

## What Themes of Parenthood and Responsibility are Explored in the Poem?

Generated: Jan 26, 2026

### What themes of parenthood and responsibility are explored in the poem?

W.B. Yeats's (1865–1939) "A Prayer for My Daughter" (1921) beautifully shows the deep love and care a parent feels for their child. The poem captures a father's heartfelt wishes for his daughter's future. It explores the themes of parenthood and responsibility through Yeats's hopes and fears for his child. The poet reflects on the challenges of life and prays for his daughter to have a life filled with happiness, kindness, and wisdom.

**Parenthood- A Father's Love and Hopes:** Yeats shows a parent's unconditional love by praying for his daughter's well-being. He wants her to grow into a strong and virtuous woman. He prays that she will have beauty but not so much that it causes her trouble. He prays,

*"May she be granted beauty and yet not  
Beauty to make a stranger's eye distraught."*

Yeats wants her to value kindness and good character above superficial beauty. This reflects the caring and protective nature of a parent who wishes only the best for their child.

**Responsibility- Teaching Values and Wisdom:** The poem highlights a parent's responsibility to guide their child's values. Yeats prays that his daughter avoids hatred and intellectual arrogance. He says,

*"An intellectual hatred is the worst."*

He knows these characteristics can lead to misery. Instead, he hopes she will embrace innocence, joy, and peace. By wishing for her to live a stable, simple life rooted in love and tradition, Yeats shows how parents feel responsible for their children's emotional and moral growth.

Through these themes, the poem celebrates the deep connection between parent and child. It reminds readers of the sacrifices and wisdom involved in parenthood.