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[www.njchildsupport.org](http://www.njchildsupport.org)**

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Dear Teacher:

Most teenagers don't spend much time thinking about what it takes to be a parent. They don't think about what their parents do for them as part of an ordinary day, and they don't think about what it would take to care for a child of their own.

New Jersey's Child Support program would like to give teens a reason to think about their own parents and by extension, what it takes to be a parent. There are the financial responsibilities, but of course, that is just part of the job.

As state officials, educators and community leaders, we can help illuminate for our young men and women the many real parental responsibilities that extend beyond clothing, food, and shelter. Supporting children takes more than just money. As we all know, mothers and fathers play an important role in children's social, psychological, and moral development. But the realities of the long-term, legal and financial obligations associated with being a biological parent are equally important to understand.

In 1995, the State Department of Human Services (DHS) sponsored its first Annual Teen Media Contest focusing on parental responsibility. It was created out of concern for the significant number of teen births in New Jersey, and the non-participation by fathers in the lives of these infants. Today, the Office of Child Support Services at DHS continues to educate young people on the responsibilities of parenthood through this statewide contest, which is now open to all New Jersey middle school and high school students.

For this contest, entrants are asked to create and submit a piece of original hand drawn artwork which complements the state's ongoing advertising and community outreach campaign. **This year's contest theme is: Depict a unique quality in your parent(s) that you would like to see in yourself and pass on to your children.**

The winning student submissions will receive a U.S. Savings Bond and may be used to promote the campaign. The enclosed calendar features select artwork submissions we received last year. Please display it prominently in your classroom or office.

We ask you to support the state's mission to instill a sense of parental responsibility in our youth by participating in this worthwhile initiative. To register your school, visit [www.NJTeenMedia.org](http://www.NJTeenMedia.org) or contact Shachar Sharon at 973-286-8293 or via email at [shachar.sharon@winningstrat.com](mailto:shachar.sharon@winningstrat.com).

Thank you in advance for your consideration of this contest.

Alisha A.Griffin, Assistant Director  
Office of Child Support Services  
Division of Family Development  
New Jersey Department of Human Services

**"Child Support. It's More Than Just Money."  
New Jersey Department of Human Services**