

Huffington Post: What women want

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A university education makes you less likely to value stay-at-home parenting.

In [Daycare Desires, Part III: How education affects attitudes toward daycare](#), an analysis by the Institute of Marriage and Family Canada, we learn that Canadians have somewhat different attitudes toward child care depending on whether or not they hold a university degree.

While 76% of Canadians think the best place for a child under six is at home with a parent, only 68% of those who have completed university say the same.

For those with a post-graduate degree, the number declines to 62% and further to 54% for women with post-graduate degrees. (Men with post-graduate degrees are back up to 69%.)

The question is why.

Short answer: We didn't officially ask as part of the poll.

So we asked for parents' thoughts and some themes emerged.

People who have invested years into higher learning are more invested in using that education. And they love their chosen field.

One educated mother, an Ottawa-based engineer on maternity leave, feared the loss of the time investment she put into building her career. "If there was some magical guarantee that I could quit my job now, and in five years still get back into my profession, I would leave the workforce until all our children are in school, no question."

Dr. Tamara Pierce, a Calgary physician and mother of one with one on the way, spoke of a number of factors that likely influence educated mothers. "Time invested..., personal career satisfaction and increased income 'needs' in a society with abundance and a sense of entitlement. I say this as a woman who continues to work part-time outside the home for these reasons."

Certainly, the questions associated with working and mothering are perennial, as evidenced by the spate of recent articles and books on the topic.

There's the June 2012 article in *Atlantic Monthly* called *Why Women Still Can't Have it All*. More recently, Debora Spar, president of Barnard University, argues in her 2013 book *Wonder Women: Sex,*

Power, and the Quest for Perfection that "having it all" is difficult and even disappointing for women today. Sheryl Sandberg, COO of Facebook, authored *Lean In*, a book which challenges women to press in to their dreams regardless of whether they are mothers or not.

Another article, *No Happy Harmony*, published in the October 2013 issue of *First Things*, makes some similar points about the difficulties of juggling work and family. The author, Elizabeth Corey, herself a professor of political science at Baylor University, argues discussions of working and mothering will always be with us. Because families stand outside the world of power and money and children do not contribute to GDPs or quarterly fiscal assessments, there will always be a tension between the worlds, she says. Parents--particularly mothers--put aside, for a time, the quest for personal achievement, financial reward, or even thank-yous.

These are tough choices. And all theorizing aside, each family will have their own ideal.

There are implications for good public policy.

Any program that is one-size-fits-all will not serve the diversity of families. For example, in Ontario the current plan is to pour public money into the school system, but this is an option for which there is little public support. It also means other family supports will disappear, since public money is limited.

There are other implications, for example, for the corporate world. Talent is already difficult for businesses to attract and retain. Many educated women would love to stay home longer with their young children, if they could only be sure that a career would still be an option down the road.

In spite of the fact that fewer educated Canadians felt it was best for a child under six to be at home with a parent, perhaps the surprising thing about this poll is the fact that this is still true.

Whatever the reasons for the smaller majority, it is clear that family time at home for young children is still valuable to a majority of educated Canadians.

The study examining educated Canadians attitudes toward daycare can be found at <http://www.imfcanada.org/daycaresires/education>