

Parenting Styles

Your parenting style can affect everything from how much your child weighs to how she feels about herself. It's important to ensure your parenting style is supporting healthy growth and development because the way you interact with your child and how you discipline her will influence her for the rest of her life. Researchers have identified four types of parenting styles:

Authoritarian Parenting

Do any of these statements sound like you?

You believe kids should be seen and not heard.

When it comes to rules, you believe it's "my way or the highway."

You don't take your child's feelings into consideration.

If any of those ring true, you might be an authoritarian parent. Authoritarian parents believe kids should follow the rules without exception. Authoritarian parents are famous for saying, "Because I said so," when a child questions the reasons behind a rule. They are not interested in negotiating and their focus is on obedience.

They also don't allow kids to get involved in problem-solving challenges or obstacles. Instead, they make the rules and enforce the consequences with little regard for a child's opinion. Authoritarian parents may use punishments instead of discipline. So rather than teach a child how to make better choices, they're invested in making kids feel sorry for their mistakes.

Children who grow up with strict authoritarian parents tend to follow rules much of the time. But, their obedience comes at a price. Children of authoritarian parents are at a higher risk of developing self-esteem problems because their opinions aren't valued. They may also become hostile or aggressive. Rather than think about how to do things better in the future, they often focus on the anger they feel toward their parents. Since authoritarian parents are often strict, their children may grow to become good liars in an effort to avoid punishment.

Authoritative Parenting

Do any of these statements sound like you?

You put a lot of effort into creating and maintaining a positive relationship with your child.

You explain the reasons behind your rules.

You enforce rules and give consequences, but take your child's feelings into consideration.

If those statements sound familiar, you may be an authoritative parent. Authoritative parents have rules and they use consequences, but they also take their children's opinions into account. They validate their children's feelings, while also making it clear that the adults are ultimately in charge. Authoritative parents invest time and energy into preventing behavior problems before they start. They also use positive discipline strategies to reinforce positive behavior, like praise and reward systems. Researchers have found kids who have authoritative parents are most likely to become responsible adults who feel comfortable expressing their opinions.

Children raised with authoritative discipline tend to be happy and successful. They're also more likely to be good at making decisions and evaluating safety risks on their own.

Permissive Parenting

Do any of these statements sound like you?

You set rules but rarely enforce them.

You don't give out consequences very often.

You think your child will learn best with little interference from you.

If those statements sound familiar, you might be a permissive parent. Permissive parents are lenient. They often only step in when there's a serious problem. They're quite forgiving and they adopt an attitude of "kids will be kids." When they do use consequences, they may not make those consequences stick. They might give privileges back if a child begs or they may allow a child to get out of time-out early if he promises to be good. Permissive parents usually take on more of a friend role than a parent role. They often encourage their children to talk with them about their problems, but they usually don't put much effort into discouraging poor choices or bad behavior.

Kids who grow up with permissive parents are more likely to struggle academically. They may exhibit more behavioral problems as they don't appreciate authority and rules. They often have low self-esteem and may report a lot of sadness. They're also at a higher risk for health problems, like obesity, because permissive parents struggle to limit junk food intake. They are even more likely to have dental cavities because permissive parents often don't enforce good habits, like ensuring a child brushes his teeth.

Uninvolved Parenting

Do any of these statements sound familiar?

You don't ask your child about school or homework.

You rarely know where your child is or who she is with.

You don't spend much time with your child.

If those statements sound familiar, you might be an uninvolved parent. Uninvolved parents tend to have little knowledge of what their children are doing. There tend to be few rules. Children may not receive much guidance, nurturing, and parental attention. Uninvolved parents expect children to raise themselves. They don't devote much time or energy into meeting children's basic needs. Uninvolved parents may be neglectful but it's not always intentional. A parent with mental health issues or substance abuse problems, for example, may not be able to care for a child's physical or emotional needs on a consistent basis. At other times, uninvolved parents lack knowledge about child development. And sometimes, they're simply overwhelmed with other problems, like work, paying bills, and managing a household.

Children with uninvolved parents are likely to struggle with self-esteem issues. They tend to perform poorly in school. They also exhibit frequent behavior problems and rank low in happiness.

Additional Resources

Kids with ADD or ADHD

National Institute of Mental Health

ADHD information and publications, including symptoms, diagnosis, causes and treatment. Also includes links to resource books.

<https://www.nimh.nih.gov/health/topics/attention-deficit-hyperactivity-disorder-adhd/index.shtml>

CHADD: Children and Adults with Attention Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder
Offers resources for children, adults, professional and parents for understanding ADD, finding support, and advocacy.
<https://www.chadd.org>

The Attention Deficit Disorder Association
Offers resources for adults with ADHD, such as webinars and assistance in connecting with professionals.
<https://www.add.org>

Learning Disabilities Association of America
Has information about LD/ADHD kids for parents and educators.
<https://ldaamerica.org>

Bullying Prevention and Awareness

StopBullying.gov

Has information on bullying, how to prevent it and how to stop it. Also has sections for kids, teens, educators, parents and the community on their role in ending bullying, and tips for how to respond.
<https://www.stopbullying.gov>

Boot Camps

National Association of Therapeutic Schools and Programs

<https://www.natsap.org>

Domestic Violence

National Domestic Violence Hotline

Offers information and support for people who are experiencing domestic violence, as well as families of victims/survivors. Has information in English/Spanish, as well as TTY access numbers.
<https://www.thehotline.org>

Children of Domestic Violence

The aim of this organization is to assist those who have experienced or witnessed domestic violence as children to "reach their full potential and break the cycle of violence." Also offered is a free, interactive online curriculum, "Change A Life," which gives training to adults on how to intervene, offers safety-planning skills, and explains how to build resiliency in children affected by domestic violence.
<https://cdv.org>

Eating Disorders

National Eating Disorders Association

For referrals to treatment centers, general information about eating disorders, videos, books and more.

Help hotline: 800-931-2237
<https://www.nationaleatingdisorders.org>

Foster/Adoptive Parenting

FosterParentCollege.com

Offers training for a nominal fee for foster parents, adoptive parents and kinship caregivers on topics specific to foster parenting such as impact of fostering on kids, sexualized behaviors, house safety and the role of mandated reporters.

<https://www.fosterparentcollege.com/index.jsp>

AdoptUSKids

Serves families who are starting the process to foster/adopt, waiting for a placement or who are looking for post adoptive resources. Has information by state for both fostering and adoption.

<https://www.adoptuskids.org>

National Council for Adoption

Offers information and resources about a variety of topics related to foster and adoptive parenting.

<https://www.adoptioncouncil.org>

General Resources

211

2-1-1 provides free and confidential information and referral. Call 2-1-1 for help with food, housing, employment, health care, counseling and more.

1-800-273-6222

<http://www.211.org>

Kinship Care

Child Welfare Information Gateway Kinship Care Resources

Applicable laws, resources, and services and policies for grandparents raising grandchildren.

<https://www.childwelfare.gov/topics/outofhome/kinship>

Online Safety

ConnectSafely

Has information for kids, teens and families about how to stay safe online. There is also a breakdown by age of child, information on kinds of risks, a glossary, tools for families and links to kid-friendly sites.

<https://www.connectsafely.org/safety-tips-advice>

Child and Teen Runaways

National Runaway Safeline

"We are the federally-designated national communication system (hotline and website) for runaway and homeless youth. Youth and family members call 24 hours a day to work through problems and find local help from social service agencies and organizations. Some callers just need someone to talk to; others need help finding a shelter, food, medical assistance, or counseling. Some callers are on the streets; others are struggling with other issues and we work with them to identify options to prevent them from leaving their home, when possible and if appropriate."
<https://1800runaway.org>

Younger Children

Zero to Three: National Center for Policy on Infants, Toddlers and Families

Offers information on normal early childhood development and behavior through articles, publications, interactive tools and other parent resources. Addresses common topics such as play, sleep, eating habits, early literacy/language development and challenging behaviors.

<https://www.zerotothree.org>

Office of Child Development, University of Pittsburgh

Offers Parenting guides in Resources sections; PDF files that deal with common issues which may arise in parenting. Mostly geared to younger kids (birth-6.)

<http://www.ocd.pitt.edu>

Need help getting connected to a professional? Email counseling@breakdownstl.org for assistance.

Sources:

*Very Well Family - <https://www.verywellfamily.com>

* Empowering Parents - <https://www.empoweringparents.com>