

Generation Gap Narrows: Parents, Kids See eye-to-eye on More Things

New cultural attitudes, the expanding role of technology and the current economic climate are narrowing the generation gap and drawing today's American families closer together, changing how parents raise and regard their children compared with how their parents raised them, **according to** a recent study commissioned by **Nickelodeon** and conducted by **Harris Interactive**.

The study, entitled "The Family GPS," found that - as Millennials become parents and Baby Boomers become grandparents - today's increasingly multi-generational and diverse American families are rapidly becoming united by an expanding set of values and converging tastes.

Generation Gap Ends, Family Fusion Begins

Today's families are increasingly multi-generational - with kids, parents and grandparents living together in one household or in close proximity - and closer knit, often sharing the same interests and tastes. As a result, the study found that it is a top priority to seek and create opportunities to spend more time together, preferably in the home, which serves as the main hub for free time as well as family life.

Study findings about family time:

- 83% of parents spend at least some time each week just "hanging out" and talking with their kid/s; and 86% eat dinner together at least once a week.
- 51% of parents worry a lot about spending enough time together as a family, on par with their concern about their own or their family's health (53%) and paying their bills (51%).
- 76% of parents of 2-21 year-olds say they feel extremely close to their child today, while only 25% of grandparents reported that they felt close to their own child. Today, 49% of parents have one of their own parents living within 30 minutes from them; and 10% percent have a parent living with them in their home.
- Today's first-time grandparents are an average age of 48 (source: AARP), and have a central role in day-to-day family life.
- 61% of parents of 2-17 year-olds say the grandparents assist with raising the kids (source: Nickelodeon 2008 Family Study, OTX US data).
- 56% of sons ages 8-21 years-old share the same taste in movies as their

fathers, and 48% enjoy listening to the same music. 64% of daughters 8-21 years-old share a similar taste in movies as their mothers, and 44% share the same sense of fashion and clothing as their moms.

- Technology serves as a core family member, as parents and kids spend time together using various media. 82% and 77% of families are watching TV or movies together at home, respectively, each week; 41% of parents and kids are listening to music together; and 36% are playing games together (source: Nickelodeon 2008 Family Study, OTX US data).

Changing Expectations, Values

Parents' expectations and the values they instill in their kids are also changing, particularly by gender, Nickelodeon found. Most notably, kids and parents are becoming more accepting of differences in their communities, in other people and in cultures. Generally, the younger the generation, the more accepting they are.

Study findings about values and expectations:

- Parents of 2-21 year-old boys think the most important value to instill in a son is to be respectful of women (70%). When raising a daughter, top values include self-sufficiency and an independent thinking (both 66%).
- Parents have equal educational expectations for both sons and daughters, but it's more important to parents of girls than parents of boys that their child gets good grades (92% vs. 86%).
- 18% of parents think it's very important that they raise their daughters to be good wives; while 40% think it's important to raise their sons to be good husbands.
- 49% of parents say it's very important to raise their daughters to be good with money, while only 31% emphasize the same for their sons.
- 88% of kids believe that it's important to learn about different cultures, and 95% of kids value the importance of respecting other cultures.
- 88% of kids and 82% of parents believe that inter-racial marriages are acceptable, while only 70% of grandparents approve of them.
- 71% of 13-21 year-olds and parents believe it's acceptable for couples to live together before marriage, compared with 62% of grandparents.
- 65% of 13-21 year-olds are unopposed to homosexual couples having kids, compared with 57% of parents and 52% of grandparents.

New Economic Realities

Almost half of all families' economic situations have worsened over the last year, the study found. This has caused many parents to initiate discussions about saving money with their children. Some kids are even helping out with the finances:

- 85% of kids 13-21 say they have been impacted by the economic crisis, and 15% of kids 13-21 have witnessed a parent lose his/her job.
- 51% of parents of 8-21 year-olds are now talking to their kids more about the importance of saving money.
- 41% of 13-21 year-olds are now saving more of their own money.
- 44% of today's parents with daughters feel it's the parents' responsibility to pay for their child's wedding, while 74% of grandparents with daughters said it was their responsibility to assume the costs for their own kids.
- More than one third (38%) of 13-21 year-olds say they have to buy certain things with their own money that they didn't have to before.

"Today's families are different from what we've seen and come to expect from previous generations, in that staying together and playing together are the top priorities among everyone in the household," said Ron Geraci, SVP of Nickelodeon Research. "Instead of being divided by tastes and clashing over values and things like music and entertainment choices, today's parents, kids and grandparents are being drawn closer together by them, as well as embracing new value systems of tolerance and acceptance."

About the research:

The study is part of an ongoing partnership between Nickelodeon and Harris Interactive in which the companies are studying the changing face and role of the family in the US. It was fielded in the US by Harris Interactive between July and August 2009 through online interviews with 1,010 grandparents, 1,880 parents with kids ages 2-21, and more than 2,100 8-21 year-olds.