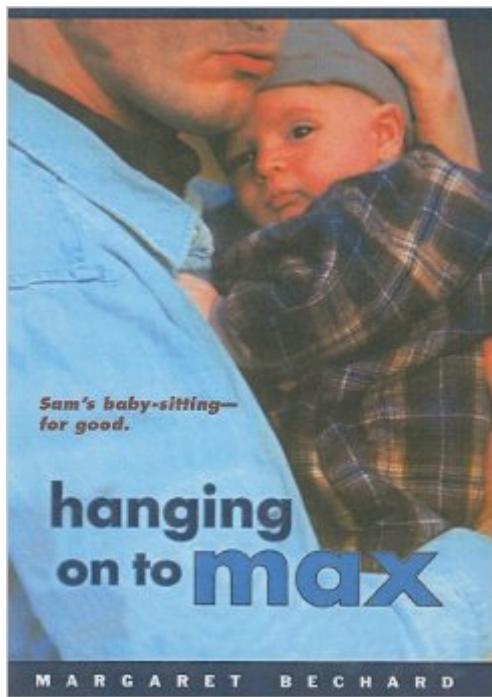


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# Hanging On To Max



## **Synopsis**

Bechard writes with humor and empathy, weaving the story of 17-year-old Sam in a very real look at the lives of teen fathers today. A breath of fresh air . . . a poignant winner of a book.--School Library Journal, starred review.

## **Book Information**

Lexile Measure: 420 (What's this?)

Hardcover: 204 pages

Publisher: Perfection Learning (January 1, 2001)

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Shipping Weight: 0.8 ounces (View shipping rates and policies)

Average Customer Review: 4.5 out of 5 starsÂ  See all reviewsÂ  (69 customer reviews)

Best Sellers Rank: #4,406,634 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #52 inÂ  Books > Teens > Literature & Fiction > Social & Family Issues > Family > New Baby #1937 inÂ  Books > Children's Books > Growing Up & Facts of Life > Family Life > New Baby #6271 inÂ  Books > Teens > Literature & Fiction > Social & Family Issues > Being a Teen

Age Range: 12 - 17 years

Grade Level: 7 - 12

## **Customer Reviews**

Sam Pettigrew is a senior in high school. And he has a baby. Yes-a baby. His girlfriend got pregnant the previous year, decided that she couldn't handle raising the baby, and Sam felt a need to raise his son. Now, Sam's going to an alternative high school and juggling classes, college hopes...and baby Max. The mix only gets tougher when he meets Claire, a fellow teenage parent who Sam definitely has feelings for. Yet no matter what happens, Sam is determined to prove to the world that he's not a stupid teenage guy and that he CAN hang on to Max. Like I said, this is definitely a book that needed to be written and needs to be read. Many of us at some point or another have read the typical "pregnant teenage girl" novels and they certainly offer valuable perspectives. Yet it seems that we rarely come into contact with novels that explore a MALE's feelings about the issue. "Hanging Onto Max" definitely corrects this problem. But "Hanging Onto Max" is more than just a mediocre novel with a rarely-done perspective- its main character is just as memorable as the

content. I literally checked this book out from the library, read the first page, and raced through the novel until I finished it. Sam is just that kind of a character. He is realistically "male" without being a stereotype, and his thoughts and words reverberate with a piercing, understated truth. Flashbacks of Sam's experiences with his girlfriend and of life "before" are also unusually well done. Through them, Bechard managed to perfectly capture Sam's previous experiences and thus allow the reader to understand his current situation better. As I read, I felt like Sam was really a person—he is one of those characters you literally feel a "warmth" and empathy toward. The writing is blunt, quick, and free of pretentious prose. This only makes Sam better. Without a doubt, "Hanging Onto Max" succeeds at exploring one of the toughest issues. Not only is it from an intriguing male perspective, it deals with the issue of teen pregnancy with realism, empathy, and a fearlessness when it comes to exploring the gut-wrenching choices that those involved must make.

Hanging on to Max by Margaret Bechard is a book about a boy named Sam Pettigrow living through his senior year as a parent. Sam was no typical 17-year boy. At this stage of the game Sam was already changing diapers and pushing around strollers. Sam was a teenage father balancing parenting duties and schoolwork. His former girlfriend Brittney couldn't handle being a teenage mother and was going to give up her new baby boy, Max. Sam couldn't let this happen so he took over the roll of being a father. Sam started to go to an alternative school that had a day care built into it for teenage mothers and fathers. Sam was so busy juggling schoolwork and taking care of Max and never had anytime for himself. Sam meets a former friend Emily from his old high school who also is a parent. Emily shows Sam that things aren't as easy as they should be. This story was heartbreakingly, humorously, you can relate to this story and was very realistic. I really enjoyed reading this story and I think you would enjoy reading this story also if you're a boy or girl anyone can benefit from reading this and you can learn many things from reading this story.

Margaret Bechard's book Hanging On To Max teaches teenagers the consequences of their actions. The main character, Sam, learns how to deal with his own consequences when he finds out that his girlfriend is pregnant and wants to give up the baby for adoption. On impulse, he decides that he doesn't want to see his child be raised by strangers. He gets custody of his son and has to cope with the reality of raising a newborn. Throughout the book, Sam has to deal with the everyday hardships that come along with having a baby. At such a young age, he struggles with balancing school, studying for the SATs, and falling in love again. The book Hanging on to Max has many significant lessons that can be learned throughout it. One important message the author tries to

send out to young teens is to think about the consequences that could happen before acting on impulse. This is suddenly a problem for Sam and Brittany when they find out that she is going to have a baby. Suddenly, they have a bigger problem that they could've imagined. When Brittany decides to give up the baby for adoption, Sam has to deal with even more, because he makes the tough decision of keeping the baby. Sam's whole world will soon be all about Max and being a good father. Instead of worrying of making varsity basketball and his plans for Friday night, he has to worry about midnight feedings and making ends meet. Though the book sends a strong and realistic message, some teens may find it to be unrealistic. Just when Sam seems to be coping with the responsibility that comes with the baby, he makes the decision to give him up. Most readers see this as a shock because adoption never really seemed to be a choice. Another thing that might be unappealing about this book is that it moves somewhat slowly. Readers might see Sam's reality as uneventful and dull, but the fact is that having a baby changes your life dramatically. Overall this book is a great way to show just how realistic this situation is, and how it can happen if you don't take responsibility for your actions. This book teaches teenagers to take a step back and look at what could possibly happen to them or someone they love.

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