

# Safe kids Healthy kids Happy kids

## Family Time Makes Teens Happy

Surprise! Turns out that the top answer to the question 'What makes you happy?' was "Spending time with family."

MTV and the Associated Press conducted a new study concerning teens and happiness. Over 1,200 teens and young adults between the ages of 13 and 24 were asked to give answers to more than 100 questions. One of the questions was, "What makes you happy?" The top answer to this question was "spending time with family." Hardly anyone said that money made them happy.

This is good news for all parents. Rich, poor or in-between, teens want to spend family-time together. Families are the one place where teens know they are accepted and loved for who they are.

Seventy-five percent of young people said that their relationship with their parents makes them happy. This is more good news for parents. Teens lead busy lives. Much of their time is spent with friends. Parents are often left with a hello, goodbye and maybe a quick meal together before their teen's next activity.



When young people were asked to name their heroes, almost 50% named one or both parents. This will probably shock many parents who think their teens take no notice of who they are or what they do. In fact, it seems that most young people really do appreciate the work and sacrifice that goes into parenting.

The second most popular answer to the question, "What makes you happy?" was "Spending time with friends." This answer is less surprising to parents. Peers and friends are a big part of a teen's social life. Hopefully, they enjoy spending time with friends who have *positive values*.

Teens do not always express love to parents and family. They may roll their eyes at the suggestion of family-time together. But, family and parents do matter to them. Make the most of your time together.

As a parent of a teenager:

- Tell your teen you love him. Say it daily.
- Schedule family-time together often. Plan ahead. Celebrate seasons, holidays, and special events.
- Engage in daily small talk, no matter how short the conversation. "What happened at school today?" "What was the easiest question on your history test?" "Did you hear the news about \_\_\_\_\_?" Ask questions that require more than a "yes" or "okay" answer.
- Give hugs, high-fives and pats on the back.
- Praise good efforts.
- Encourage school attendance.
- Attend school events.
- Encourage your teen to join school teams and clubs.

*Brought to you by Parent Help Line and St. John's Children's Hospital*



Call the Parent Help Line. Help is just a phone call away.  
1-217-544-5808 or 1-888-727-5889, 10 a.m. to 10 p.m., 7 days a week  
[www.parenthelpline.org](http://www.parenthelpline.org)

  
St. John's Hospital  
In partnership with the SIU School of Medicine