

Search Institute/YMCA of the USA

“Building Strong Families” Parenting Self-Quiz

This simple conversation-starting tool for adults is designed to help them compare their perspectives to those of parents in the survey. We invite you to reproduce this parenting self-quiz and use it to engage parents in your communities in a dialog about parenting challenges and identify available resources.

1. Do you feel that as a parent you are going it alone?

If so, you have company. Fifty-three percent of those surveyed responded that they don't seek much help or advice in raising their children.

But don't be afraid to reach out. Being a parent is one of the toughest job in the world. If you had a question about a project at work you'd ask for clarification wouldn't you? Your children are your most amazing accomplishment and most important responsibility. Why not ask others to help and support you?

2. Would you describe your relationship with your spouse or parenting partner as strong?

Despite the importance of this relationship, 46 percent of parents surveyed said they lacked a strong relationship with their spouse or partner.

A strong parenting partner makes a big difference for parents. Survey respondents reported that when they had a supportive partner, they were more likely to feel successful and confident, experience fewer challenges and be open to other learning and support. Communication is the key to all excellent relationships. Making it a priority to keep communication lines open and your relationship strong is good for you and for your kids.

3. Do you feel successful as a parent every day?

Only 34 percent of parents surveyed feel successful every day.

Although parenting requires daily effort, most parents don't experience positive results every day. It's discouraging to work very hard every day at a job without a gauge to measure your success, or any positive feedback. But remember, your true success as a parent only becomes clear over time—sometimes years. In the meantime, celebrate the little things. And talk with other parents. They can help you decide whether you need to try something new.

4. Do you feel unprepared for parenting situations that arise?

Fifty-two percent of survey respondents said “feeling unprepared” contributed to their feelings of dissatisfaction with their parenting.

Other reported parenting challenges include “feeling overwhelmed” and “feeling unsupported by family and friends.” The best way to meet these challenges is to seek support. When you're feeling unprepared or unsupported, the first person who needs to know is your spouse or parenting partner. Share your feelings and offer suggestions for what they can do to help you. Also find others who can listen and offer perspective.

5. Do you have other caring adults actively participating in your child's life?

Seventy-one percent of parents surveyed believed having other adults whom they trust spend time with their kids would be helpful. And 67 percent said it would help them to hear they were doing a good job.

Help yourself and your children by seeking out caring adults in your family or neighborhood who don't have children or whose children are grown. Invite them to spend time with your children to enrich everyone's lives. And try to compliment other parents when you can. A little support goes a long way.

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