

Being a good mum: Teens have their say

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Just in time for Mother's Day teens have spoken out on what they consider makes a good mother. The project Young Lives and Times, part of the Timescapes study and funded by the Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC), reveals how teens view their mums.

Teens want their mums to be someone who cares for them, who is understanding and dependable no matter what they do. Meg (16) feels that a good mum should be: "someone who's there for you, someone you can talk to about most things, but, like, at the same time respects your privacy, is honest and just helps you with whatever you need". Another young person feels a mum has to be: "Someone who cares for you and looks after you well and who can understand how you feel and sees it from your point of view as well. And, say, if you've done bad in a test or you've done something wrong, she can still love you or be happy and care for you".

As well as carrying out motherly duties teens felt it was important for mums to be able to have fun with them. Jessica (15) believes that a good mum should 'always be up for a laugh'. Even though teens expect mums to look after them and be there for them, they also value and look up to their mums as an important and influential person in their lives. "I'm quite proud of her as well cause she's been through a lot.....she's managed with three kids... I admire her for that" comments Sophie (15).

Dr Carmen Lau Clayton, research fellow for the project, believes that many of the teens interviewed have similar views on what a good mother should be. She says: "Many of the [teens](#) cited similar qualities of what a

'good mother' should be despite their varied backgrounds and circumstances. It is also very clear that [mothers](#) play a significant role in young people's lives and in helping them to make important decisions for the future."

The project has followed a group of young people with varied backgrounds from the age of 15 as they grow through their teenage years and into early adulthood. The project allows young people to respond to researchers in a way that is comfortable and often innovative, with some of the young people documenting their lives through video diaries. This unique method of collecting the young people views reveals in-depth data which is reflected in their own words.

Provided by Economic & Social Research Council

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