



Sun Herald  
Sunday 10/5/2009  
Page: 8  
Section: General News  
Region: Sydney Circulation: 473,769  
Type: Capital City Daily  
Size: 183.57 sq.cms.  
Published: -----S

Brief: REEDHEALTH

## MOTHER'S DAY

# Parents feel caught in children trap

By RACHEL BROWNE

ALMOST one in four parents feels "terrified" or "overwhelmed" by the challenge of raising children, a study has found.

The survey of 500 families found most parents struggled with the daily demands of bringing up their children.

Two-thirds of parents reported feeling "worried, concerned or challenged" about raising children while 24 per cent felt "terrified or overwhelmed" and 6 per cent felt "out of control".

The findings of the study, commissioned by parenting group Generation Next, reveal a national family crisis, health professionals say.

Sydney GP and Generation Next founder Ramesh Manocha said Australian children were facing an uncertain future.

"We give our children everything. They have access to every opportunity, every material item, more information than ever before.

"And yet, they seem to be unhappier and unhealthier.

"This is an alarming trend. If we keep going this way, the current generation of young people will turn out to be less healthy than their parents."

Increasingly, parents fall into the trap of working long hours to earn enough money to provide for their children when they would be better off spending time with them.

"As parents spend more time earning, thinking that they're doing the right thing by their children because they are earning more money to provide better education, they're spending less time with the children," Dr Manocha said.

"The difficulty there is that parents find it difficult to take what time they do have and make sure it's quality time with their children. As a result, you have parents spending less time with their children and children turning to their peer group for support."

The struggle to achieve the work-life balance is most prevalent in the middle class, which is now

suffering higher rates of depression as a result.

"Of all the socio-economic groups, there is a disproportionately higher rate of unhappiness and depression in the upper middle class," Dr Manocha said.

"Our children are going to pay the price for middle-class materialism."

Dr Manocha is urging parents to become more proactive in raising their children, and has organised a parenting seminar featuring the adolescent psychologist Michael Carr-Gregg, drug and alcohol researcher Paul Dillon and cyber safety adviser Susan Mclean, in Sydney on May 23.

"Parents and sensible people can take control of the situation," he said. "The message is not social apocalypse. But if we remain as passive observers of the assault on childhood it will overwhelm members of the younger generation."