

All in the Family

*Nearly One Half (44%) of Canadians Believe the Family is
More Important than it was 50 Years Ago,
But No Consensus on What Constitutes a Family*

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All in the Family

Nearly One Half (44%) of Canadians Believe the Family is More Important than it was 50 Years Ago, But No Consensus on What Constitutes a Family

Toronto, ON – Nearly one half (44%) of Canadians believe that the family is more important (34% much more/10% slightly more) than it was fifty years ago, outweighing the 38% who thinks it's less important (27% much less/11% slightly less), according to a new Ipsos Reid poll conducted on behalf of Postmedia News. Two in ten (18%) believe the family is no more or less important than two generations ago. Interestingly, Canadians who are currently in a common-law relationship are most likely (49%) to believe the role of the importance of the family has been elevated in the last two generations.

But the verdict is more mixed when it comes to the importance of the family compared to just twenty-five years ago: while four in ten (39%) think it's more important (20% much more/19% slightly more), nearly the same proportion (37%) thinks it's less important (12% much less/25% slightly less) than one generation ago. One quarter (24%) believes there's no difference in the importance of the family over that period of time. Those with kids (43%) are significantly more likely than those without (33%) to believe that the family is more important than it was a generation ago, as are Canadians who are married (42%) or living common law (42%).

Constituting a Family...

Canadians' opinions on what constitutes a family are as varied as Canadian families themselves. Canadians were presented with various family compositions and were asked if these compositions constitute a family unit, as they see it:

- Eight in ten (80%) Canadians agree that two married heterosexuals and their children constitute a family.
- Two in three (66%) believe that a common-law couple and their children constitutes a family.
- A majority (55%) believe that a single mother and her children make-up a family.
- A similar proportion (54%) believes the same about a father and his children (54%).
- Canadians are evenly split (50%) on whether a household of grandparents raising grandchildren without parents present constitutes a family.
- A minority (46%) of Canadians believe that a married or common-law couple without children constitutes a family.
- A similar proportion (45%) believes that a same-sex married couple and their children constitutes a family.

The Facts of Life...

Most Canadians express that they wish something could change about their family life, as just three in ten (30%) say there's nothing they would change. Three in ten (28%) would like the amount of time they have available to spend together to change, while others would



change the distance they are from their extended family (16%), the ability of them or their partner to pursue other interests (7%), the size of their family (6%), or the division of labour at home (5%). One in ten (7%) don't know what they would like change about their family.

Of particular note is that two in ten (21%) Canadians who have more than five kids would like to change the size of their family. On the other hand of the spectrum, 13% of those who had fewer children than they initially had wanted would most want to change the size of their family.

These are some of the findings of an Ipsos Reid poll conducted September 17 to 22, 2010, on behalf of Postmedia News. For this survey, a sample of 2,039 adults from Ipsos' Canadian online panel was interviewed online. Weighting was then employed to balance demographics and ensure that the sample's composition reflects that of the adult population according to Census data and to provide results intended to approximate the sample universe. A survey with an unweighted probability sample of this size and a 100% response rate would have an estimated margin of error of +/-2.2 percentage points, 19 times out of 20, of what the results would have been had the entire population of adults in Canada been polled. All sample surveys and polls may be subject to other sources of error, including, but not limited to coverage error, and measurement error.

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- 3 -

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- 4 -

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