

# Happy Family Checklist

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

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

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