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IT'S MORE THAN JUST BACON & EGGS

KidsPoll Helps Parents Understand What Kids Need When It Comes To Communicating – Sometimes It's The Everyday Moments That Matter Most.

Wilmington, DE, September 12, 2006 – As kids mature, the balance between being involved in their lives while also providing them with autonomy is something that all parents struggle with. After all, having mom or dad “too involved” is definitely not cool. A recent KidsHealth® KidsPoll asked kids what *they* thought about their relationship with their parents. In a nutshell, kids would like them to be there... but please don't ask too many questions.

KidsPoll found that when it comes to parents asking them what goes on in their life, the majority of kids (55%) said that their parents talk to them **more** than they want, with only 14% reporting that their parents talk to them less than they would like. Conversely, 43% of kids reported that they wanted their parents to be **more involved** in their school.

D'Arcy Lyness, Ph.D., a child and adolescent psychologist and medical editor for KidsHealth.org, explains that this is not surprising – especially for kids of this age group. “As children become more independent, they may begin to share less with their parents about the details of their day because they have already shared them with their peers. In response, many parents begin to ask even more questions of their child – almost ‘interviewing’ them about the day's events.” Lyness explains that this can lead to a relationship where the child becomes more resistant, using many familiar one-word responses such as “fine” or “OK.”

“Creating moments during the day to spend time with your child, such as making breakfast together or watering the garden, can provide an excellent opportunity for a child to open up,” she continued. “It isn't about the bacon and eggs – it's about spending time, even if it's only 10 minutes. Making sure there are moments together when you're not stressed and rushing can provide a chance for kids to share what's on their minds without the pressure to communicate through questions and answers.”

How can parents keep the lines of communication open without talking too much or asking too many questions? KidsHealth.org, the most-visited website for children's health information, offers these tips for parents:

- **Make time together.** Having a parent's company, time, and attention helps kids feel loved, supported, and secure – all ingredients for an environment that encourages sharing.
- **Tell me more.** Sometimes kids mention something without elaborating. Instead of asking 20 questions, let them say it their way, then invite them to share with an open-ended statement such as, “tell me more about what happened or what it was like...”
- **Be a good listener.** Listen with genuine interest and encourage kids to keep going. Show that you have time to hear what they have to say and don't be too quick to offer opinions or advice.
- **Be pleased and proud.** Let kids know what makes you proud of them. When they tell you about an experience, find something to praise. Your positive reaction encourages kids to talk more.
- **Share your experiences.** Talk about what is happening in your life or something that happened to you that may have been interesting, enjoyable, frustrating, or challenging. By talking about your everyday experiences, you're showing kids how it's done. Chances are your child will chime in and do the same.
- **Do something.** Play a board game, shoot some hoops, or run an errand. An activity done together provides bonding time and allows conversation to happen spontaneously.

Lyness tells parents, “Don't worry if sometimes kids don't have much to say. The important thing isn't knowing what happened every day. What's important is to maintain and build the relationship and emotional connection. And that's more about just being there than what you say.”

Other KidsPoll Findings:

- **Moms rate tops.** About half (49%) of kids surveyed reported that mom is the first person they turn to when they are upset, followed by a friend (21%) and dad (15%).
- **Children feel loved.** When asked if they feel that their mom and dad love them, 84% reported feeling that their mom loved them a lot, with 78% reporting that they felt their dad loved them a lot.

The KidsHealth KidsPoll about “Parents” surveyed 855 children ages 9 to 13 across the United States at nine member sites of the National Association of Health Education Centers (NAHEC). The survey was conducted by researchers from the Department of Health Education and

Recreation, Southern Illinois University Carbondale. Survey questions were drafted with the expertise of the KidsPoll Scientific Advisory Board and **Michael E. Wells, PhD**, Education Research Analyst, Office of Safe and Drug Free Schools, U.S. Department of Education.

MEDIA RESOURCES (images for download, KidsPoll results, and tips for parents and kids):
www.KidsHealth.org/media/kidspoll/parents.html

For complete survey findings and methodology, or to view the 2004-2005 KidsPoll archive, visit nahec.org/KidsPoll.

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About the KidsHealth® KidsPoll

A project of the National Association of Health Education Centers (NAHEC), the Nemours Center for Children's Health Media (creators of KidsHealth.org), and Southern Illinois University Carbondale, Department of Health Education and Recreation (project researchers), the KidsHealth KidsPoll gives children a national platform to share their views on health-related issues that affect them. For more information about the KidsHealth KidsPoll, please visit nahec.org/KidsPoll/.

About the National Association of Health Education Centers (NAHEC)

NAHEC is a network of nonprofit health education centers (HECs) and of other organizations that support children's health education and provide products and services to HECs. NAHEC member centers reached over 3 million children, teachers, and parents in 2005. HECs use life-size exhibits, advanced audio-visual technology, and specialized, interactive instructional techniques not generally found in conventional classrooms. The curriculum is designed to support school-mandated areas of study. With programs like "Whodunit? - A Forensic Science Camp," Hummers outfitted with removable organs, and playgrounds modeled after anatomy parts, you'll see why former U.S. Surgeon General Dr. C. Everett Koop proclaimed that health education centers "put pizzazz in prevention." For more information about NAHEC, please visit nahec.org.

About KidsHealth®

KidsHealth creates engaging online, print, and video media about a wide range of parenting and children's health issues. Each year, over 100 million families turn to KidsHealth.org for expert answers – making it the Web's most-accessed site on children's health. KidsHealth's physician-led editorial staff creates the largest resource of health, behavioral, and developmental information written for three distinct audiences: parents, kids, and teens. Recent accolades include the Webby Award for Best Family/Parenting Website, and selection as one of the 50 Coolest Websites by TIME Magazine. KidsHealth comes from Nemours, one of the largest nonprofit organizations devoted to children's health. For more information, please visit KidsHealth.org.

About Southern Illinois University Carbondale, Department of Health Education & Recreation

Researchers from Southern Illinois University Carbondale's Department of Health Education and Recreation conduct the KidsHealth KidsPoll. The research team for this project is led by Stephen L. Brown and David A. Birch, faculty members in the Department of Health Education and Recreation. The department offers a bachelor's, master's, and doctoral degree in health education and a bachelor's and master's degree in recreation. The health education program is recognized nationally as a leader in school health education and graduate-level teaching and research. Graduates of the program are in health education leadership positions across the country. The department includes 11 health education faculty members and six recreation faculty members. For more information about SIUC, please visit www.siu.edu.