



As we enter the holiday season you may be feeling tired, stressed and out of time. Your child may be feeling the very same way. Consequently, our holiday expectations of joy and family time can take a back seat to the disappointment of impatience, short tempers and frustration.

There is good reason however, to protect your family time and joy from whatever the joy “stealers” are in your life and in the life of your kids. There is a significant amount of research surrounding the science of joy and why it is important for you and your child to be intentional about increasing joy, not just at the holidays but every day.

Some of the benefits of joyful living are:

- **Increased life span**
- **Better health**
- **More satisfying relationships**
- **Goal attainment**
- **Greater fulfillment in work and**



**daily pursuits**

Of course these are outcomes that we would like for both our kids and ourselves. The demands of parenting, especially the challenges of raising school age kids can thwart our efforts of seeking and modeling joyful living. We are transmitting our feelings and emotional habits to our kids daily, perhaps without knowing.

The research of Andrew Seligman, Ph.D., University of Pennsylvania, shows that people who live a more joyful life have some specific “joy habits”. They are:

1. *They surround themselves with other happy people.*
2. *They smile when they mean it.*
3. *The cultivate resilience.*
4. *They try to be happy.*
5. *They are mindful of the good.*
6. *They appreciate simple pleasures.*
7. *They devote some of their time to giving.*
8. *They let themselves lose track of time. (And sometimes they can't help it.)*
9. *They nix the small talk for deeper conversation.*
10. *They spend money on other people.*
11. *They make a point to listen.*
12. *They uphold in-person connections.*
13. *They look on the bright side.*
14. *They value a good playlist.*
15. *They unplug.*
16. *They get spiritual.*
17. *They make exercise a priority.*
18. *They go outside.*
19. *They spend some time on the pillow.*
20. *They laugh out loud (LOL).*
21. *They walk the talk.*



As we enter the holidays and consider the upcoming New Year, perhaps there are some ways to consciously add more joy to your life and parenting as you model the value of joyful living for your child. It's contagious!

Have a joyful holiday with your family!

Lisa Weir, M.Ed. Parent & Family Educator

[weirli@district112.org](mailto:weirli@district112.org)

Sources: Adapted from HuffPost, The Habits of Supremely Happy People. By Kate Bratskeir, 9/16/2013