

You have what it takes to be a GREAT PARENT!



The Michigan Department of Human Services is committed to helping parents reach their full potential. If you are interested in finding out about healthy relationship/healthy marriage programs in your area, please contact your local DHS office or the office listed below.

www.michigan.gov/dhs

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DHS-Pub 234 (Rev. 8-08) Previous editions may be used.

A large silhouette of a family: a man, a woman, and a child, standing together. The man is on the left, the woman is in the center, and the child is on the right. They are all facing right.

BOTH PARENTS MAKE A DIFFERENCE

 **STATE OF MICHIGAN**
Department of Human Services

Michigan Healthy Marriage and Responsible Fatherhood Initiatives

Take the “Healthy Family” Quiz

1. Do both parents respect each other's parenting roles?
2. Do both parents show an investment in the child?
3. Do both parents have ongoing communication with each other?
4. Do both parents share child caring responsibilities?
5. Do both parents represent a team approach to parenting?



We all need to help others feel they have been heard. It's an important skill for couples and essential for couples with children!

CHILDREN NEED HEALTHY FAMILIES

Benefits of Healthy Marriages

For Women:

- **More satisfying relationships with their partner.**
- Emotionally & physically healthier.
- **Higher family income.**
- Better relationships with their children.



Source: Why Marriage Matters: 21 Conclusions from the Social Sciences, Institute for American Values, 2002

For Men:

- **Live longer.**
- Physically & emotionally healthier.
- **More stable employment.**
- Higher wages.
- **Better relationships with their children.**



Parents in a Healthy Marriage Have Children Who Are More Likely To:

- Have a better relationship with their mothers and fathers.
- Have a lasting marriage if they get married as adults.
- Succeed in school.
- Attend college.
- Be physically healthier.
- Be emotionally healthier.

Practical Tips for a Healthy Marriage

Useful tips from marriage scholars, educators and practitioners.

1. Remember that all couples will have problems; it's how you handle them that determines your happiness in your marriage.
2. Tell your spouse what you like and admire about her or him; these words will go a long way.
3. Try calling "time out" when an argument starts to get out of control. Take a break and pick back up when you both have had time to calm down.
4. Make a big deal of your wedding anniversary. Treat it like the birthday of your marriage.
5. Every couple has a few problems that never go away. Happily married couples learn to accept this fact.
6. Learn to see the difference between normal marriage problems and truly unacceptable ones, such as violence and abuse.
7. Be careful about criticizing your in-laws; most spouses will defend their own family even if they agree with the criticism.
8. Listen to what your partner is saying, even if the way it is said bothers you.
9. How you begin a conversation usually determines how it ends. If you need to have a difficult conversation with your spouse, start off the conversation with something positive.
10. Find 15 minutes a day to give your partner your full attention — turn off the TV, put away the newspaper, and make sure your kids are occupied elsewhere.

Source: National Healthy Marriage Resource Center, www.healthy marriageinfo.org

Happy Couples = Healthier Families = Better Lives for Children