

MEDIA RELEASE from

**The Association for Family Therapy and Systemic Practice in the UK**

Date: January 27 2010

For: Immediate Release

## **Quality not structure of family relationships boosts children's happiness**

A new investigation into children's happiness in the UK has been warmly welcomed by leading clinicians working with children and families.

The research, ***Understanding Children's Well-being: A National Survey of Young People's Well-Being***, is launched today by The Children's Society.

'This report confirms what our therapeutic work with children and families, extensive research and importantly children themselves tell us - that children's happiness is nurtured when their family gets along,' says Dorothy Ramsay, chair of AFT, The Association for Family Therapy.

'Put simply, it's the quality of family relationships that matter most to children, not family structure.

'This is an important message - especially at a time of such passionate debate on how best to spend public money supporting children and families.

'Let's be in no doubt. We're at a crossroads in how we support children, parents and families in the UK. We've had a stream of reports stressing the importance of working with families when children, young people or adults experience difficulties. We've now a large body of research gathered over 60 years showing the effectiveness of this work. We know how relationship difficulties between family members can impact on children's mental health.

'In some areas of the UK, services for families are world class. Yet in others there's not one single family psychotherapist in post to help children and families experiencing serious and complex difficulties. Trainings to equip staff to support families and build better futures are patchy at best in some services. In some, they're non-existent.

'We wholeheartedly support the report's call for greater access to mediation and counselling to help families avoid and resolve conflicts. We'd go further - specialist services and trainings must be developed across the UK if the needs of children and families are to be met.

'In hard economic times it's especially important to make good investments. Supporting families respectfully and usefully supports children and our

next generation of parents' This is sound 'value for money' and, for our children, families and social well-being, priceless.'

#### **NOTES TO EDITORS**

- Leading family therapists and researchers are available for interview on this issue – please contact AFT communications officer Jan Parker on 07931 726247
- AFT, the Association for Family Therapy and Systemic Practice in the UK, is the UK's leading body for professionals working therapeutically with families. Visit [www.aft.org.uk](http://www.aft.org.uk),
- For further details of The Children's Society and the report, visit [www.childrensociety.org.uk](http://www.childrensociety.org.uk).