

## Do you have a wholesome family?

In an email survey of 1,400 recipients, persons including parent educators, day care providers, nurses, church and school personnel were asked to respond to the following questions:

### **Is there such a thing as wholesome families? If so, what does one look like and what advice would you give to parents looking to develop a wholesome family?**

While the dictionary definition of wholesome includes “tending to promote health” and “free from danger or risk”, when applied to families today, it seems to be an outdated term. Perhaps as interesting as the replies were, is that fact that only 36 replies were received at all. The replies ranged anywhere from “I’m not sure we want to go there” to suggestions of other descriptive terms such as “effective” or “strong” or “resilient”, to lengthy descriptions of what a wholesome family looks like and what parents can do to promote wholesomeness.

At heart, families with wholesome attributes were considered those where the parent or parents or guardians strive to instill values, trust, security, morals and open communication. Several of the replies included a spiritual component such as maintaining a clear religious or spiritual affiliation with active practice.

Often when we think of “wholesome” families, we are transported to the TV shows of the 1950’s that were exemplified by families like the Cleavers or parents like Ozzie and Harriet. As such, several of the respondents in this survey were quick to point out that whatever is considered a wholesome family, it first must include the variety of families seen in present day life including single parents, same sex parents or alternate guardians and caregivers such as grandparents or foster parents.

Given then that wholesome families do exist and still is considered of value in our modern day society, the next issue becomes one of how parents (of any kind) can develop and reinforce the attributes of the wholesome family. To this end, the following tips are suggested:

1. Have as many meals together a week as possible with all family members present and at least once per day.
2. Maintain a religious or spiritual affiliation and participate with appropriate practice.
3. Provide the necessities of life to your children from nurturance, to nutrition, to appropriate shelter, to education.
4. Use appropriate discipline techniques, particularly those that do not include hitting or belittling, but rather discussion, restitution, or loss of privileges.
5. Be an appropriate role model in your adult intimate relationships.
6. Participate as a family in volunteer or charitable activities.

Do you really think the concept of wholesome families is outdated? Perhaps it is time to return to this basic concept and instill a sense of decency and caring to some forgotten.

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Buy the book:

To order Direnfeld's book, Raising Kids Without Raising Cane, send a cheque or money order in the amount of \$12.00 to:

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