

Kristen is on top of
the world. She's an
A student. She's
popular and she's
in love. An unwanted
pregnancy? It could
never happen to her
...could it?

Baby Blues



Name: Heather O'Sullivan
Likes: Art Nouveau, crustless
cucumber sandwiches
Future: To live in luxury
Quote: Where's my tiara?



Name: Paul Calkin
Likes: Chocolate cake, fixing
up old cars, sleeping
Future: To travel and study
engineering
Quote: Pass me that wrench!



Name: Jason Dussault
Likes: Herbal tea, videos, ice
hockey
Future: To read the entire works
of Tolstoy and play professional
hockey
Quote: Do I have to?



National
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of Canada

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du Canada

Baby Blues

BABY BLUES was designed especially for teenage viewers. Right from the start of the film, they are drawn into the uncertain world of a young woman their age on an emotional roller coaster.

Kristen, the film's protagonist, is an attractive teenager with everything going for her. She does well in school, she has just won a music scholarship and she has a good relationship with Jason, her steady boyfriend.

Her world begins to crumble when she suspects that she may be pregnant. Suddenly she and Jason are forced to face the consequences of an unexpected pregnancy. They are compelled to evaluate their feelings and face some difficult questions. Will they keep the baby? What are their feelings about abortion? What about adoption? How will their choice affect their future plans?

BABY BLUES reflects the teenage point of view without moralizing or sugar-coating the issue. The situation is not romanticized in any way. The film presents options without giving advice. It demonstrates the consequences of unprotected sex in a way that breaks through the *it can't happen to me* barrier. It invites young viewers to examine their feelings, beliefs and attitudes about unexpected pregnancies. After all, if it could happen to Kristen and Jason, it can happen to them.

Background

Every year in Canada, one in 25 unmarried women under the age of 20 becomes pregnant. For many of them the experience is devastating. If they elect to deliver the baby and raise it themselves, they risk poverty and limited opportunities in the future. If they decide to marry, their prospects for divorce are such that, in many cases, marriage merely delays their status as single mothers. Abortion or giving the baby up for adoption may have emotional repercussions.

Why then, given the consequences, do so many young girls find themselves faced with unexpected pregnancies? When questioned, their responses are surprisingly consistent. It couldn't happen to them. They thought they were too young to get pregnant. Their partner said he was sterile. They couldn't get hold of contraceptives.

Another factor is the unwillingness to admit, even to themselves, that they are sexually active. If they take responsibility for acquiring contraceptives, they can't pretend that they aren't sexually involved.

Sexuality education and the availability of contraceptives are making an impact. While the figure of one in 25 is high, research indicates that without current levels of sexuality education, the pregnancy rate among teenagers would be even higher. Alarming, the incidence of teenage pregnancy is growing fastest in the under-15 group. Over 15, the numbers are actually declining. Experts believe that early sexuality education programmes are all-important.

Extensive work with teenagers, including teenage mothers, was an important part of the filmmaking process for **BABY BLUES**. During a series of workshops, teenagers were asked to critique the script and improvise important scenes. The script was sent to educators and the Planned Parenthood Association for their input.



Discussion Questions

1. Were you surprised at the pregnancy test result? Why?
2. Do you think Kristen and Jason knew the facts about reproduction and birth control? Why did they take chances?
3. When did Kristen first suspect that she might be pregnant? What are some early signs of pregnancy?
4. How did Jason react when Kristen told him she might be pregnant? How do you think he was feeling?
5. How did Jen (Kristen's friend) feel when she learned Kristen might be pregnant? What role can friends play in a situation like this?
6. When Kristen wanted to find out whether or not she was pregnant, what were her options? Why did she decide not to go into the clinic?
7. How did Kristen feel about herself once she suspected she was pregnant? How did Jason feel? How were their self-images affected?
8. Did your feelings about Kristen change once you knew she was pregnant? Did your feelings about Jason change?
9. What impact will family, cultural, and economic status have on decisions Kristen and Jason might make?
10. What was Kristen's attitude towards abortion before she suspected she was pregnant? What was her attitude after? How about Jason's feelings? What was Jen's response to this dilemma?
11. Who do you think is more responsible for birth control—the man or the woman?
12. One possible consequence of having sex without using a condom is pregnancy. What are some others (i.e., sexually transmitted diseases, AIDS, etc.)?
13. Do you think Kristen felt pressured to have a sexual relationship with Jason? If Jason didn't pressure her directly, what are some other reasons why she might have felt pressured? If you are feeling pressured to be more sexually involved than you want to be, what can you say or do to make your feelings clear?
14. How does religion or cultural background affect a person's attitude toward sexual activity?
15. Kristen and Jason have to make some choices. What are their options? What do you think they will do?

Suggested Activity

It's five years later. Kristen and Jason are now dealing with the consequences of their decisions. Choose one of the options listed below and create scenarios describing Jason's and Kristen's life. Focus on opportunities, schooling, careers, relationships, future plans, etc. Also consider the emotional aspects of the choices they have made.

1. Kristen delivers the baby and gives it up for adoption.
2. Kristen and Jason stay together to raise the baby.
3. Kristen delivers the baby and raises it alone.
4. Kristen has an abortion.
5. Kristen delivers the baby and Jason raises it alone.
6. Kristen and Jason keep the baby and raise it with their parents.

Important Facts to Know

- After puberty, a girl can get pregnant the first time she has intercourse.
- The position of the couple during intercourse doesn't affect whether or not the woman will become pregnant.
- If one is sexually active but doesn't use birth control, the chances of getting pregnant are four in five.
- Having intercourse while a woman is menstruating does not prevent pregnancy.
- When used together, foam and condoms are nearly as effective as the birth control pill.
- Live sperm can be released before ejaculation, so withdrawal is a risky form of birth control.
- Douching (rinsing the vagina) after intercourse doesn't prevent pregnancy.

Services

Some clinics and youth services will provide confidential birth control information and guidance to young people.

For more information, contact the Planned Parenthood Association.

Related Films and Videos

ABORTION: STORIES FROM NORTH AND SOUTH	0184 046
BEING MALE	0180 086
GIRLS FITTING IN	0180 122
THANKS FOR THE RIDE	0183 024
A MOTHER AND DAUGHTER ON ABORTION	0187 059
WITHOUT WORK series	
NOT BY CHOICE	0189 133
THE FEMINIZATION OF POVERTY Series	
NO WAY! NOT ME	0187 104
PLAYING FOR KEEPS	
(Available 1991)	

About the Filmmakers

Annie O'Donoghue-Director
Annie O'Donoghue brings ten years of teaching experience to her filmmaking career. Her independently made films include *INVEGARY-NOT JUST ANOTHER SCHOOL*, a documentary about an educational programme for illiterate adults; *THE AVENUE*, a drama about a mother-and-daughter relationship; and *CLOSING THE GAP*, a film about women and sports. For the NFB, she has also directed *THE OLD PERSON'S FRIEND* (from the *DISCUSSIONS IN BIOETHICS* series), a short drama about dying with dignity; and *AUTOMATED LOVERS*, a drama about the dehumanizing of society.

N.J. (Nancy) Isaak-Writer
Nancy Isaak has written for numerous corporate and industrial videos and dramatic teleplays, including episodes for *BEACHCOMBERS* and the teenage drama *NORTHWOOD*, shown on the CBC network. Along with *BABY BLUES*, her NFB credits include *NOT BY CHOICE*, a film about the plight of a young single mother.

Jennifer Torrance-Producer
Jennifer Torrance has produced numerous films for the NFB's Pacific Centre, including: the *GROWING UP SERIES*, three films about sexuality education; *IS IT HOT IN HERE? A FILM ABOUT MENOPAUSE*; *BOMBS AWAY*, a drama about children's fear of nuclear war; and *STREET KIDS*, a documentary on juvenile prostitution. She has also produced the internationally acclaimed *FEELING YES*, *FEELING NO*, a four-film drama-documentary series for sexual-abuse prevention in young children.

Credit List For Baby Blues

Robyn Stevan
as Kristen Butterworth
Spencer Rochfort
as Jason Dussault
Lossen Chambers
as Jennifer Meeker
Jacques Lalonde
as Paul Calkin
Paula Rempel
as Heather O'Sullivan
Lorena Gale
as Ms. Catherton
Anna Hagan
as Mrs. Butterworth
Director
Annie O'Donoghue

Writer
N.J. Isaak
Producer
Jennifer Torrance
Cinematographer
Danny Nowak
Editor
Janice Brown
Art Director
David Roberts
Original Music
Brian Tate
Production Manager
David Hauka
Assistant Director
Sandra Mayo

Costume Design
Patricia Flynn
Location Sound
Michael McGee
Sound Editor
Janice Brown
Assistant Picture & Sound Editor
Ellen Gram Shumiatcher
Production Co-ordinator
Kathryn Lynch
Unit Administrator
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
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24 minutes 32 seconds

Order number: 16 mm - C 0190 071

Video - C 9190 071 

Produced by the National Film Board of Canada,
Pacific Centre

Distributed by the National Film Board of Canada

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P.O. Box 6100, Montreal, Quebec H3C 3H5



Printed in Canada