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Why is a Mum's CV needed?

As a stay-at-home mum or dad, you acquire a wide range of new skills and competencies, which in many cases are highly similar to those needed in the workplace. However, these skills are generally unrealised and undervalued by mums themselves and certainly by society and business. Consequently, many mothers wishing to return to work suffer a crisis of confidence, which then affects their ability to be selected for jobs. Moreover, many recruiting managers do not appreciate the skills which have been gained whilst looking after a family at home.

This article aims to help you identify the skills and competencies you may have acquired whilst looking after a family at home and to express them in language which will be familiar to those in business.

Yes but what about IT Skills? Potential women returners are often concerned that they do not possess the necessary I.T. skills to be successful in the modern workplace. Even after a break of just a few years, new IT systems may have been installed and new programmes are likely to be in use.

However, most managers would accept that, provided a jobholder is of a reasonable level of intelligence, IT skills can be taught fairly easily. It is rare for performance of a jobholder to be found unacceptable, or for promotion to be refused, because someone cannot operate the required IT systems. Think how quickly your children mastered the use of a keyboard! There are countless other skills and competencies which are far harder to teach and which are particularly sought after in the modern workforce, notably in the area of people skills, but also things like project planning, creativity and so on.

So, how does this Mums C.V. work?

You will find below a list of skills and competencies, all of which could be acquired by parents in the years they choose to stay at home to look after their children.

Each one is followed by a series of questions to stimulate thought and provide suggestions for examples of when you might have put this skill into practice. They will not all be things you have had to do your own experience will vary enormously depending upon things like the age of your children, your family circumstances, your interests and so on. You will probably think of other examples that are unique to you.

When applying for a job, you may wish to use some of these examples on your application form or C.V. and you will almost certainly wish to talk about them at an interview. They should help you and others to realise that bringing up children is the best learning and developmental experience ever invented!



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IN BRIEF: A Mum's CV

1. Time management & Prioritisation

- Have you learnt to balance the needs of different individuals in the household (possibly allocating time to different children, partner, friends etc.)?
- Have you had to meet non-negotiable deadlines (e.g. School pick-up times)?
- Have you had to develop routines and prioritise tasks (e.g. Learning how to get out of the house in the morning with a new baby; learning how to get out of the house with a new baby and get an older child to school and get the house clean and do the shopping and look after an elderly relative and walk the dog and the list could go on and on!)

2. Coaching and Listening

- Have you tried to explain the ways of the world to a small child?
- Have you listened to your child learning to read, and tried to help them?
- Have you coached patiently as your child tried to make a birthday card for their grandmother?
- Have you acted as a listening ear for friends in distress and helped them see a way through their situation (or just supported them by listening)?

3. Creativity

- Have you had to turn your hand to making costumes for school plays, designing scenery, making posters, setting up stalls for school fetes?
- Have you had to come up with ideas for fundraising?
- Have you had to invent games to entertain children on a rainy day?

4. Communication and Influencing skills

- Have you had to break into a whole new social set (such as building or joining networks of other mums)?
- Have you put forward ideas for new ventures (e.g. new fundraising ideas for the playgroup, or Christmas lunch for other mums at the playgroup) and had to persuade others of their potential?
- Have you had to plan and carry out difficult conversations with teachers when your child is unhappy or you feel the school/nursery is not acting effectively?
- Have you joined any committees and voiced your point of view in a group?
- Have you approached any businesses or individuals to ask for support for your school/playgroup/charity?

5. Project Planning and Organising

- Have you organised a children's party (can involve planning the event, getting quotes, booking a venue and possibly entertainers, sending out invitations, keeping a tally of who is coming, preparing food, prizes, party bags, managing the event on the day)?
- Have you organised any events for school or nursery?



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6. Financial Management

- Have you managed the household budget or part of it? Very often, having children will result in a drop in income and a rise in potential expenditure, which will require very careful budget management.
- Have you had to get quotes and choose suppliers for capital projects (e.g. Building work, double-glazing, moving house?)
- Have you had to organise a major event to a budget, such as a wedding, party or school event?

7. Application of IT

- Have you used the Internet whilst at home? Have you tried any home shopping?
- Have you improved your speed of computer use by playing computer games with your children?

8. Crisis Management

- Have you had to decide instantly what to do with an injured or sick child?
- Have you had to deal with insurance companies, builders or neighbours following storm damage to your house, a car crash or other catastrophe?

9. People Management

- Have you helped at school or nursery and co-ordinated the activities of other helpers or staff?
- Have you run committees of volunteers or chaired meetings?

10. Learning New Skills

- Have you had to learn new skills to try and stay one step ahead of your children (whether it's to help an older child learning Russian, German or Trigonometry, or to explain the LBW rule or the off-side trap used by Arsenal!)

A Mum's CV by Ruth Liley

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