



Advice for Professionals from Mothers with Disabilities

The Disabled Parenting Project (DPP) has hosted two Mother's Day Twitter Chats. In 2016, 152 people participated and there were 900 tweets. In 2017, 83 people participated and there were 377 tweets. Each Twitter Chat lasted an hour and revealed many key themes. Among the important discussions was a dialogue about advice for professionals, such as health care providers, who work with parents with disabilities and their families. The overarching theme related to presumptions by professionals about parenting with disabilities. Several mothers reported experiencing negative encounters with professionals. Other mothers wished professionals would be more supportive of their role as a mother. The following are sample quotes.

- *"Don't ask [yes/no] questions about how we live. Ask how. 'How do you do X?' versus assume we don't."*
- *"Presume competence."*
- *"Understand that there is a long history of mistrust (for good reason) and that you are working within that context."*
- *"Don't act surprised at our success and our kids' awesomeness."*
- *"Listen to all of our concerns instead of being dismissive, disabled moms often have heightened sensitivity levels."*
- *"Express that you're available to help, and then assume they don't need it unless they ask."*
- *"Keep an open mind and help find resources instead of assuming [disabled mothers] can't do things."*
- *"OTs [occupational therapists] could be supportive of parenting vs. only assuming the child will have the disability."*