

# Married with children the key to happiness?

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Having children improves married peoples' life satisfaction and the more they have, the happier they are. For unmarried individuals, raising children has little or no positive effect on their happiness. These findings by Dr. Luis Angeles from the University of Glasgow in the UK have just been published online in Springer's *Journal of Happiness Studies*.

Previous research suggests that increasing numbers of children do not make people any happier, and in some cases the more children people have, the less satisfied they are with their lives. Rather bleakly, this has been attributed to the fact that raising children involves a lot of hard work for only a few occasional rewards.

Dr. Angeles believes that this explanation is too simplistic. When asked about the most important things in their lives, most people place their children near or even at the top of their list. Contrary to previous work, Dr. Angeles' analysis of the [relationship](#) between having children and life satisfaction takes into account the role of individual characteristics, including marital status, gender, age, income and education.

For married individuals of all ages and married women in particular, children increase life satisfaction and life satisfaction goes up with the number of children in the household. Negative experiences in raising children are reported by people who are separated, living as a couple, or single, having never been married. Children take their toll on their parents' satisfaction with social life, and amount and use of leisure time.

Dr. Angeles concludes: "One is tempted to advance that children make

people better off under the 'right conditions' - a time in life when [people](#) feel that they are ready, or at least willing, to enter parenthood. This time can come at very different moments for different individuals, but a likely signal of its approach may well be the act of [marriage](#)."

More information: Angeles L (2009). [Children](#) and [life satisfaction](#). *Journal of Happiness Studies*; [DOI 10.1007/s10902-009-9168-z](#)

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