



Advice for Prospective Mothers with Disabilities from Mothers with Disabilities

The Disabled Parenting Project (DPP) 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 prospective mothers with disabilities. The following are the key themes and sample quotes.

Encouragement

Several of the mothers expressed enthusiasm, encouraging other women with disabilities to become mothers.

- *"Do it! There is never a convenient time."*
- *"Don't have regrets [about] parenthood. We can be and are amazing parents."*
- *"Define your family in your own terms. It's [definitely] challenging but the most rewarding thing you'll ever do."*
- *"YOU are the world's foremost and only expert on yourself. If you know you can do it, then do it."*
- *"Follow [your] dreams. If [you] dream [to] be a mother, put [your] efforts into making it a reality. Find other disabled women [to] support [you]."*
- *"It's an act of defiance to be a mother. It tells society you won't let it tell you what you should/shouldn't do w/ your body."*

Be Prepared

Many of the recommend being prepared for motherhood, such as conducting research and planning ahead. Preparation should also include obtaining necessary appropriate supports and services.

- *"Plan ahead but be fearless. Your 'disability skillset' is totally applicable to parenthood."*
- *"Never will be a perfect or right time. Do [your] research & go for it if [you are] considering conceiving or adopting."*
- *"Find doctors and others who are supportive. ask other disabled women for supportive OBGYNs."*

Seek Peer Supports

Most of the mothers reported the importance of connecting with other mothers with disabilities. Peer supports provides the opportunity to gain information and advice from others with similar circumstances and experiences.

- *"Even able-bodied parents need support. Please ask and accept help from your community. You can do it!"*
- *"Find great mentors; disabled people are successfully raising kids; you're not alone."*
- *"Start connecting [with] disabled moms beforehand & building network/gathering info. Motherhood [with] disability adds another dimension."*
- *"Go for it! Recognize parenting is hard, and most difficulties have nothing to do with disability."*