

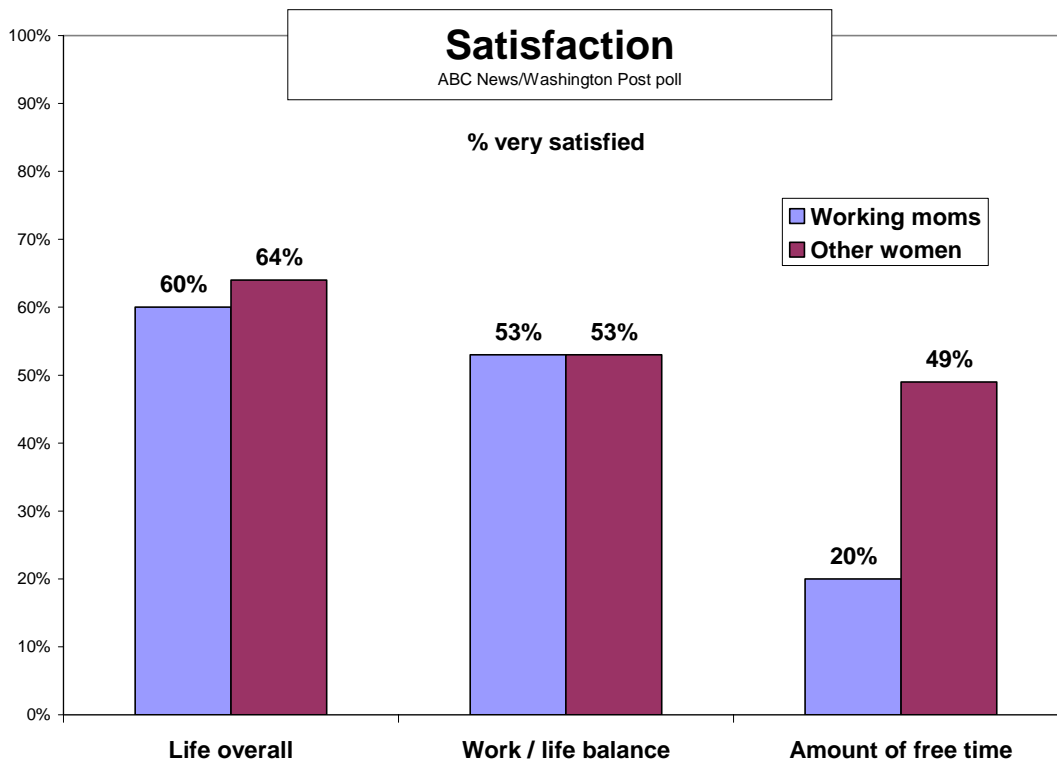
Moms Make it Work

Working moms are making it work: On Mother's Day 2005, they express broad satisfaction with their lives, work/life balance and parenting skills.

But oh, for a little spare time.

This ABC News/Washington Post poll finds that working moms (those with kids under 18 at home) are as satisfied as other women with their lives overall and their ability to balance work and family life. And they're no more likely than other working women to say they'd quit their job or cut their hours if they could.

But time is a different story: Among women who don't work outside the home, 68 percent are "very satisfied" with the amount of spare time they have. Among women who don't have kids at home, it's 51 percent, still a majority. But among working moms that plummets: just 20 percent are happy with their free time.



DADS – Then again, dads are in much the same boat. Twenty-eight percent of working dads are very satisfied with their spare time, just a tad more than among working moms. And working dads are less likely than working moms to be happy with their mix of work

and family life: Forty-one percent of working dads are very satisfied with this balance, compared with 53 percent of working mothers.

TAKE THIS JOB AND – The time squeeze between working and parenting doesn't mean working moms (or dads) would bail out of their jobs altogether. Just 21 percent of working mothers say they'd stop working altogether if they could do so and still maintain their standard of living. Ditto for working dads, 20 percent.

At the same time, few working moms (or dads) say they'd keep working as much as they do now – 22 and 25 percent, respectively. Instead, almost identical majorities of working mothers and fathers take the happy medium, saying they'd keep working, but fewer hours.

What would you do if you didn't have to work?

	Work the same hours	Work, but fewer hours	Wouldn't work
All workers	27%	55	18
Working moms	22	57	21
Working dads	25	55	20

As it stands, working these days is the norm for parents: Seventy percent of women with kids under 18 currently work outside the home, as do 83 percent of dads. For nearly six in 10 married couples with young children, both parents work.

The prevalence of families in which both parents work, and the constraints on free time that result, may be one reason so many people think parenting is just plain harder than it was for the previous generation. Three-quarters of working moms say motherhood is more demanding these days, and 69 percent of working dads agree. And just over six in 10 in both groups say fathering is tougher, too.

Is motherhood more, less or as demanding as for previous generations?

	More	Less	Same
All	68%	8	23
Working moms	75	3	23
Working dads	69	6	25

It follows that a significant number of people – 48 percent of all Americans, and 44 percent of working moms – also say they think mothers these days are doing a worse job as parents than their own mothers did 20 or 30 years ago.

LEAVE IT TO BEAVER – Part of that criticism reflects the grip of the “Leave it to Beaver” model of American life on the public psyche. Three-quarters of Americans agree with the statement, “It may be necessary for mothers to be working because the family needs money, but it would be better if she could stay home and take care of the house and children.” Eight in 10 working dads agree, as do 72 percent of working moms.

Agree/disagree statements in polls can carry acquiescence bias (people tend to agree), and this one doesn't draw working in a particularly positive light. Another reality also tempers this result: the simple fact that, as noted, eight in 10 working mothers say that even if they could stop working entirely, they wouldn't.

METHODOLOGY – This ABC News/Washington Post poll was conducted by telephone April 21-24, 2005, among a random national sample of 1,007 adults. The results have a three-point error margin. Sampling, data collection and tabulation by TNS of Horsham, Pa.

Analysis by Jon Cohen and Gary Langer.

ABC News polls can be found at ABCNEWS.com at <http://abcnews.com/pollvault.html>.

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Full results follow (*= less than 0.5 percent).

45. How satisfied are you with (ITEM) - very satisfied, somewhat satisfied, not too satisfied or not at all satisfied?

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	---Satisfied----			----Not satisfied---			No op.
	NET	Very	Smwt.	NET	Not too	At all	
a. your life overall							
All	94	61	33	6	5	1	*
Men	93	58	35	7	5	2	1
Women	94	63	32	5	5	1	*
Working dads	95	60	35	5	4	1	0
Working moms	92	60	32	8	8	0	0
b. (If working) your ability to balance work and family life							
All	90	53	37	10	8	2	*
Men	90	52	37	10	9	2	*
Women	90	53	37	10	8	2	0
Working dads	88	41	47	12	10	2	*
Working moms	89	53	36	11	9	2	0
c. (If parent) the job you're doing as a parent							
All	96	61	34	4	3	*	*
Men	96	61	35	3	3	0	*
Women	95	61	34	4	4	1	0
Working dads	96	61	35	3	3	0	1
Working moms	95	66	30	5	4	1	0
d. the amount of free time you have in an average week							
All	77	43	34	23	16	7	0
Men	77	45	32	23	15	8	0
Women	77	41	35	23	17	6	0
Working dads	64	28	35	36	26	10	0
Working moms	66	20	46	34	24	10	0

46. (IF WORKING) If you could live as well as you do now WITHOUT working, would you choose to: continue working the same amount; continue working, but work fewer hours or fewer days per week; or, Stop working altogether?

4/24/05

	-----Continue working-----			Stop	No
	NET	Same amount	Fewer hours/days	working	op.
All	82	27	55	18	0
Men	83	28	55	17	0
Women	82	26	56	18	0
Working dads	80	25	55	20	0
Working moms	79	22	57	21	0

47. All in all, do you think mothers are now doing a BETTER job as parents than their own mothers did 20 or 30 years ago, a WORSE job -- or about the SAME job?

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	Better	Worse	Same	No opin.
All	12	48	38	2
Men	10	53	35	2
Women	13	43	42	2
Working dads	12	43	44	1
Working moms	11	44	42	3

48. Do you think (ITEM) today is (more) demanding than it was for the previous generation, (less) demanding, or about the same?

4/24/05 - Summary Table

	More	Less	Same	No opin.
a. motherhood				
All	68	8	23	*
Men	65	10	24	*
Women	71	6	22	1
Working dads	69	6	25	0
Working moms	75	3	23	0
b. fatherhood				
All	60	9	29	1
Men	60	9	30	1
Women	61	10	28	1
Working dads	61	8	31	0
Working moms	63	12	25	1

49. Do you agree or disagree with the following statement: It may be necessary for mothers to be working because the family needs money, but it would be better if she could stay home and take care of the house and children.

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	Agree	Disagree	No opin.
All	77	20	3
Men	80	16	4
Women	75	24	1
Working dads	80	16	3
Working moms	72	27	1
9/17/00*	79	19	2
8/18/98*	79	19	*

*Post/Harvard/Kaiser; 8/98 took "neither" (vol.), 2 percent

END