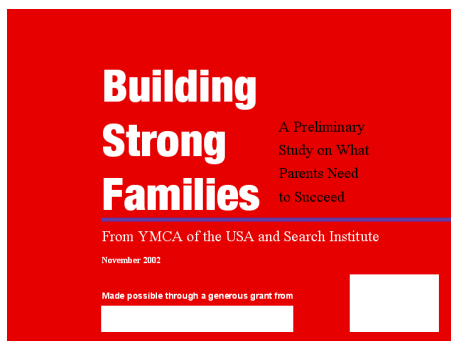


Building Strong Families: Power Point Presentation Notes

Notes to the Presenter

- These slides follow the content of the building strong families summary report and other documents. You may download the summary report, a two-page fact sheet, and a 90-page detailed report from www.abundantassets.org.
- Review the in-depth report before presenting the study findings.
- Make your presentation more interesting by weaving in time for discussion as well as stories from families. Use stories from your own experience, or retell stories that are included in the reports from the study.
- Feel free to adapt this power point to fit your specific timeframe, audience, and presentation style. However, we ask that you do not alter key findings or the statistics from the poll. If you wish to offer alternative perspectives, please clearly indicate your adjustments to your audience.
- These notes are not intended to serve as a ready-to-use presentation. They include a series of ideas and context that you can use to build your own presentations based on the study.
- These notes are also included in the notes feature in Microsoft Power Point.

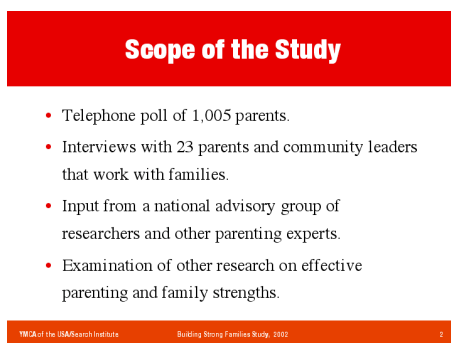
Slide #1



Building Strong Families: A Preliminary Study on What Parents Need to Succeed

- A study by YMCA of the USA and Search Institute
- Supported by Kimberly-Clark Corporation
- Designed to explore parents' own perceptions of their strengths, their successes, and the support they have, or need, to be effective parents.

Slide #2



Scope of the Study

- Project was guided by a team of advisors from academia, family services, and parent education.
- Telephone poll conducted in May 2002 with 1,005 parents (with children under age 18). Due to sampling issues, the sample is not representative of all U.S. parents. However, it is a fairly large, diverse sample that offers important, preliminary insights into the strengths, challenges, and sources of support for parents.
- Poll was complemented with interviews with parents to learn more in-depth stories.
- The study was grounded in Search Institute's groundbreaking research on the developmental assets that young people need to grow

up healthy, caring, and responsible. This research was integrated with other research on family strengths and effective parenting to develop and interpret the survey.

Slide #3

Overview of 5 Key Findings

1. Most parents are going it alone
2. The importance of the partner relationship
3. Feeling successful most of the time
4. Ongoing challenges of parenting
5. Parents value informal supports

TMCA of the USA Research Institute

Building Strong Families Study, 2002

3

Overview of 5 Key Findings

- Researchers identified five key findings in the data.
- These findings suggest that parents expect a lot from themselves, but little from anyone else. Many parents are “going it alone” in the vital and challenging task of parenting. Despite the odds, many parents appear to be doing an admirable job as parents.

Slide #4

Finding #1

Most Parents Are Going It Alone

Most parents surveyed are going it alone in their parenting, not actively seeking parenting support and encouragement from family, friends, or community resources. When they do seek support, they are most likely to turn to family and friends.

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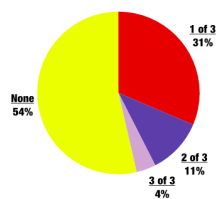
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Finding #1: Most Parents Are Going It Alone

- We live in a society where “pull yourself up by your own bootstraps” is often seen as the ideal. We tend to assume that people who need help are, in some way, weak.
- In reality, researchers consistently find that parents are most effective when they have a wide range of supporters and allies. Parents do better when they are comfortable seeking support from people they trust in their family and community.
- Many parents surveyed don’t actively seek support and advice from others. When they do, they are most likely to turn first to informal sources of support, such as family and friends.

Slide #5

How Many Sources of Support?



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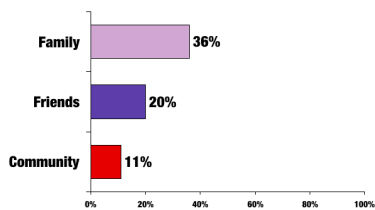
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How Many Sources of Support?

- The survey asked parents to say how regularly they turn to three different sources of support: immediate or extended family; friends; and community resources.
- Researchers analyzed the results by those who say it is “very true” that they turn to each of the sources of support. (This level is high enough to suggest that parents see the resource as valuable.)
- Only 4% of the parents said it was “very true” that they turned to all three, that is to family, friends, AND community resources. Roughly half of those surveyed (54%) did not answer “very true” to any of these options.
- When researchers analyze the findings, they learned that parents who turn to at least two or three of these resources are more likely than other parents to engage in asset-building action—or to the kinds of things with their children that help them grow up healthy, caring, and responsible.

Slide #6

Most Common Sources of Support



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Most Common Sources of Support

- When parents do seek support, they are most likely to turn to immediate or extended family members.

Slide #7

Finding #2 Importance of Partner Relationship

Parents who report having an “excellent” relationship with a spouse or parenting partner are more likely than others to feel successful as parent. Yet only about half of the parents surveyed indicated that their relationship with their partner was excellent.

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Finding #2: Importance of Partner Relationship

- Sometimes when we talk about parenting, we focus almost exclusively on the one-to-one relationship between the parent and the child. In reality, parenting is affected by all of our relationships.
- The poll’s second finding is that parents—whether or not they are married—are more likely to feel successful as parents if they have a strong relationship with their parenting partner. Yet only about half of the parents surveyed said their relationship with their partner is “excellent.”
- It’s important to say that this finding isn’t a judgment against parents who may not have a strong relationship with a spouse or partner. It simply means that they do not have this resource of support and encouragement to rely on in their parenting.

Slide #8

Parents with a Strong Partner Relationship Are More Likely to . . .

- Often feel successful as parents
- Experience fewer challenges as parents
- Feel confident in dealing with challenges
- Seek support from others
- Be open to more types of help
- Engage in asset-building actions

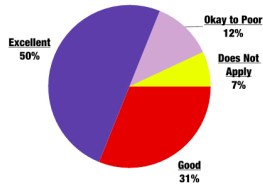
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Parents with a Strong Partner Relationship Are More Likely to . . .

- Analysis of survey results shows that parents who self-report an “excellent” relationship with their spouse or parenting partner are more likely to feel successful and confident, and they’re more likely to engage in asset-building actions.
- This finding reinforces the reality that families are “systems,” with each relationship affecting the others. As we think about being strong parents, we also need to realize that our parenting takes place in a web of other relationships that affect us and affect our children. The challenge and opportunity is to have these relationships become sources of strength, not additional stresses.

Slide #9

Quality of Partner Relationship



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Quality of Partner Relationship

- NOTE: Some people may question whether “excellent” is a good measure to use. Wouldn’t it be adequate to say the relationship is “good”? However, the data analysis shows that the power of a positive relationship comes at the level of “excellent.” Other research by the Families and Work Institute similarly showed that about half of parents indicate that their relationship with their spouse or partner is at a high level.

Slide #10

Finding #3 Feeling Successful Most of the Time

Parents see their success in both what they do and in their children’s lives and choices. Most parents surveyed say they feel successful most of the time, and they report doing many things that contribute to their child’s healthy development.

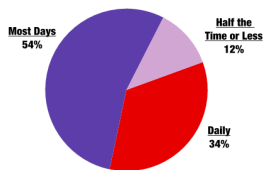
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Finding #3: Feeling Successful Most of the Time

- Despite widespread blaming of parents for everything that goes wrong with children, most parents seem to be doing a fairly good job of raising their children.
- Despite the challenges they face, most parents generally feel successful most of the time.
- Parents seem to be working hard to do the kinds of things that help their children succeed.
- Researchers did not presume to define success for parents. Rather, they asked an open-ended question about how parents themselves view success. Parents tended to point to positive qualities in their children (caring, responsible) and to their own actions (take time to be there) as evidence of their own success as parents.

Slide #11

How Often Parents Feel Successful



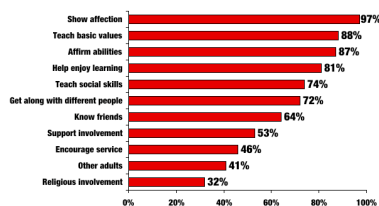
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How Often Parents Feel Successful

- Among the parents surveyed, about one-third say they feel successful every day, and another 54% said they feel successful most days. Only 12% say they feel successful half the time or less.

Slide #12

Parents’ Asset-Building Actions (Daily)



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Parents’ Asset-Building Actions (Daily)

- The survey asked parents about 11 different actions that are related to Search Institute’s framework of developmental assets. (A chart linking each of these actions to the categories of developmental assets is included in the in-depth report on the study.)
- Most parents say they do most of the actions daily.
- It’s important to note that the most common actions are the things they do on their own with their child. Less frequent are the actions that involve other people.

Slide #13

Finding #4 Ongoing Challenges of Parenting

Though most parents in this study feel successful as parents, they still face obstacles and challenges. Job demands, sibling rivalry, overscheduling, and the family's financial situation are the factors parents most often say make parenting harder.

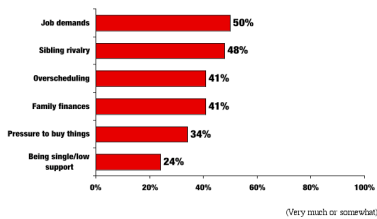
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Finding #4: Ongoing Challenges of Parenting

- The parents surveyed are not glib about their parenting. They still face challenges.
- Job demands, sibling rivalries, overscheduling, and family finances are the most common challenges identified in this survey.

Slide #14

What Makes Parenting Harder?



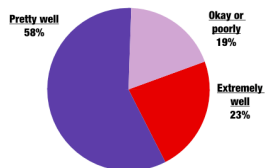
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What Makes Parenting Harder?

- The top challenges speak to both dynamics within the family (sibling rivalry) as well as outside pressures on the family (job demands and overscheduling).
- Families that struggle more and single parents have slightly different lists, with family finances and job concerns being higher concerns for these parents.
- NOTE: Other surveys have shown a high level of concern about protecting their children from negative influences in society and the media. This survey did not include that issue, so it is impossible to know how this concern would compare to other issues in this survey.

Slide #15

Dealing with Daily Challenges



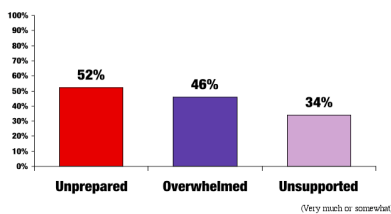
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Dealing with Daily Challenges

- Most parents (almost 8 out of 10) indicate that they feel fairly confident in their ability to deal with the daily challenges of parenting. However, about 1 in five (19%) indicate that they struggle more in dealing with these challenges.

Slide #16

Sources of Dissatisfaction



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Sources of Dissatisfaction

- The most common reason these parents give for feeling dissatisfied with their parenting is being unprepared.
- They are almost as likely to say they become dissatisfied because they are overwhelmed.
- Least common was feeling unsupported. The researchers suggest that the low level of this response may reflect a cultural reality that parents don't EXPECT to be supported, so they don't see it as a source of dissatisfaction. (Link back to Key Finding #1.)
- Researchers speculate that higher support might help parents

Slide #17

Finding #5 Parents Value Informal Supports

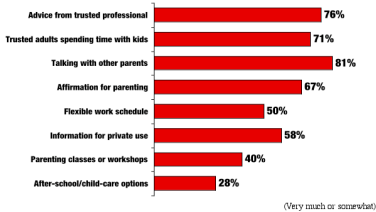
Parents in this poll value many simple ways that others can support them as parents, including affirmation for their parenting, other trusted adults spending time with their kids, advice from trusted professionals, and talking with other parents.

Finding #5: Parents Value Informal Supports

- Many of the things that parents say would really help them are fairly simple to do. Some can be done by anyone.

Slide #18

What Would REALLY Help?



What Would REALLY Help?

- These items are arranged by the mean score, which is the more accurate way to show order of emphasis. We've shown the percentages, as they are easier for people to understand.
- The top four areas that parents mention as "really helping" them are all informal sources of support. This is consistent with other research that suggests that parents are most likely to turn to people they know when they need help.
- The low rating for "more after-school or child-care options" should not be interpreted to say that these are not important resources for parents in communities. A relatively small proportion of this survey sample (16%) currently use child care. Furthermore, specific groups of parents (such as those who face more financial challenges, single parents, and African American parents) say that having more of these options would really help them.

Slide #19

Ideas for Parents

- Celebrate the ways you help your child grow up healthy, caring, and responsible.
- Find other parents you can connect with and learn from.
- Take time to focus on strengthening your relationship with your spouse or partner. If you don't have a partner, find friends and relatives who can be strong supports for you and your children.

Ideas for Parents

- These ideas are springboards for conversation. Feel free to substitute your own.
- Slides #19-22 have ideas for various groups of people. Use only the slides that are relevant for your particular audience.
- Many more ideas (including specific ideas for parents with children in different age groups and for different organizations) are included in the in-depth report on the study.

Slide #20

Ideas for Children and Teenagers

Ideas for Children and Teenagers

- Think about ways you can help reduce the bickering with your siblings.
- Tell your parent(s) when they're doing things right and when you appreciate them.
- Take responsibility for helping out at home.
- As you grow older, take time to learn new things about your parent(s).

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Slide #21

Ideas for Organizations

Ideas for Organizations

- Affirm parents in what they're already doing right.
- Ask parents for ideas on how your organization could support them more.
- Give parents opportunities to connect and learn from each other.
- Offer parents learning opportunities that focus on how they build strengths.

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Slide #22

Ideas for Communities

Ideas for Communities

- Sponsor and support community-wide, intergenerational events for families.
- Find ways to affirm and celebrate family strengths
- Ask parents to give input into what your community can offer for families.
- Create and distribute a directory of resources and opportunities for families in your community.

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Slide #23

Ideas for Policy Makers

Ideas for Policy Makers

- Recognize the power in creating policies that strengthen families rather than deal only with their problems.
- Use policies and funding to reinforce the natural and existing resources for parents, such as neighbors, extended family, schools, and communities.

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Slide #24

Dialogue Questions for Parents

- What parts of this study “ring true” for you? How is your experience different from what the study found?
- What are things you like most about your family? What do you see as your strengths?
- Who are people who give your family a lot of support and encouragement? If there aren't any, who might you know who could become such a support?

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Dialogue Questions for Parents

- Use these questions (and others) to engage parents in dialogue about the study and its implications.

Slide #25

Dialogue Questions for Family-Supporting People and Organizations

- In what ways are the findings from this study similar to or different from the realities in your own community?
- How can you include parents in your planning efforts?
- What are successes you've had or seen in supporting and encouraging parents?
- What new ideas does this study spark for you?

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Dialogue Questions for Family-Supporting People and Organizations

- Use these questions (and others) to engage people who support families (through their work, volunteering, or informal opportunities) in dialogue about the study and its implications.

Slide #26

Resources from the Study

- Available at www.abundantassets.org
- ✓ *Building Strong Families: Summary Report*
 - ✓ *Building Strong Families: In-Depth Report*
 - ✓ *Building Strong Families: Presentation*
 - ✓ *Building Strong Families: Insights from Research* electronic newsletter (free)

YMCA Strong Families Zone: www.ymca.net

Asset-Building Resources: www.search-institute.org

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Resources from the Study

- Extensive information on the study is available, free of charge, on the Internet at www.abundantassets.org
- More resources for parents and those who work with them are available from the YMCA Strong Family Zone at www.ymca.net and at Search Institute: www.search-institute.org

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