



FAMILY RESOURCE CENTER
St. Croix Valley

Growing Kids by Growing Families in Pierce, Polk, and St. Croix Counties

OUR STORIES

young parent program

Ninth Edition 2018



FOREWORD

For 20 years, Family Resource Center St. Croix Valley has placed a priority on serving young parents through group classes and home visits.

As you read their essays, we ask you to imagine what it is like to be pregnant while navigating the stressful times of high school. Imagine what it is like to try and decide what to wear the next day when your body is growing and nothing fits. Imagine how you would feel taking an exam in your first hour class after you have been up all night, feeding an infant every two hours. Imagine now what it must be like to make plans for your life after high school, and all these plans must include a child.

The parents you will read about here do not ask for your pity. They are proud, confident parents who have written about their struggles. With this book, we celebrate their success. We want every parent to feel proud of the job they are doing. Doesn't every child deserve to have loving parents who are proud to be their mommy or daddy?

The Family Resource Center is so proud of these young people and what they have accomplished. We hope to continue to follow their successes through graduation as well as the many milestones they will mark in their lives as parents. We believe that the stories that follow will give you a better understanding of the unique challenges that young parents face. We hope you enjoy reading their stories as much as we have enjoyed the process of watching these young lives unfold.

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Ninth Edition 2018

Published by Family Resource Center St. Croix Valley
857 Main Street, P.O. Box 2087, Baldwin, WI 54002
715-684-4440, www.frscv.org

Family Resource Center St. Croix Valley is an early childhood development, family support and parent education organization serving children and families in Pierce, Polk and St. Croix Counties of Wisconsin. The mission of the Family Resource Center is to strengthen children, families and communities by offering education, resources and support.



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“The Young Parent program has helped me connect with other parents who have gone through a similar situation...the support has been endless.”



Hi. My name is Taylor.

I am a senior in high school. I enjoy hanging out with my friends, competing in sports with my dog and spending time with my son. My family includes Miles, Kyle and myself. Before I was a parent, I didn't really have plans for after school. Now, I am done with high school and on the waiting list for a dog grooming school. Things have definitely changed since before I had a kid. I have gotten my life on track and made plans for after school.

When I first found out I was pregnant I told my boyfriend. He was surprised and happy. I was excited. One challenge I have faced since becoming a parent would be finding time for myself. It definitely took a toll on my social life and friends, but I would not change a single thing.

The thing I have found most surprising about being a parent would be the bond Miles and I have. I love watching him laugh, grow and learn. I am scared with how smart he is. Some of the personal traits I hope to pass down to my son are to be worldly, intelligent, open, sarcastic and quick-witted. I feel like these are important traits and will make him a better and light-hearted person.

My dreams for my child are that he is happy in life and does what he enjoys. My proudest moment is every day. I love seeing how much Miles grows, and what he learns. My biggest supporter would have to be my teacher, Flanders. He was born when his parents were young. My teacher helped me graduate early, apply to grooming school and look for jobs and housing.

Before I was a parent there were lots of somewhat pointless things that were important to me. I was always out with friends, going to events, and involved in lots of social media. Now my son and family are most important to me, along with my dog. She is amazing and the bond between us is unimaginable. We placed 1st in our UKC weight pull and I hope to accomplish more together.

What I enjoy the most about being a parent is the unbreakable bond Miles and I have. What I enjoy the least is how busy every day is. The Young Parent program has helped me connect with other parents who have gone through a similar situation and by having Miles be around other kids. This is my second year attending the Young Parent program and the support has been endless.

Hi. My name is Kora.

I'm 16 years old and I'm a sophomore at Prescott High School. I enjoy music, drawing, and hanging out with my friends. I live with my grandma, and I visit my mom and my older sister Chelsey. My goals after high school, before I knew I was pregnant, were to apply to do a job that requires minimal schooling. I wanted to work a lot and find a job that suited my skills.

When I first found out I was pregnant, I told my grandma and Kyle right away. Later the same day, I told my sister Chelsey. Everyone I told was supportive and offered me non-judgmental advice. I felt like I had to instantly become more mature but also learned that I need to lean on others for help more than ever before.

My plans for after high school changed from going directly into the workforce to having to plan to take care of a baby. I didn't have a specific job in mind before, but after I found out I was pregnant, I started looking for a sturdier career plan, possibly in the field of OB/GYN.

Some of the main challenges I have had since becoming pregnant are keeping up with my school work, telling peers, and coming to terms with the fact that my life and body is going to change. Much of the information I found out about my body and growing milestones were from experiencing it for myself and from other mothers

in my life. I learned that everyone will get stretch marks and not to be too harsh with myself.

One trait I hope to pass onto my child would be my dedication to remain unique no matter what. This is important to me because it allowed me to be true to myself, make amazing true friendships, and let my personality shine. I hope my child is happy throughout her childhood. When she is a bit older, I hope she develops an amazing personality and is living a carefree childhood.

My biggest supporters would be my boyfriend, Kyle, my grandma, and my sister because they offered advice, information, and emotional support through everything. Before I was pregnant, hanging out with my friends and doing fun things were the most important things to me, but now it is my boyfriend and school work.

I am most looking forward to giving the baby an opportunity to have a personality that is truly hers and raising her to be accepting of everyone. I am most nervous about her ever getting hurt or failing to be a good parent. The Young Parent program let my goals for my future become more realistic and reachable. It gave me a handle on how to deal with problems or worries I had.



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Hi. My name is Kyle.

I am 17 years old. I’m from Prescott High School and a junior. I enjoy music, cars, and hanging out with friends. I live with my mom and brother. I like to play games and hang out with my best friends and Kora. My goals before Kora was pregnant were to go to college for my class B license and to go to school for music.

When I found out we were pregnant I was at work and sat there frozen. I pretty much asked to go on break so I could sit there and gain my thoughts. The first person I told was my best friend Emily. She reacted by supporting me and said that if I had anything I wanted to talk about, to go to her.

My main challenges I have with my stress is Kora being OK all the time, along with school and Kora’s anxiety and stress. Starting off with the pregnancy it was hard because it was unexpected. Now it’s getting better because everyone is feeling very supportive.

The baby is due May 20th. I’m expecting to have a well behaved young girl. I’m looking forward to having something to be proud of and to teach special skills to. One trait I hope to pass on to my daughter is for her to always be nice and good to others. What I’m not looking forward to is the baby stage. The Young Parent program helped me by relieving some stress for the baby part of it and after baby is born.

My dream for my daughter will be to have a great life and not go into depression or anything on those lines. My biggest supporters are my girlfriend, mom, and grandma. They will always be there and when I need someone to talk to they allow me to.

My plan after high school is to become a music teacher or truck driver. What I have learned from this pregnancy is that there is no wrong in life, everything happens for a reason. Before Kora was pregnant my values were friends, family, and music. This will stay the same. Nothing has changed.

Hi. My name is Macey.

I am sixteen years old. I have a one-year old son named Aaron. Aaron was born on December 14th, 2016. I enjoy being active, reading, writing and being with my family. Being a parent sure has been a journey for me.

When I found out I was pregnant the first person to know was my mom. She had many mixed reactions. She was mad, then very excited, and then she would just be happy for me. On the other hand, I was terrified. I am the type of person who overreacts over everything. For example, I hate needles so when I went to get a blood test done during my pregnancy I would literally cry. I still went to school but during the last

three weeks I stopped because I had major back pain and was always sick.

Finally, Aaron was born, but unexpectedly, as his due date was originally January 15th. He was born on December 14th. The doctors had then found out I had preeclampsia which caused Aaron to be born early.

My goal for after high school is to become a depression therapist or possibly a day care provider. I have always loved babysitting kids and liked helping people with their problems. With being a day care provider, I would like to own my own day care. Today I am very much thinking I want to be a therapist for depression.

I have wanted to be once since I could remember! After my dad passed and I could understand that he was not coming back, I wanted to help. Now that I lost my mom too, I really know what I want to do.

My biggest supporters were my mom and my grandmas. Mom always had a smile on her face and was always finding something to do. My grandmas were always there for me no matter what! They got me everything I needed and now they are always here for me and my family.

One of the challenges I have faced with being a parent is many doctor appointments. At first, I did not know when Aaron's next checkup would be and there were so many things I had to do. I had to use a certain formula for Aaron because he was allergic to so many. Now it is hard because he gets so many ear infections.

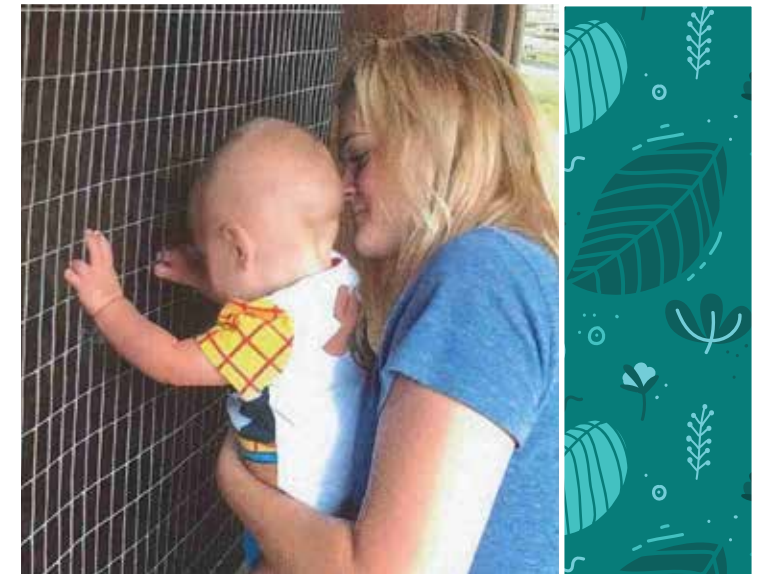
Before I was pregnant I was always in a sport. I loved doing something and every time I was not I would be going crazy or I would be out with my friends. Now I want all my time to be with my boyfriend and baby Aaron.

What I found most surprising about my child is his learning and his playing. He is now wanting toddler puzzles and when he plays he seems like he is in his own little world.

A personal trait I hope to pass down is positivity. I like to be a positive type. I feel that it keeps me going on the things I do. My dreams for my child are for him to succeed in high school and go to college to be what he dreams on being.

My proudest moment of being a parent was Aaron eating real foods. I could not wait for Aaron to be able to eat by himself and eating real food with us as a family. I enjoy many things about being a parent. I love watching him experience different foods, watching him play or listen to him talk real words and say full sentences.

The Young Parent program has always been there to keep us on our toes! We have learned marvelous things from them and are truly excited to go forward with them!





“Before I became a parent, I was mainly out fixing vehicles or anything I could. Now all I care about is being there for my child during the toughest situations!”



Hi. My name is Noah.

I am 17 years old. I have four brothers and three sisters. I also have a 1-year old son named Aaron. I enjoy many activities like doing derbies, working on broken vehicles and spending time with my family. My goals for after high school are to go to college and become a mechanic. Before I was a parent I wanted to join the Army. I switched ideas because I feel that now it would be hard to go.

I first found out Macey was pregnant through her grandma. I told my sister Asia, and she did not really have a reaction. I was terrified. I did not know how to take in the situation. When Aaron was born, it was around 4:30 AM when Macey started to have contractions. I was called up to meet her at the hospital. Aaron was born 12:55 PM and weighed 6 pounds 7 ounces. At discharge he was 5 pounds 1 ounce. After he was born I didn't want to put him down!

Some challenges I have faced being a parent are either we get low on money or we have lack of time together. Diapers and wipes are expensive, along with clothes, and we tend to argue about these.

What I found surprising about my child is his words. Aaron catches onto words fast! Another would be walking. I was super excited for him to walk but now it seems to be too much! One

of the traits I would like to pass down to Aaron is my personality. I feel that I am honest and an outgoing person.

Before I became a parent, I was mainly out fixing vehicles or anything I could. Now all I care about is being there for my child during the toughest situations! My biggest supporter is my dad. He is always there to help me claim mistakes and is a big help for Aaron too.

My dreams for my child are for him to graduate from high school and college. Then I would like for him to have a stabilized life. What I mean is that he will do what he wants to do and he will accomplish everything he tries. I would like him to stay away from anything that could hurt his future.

What I enjoy the most is watching him learn to run, jump, play, and tons more. What I enjoy least is that Macey and I never have alone time any more. We would find a baby sitter but Macey has major trust issues leaving Aaron with others.

The Young Parent Group has showed me many things, like a healthy meal for my child and many more, like milestones. My proudest moment of being a parent is Aaron eating actual foods! At first it didn't feel like we were eating as a family so I was very excited for him to start eating solids.

Hi. My name is Alexis.

I am 17 years old and a sophomore at Hudson High School. I enjoy being with Shane, my boyfriend, and enjoy watching movies. It has only been me and my dad all my life, now it is me, my dad, Shane, and my son, Devree.

My goal after high school was to go into the military. Now my goal is to be the best mother I can be and not screw up. When I first found out I was pregnant, I was so upset and so disappointed in myself, I didn't know what to do, or how to feel. The first person that I told I was pregnant was my best friend, Kaitlyn. She didn't believe me at first until she saw pictures then she was super happy, super supportive, and thankfully she is still right by my side.

Now that I am a parent, my plans after high school are to go to college to become a cop. I am still going to graduate from high school. Most of the challenges I have had while being pregnant are going to school and getting up in the morning because I am so tired.

The most surprising thing during my pregnancy is seeing my son move and push on my stomach. Now that Devree is here, I am surprised most by how little he cries and how content he is. He only cries if he is hungry or needs to be changed. Being a parent is a lot easier with all the support that I have.

The personal trait that I want my son to have is my eyes because they change colors and my dad has the same kind of eyes that I love. I hope my son follows his dreams no matter if people put him down. I hope my son is happy with whatever he does in life.

At age five, my dream for Devree would be for him to have fun and not let others tell him what he can and cannot do. At fifteen, I want Devree to be doing good in school and not screw up. At age twenty-five, I want Devree to follow his dreams, whatever they may be.

My biggest supporters are my dad and Shane. If it wasn't for my dad, I don't know where I would be

and what I'd be doing in life. My dad has helped me physically and emotionally. He has been by my side throughout this whole pregnancy. Everything that was important to me before getting pregnant like school, friends, working, and my family are still important to me. However, now everything revolves around my son.

Before I was a parent, my family was most important to me. Now that I am a parent, my family is still important to me along with Devree.

My proudest moment of being a parent is watching my baby kick and just be active in my belly. I enjoy knowing I am going to be the best parent I can be even though I grew up without a mother, I know I'll be the best mother I can be. Now that Devree is here, my proudest moment was pushing him out and seeing his face for the first time.

I went into the hospital to be induced on a Thursday. I began laboring and labored until Saturday. When it was time to push, I began pushing at 6:40 pm and he was born by 7:07 pm. Devree weighed in at 9lbs 2oz and was 22in long.

The Young Parent program has helped me through a lot and it has taught me how I can be a good mom without having a mother in my life. Being in the Young Parent program has made me feel more confident about being a teen mom and knowing I will have support.



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Hi. My name is Shane.

I am 17 years old. My girlfriend is Alexis. I currently work at Wendy's. I go to River Falls High School and I am in 11th grade. I am a middle child of 8 kids. I didn't really have any goals before I became a parent. I was a bad child, didn't listen to anyone and would run off with friends to go street racing and cave adventuring.

When I found out Alexis was pregnant, I admit I didn't want a baby in my life because I like my freedom, but I came to my senses. I think the first person I told was my mom. She didn't react like I messed up. Instead, I realized what I was doing in life was doing the wrong thing and needed something new.

The plan I have is to finish school and get a good job. My dream job is to be a car mechanic, do body work, and paint. I want to do something with cars and to save money. One of the challenges I have faced with becoming a parent is that some of my friends said my baby is not mine and called Alexis names. My family and mom tried to help a lot to calm me down.

The things I find interesting about my son Devree are the movements he makes. Babies growth happens fast and is weird. Something I would like to pass down to Devree is to grow up and be happy. I would pass this down because growing up was difficult with all my brothers and sisters.

My biggest supporters are my mom and Alexis. I am much happier with the life decision I made.



Hi. My name is Chris.

I am seventeen years old and a junior in high school. I am the oldest in my family and have a younger brother and sister. In my spare time, I like to hang out with my family. I also like to do things with my dad, as we work on vehicles together and he teaches me about car mechanics. I also like to spend time with my son, Joshua, because we do not live together. I currently work at the Laurel as a prep cook and enjoy doing this. I will be doing construction this summer as a full-time job.

My goals have not changed since I became a dad. My current goals are to graduate and get a high school diploma. After graduation, my goal is to go into the labor union to be a taper, mudder, and to get an apprenticeship to get hired full time with the union.

When I first found out Tranae was pregnant, she was three months along. I reacted by being mad as she didn't tell me first when she found out. Also, we were not together as she had broken off the relationship. The first person I told was my dad, and he had a blank face when I told him.

During the pregnancy, I was not with my girlfriend a lot. I know she was sick a lot with morning sickness. I went to a couple ultrasounds with her. I was in shock that this was happening to me.

When Tranae's water broke she went to the hospital and went into labor with bad contractions. I was with Tranae, holding her hand, she had a strong grip and had to go onto oxygen. It didn't seem very long that she was in labor. When Joshua was born, I could not get over how small he was. I was in shock for me being as young as I was and then holding my son, Joshua.

A trait I would like to pass down to my child is for him to be active, and share the love for cars. I would like to try to get him into cars. A dream for him is to get his high school diploma, get him into either a two or four year college, and to do better in school. I would be proud if he was able to complete a degree and get a job. I would like him to buy his first vehicle, his own clothes, and his own things. When he buys things with his own money, he will respect it more as he has worked hard for it.

This is something my grandpa passed down to my dad and then my dad passed down to me, so I want to pass it down to my son.

My biggest supporter is myself and what my parents taught me. My mom and dad have taught me respect and showed it to me all the time. This is something that they wanted and to respect our family, others, and things we owned.

Before I became a parent, I was focused on work and making money, now Joshua is first. What I enjoy the most about being a parent is watching Joshua grow and be a dad to him. What I enjoy the least is not being there for him 24/7. It is also hard finding a babysitter for Joshua.

“In the Young Parent program, I saw other kids my age with children at group and learned it wasn't just me. There were kids from other schools attending Young Parent group. In group, we went over the developmental milestones and I learned what Joshua should be doing at different ages. If I knew people expecting I would tell them about Young Parent group.”



Hi. My name is Krystle.

I live in my own apartment in Osceola and will be graduating from high school on May 25th. I work full time at SMC in Somerset. My goals after high school are to go to college to become a registered nurse. I want to be working in that field by the time my son, Jayse turns five.

Before I had Jayse, I had no goals and didn't even finish high school. Jayse inspired me to do better. He will be one year old on May 24th.

In my case, I guess you can say that he wasn't a "step back" he was "three steps forward." When I first found out I was pregnant I was very confused at that time because I wasn't in the best place in life and my son's father wasn't the best. The difficulties I've faced were trying to get everything together for Jayse and going through the pregnancy alone. Labor was difficult and scary also because I had a "high risk" and only my cousin by my side.

I feel like my biggest supporter is my boyfriend Trevor because he took Jayse in as his own and has proved to us that he will always be there no matter what. What I've found most surprising is how much babies take over your heart, and how your world revolves around them and nothing else matters. The most important trait I would like to pass down to Jayse is my work ethic. This is important to me because if you want to go anywhere in your life you're going to need a work ethic. It also says a lot about a person if they do or don't have a work ethic.

Before I became a parent, partying and friends were my life. But now that I'm a parent and have matured, what matters now is my family, my job, and keeping a safe environment for Jayse. I can say that my proudest moment is and always will be watching Jayse grow up and his brain grow when he shows me what he's learned. It makes me the most proud I've ever been in my life.

My plans after high school now that I'm a mom haven't changed. I'm still going to be going to school for being an RN. I don't believe my goals have changed but only grown stronger. The Young Parent program has helped me get closer to my goals to graduate by giving me credit I need to move forward and make a good life for my family. The more I watch my son grow and play the more it motivates me to reach my goals. I'm planning on working at Children's Hospital in the NICU with the babies and my son is the best reminder of all.

I love to be the best teacher for my son. The thing I enjoy most about being a parent is being able to experience this kind of love that only a parent can experience. The least thing I like is when he gets sick and I have to bring him to the doctor and watch him suffer. I hate not being able to fix his problems or his pain when he has it.

My dreams for Jayse are that he graduates school, goes to college, and goes into a good work field. And that he has an amazing wife that he can have gorgeous babies and an amazing life without the financial problems everyone seems to face today.



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