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## Teen Pregnancy, Hollywood Style

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Early in July, *OK!* magazine featured a cover story about Jamie Lynn Spears and her new baby, Maddie. *Newsweek* reported that the magazine paid \$1 million for the rights to publish photographs of the baby and mother. The young mom, now 17, is shown on the magazine's cover declaring, "Being a mom is the best feeling in the world." A good number of parents were understandably outraged.

This week, *Newsweek* is out with an article that questions how Hollywood is presenting teenage motherhood. The magazine reports that teen moms and their babies have become "a hot plot device lately."

"Many teen moms and the adults who deal with them are glad to see a conversation about teen pregnancy out in the open," *Newsweek* explains, "But they say that big parts of the story are being glossed over: how that baby bump came to be in the first place, and just how hard it'll be for a teen to raise a child."

Jane Brown of the University of North Carolina asserts that the Hollywood version of the teen pregnancy storyline lacks commitment, contraception, and consequences. Critics complained that the movie *Juno* mentioned condoms "only" twice. The assumption is clearly that teenagers simply *will* have sex, and the best parents can hope for us that it be "safe" sex.

Beyond that, "commitment" is the word one uses to avoid using "marriage." Waiting until marriage to engage in sexual intercourse is, for Hollywood, an unthinkable presumption. Teens are encouraged to establish "committed relationships" before sex. We can only wonder what kind of commitment would please Hollywood and its critics.

As for consequences, Hollywood generally abandons reality when it claims to present "reality" programming. The celebrity cult is even worse. The *OK!* magazine cover makes teen motherhood look positively glamorous. But, as one young woman responded to the *OK!* coverage, "I had a baby at 16, it was NOT easy, I did NOT look radiant and beautiful."

Then again, that kind of honesty probably wouldn't sell many magazines. Hollywood and the entertainment industry are selling their version of normal teenage expectation. Teen moms are, as *Newsweek* explained, "a hot plot device." Parents, you have been warned.

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