

Happy Family Checklist

Family Trait for a Happy Family	Your Family Response	Improvements to be made for your family
Communication - Families benefit from open two-way communication that is loving, understanding and patient. Does your family:		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Be honest with each other • Listen to each other with full attention • Stay in contact with each other • Reassure each other of your love with words, cuddles and making time for each other • Share thoughts and feelings without censoring or criticising each other • Encourage positive behaviour • Allow the expression of negative emotions as well as positive ones • Work together to solve problems and conflicts • Laugh together 		
Sharing activities - Happy families share activities together. Does your family:		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Share time together. • Make dinnertime an opportunity for round table family discussions. • Play together. • Go on regular family outings. • Decide as a group on important family 'traditions', such as how to celebrate birthdays and festive occasions. • Plan holidays that cater for the whole family. 		
Togetherness - Children need to be involved in some of the decision making if they are to feel like a worthwhile family member. Happy families share a feeling of togetherness. Does your family:		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Share a common sense of belonging • Share beliefs that really matter • Enjoy the place you all call home • Celebrate together • Share your memories. 		
Support - Happy families support and encourage each other. Does your family:		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Look out for each other • Share the load • Be there for each other • Encourage each other to try new things • Take an active interest in each other's hobbies. 		
Affection - Happy families show their affection for each other in a variety of ways. Does your family:		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tell family members how they feel about them • Show their love for each other • Consider each other, including each other's feelings • Care about each other • Do things for each other. 		

Family Trait for a Happy Family	Your Family Response	Improvements to be made for your family
<p>Acceptance - Families are made up of different individuals with different needs and, sometimes, different values and beliefs. Happy families are able to show acceptance of these individual differences. Does your family:</p>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Accept the differences • Give each other space • Respect each other's points of view • Be able to forgive each other • Each taking on their own responsibilities. 		
<p>Commitment - Happy families have a genuine commitment to each other. Does your family:</p>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Feel safe and secure with each other • Trust each other • Keep promises • Do things for the community • Have rules. 		
<p>Resilience - Happy families show their resilience. Does your family:</p>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Talk things through • Change plans when they need to • Learn from the tough times • Keep each other hopeful • Pull together in a crisis • Discuss problems. 		
Family Trait for an Un-Happy Family	Your Family Response	Improvements to be made for your family
<p>Unhappy families Families that don't function as well as they could have certain traits in common.</p>		
<p>Does your family have any of the following traits of an unhappy family?</p>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Unfair power distribution, such as one parent ruling the household • Problems with maintaining peaceful conflict negotiation • Lack of respect for each other as individuals • Not talking or listening to each other • Refusing to acknowledge or accept anyone else's point of view • A tendency to rely on negative forms of communication such as yelling, criticising or sulking • The use of physical punishment, such as smacking or hitting, as the main form of discipline. 		

Checklist based on research by *Family Strengths Research Project* in Australia.