



## MTV and Teen Pregnancy: Critical Essays on 16 and Pregnant and Teen Mom

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In 2009, *16 and Pregnant* premiered on MTV, closely followed by the spinoffs *Teen Mom* and *Teen Mom 2*. Because of their controversial portrayals of teenage mothers, the shows have received ongoing media attention. While some argue that the programs could play a factor in reducing the number of teen pregnancies, others claim the shows exploit young women and glamorize their situations. Among these debates, there have been surprisingly few in-depth discourses that discuss the roles such shows have on teenage audiences.

In *MTV and Teen Pregnancy: Critical Essays on 16 and Pregnant and Teen Mom*, contributors from a variety of backgrounds and expertise offer potent essays about these programs. Divided into four parts, the book tackles the controversial representations of teen pregnancy from various disciplines. Part I explores gendered social norms and the shows' roles as either educational resources or idealized depictions of teenage motherhood. Part II prompts readers to consider the intersections of race, class, gender, and the social and cultural power structures often glossed over in these programs. Part III focuses on teenage fathers, the portrayal of masculinity, and "good" vs. "bad" parents. Part IV draws from TV's representations of reality to discuss the impact of these shows on the viewing audience. This section includes a narrative from a teen mother who argues that the shows do not accurately reflect the life she leads.

As the debates about *16 and Pregnant* and *Teen Mom* continue, this collection provides a valuable critical discourse to be used both inside and outside the classroom. Those engaged in courses on gender and women's studies, as well as media studies, social work, and family and childhood development, will find *MTV and Teen Pregnancy* especially insightful—as will those involved in community outreach programs, not to mention teens and young mothers themselves.

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### Editorial Review

About the Author

**Letizia Guglielmo** is associate professor of English at Kennesaw State University. She also teaches in the Gender and Women's Studies Program and serves as the Assistant Director of Composition for the English Department. Her research and writing focus on feminist rhetoric and pedagogy, multiliteracies, digital media in the writing classroom, and the intersections of feminist action and digital communication.

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