

Parents happier after their children leave home

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Many of us believe that having children is the key to happiness and a perfect family life. Naturally, this idealistic image is true for some, but researchers say that in reality, children make us happiest when they fly the nest - when they have grown up

and left home. Researchers in Germany looked at data from a survey of 55,000 over 50-year-olds living in Europe. The survey respondents were quizzed about their emotional wellbeing. The researchers discovered that most parents were happier with life after their offspring had left home and started making their own way in life. Researchers say this could be because raising children creates financial worry, stress, fatigue and anxiety.

The research was led by Christoph Becker at Heidelberg University. He concluded that a big reason for parents being happiest when their children leave home is that the tables are turned and the children provide more support to their parents. He said parents whose children no longer live with them suffer from fewer symptoms of depression and have a more positive outlook on life. Regarding the role reversal in providing support, Mr Becker said: "Children's roles as caregivers, providers of financial support or simply as a means of social contact might outweigh the negative aspects of parenthood." He added that maintaining family relationships may stave off loneliness in ageing parents.

Sources: usatoday.com / independent.co.uk / yahoo.com

Writing

Having children is the best thing anyone can do. Discuss.

Chat

Talk about these words from the article.

children / key / perfect / family life / data / wellbeing / offspring / fatigue / anxiety / research / happiest / leave home / symptoms / depression / positive / support

True / False

- The article said most people believe children are the key to happiness. T / F
- The article said parents are happiest when children fly overseas. T / F
- Researchers looked at data from 55,000 people living in Europe. T / F
- Parents are more stressed and anxious when children leave home. T / F
- The research was conducted by Stuttgart University in Germany. T / F
- Once children leave home, parents feel less depressed. T / F
- Children providing care could outweigh the negatives of parenthood. T / F
- Family relationships help keep off loneliness in ageing people. T / F

Synonym Match

(The words in **bold** are from the news article.)

- | | |
|------------------------|------------------|
| 1. key | a. questionnaire |
| 2. idealistic | b. decided |
| 3. fly the nest | c. tiredness |
| 4. survey | d. prevent |
| 5. fatigue | e. dreamy |
| 6. concluded | f. assistance |
| 7. support | g. exchange |
| 8. symptoms | h. answer |
| 9. reversal | i. signs |
| 10. stave off | j. leave home |

Discussion – Student A

- What do you think about what you read?
- How important are children to making you happy?
- How do parents feel when their children leave home?
- What should children who leave the nest do for their parents?
- What are the symptoms of depression?
- What are the negative aspects of parenthood?
- How can we stop old people from getting lonely?
- What questions would you like to ask the researchers?

Phrase Match

- | | |
|--------------------------------------|--------------------|
| 1. having children is the key | a. wellbeing |
| 2. this idealistic image is true for | b. outlook on life |
| 3. when they fly the | c. and anxiety |
| 4. quizzed about their emotional | d. of parenthood |
| 5. financial worry, stress, fatigue | e. nest |
| 6. the tables are | f. off loneliness |
| 7. suffer from fewer symptoms | g. to happiness |
| 8. have a more positive | h. of depression |
| 9. outweigh the negative aspects | i. turned |
| 10. family relationships may stave | j. some |

Discussion – Student B

- What is the key to happiness?
- What is a perfect family life?
- What is your family life like?
- When is the best age to fly the nest?
- What are the difficulties of flying the nest?
- What are the benefits of flying the nest?
- What is the best number of children to have?
- What are the stresses of raising children?

Spelling

- this ciialdteis image
- in ailryte
- The survey etedopssrnn were quizzed
- their emotional ewlbgilne
- after their frinosfpg had left
- worry, stress, fatigue and nixteay
- He cdecldnuo that
- suffer from fewer yspotmsm
- role vlresrea
- eopvdisrr of financial support
- gtwohiue the negative aspects
- etavs off loneliness

Answers – Synonym Match

1. h	2. e	3. j	4. a	5. c
6. b	7. f	8. i	9. g	10. d

Role Play

Role A – Family Dinners

You think family dinners are the best thing about parenthood. Tell the others three reasons why. Tell them why their things aren't as good. Also, tell the others which is the least interesting of these (and why): family photos, family trips or having children.

Role B – Family Photos

You think family photos are the best thing about parenthood. Tell the others three reasons why. Tell them why their things aren't as good. Also, tell the others which is the least interesting of these (and why): family dinners, family trips or having children.

Role C – Family Trips

You think family trips are the best thing about parenthood. Tell the others three reasons why. Tell them why their things aren't as good. Also, tell the others which is the least interesting of these (and why): family photos, family dinners or having children.

Role D – Having Children

You think having children is the best thing about parenthood. Tell the others three reasons why. Tell them why their things aren't as good. Also, tell the others which is the least interesting of these (and why): family photos, family trips or family dinners.

Speaking –

Rank these

- | | |
|-----------------------------|------------------|
| • weddings | • family dinners |
| • having children | • family photos |
| • having grandchildren | • family trips |
| • children leaving the nest | • family members |

Answers – True False

a	F	b	F	c	T	d	F	e	F	f	T	g	T	h	T
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Answers to Phrase Match and Spelling are in the text.