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**Becoming a parent may add a year or two to your life**

By **New Scientist staff and Press Association**

Why become a parent? Well for one thing, it may add a few years to your life.

A study that tracked 1.4 million people in Sweden born between 1911 and 1925 found that people who had at least one child tended to live longer, and that these benefits lasted up to the age of 80 and over.

The analysis found that at the age of 60, men and women with children on average could expect to live for another 18.4 and 23.1 years, respectively. This average life expectancy was 1.5 years higher than women who did not have children, and nearly 2 years higher than childless men.

There may be biological reasons why parents live longer. However, because the association between parenthood and increased life expectancy grew stronger with age, and was stronger among non-married people, the researchers think the social support provided by adult children is a likely explanation.

The data suggested it was just as beneficial to have a boy as it was to have a girl. Previous studies have suggested that daughters are more likely to help their parents in their old age.

Journal reference: *Journal of Epidemiology and Community Health*

Read more: [Does parenthood really make us happier?](https://www.newscientist.com/article/mg22730372-300-does-parenthood-really-make-us-happier/)