

# Trends & TudeJes<sup>SM</sup>

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Keeping you informed of current topics in youth and education research.

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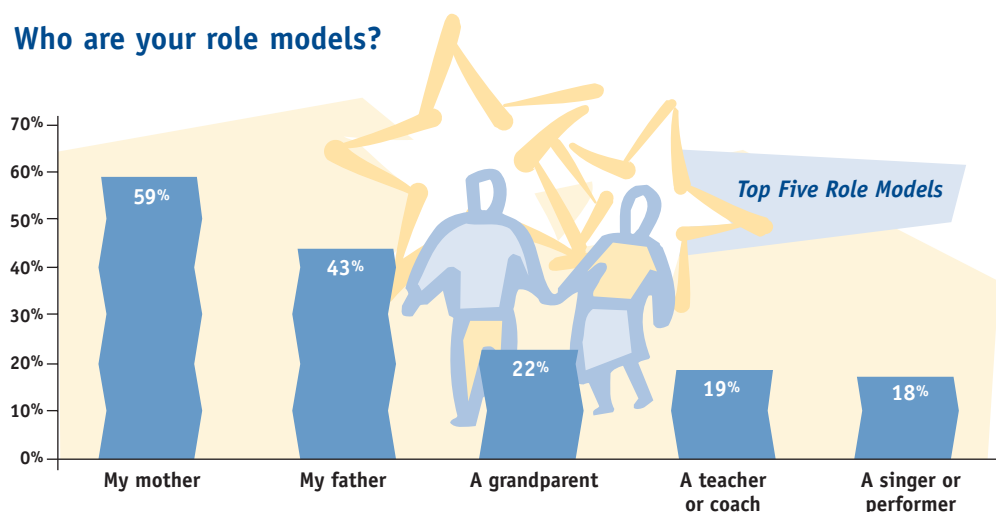
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## Parents' Changing Role In Tweens' And Teens' Lives

Much attention is paid to the role of friendships and peer influences during the later childhood and teenage years – and rightfully so. As children grow, their universe expands as well, and friends and others from outside the home play increasingly important roles. But of course parents don't immediately or completely drop out of the picture. As we prepare to celebrate Mother's Day, we turn our attention to the roles that mothers – and fathers – play in children's and teens' lives today.

Parents still top the list of children's role models. Six in 10 (59%) of tweens and teens report that their mother is among their role models and four in 10 (43%) say that their father is a role model for them. Although teens are less likely than tweens to say their mothers (74% vs. 44%) and fathers (56% vs. 30%) are their role models, parents still surpass grandparents, teachers, performers and siblings as role models. Girls are more likely than boys to cite their mothers as their role models (70% vs. 48%) while boys are more likely to cite their fathers (48% vs. 38%). Boys are just as likely to say that their mothers (48%) and their fathers (48%) are their role models. However, girls are much more likely to say that their mother (70%) is their role model compared to their father (38%).

### Who are your role models?



Base: 8- to- 17 Year-Olds (Harris Interactive YouthPulse<sup>SM</sup>)

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## Editorial: Our Take On It

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“Sleep, I need sleep.” This tenth-grade boy whom we surveyed clearly states what many of his high school peers believe as well as the view of educators and parents of high school students. In the busy daily lives of high school students, getting a good night’s sleep often falls to the bottom of the “To Do” list. Yet sleeplessness may have serious consequences. A recent survey provides powerful evidence that sleep deprivation is widespread among high school students and appears to be a major cause of poor academic performance.

Most high school students get fewer than eight hours of sleep on school nights and one-third get fewer than seven. Those who get more sleep do better in school, and vice versa. Students who get less sleep are not only much more likely to fall asleep or daydream in class and to have difficulty paying attention, they are also much more likely to get poor grades, and more likely to consider dropping out of school.

These are some of the findings from a nationwide survey of a cross section of 2,308 students in grades 7 through 12 surveyed between February and April 2002 by Harris Interactive as part of the **MetLife Survey of the American Teacher** series.

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Tweens and teens participate in a variety of activities with their parents. The majority of youth regularly do the following activities with their parents:

- Eat dinner at home (80%)
- Watch TV (77%)
- Go out to eat (75%)
- Go food/grocery shopping (74%)
- Do household chores/activities (69%)
- Go shopping (66%)
- Watch rented movies (64%)
- Visit relatives (63%)

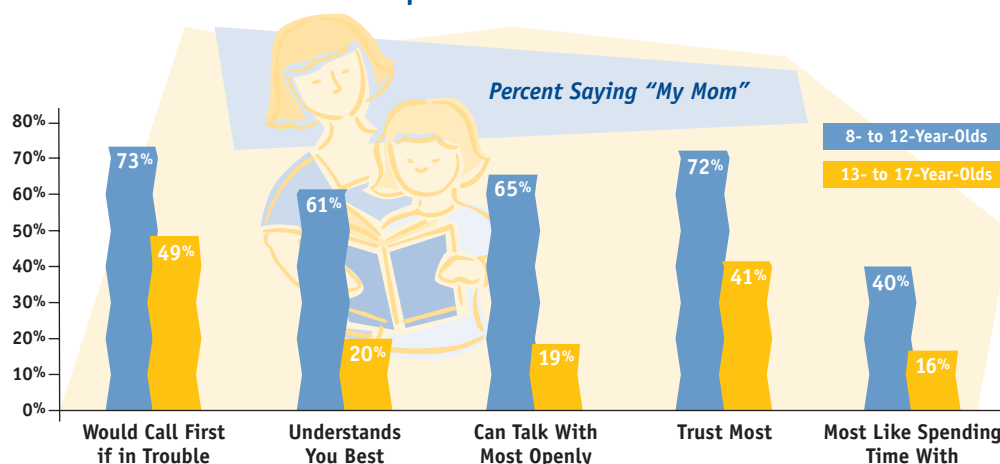
However, the types of activities that children participate in with their parents evolve with age. While six in 10 (59%) 8- to 12-year-olds regularly plays cards or board games with their parents, only 25% of 13- to 17-year-olds plays games with their parents. Three-quarters of tweens (77%) regularly do homework with their parents, compared to only 14% of teens.

In addition to differences in parent-child activities, tweens and teens differ in the topics they discuss with their parents. While 84% of tweens feel they can talk to their parents about almost anything, only 49% of teens feel this way. In contrast, 42% of teens feel their parents don’t understand what’s going on in their lives and what’s important to them, while only 10% of tweens feel this way.

Across age groups, mothers are more likely to be sources of advice and support than fathers. Tweens and teens are more likely to discuss such topics as problems with schoolwork (62% vs. 16%), plans for the future (52% vs. 21%) and medical issues or problems (77% vs. 13%) with their mothers rather than with their fathers. Although this may be explained to some extent by the fact that 8- to 17-year-olds are more likely to live with their mother than their father (94% vs. 68%), the size of the gap indicates that the living situation alone does not account for the difference.

The mother-child relationship undergoes a remarkable transition during the teen years. Nearly three-quarters of tweens say they trust their mother the most (72%) and would call their mother first if they were in trouble (73%). In comparison, only half of teens (49%) would call their mother first if they were in trouble and only 41% trust their moms the most.

### Tweens’ and Teens’ Relationship With Mom



Base: 8- to- 17 Year-Olds (Harris Interactive YouthPulse™)

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While it is important to remember that a statistical correlation does not establish cause and effect, the evidence that sleep deprivation adversely affects the performance of millions of high school students is very strong. There is both objective and subjective evidence. The generally accepted view is that they should get at least eight hours of sleep each night. Only 40% of high school students say they get this much sleep the night before going to school while 33% say they get fewer than seven hours, including 12% who get fewer than six hours of sleep. Furthermore, most high school students (64%) believe that, in general, they do not get enough sleep.

Those who feel they don't get enough sleep are far more likely than those who feel they do get enough sleep to say that they often have difficulty waking up in the morning (70% vs. 37%), feel tired during classes (64% vs. 34%), daydream in class (48% vs. 31%) or fall asleep in class (15% vs. 7%).

Furthermore, all of these characteristics – feeling tired, daydreaming, falling asleep and sleeping fewer than seven hours on school nights – are much more common among students who get poor grades than they are with students who get better grades. Compared to students who mostly get A's, those who mostly get D's or F's are more likely to daydream often (60% vs. 39%), to fall

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Despite these differences, over one-third of 8- to 17-year-olds (35%) would like to spend more time with their mother.

And so with Mother's Day approaching and Father's Day around the corner, it is a good time to reflect on the relationship of Generation Y with their parents. Mom is an important role model to them; young people enjoy doing a host of things with their parents, and are likely to look to parents for advice. There is always a tension between the dependence that adolescents have on their parents and their natural desire for independence, but they seem to know that their parents are there for them.

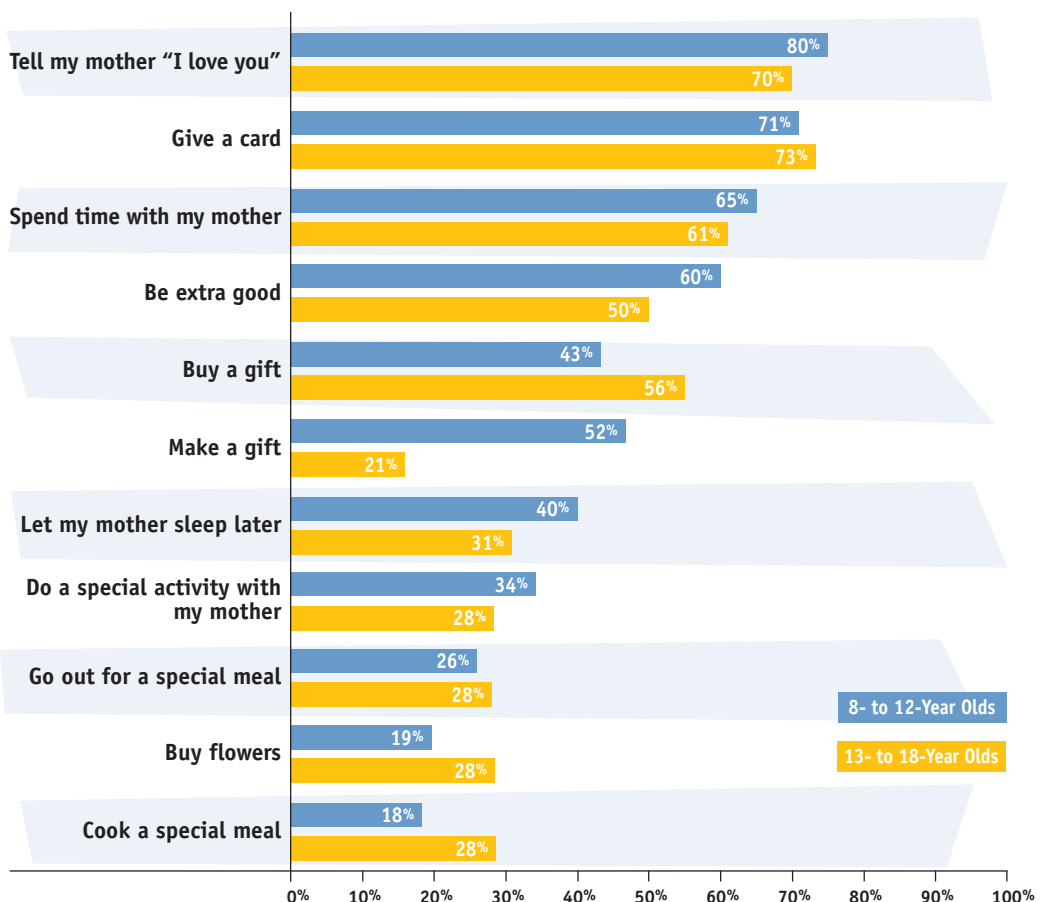
## Ask a Question...

Have a burning question you would like to ask kids and teens? Here's your chance to submit a free question for our upcoming YouthQuery<sup>SM</sup> youth omnibus. Just send us an email with your suggestion. We will pick one question each month and then publish the results in the next issue of this newsletter.

### ...Get an answer

In honor of Mother's Day this month, we asked the following question:

### What do you plan on doing this Mother's Day?



Base: 8- to 18 Year-Olds (Harris Interactive YouthQuery<sup>SM</sup>)

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asleep often (27% vs. 10%), and to often have difficulty paying attention in class (58% vs. 23%).

Students today do have busy schedules. Students who get enough sleep are more likely than sleep-deprived students to believe that their extracurricular activities help them do well in school. In contrast, sleep-deprived students are more likely to view participation in activities as a hindrance to academic achievement. But those who participate in group activities are more likely to get good grades than those who do not. For example, students who get mostly D's and F's participate much less than A students in sports (26% vs. 56%), in dance or music programs (8% vs. 30%), in school-work programs (5% vs. 16%) and in drama programs (3% vs. 15%). Sleep-deprived children not only do less well in school, they also are less likely to participate in group activities.

While the science may be soft in places, it is clear that sleep deprivation adversely affects the health, happiness and educational achievements of millions of high school students. This should be a problem we can address. Unlike some other ways of improving the education of our children, it should not require huge sums of money.

## Come See Us At The Action Sports Summit

If you'd like to *see* us in action, we invite you to meet us at the June 27 Action Sports Summit in Marina del Rey, CA with 360 Youth/Alloy. We will be presenting at a workshop called "Cutting Through the Clutter to Reach the Youth Demographic." We hope to see you there!

## Recent Research for Public Release

From time to time, the Harris Interactive Youth Research team is fortunate to work with media, leading foundations and non-profit organizations, and we often are able to release the results of these studies publicly.

**National SAFE KIDS Campaign** – National SAFE KIDS Week is May 3-10. The theme this year is *Wrap Your Arms Around Safety* and throughout the week, hundreds of SAFE KIDS coalitions and chapters will conduct safety fairs and community events all across the nation to teach families how to prevent injuries and save lives. As part of the kick-off for National SAFE KIDS Week, Harris Interactive surveyed nearly 1,200 parents of children 14 and under to provide the National SAFE KIDS Campaign with a picture of parents' understanding of unintentional, preventable childhood injuries. More information is available at [www.safekids.org](http://www.safekids.org).

**Harris Interactive In The News** – Harris Interactive's capabilities in online youth research were featured in the April 2003 edition of *Informed*, the Advertising Research Foundation (ARF) newsletter. Dana Markow, Ph.D., Director of Youth Research, Harris Interactive based the article on a presentation she gave at the January 2003 meeting of the ARF Youth Research Council. The article can be viewed at (<http://bpub.net/c.jsp?m=1+2avyr&sec=2&type=text>).

**War In Iraq** – We have just finished fielding a study that compares the attitudes of today's 8- to 18-year-olds towards the War in Iraq with the attitudes of 8- to 18-year-olds during the Gulf War in 1991. We will report on this study in an upcoming issue of *Trends & Tudes*.

To view previous issues of *Trends & Tudes*, please visit our website at [http://www.harrisinteractive.com/news/newsletters\\_k12.asp](http://www.harrisinteractive.com/news/newsletters_k12.asp)

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You received this newsletter because you provided your contact information to a member of our youth research team. If you would prefer to be taken off our distribution list, please send an email to [HI\\_youth\\_research@harrisinteractive.net](mailto:HI_youth_research@harrisinteractive.net) and write the word "Remove" in the subject line. If others in your organization are interested in receiving our information, please have them forward their email address to [HI\\_youth\\_research@harrisinteractive.net](mailto:HI_youth_research@harrisinteractive.net)