

Family Togetherness: A Look at Play & Family Well-Being

Executive Summary

In an exploration of the link between access to playgrounds and parental reports of family well-being, this study, commissioned by Foresters and KaBOOM! and conducted online by Harris Interactive, concludes that the more time a family spends together at a community playground, the greater their sense of family well-being.

Research Objectives

- To measure and determine the relationships between family well-being, family time at a community playground, and family time in general.
- To determine the meaning of family well-being for parents.
- To gain a better understanding of the family unit of parents of 2-to-12-year olds in the United States, including time spent together, and measures of family well-being.
- To explore the community playground situation for parents of 2-to-12-year olds in the United States, including proximity, usage and attitudes.

Methodology

- A total of 1,103 parents of 2-to-12-year olds in the United States were interviewed online.
- Invitations to participate in the survey were emailed to a stratified random sample who identified as United States residents 18 years or older with a 2-to-12-year old child in the household.
- Interviews were conducted using a self administered online survey.
- Results were weighted for age, gender, race/ethnicity, education, and region.

Defining “Family Well-Being”

Over half of parents surveyed indicate that “family well-being” is best described as having strong, supportive relationships within the family. Others believe it means that each family member is happy, in good physical health, that the family has a safe place to live, or that family members spend time together.



Overall Findings

When asked about their feelings concerning the relationship between playground use and family well-being, over three-quarters of parents agree that the more time they spend together at a playground, the better their sense of family well-being. Furthermore, parents who live near a playground and visit often with their child report higher levels of family well-being than parents who do not live near a playground or do not visit playgrounds often.

Key Findings and Implications

- Parents who live within walking or short driving distance of a community playground are more likely than those who do not live closely to a playground to visit with their child a few times a month or more. This is especially true of those who live within walking distance.
- A vast majority of parents report the importance of playgrounds to a child's welfare and their family's well-being. Ninety-five percent believe visiting a playground allows their child to learn and grow; 88% believe it gives their family a chance to relax; and 80% believe it helps their family manage stress.
- Families with a playground in walking or driving distance are more likely to report that their family spends time together, has friends, and that each family member is pursuing goals.
- Parents who frequently visit playgrounds with their child are nearly three times more likely than those who visit less frequently to believe that visiting playgrounds is very important to family well-being.
- Of all income levels studied, parents with a household income of less than \$50K are least likely to indicate a playground exists within walking or driving distance of their home and are most likely to report lower levels of family well-being.

What Can You Do?

Increasing demands on children's and families' time, strained municipal budgets, decreasing time for recess and play in school, and poor design of the built environment all result in fewer opportunities for children and families to play. KaBOOM! is working to change this by ensuring that there is a safe place to play within walking distance of every child in America. Visit kaboom.org to find out how you can take action to save play in your community.

