

CHARACTERISTICS OF HEALTHY FAMILIES

Below are ways one can help maintain a healthy, happy family. How well are *you* doing?

	great	fair	bad
1. CLEAR BOUNDARIES MAINTAINED BETWEEN CHILDREN AND PARENTS – It is my responsibility to raise my children and, therefore, to have authority over them. Although I can be their friend, I am a parent first, and do not use my children to meet my emotional needs. I take care of my own needs, and my spouse and I have a relationship apart from the children. We avoid siding with any child, and discourage “alliances” from developing. Even when they sometimes act like people I’m angry with, I don’t project my frustrations out on them.			
2. MARITAL RELATIONSHIP SECURE AND LOVING- I am always looking for ways to make my relationship better. My partner and I help each other, are flexible in our roles, and show mutual respect. We set aside time to talk about problems, but we also go out and have fun together, so that our home is not merely a “child rearing business.”			
3. COMMUNICATION IS RESPECTFUL - With my partner and my children, I communicate in a respectful manner. I listen attentively and talk without aggression, careful to not use put-downs and comments that can shame my children. I am secure enough to allow my children to express strong feelings and opinions.			
4. DISCUSSION AND NEGOTIATION PREFERRED - My partner and I never impose our will on each other, and are open to hearing each other’s points of view. I am willing, when appropriate, to also engage in discussion and negotiation with my children, letting them contribute to the problem-solving process. I am open to changing the rules if necessary.			
5. “AUTHORITATIVE” STYLE OF PARENTING IS USED- My style of parenting is neither authoritarian nor permissive. My spouse and I have reasonable rules for the children. We are willing to hear them out, but reserve the right to have the final say. Our decisions are made out of love, not anger, and our goal is to meet the best interests of the family.			
6. AUTONOMY ENCOURAGED - I give my children as much responsibility as they can handle. Although I am responsible for their welfare, and seek to keep them safe, I don’t overprotect or over-control them. I teach them in such a way that they <i>internalize</i> my rules and lessons, and behave because they think it is the right thing to do, rather than out of fear.			

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