

# Pointers For Parents

## American Teens Say They Want Quality Time With Parents

(NAPSA)—A new national poll contradicts the conventional wisdom that teenagers want their parents to “just leave them alone.”

Up to 67 percent of America’s teens say they actually want to spend more time with their parents. That’s according to an online survey of 1,250 adults and teens conducted by Opinion Research Corporation.

Nearly half of the teens who responded said they would be happier and better adjusted if they were able to spend more time with their parents or other adult caregivers, such as grandparents, aunts, uncles or adults outside the family.

“While most make it through adolescence without excessive stress, teenagers are at greater risk of school drop out, arrest, drug use and some psychological disorders than other age groups,” explains Dr. Holly Kreider, a research associate at the Harvard Family Research Project at the Harvard Graduate School of Education. “This is when they need engaged adults in their lives, to help separate the good from the bad and to know that they have a chance for a great future ahead of them.”

The survey shows what some say is a clear disconnect in a number of American families. While nearly a quarter of teen respondents said their parents don’t seem to have enough time to spend with them, the majority of the parents surveyed did not



**According to a new survey, many teens want to spend more time with their parents.**

report having struggles with finding enough time to spend with their kids. Dr. Kreider says this disconnect may be the result of parents underestimating the amount of time their kids want and need from adults.

But parents are faced with many demands for their time, ranging from careers, to their own hobbies and activities, to potentially caring for their own adult parents—all things that can take away from the time they might otherwise spend with their children. Single parents may have even less time for their kids. So how can a parent achieve more quality time with a teen?

Dr. Kreider, who has worked extensively on programs that strengthen parent involvement and engagement, advises parents to seek out local family resources. She has served as an advisor to Boys & Girls Clubs of America

(BGCA), an organization that she says has recognized and responded to the needs of parents, with local assistance in strengthening families.

In particular, BGCA’s Family P.L.U.S. (Parents Leading, Uniting Serving) initiative, which is funded through a \$7 million grant from the Kimberly-Clark Corporation, provides family-strengthening activities and resources in local communities to help families become more stable, cohesive and connected. More information is available at [www.bgca.org/programs/specialized.asp](http://www.bgca.org/programs/specialized.asp).

There’s more good news for parents. Teens say it’s the simple things—like taking walks, sharing meals, playing games, watching TV and talking more with each other—that they most want to do more of with their parents. They also say—and parents agree—that they’d like to spend more time as a family planning for the future.

“It may be surprising to many parents that teens don’t expect lavish getaways just for family time, but rather that they would much rather have the quality time at home,” said Kreider. “This should open the doors for many parents who were hesitant to ask their teen if they’d like to do something around the house together or to go see a movie.”

To learn more about the programs available through the Boys & Girls Clubs of America, visit [www.bgca.org](http://www.bgca.org).