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# Parents com

## 10 Best Towns for Families: 2008

Photo by: Gerald D. Tang [www.tangsphoto.com](http://www.tangsphoto.com)



Wheeling, Illinois  
Population: 33,786  
Median income: \$68,419  
Median home price: \$216,000  
Households with children: 35%  
Student/teacher ratio: 16:1  
Residents who recycle: 47%

Stephanie and Brian Smith live on tree-lined street alongside families from China, India, Korea, and Russia. That's typical of Wheeling, where 30 percent of the residents are immigrants or minorities. Diversity is the reason Stephanie, 41, a banker, and Brian, 35, an acquisition associate, chose to raise their young family -- Chloe is 5 and Brian Jr. is 1 -- here. "Our kids are constantly around people of different backgrounds living in tolerance and harmony," says Brian, who grew up in Chicago's inner city. "I think of them as flowers blooming in a garden -- it's a beautiful thing." The town's schools are flourishing too. Buffalo Grove High was recently awarded a Blue Ribbon, the Department of Education's highest honor. Stephanie also appreciates the little things, like fishing for bluegill in a pond near their home. "The neighborhoods have an easy-living feeling," she says. "And I love having the whole world in our little cul-de-sac."

Going for the Green: Since 2002 the town has spent \$2 million to convert five vacant lots into half-acre "pocket parks," with fountains, benches, and flowers.

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