

# READER'S DIGEST TEENS GRADING PARENTS

*Virtually All Moms Get An Overall Good Grade, One In Three  
Dads Need Some Tutoring Sessions*

*Moms Beat Dads In All Areas Hands Down*



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## READER'S DIGEST TEENS GRADING PARENTS

### *Virtually All Moms Get An Overall Good Grade, One In Three Dads Need Some Tutoring Sessions*

#### *Moms Beat Dads In All Areas Hands Down*

**Toronto, ON** – Any student knows how it feels to bring a report card home from school to show their parents. Well Reader's Digest figured it was time to turn the tables. Participating in an online Reader's Digest/Ipsos-Reid survey, Canadian teens gave mom and/or dad a report card on how good of a job *they're* doing as parents. Teens and their parents can then use the report card to discuss the "grades" and any issues that they find.

More than nine in ten (92%) Canadian teens give their Mom an overall good grade, with 50% giving her an 'A.' This compares to just two in three (65%) who give dad get an overall good grade, with 29% giving him an 'A.'

The teens were asked to grade their Mom's and Dad's performance in a number of different areas. It appears that Moms excel most in the areas of birthdays (73% give an 'A'), providing a home that is happy and safe (72% give an 'A'), and working hard (72% give an 'A'). Dads also excel most in working hard (61% give an 'A') and providing a home that is happy and safe (53% give an 'A'), but not to the same extent. In fact, Moms beat Dads in all areas except driving, where the results are actually quite close (46% Dad vs. 41% Mom).

Moms need to shape up most in giving good advice without lecturing or preaching (16% give an 'A'), talking things through without losing their temper (19% give an 'A'), and not pressuring or guilt tripping them (22% give an 'A'). Dads also need to shape up in giving good advice without lecturing or preaching (9% give an 'A'), talking things through without

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losing their temper (10% give an 'A'), but above all they need the most help with fashion (5% give an 'A').

Half of Moms get good grades in Sex Ed. (54% score 'A' and 'B') compared to less than one-quarter of Dads (23%). One in six (16%) Moms haven't explained sex to their teens compared to one in three (34%) Dads.

Six in ten (58%) Canadian teenagers consider Mom "cool" compared to one in three (36%) teenagers who think Dad's cool. However, less than one in ten consider Mom and Dad "uncool" (6% and 9% respectively).

One in five (20%) teens consider Mom to be too strict, compared to one in four (25%) who think Dad's too strict. One in ten don't think Mom and Dad are strict enough (12% and 10% respectively). Most teens think Mom and Dad are just strict enough (67% and 50% respectively)!

No one thing stands out for things Canadian teens will do differently when they become parents. However top mentions are less strict (23% future moms and dads) and show more interest (11% future moms, 10% future dads). And after all is said and done, one in five say they will do nothing differently insinuating their parents are good the way they are (22% future moms, 23% future dads).

*These are the findings of an Ipsos-Reid poll conducted for Reader's Digest between January 16<sup>th</sup> and January 21<sup>st</sup>, 2004. The online survey is based on a randomly selected sample of 1,000 Canadian teenagers; 200 from each age between 14 and 18 with a 50/50 gender split. With a sample of this size, the results are considered accurate to within  $\pm 3.1$  percentage points, 19 times out of 20, of what they would have been had the entire Canadian population of 14-18 year olds been polled. The margin of error will be larger within regions and for other sub-groupings of the survey population.*

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## ***Virtually All Mom's Receive An Overall Good Grade Compared To Two In Three Dads***

More than nine in ten (92%) Canadian teens give their Mom an overall good grade, with 50% giving her an 'A.' On the other hand, just two in three (65%) give dad an overall good grade, with 29% giving him an 'A.'

**Overall Grade**

	%of Respondents	
	Mom	Dad
'A': Excellent, a really good parent	50	29
'B': usually pretty good	42	36
'C': Satisfactory	5	11
'D': Could do better	2	7
'F': Fail	1	3
DK	1	15
<i>Base</i>	<i>1000</i>	<i>1000</i>

Question: "How would you grade your [mom/dad] overall?"

- 15 year olds are less likely than others to give Dad an 'A' or 'B' overall (56% vs. 67%).

## ***In All Cases But One (Driving), Moms Beat Dads Hands Down***

Moms excel most in the areas of birthdays (73% give an 'A'), providing a home that is happy and safe (72%), and working hard (72%). Dads also excel most in working hard (61%) and providing a home that is happy and safe (53%), but not to the same extent. In fact, Moms



beat Dads in all areas except driving, where the results are actually quite close (46% Dad vs. 41% Mom).

Moms need to shape up most in giving good advice without lecturing or preaching (16%), talking things through without losing their temper (19%), and not pressuring or guilt tripping them (22%). Dads also need to shape up in giving good advice without lecturing or preaching (9%), talking things through without losing their temper (10%), but above all they need the most help with fashion (5%).

#### Areas of Excellence

	% of Respondents Who Give An 'A'	
	Mom	Dad
Makes an effort for my birthday	73	47
Provides a home where I feel happy and safe	72	53
Is a hard worker	72	61
Is proud of me	67	48
Is an honest person	67	50
Is someone I like	65	47
Knows my best friends' names	60	28
Sticks up for me	60	39
Shows me affection	60	30
Overall, is interested in what's going on in my life	59	32
Is a good cook	58	27
Encourages me	57	36
Encourages me to think for myself	57	42
Makes my friends feel welcome	56	35
Teaches me values to live by	56	39



	% of Respondents Who Give An 'A'	
	Mom	Dad
Gives good advice about drugs	54	40
Accepts me as I am	52	36
Accepts that I have my own taste in music	52	36
Has values I admire and respect	50	38
Sets reasonable curfews for me	45	35
Trusts me	44	32
Allows me to be independent	42	35
Is a good driver	41	46
Respects my privacy	41	34
Keeps his/her word	40	29
Has a good sense of humour	39	37
Listens to me	37	17
Includes me in conversations about things that affect our family	35	22
Helps me with my homework when I need it	33	18
Gives me a reasonable amount of pocket money	30	24
Shows me how to cope with problems	29	19
Understands me	26	12
Has a clue about fashion	24	5
Doesn't pressure or guilt-trip me	22	17
Can talk things through without losing his/her temper	19	10
Gives good advice without lecturing or preaching	16	9
<i>Base</i>	<i>1000</i>	<i>1000</i>

Question: "When you read each statement on the following pages, try to think about the past year (not just the past week) and give your mom and/or your dad a grade of A, B, C, D or F for each statement."



14 year olds are more likely than other teenagers to give an 'A' or 'B' to:

- Their mother for helping them with their homework (78% vs. 67%).

15 year olds are *less* likely than other teenagers to give an 'A' or 'B' to:

- Their mother for giving good advice without preaching (46% vs. 56%);
- Their father for accepting them as they are (56% vs. 65%);
- Their father for understanding them (37% vs. 46%);
- Their father for not pressuring or guilt-tripping them (39% vs. 49%);
- Their father for having a good sense of humour (60% vs. 69%);
- Their father for setting reasonable curfews (54% vs. 62%);
- Their father for having values they admire and respect (58% vs. 69%);
- Their father for teaching them values to live by (61% vs. 68%);
- Their mother (73% vs. 80%) and their father (53% vs. 66%) for allowing them to be independent; and
- Their mother (84% vs. 91%) and their father (63% vs. 73%) for encouraging them to think for themselves.

15 year old *boys* are more likely than 15 year old *girls* to give an 'A' or 'B' to:

- Their mother for helping them with their homework (74% vs. 60%);



- Their mother for listening to them (81% vs. 65%); and
- Their father for setting reasonable curfews (62% vs. 50%).

17 year old *girls* are more likely than 17 year old *boys* to give an 'A' or 'B' to:

- Their mother for not pressuring or guilt tripping them (65% vs. 46%);
- Their mother for making their friends feel welcome (93% vs. 82%); and
- Their mother for trusting them (88% vs. 75%).

Girls are more likely than boys to give an 'A' or a 'B' to:

- Their mother for knowing their best friend's name (87% vs. 83%);
- Their mother for being a good driver (79% vs. 73%);
- Their father for showing them affection (60% vs. 51%); and
- Their father for giving them a reasonable amount of pocket money (49% vs. 41%).

Boys are more likely than girls to give an 'A' or a 'B' to:

- Their mother for accepting them as they are (86% vs. 81%).

Teenagers living *outside* Quebec are more likely than teenagers living *in* Quebec to give an 'A' or 'B' to:

- Their mother for making an effort for their birthday (94% vs. 89%);





- Their father for giving good advice without lecturing or preaching (38% vs. 29%);
- Their father for being a good cook (56% vs. 45%);
- Their father for being proud of them (71% vs. 64%);
- Their father for talking things through without losing his temper (39% vs. 32%);
- Their father for encouraging them to think for themselves (72% vs. 66%);
- Their mother (60% vs. 53%) and their father (48% vs. 37%) for giving them a reasonable amount of pocket money;
- Their mother (90% vs. 83%) and their father (69% vs. 59%) for having values they admire or respect;
- Their mother (86% vs. 72%) and their father (65% vs. 50%) for accepting that they have their own taste in music;
- Their mother (72% vs. 62%) or their father (46% vs. 32%) for helping them with their homework; and
- Their mother (87% vs. 80%) and their father (52% vs. 42%) for knowing their best friend's name.

Teenagers living *in* Quebec are more likely than teenagers living across the rest of the country to give an 'A' or 'B' to:

- Their mother for sticking up for them (92% vs. 87%); and



- Their mother for respecting their privacy (82% vs. 75%).

## ***Neither Mom Nor Dad Excels In Sex Ed., But Mom Certainly Does Better***

Half of Moms get good grades in Sex Ed. (54% score 'A' and 'B') compared to less than one-quarter of Dads (23%). One in six (16%) Moms haven't explained sex to their teens compared to one in three (34%) Dads.

**Performance in Sex Ed.**

	% of Respondents	
	Mom	Dad
'A': Excellent	22	7
'B': Pretty good	32	16
'C': Satisfactory	20	15
'D': Could have done better	7	8
'F': Hopeless	2	6
N/A She/he has not explained sex to me at all	16	34
DK	1	15
<i>Base</i>	<i>1000</i>	<i>1000</i>

Question: "How did you find your [mom's/dad's] attempts to explain sex to you? (check one grade below)."

### **Mom's Results:**

- Girls are more likely than boys to give their mother an 'A' or a 'B' for her attempts at Sex Ed (60% vs. 46%), while boys are more likely not to have gotten the talk at all (21% vs. 12%).



- Teenagers living in Quebec are more likely than teenagers living elsewhere in the country to give their mother an 'A' or a 'B' for her attempts at Sex Ed. (60% vs. 51%), while teenagers living outside of Quebec are more likely not to have gotten the talk at all (18% vs. 12%).

#### Dad's Results:

- Boys are more likely than girls to give their father an 'A' or a 'B' for his attempts at Sex Ed (30% vs. 18%), while girls are more likely not to have gotten the talk at all (41% vs. 27%).
- Teenagers living outside of Quebec are more likely than those living in Quebec not to have gotten the talk at all (37% vs. 25%).



## *Moms Cooler Than Dads, But Dads Aren't Any More "Uncool"*

Six in ten (58%) Canadian teenagers consider Mom cool compared to one in three (36%) teenagers who think Dad's cool. Less than one in ten consider Mom and Dad "uncool" (6% and 9% respectively).

**Level of Coolness**

	% of Respondents	
	Mom	Dad
Cool	58	36
In Between	35	40
Uncool	6	9
DK	1	15
Base	1000	1000

Question: "How cool is your [mom/dad] on a scale of one to ten? ('1' meaning she's very uncool, '10' meaning she's the most cool mom I know.) (check one number below)"



## ***Most Think Parents Are Strict Enough, Although Slightly More Dads Considered Too Strict***

One in five (20%) Canadian teens consider Mom to be too strict, compared to one in four (25%) who think Dad's too strict. One in ten don't think Mom and Dad are strict enough (12% and 10% respectively). Most teens think Mom and Dad are strict enough (67% and 50% respectively).

**Level of Strictness**

	% of Respondents	
	Mom	Dad
Too strict	20	25
In Between	67	50
Not strict enough	12	10
DK	1	15
Base	1000	1000

Question: "How strict is your [mom/dad] on a scale of one to ten? ('1' meaning she's not strict enough, '10' meaning she's way too strict) (check one number below)"

## ***One In Five Won't Do Anything Different When They Become Parents***

No one thing stands out for things Canadian teens will do differently when they become parents. However top mentions are less strict (23% future moms and dads) and show more interest (11% future moms, 10% future dads). One in five say they will do nothing differently insinuating they're parents are good the way they are (22% future moms, 23% future dads).



### What They'll Do Differently When They Become Parents

	% of Respondents	
	Future Moms	Future Dads
Less strict	23	23
Show more interest in their lives	11	10
Spend more time with them	9	6
Control my temper	6	6
More understanding	7	4
More money	4	5
More strict	4	3
More privacy	2	2
Be more financially sound	2	2
No divorce	2	2
Show more affection	2	1
Be cool	1	1
Won't break promises	1	2
Less chores	1	1
Less nagging	1	1
Be honest with them	0	1
Don't want/ won't have kids	3	1
Nothing (including positive mentions about parents)	22	23
Other	11	10
DK	12	14
<i>Base</i>	<i>500</i>	<i>500</i>

Question: "Finally, if you become a parent yourself one day, what will you do differently than your mom and/or dad?"



**Ipsos Reid**

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