

## Struggles can be road block to time spent with children

"Roughly half of working mothers and fathers say they would rather be home with their children but work because they need the income," Jennifer C. Kerr reported in last Sunday's Daily News.

"Fifty-six percent of working mothers and 50 percent of working fathers say it's either very or somewhat difficult for them to balance work and family." Kerr was citing statistics from a recent survey by the Pew Research Center.

Studies have repeatedly demonstrated a strong correlation between the amount of time kids spend with their parents while growing up and success later in life. Most parents instinctively recognize the importance of spending time with their sons and daughters.

But not every parent has the opportunity to spend quality time with their children. Many are working two and three jobs just to survive, which leaves precious little time to engage in what is arguably the most important job any of us can ever have.

This unintended yet disturbing consequence is one of most overlooked considerations in the current debate over income inequality. It's not that children from underprivileged households are cared for less than those from wealthy families; it's more a matter of not having the option to spend time together that prosperity inherently provides.

I don't think it's inherently wrong to be affluent. However, those who could spend more time with their children but simply choose not to do so – for whatever reason – should be ashamed of themselves. As a society, we have a moral obligation to do everything we can to mitigate the detrimental effects that the never-ending struggle just to survive has on poor families.

All children deserve to be raised by parents who want to, and can, spend significant time with them. We need to work harder to make this a luxury all Americans can afford.

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