



The Parenting Information Maze



**An Overview of Parenting Philosophies, Styles and Programs,
and How to Find Advice That Fits Your Family**

Judy Arnall

Maze: complex network of paths, labyrinth, and network of paths designed as a puzzle for those who try to penetrate it. -Concise Oxford Dictionary

“There are many voices around you, but you must listen to your own voice.” – Pocohontas, American legend

Table of Contents

Introduction

Chapter One: Entering the maze
Where do parents learn parenting?
The myth of the Expert
What children need and why you are the expert to provide it
Parenting challenges are normal
One size fits all advice doesn't work.

Chapter Two: Parenting styles quiz and overview

Chapter Three: Child styles overview
Ages and stages
Temperament
Birth order
Gender

Chapter Four: The Authoritarian Parenting Style
“I'm in charge.”

Chapter Five: The Authoritative Parenting Style
“Lets brainstorm together but I still have veto power.”

Chapter Six: The Collaborative Parenting Style
“Let's find a win-win solution together that works equally for us.”

Chapter Seven: The Indulgent Parenting Style
“He can't help it.”

Chapter Eight: The Uninvolved Parenting Style
“It's not my problem.”

Chapter Nine: Parenting style tools

The behavior modification tools
The communication based tools

Chapter Ten: Sources of parenting information and how to judge credibility
Questions to ask experts
Questions to assess resources
Anecdotal opinion and researched evidence

Chapter Eleven: Parenting philosophies through the ages and the roots of advice

Chapter Twelve: How to respond to unwanted advice

Chapter Thirteen: When parenting partners disagree

Chapter Fourteen: Parenting programs overview

Chapter Fifteen: Research

Chapter Sixteen: Solving the maze.

Introduction

What is parenting?

“The experiences, skills, qualities and responsibilities involved in being a parent and in teaching and caring for a child.” -Encarta World English Dictionary

From the minute you know that you and your partner are expecting a baby, you begin to get advice from all around you – family, friends, strangers in the supermarket line-up, doctors, midwives, and even the media all claim they know best how you should care for your unborn child. If you are feeling confused and overwhelmed, it's normal! It's important to remember that you and your partner are the best persons in the world for your child. You spend the most time with her, and know her best. No one in the world is going to invest the time and effort in providing the best for her and no one else has as much of a vested interest in how your child turns out. **No expert advice is going to work for you if it goes against what you instinctively believe is right for your child, your family and your situation.** All children really need is a safe environment, nurturing, instinctual, responsive care and love, and they will grow up healthy and normal.

New and experienced parents seek out information to help them understand the many issues, and challenges in parenting and to do the best job in keeping their child healthy, safe and contented. Information sources are limitless. **However, in**

this unending quest for information, parents encounter varying opinions about what is the best solution and strategies for every problem. It's up to parents to be the health information consumers— to sort through and put together the information in a way that makes sense and applies to them. It's enough to make anyone feel a little insecure about making the right choices. Parents are afraid that one piece of wrong advice can damage their child forever, which is not true.

Parents make many mistakes and every parenting expert in the field makes mistakes also. Information is constantly being updated based on new research. New information, advice and insights update or replace old advice. Much of it is contradictory. That's okay. Armed with a few critical thinking skills, parents can sort through the myriad of information, judge what is credible, decide what's best for them, be confident in their decisions and accept the outcomes including mistakes. It's great that most children and their parents are resilient and to error is human. Not many mistakes have irreversible consequences. Parents do the best they can with what information they have and most children turn out to be wonderful, contributing happy human beings. Information combined with parents' instinct are the best tools to be effective parents.

Experts don't agree on much of parenting. Each specialist has their own narrow area of expertise. In fact, many experts have no background in parenting education or theory, other than the fact they are parents themselves. Something worked for them and it should work for everyone's child. Many experts are not even parents! Many experts have not even lived with children 24 hours per day, 7 days per week. Some parenting books are written by academics that use large jargon, dictate theory and haven't been around children for more than an hour at a time. Other experts write reflections of new discoveries for them, but those "discoveries" have in fact, been around for decades. **It's critical for parents to judge the credibility of parenting information that they receive before they act upon it.**

This book was created to give parents critical thinking tools to help them sort through the information and to provide a roadmap of where the major parenting philosophies fit. There are several general categories of advice and the various books, programs and information fit into at least one of these categories. In reading this book, parents, caregivers and health care professionals will have a broad overview of the parenting advice industry and will be better equipped to understand which sections are beneficial to them and which are not. The goal is to make them more confident in their parenting and what fits for their family. Information and instincts will guide them well.

1

Chapter One: Entering the Maze

“You know more than you think.” -Dr. Benjamin Spock, Author
“Parents are blamed, but not trained.” -Dr. Thomas Gordon, Author

Patricia and Dan were expecting their new baby and like most new parents, they were eager to learn more about what they were getting into. They were about to embark on an exciting journey. Also like every parent, they wanted to be the best parents they could be and do everything right in order to raise happy, healthy and smart children. They went to the library to check out the parenting book section. Not knowing what book to pick, they checked out a few random books and began to read. The information provided them with lots of material to have a few heated and loving discussions about their families' values, beliefs and culture.

Eventually they gave up on the parenting section and checked out the birth and pregnancy section. There again were many books about theories, philosophies, how to and how not to have a positive birth experience.

The next time Patricia and Dan looked in the parenting section of the bookstore, was after their son was born. He was four-months-old, and they were terribly sleep deprived and desperate for a magical answer to get him to sleep. They dragged their coffee cups and weary bodies to attend baby sleep classes. **They were amazed that two very prominent pediatricians can hold opposing viewpoints on the nature of and treatment of sleep problems in babies and as both seemed credible, they were at a loss as to whom to believe.** After attending two classes that were on the opposite extremes of philosophy, and reading eight books on baby sleep tricks, they muddled their way through a few more months of tiredness and the problem just seemed to sort itself out.

When their son, Eric, grew into a toddler and began to say “No” to them, they decided it might be time for a bit of information on discipline. This time they sought books, classes, doctors, nurses, videos, and the readily available advice

from friends, families and even strangers. Again, they were given more conflicting advice. Each week, they tried the latest advice to see if it “worked” and after trial and error, and closely observing the reaction of their son, they again decided on a mish-mash of strategies that seemed to work for Eric. **Patricia and Dan had discovered the art of customizing parenting advice!**

When son number two came along and the sibling rivalry began, they felt it necessary to find out about child development and family dynamics, and parenting in general. Expecting that they had the confidence and know-how to handle Eric, they were shattered to realize that their second son, Alex, was completely opposite to Eric and required different parenting techniques. Everything that “worked” on Eric was totally useless and had no effect on Alex. **They soon realized that each child should come with a personal care manual on that model.**

As Patricia and Dan added more children to their family and realized that they could have four children that are completely so different from each other, they came to another realization – **they grew as parents too. They were different parents to each child in the birth order.** Their patience, knowledge and experience led them to different innovative strategies and some old stand-bys that always worked. They grew as parents by acquiring more information but also more confidence along with their children that also grew. Some of the information was good and some was not. The most important thing they realized is that there are many, many great ways to parent and get to the same outcomes.

Is a Guide Required?

Parenting is the world’s most common career. It’s also the one that in our present culture, we are least prepared for. Do parents need information on child rearing or does it come naturally and instinctual? **Most parents would agree that they need more information on pregnancy, birth and child rearing than they come equipped with. However, most parents seek information about birthing the child, but not about the actual raising of the child.** Studies show that parents attend classes in the pregnancy and post-partum period up to when the child is a year old. After that, attendance drops off because parents feel they should instinctively know everything about child development and parenting and if they seek out more information, they may be criticized or stigmatized by family and society as not having it all together.

Yet, in no other occupation is there zero training required or education upgrade demanded. And no other occupation can have such life long consequences if things are done wrong. The media ensures that parents must do everything and know everything for their child or dire consequences could occur. For example, if a kitchen floor is not kept spotless for a crawling baby, they could

catch germs and become very sick. Parents then seek out information on how to keep a house clean and sanitary with a baby.

Every child in the birth order has a different parent. When parents are parenting their oldest child, they often think, “I have to solve this problem now, or it won’t go away.” We tend to have blinkers on when our oldest child is young because we are worried for the future. Parents of many children are more confident and relaxed in their general parenting style because they have experienced the benefits of the methods they choose to use.

School children do not have mandatory child development classes which is the most basic of parenting information needed. This is a lack of life preparedness in education where 85% of the population is going to become parents. Although schools offer option classes in parenting, child development and family dynamics, most children learn parenting and child development on the fly when they grow up and become parents themselves. By the time they get the information, usually in the first year, they are tired and trying to cope with a job and multiple demands and don’t have the time or energy for preventive information. Most often, they are seeking information to solve their current problem or issue such as a baby that won’t sleep.

The first parenting book, *Baby and Child Care*, by Dr. Benjamin Spock, took the world by storm in the 1950’s. His famous words of “You know more than you think” still stand true today. Parents do hold a lot of information just by watching how they were raised. However, the words of Dr. Thomas Gordon, author of *Parent Effectiveness Training*, 1962, who said, “Parents are blamed, but not trained,” also ring true, because parenting is highly personal and held dearly in people’s hearts. To be criticized as a parent is the hardest judgment to take and the stigma against taking parenting courses, even proactive ones, is still very strong today. Classes designed to offer preventative parenting information sit with empty seats and few registrations, yet, when parenting problems do develop, the therapists, psychologists, juvenile counselors, and social worker’s counseling rooms are full. There is an amazing wealth of information out there today. From one parenting book in the 1950’s to hundreds of thousands today make for a saturated market. Parents are more confused than ever and their confidence is being continually eroded by conflicting advice. Parenting information is great. **Supporting parents when they have made instinctual but informed decisions (from plucking through the information) is absolutely mandatory for our society.** Both Spock and Gordon have it right. Parents need training and information and also need support and validation that they are making their own decisions based on what they know.

“People hear when and what they are ready to hear.” -Donna Wallace, Health Care Professional

“Everybody... doctors, nurses, educators, family are all a small piece in the new parent’s education system.” -Jocelyn Churchill, Health Care Professional

Where do parents learn parenting?

The number one source for learning parenting is ones own parents. Next, the most common information comes from doctors, nurses, friends, family, internet, books, magazines, TV shows, speakers, support groups, schools, hospitals, and last of all, their children.

A recent study by the organization, Invest in Kids, called the National Parenting Survey found that 77% of parents had incorrect responses to a questionnaire about child development (the capabilities of children at different ages). (2002 National Parenting Poll, Summary, Invest In Kids Foundation.)

A national survey of 1615 parents commissioned for the organization, Zero to Three, found that 47% of parents go to their mothers or mother-in-laws for parenting information. Friends were the next source at 21%, relatives 16%, doctor 13%, spouse 12%, websites 9% and books 3%. (2010 Zero to Three *Grandparents Matter: Key Findings from a 2009 National Survey*)

Our parents

Values, beliefs, knowledge and attitudes are passed on through the generations. Much of their knowledge is old and outdated information. This is often old advice for parenting in a new technological world. Partners then learn from their partners. Men learn parenting skills from their female partners. Parents can change their skills over time, and let go of destructive tools to be replaced by respectful effective ones, but generally, in times of stress, they revert back to how they were parented.

A person wouldn’t go to a doctor who has never studied constipation, but instead, gave advice on constipation based on the fact that he had it personally himself. In much the same way, going to moms, parents or anyone who was a parent for advice is the same. They don’t have much of the theory or scientific data backing their advice and they mostly dish it out based on anecdotal information, which is only person experience.

Generally, parents are very loyal to their parents even when they disagreed how they were parented. When parents are given information about the risks of physical punishment, a common response is, “Yes, but I was spanked and I turned out okay.” Part of this sentiment is the common thought that we dislike

the risk of offending older people, especially older people who are family. They did the best they knew how at the time and we give them leeway for that. Accepted parenting practices change over time. Adult children are loyal and they would seem to be anti loyal if they criticized their parent's parenting too much.

When parents are given information about the risks of physical punishment, a common response is: "Yes, but I was spanked and I turned out okay." While we did all survive and reach adulthood that does not mean we can't seek to improve upon the example of parenting that we were given by our families of origin. Parents can learn new skills and change their parenting habits over time, can let go of destructive tools to be replaced by respectful effective ones, but generally, in times of stress, parents revert back to how they were parented. This is very normal and natural, but it can be worked on as knowledge is gained and skills are practiced over time.

Health care professionals

The next most common sources are pediatricians, family doctors and nurses. If the challenge or concern is really big, parents will look for private professionals to speak with, such as doctors, nurses, and coaches. Many general doctors do not have much training in child development that is up to date, nor do they have hands on experience.

Optional high school courses and university courses

Many new parents also received some information in school about parenting – but this theoretical information is often at least ten years old by the time they actually become parents due to the increasing age of marriage and parenthood. Ten years can produce a lot of studies and new information. It's important to note that many highly educated parents in the professions feel that they are still undereducated in parenting. Years of university studying Engineering, Business Management or Law still does not adequately prepare one for the challenges of parenting. Years of specific parent education provides more help than general education.

Prenatal and postnatal classes

Parents generally begin to acquire new, up-to-date information when they attend prenatal classes. Childbirth preparation classes are typically well attended and couples usually go together. Unfortunately, as mentioned before, many parents are reluctant to attend 'parenting' classes past their child's first year due to the impression that they are stigmatized as having "problems" and something must be very wrong with them that they need to attend classes in order to parent effectively. Somehow, classes for birthing a child carry fewer stigmas than classes for raising a child. Golf classes, scrapbooking classes, driving lessons are okay, parenting classes are deemed not.

Informal networks

As a result of the stigmatization of parenting classes, the more private methods of acquiring parenting knowledge are popular. Parents seek out information from: books, flyers, newsletters, magazines, internet sites, social networking web sites, email newsletters, and online groups; TV shows; parenting lectures and school workshops; and local support or social parent-and-tot type groups. All of these sources provide anonymity and generally any kind of information that the parent is looking for. Most is delivered specifically for general child information. Of course, not all of it is credible. Some is based on researched theory, but much is purely personal opinion based on anecdotes.

Our children

The last person to consult for parenting advice is, ironically, the child. Often, as parents get older, they observe and tune in to what works for that particular child and finally decide to do what works for them, their child and their family in that particular space and time. Parents must realize that children do come with an owner's manual, if we take time to read it. It's the child's brain and his or her behavior, personality and temperament. Often, most of our knowledge comes from within us, through trial and error, gained by truly observing and nurturing our child.

Parents Have Many Decisions to Make...

Even before birth:

Use a home test kit or go to the doctor
Quit smoking or cut down
Drink alcohol or not
Ultrasound or not
Genetic testing or not
Homebirth or hospital
Midwife or doctor

After the birth:

Breastfeed or bottle
Cloth diapers or disposable
Pacifier or thumb
Baby in the parents' room or in a crib in the nursery down the hall

A few months later:

Schedule or demand feed
Cry it out or respond to crying
Solids at six months or six weeks
Supplement with formula or exclusively breastfeed
Vitamin D or not
Baby signing or baby massage
Swim lessons or baby story time
Elimination communication or diapers

Toddler years

Spank or childproof
Playpen or yard fence
Toilet train now or later
Gymnastics or swim lessons

Preschool years

Playdates or sleepovers
Time-out or Time-in
Montessori preschool or cooperative
Soccer or hockey school

School years

Home school or public school
Special needs testing or not
Extra curricular activities or free play
Dance lessons or Girl Guides
Sleepovers or sleep-away camp

Teenage years

Dating or group outings
Driving lessons or bus passes
Have “the talk” or give a book
Private school or on-line school
Curfew or self-regulation

Young adult

Gap year or post-secondary
University or college
In city or across country
Work or student loans
Speak up about girlfriend or use velcro lips

Adulthood

Help with mortgage or provide loans
Pay for wedding catering or rehearsal dinner

Grandparenting - It starts all over again!

Should my child and their partner...

Use a home test kit or go to the doctor
Quit smoking or cut down
Drink alcohol or not
Ultrasound or not

Genetic testing or not
Homebirth or hospital
Midwife or doctor...ETC

The decisions of parenting and adulthood are never ending. We can't rely on others to make choices for us. We need to do it ourselves. We need to take responsibility and charge of our parenting health care decisions because the minute that conception indicator stick has pink or blue lines on it, becomes the minute we are health care consumers in parenting.

The Myth of the Expert

Is an expert a mother who has raised seven children? Or a person who has read seven different parenting books? Or a university professor who has studied child development for seven years, but has never had the role of parent? Each of us has our own criteria for what makes a person an expert.

What Makes An Expert? Experts have some commonalities.

- Experts have in-depth knowledge of their fields.
- Experts see patterns and meanings not apparent to novices.
- An expert's knowledge is not just a set of facts – it is structured to be accessible, transferable, and applicable to a variety of situations.
- Experts can easily retrieve their knowledge and learn new information in their field.

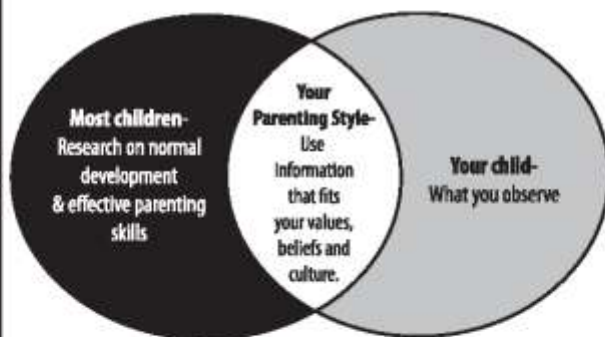
(This list was adapted from "How People Learn," published by the National Research Council in 1999.)

Experts come in all shapes and sizes as we shall examine in Chapter ten. **Generally, experts fall into two categories: General experts that know quite a bit on most children and Individual experts that know quite a bit about your child.** The first category comprises many child and family professionals and the second is you and your parenting partner, and of course, your child too!

You are the best person
in the world for your child.

Trust yourself.

You know what is right for you,
your children and your family.



63

General Experts on Most Children

Experts on all children in general have **researched information** that is based on data collection, statistics, surveys, and studies that are rigorously peer-reviewed and published in professional journals. Those recommendations are for most children in general. They are subject to bias as research may not meet standards of best practices. Studies based on meta-analysis of studies are some of the best, because the information doesn't come from just one study and an overview of many studies results. These recommendations will be applied to the general population of children and families.

Copyright 2011 Professional Parenting Canada www.professionalparenting.ca
Judy Arnall ~All Rights Reserved~ May not be reproduced without permission

Individual Experts on Your Child

Not all the research will apply to many children. Experts on your child are you and your family. You are Individual Experts. Opinions on this type of expertise is not based on data, or statistics, but based on personal experience which is called **anecdotal information** and not necessarily on researched information. It is true for one or two persons only and may not be true for the wide group of a general population. Individual experts give advice based on what worked for them in their circumstances. They may also give advice based on past accepted practices that are no longer research based, or heresy such as advice which worked for their friends or family members

Individual experts know their particular circumstances, child, family and background better than general experts and can judge if recommendations from the general experts for the general population based on statistical research apply to their unique individual situations.

The best advice comes from the overlap of the general expertise and individual expertise. That's the pool of information that parents need to make the best decisions from.

What Children Need and Why You are the Expert to Provide it

When parents embark on entering the 'maze', it helps to know exactly what children really need and what parents require to provide it. Plenty of parenting methods are wonderful and a few are not so good. A general list of the needs of children that most experts would agree upon, is adapted from The Canadian Paediatric Society:

- Unconditional love for the child
- Basic necessities of life
- A respect for the child's human dignity, worth and value
- Provides knowledge and facilitation of the child's education, and ability to earn financial security
- Protection of the child's mind, body and spirit from harm
- Teaching and guidance of proper behavior and self-control
- Fosters healthy physical, emotional, cognitive and social growth and development into a functioning healthy adult
- Provides responsive comfort, warmth and nurturing when child is sick, hurt or upset

Everything else is pretty small potatoes. If you are providing the above necessities the best you can for most of the time, then you are an excellent parent. Keep in mind that all parents are not perfect. They are human. Most of

the time is defined by 70% of the time!

New moms in support groups or classes constantly want to know, “How do I know what my baby wants or needs?” Experienced moms say, “Listen to and watch your baby. He or she will tell you.” Parents need to tune into their children by observing what works and most of this is through trial and error. For example, if your baby feels comforted by a pacifier, you can give him one. If he rejects it constantly, you shouldn’t push it just because some organization or individual has recommended it.

“Remember, there are many, many, many right ways to parent and a few wrong ways.” -Donna Wallace, Health Care Professional

2

Chapter Two: Parenting Styles

What type of traveler are you?

Role of the Parent

What do you see as your parenting role? What did you like from your family of origin and what do you wish to replicate in your parenting now? What did you not like from your family and what do you wish to do differently in your parenting?

Families come in all shapes and sizes

The reason there is so much published information about parenting, is that no one family is the same. A family combines different personalities, values, attitudes, beliefs, temperaments, genders, ages, learning styles, and intelligences; each member is in a unique relationship with each other member. With so many variables present, it's no wonder there is such a plethora of varying parenting advice. Innumerable dynamics elicit innumerable approaches. The one thing that unites all members and differentiates the family relationship from the relationships we share with neighbors, friends, employers, employees, colleagues, is that the family relationship is a love relationship. It's not always unconditional loyalty either. Just because a person is a family member doesn't mean that we can abuse them or take liberties that we could not take with people outside the family.

Parenting Styles

A parenting style is defined as the way a parent consistently behaves the majority of the time toward his or her children. Majority of the time is defined as about 70% of the time. Parents waver from their preferred style when they are sick, under stress or are absent. They also waver when their children are sick, or under unusual circumstances. However, the style used under normal day to day conditions most of the time, dictates the parenting style. Parenting styles are rooted in many factors of which include:

- How the parents were raised when they were children.

- The personalities and temperaments of the parents (controlling or easygoing)
- The personalities and temperaments of the children (introvert or extravert, strong-willed or easygoing)
- The moral and religious beliefs of the parents.
- The culture the parents were raised in and the one they presently are raising children in.

Parenting styles vary according to one's culture. Culture includes language, celebrations, holidays, foods, music, dance and literature, traditions and rights of passage, and customs, beliefs, practices, and values of the society. Culture begins to play a part in a child's life as soon as he/she is born. For example, the custom of dressing girls in pink and boys in blue is rooted in the idea of protecting the newborn from evil spirits. Blue was the color of the heavens and could frighten away evil spirits. Males were more valued so the color blue was bestowed on them. Pink, the color of the earth, is a lesser color and bestowed on girls. Culture has a large influence on how children are reared. Some cultures display definite ideas on how small children should behave. For example, in North American society, independence is highly valued. We train our babies to sleep alone, play alone and cope alone from a very early age, compared with Japanese society, whose emphasis is on group conformity and tight family connections.

What Type of Parent are You?

Diana Baumrind, researched parenting styles in the 1970's and found three basic types: Authoritarian, Democratic, and Permissive. These styles captured two elements of parenting which she called demandingness and responsiveness. According to Baumrind, demandingness is "the claims that parents make on the children to become integrated into the family and community by their maturity expectations, supervision, disciplinary efforts and willingness to confront a disputative child." Responsiveness is "the extent to which parents intentionally foster individuality and self-assertion by being attuned, supportive, and acquiescent to children's needs and demands." Baumrind continues by saying that Authoritative parents are both highly demanding and highly responsive. Authoritarian parents are highly demanding but not responsive. Permissive parents are highly responsive but not demanding.

I personally think that responsiveness is even more important than demandingness. The outside world in the form of laws, teachers, employers, relatives and friends all demand. But only parents can steadily provide nurturing, responsiveness.

These styles were based on several criteria such as goals of the parent, and who makes the decisions about the child's life and who makes the rules. Since then,

several other philosophies have come up such as Attachment Parenting and TCS movement (Taking Children Seriously). These philosophies have a high collaborative component, and also have the combination of high parent involvement, high parent teaching and guidance, but low parent control. Many of these families have very happy, normal functioning children and would not fit well in Baumrind's model. As well, many Authoritarian parents have a high degree of warmth and nurturing in addition to their expectations and punitive discipline, which can also produce well adjusted children.

Expectations and Structure

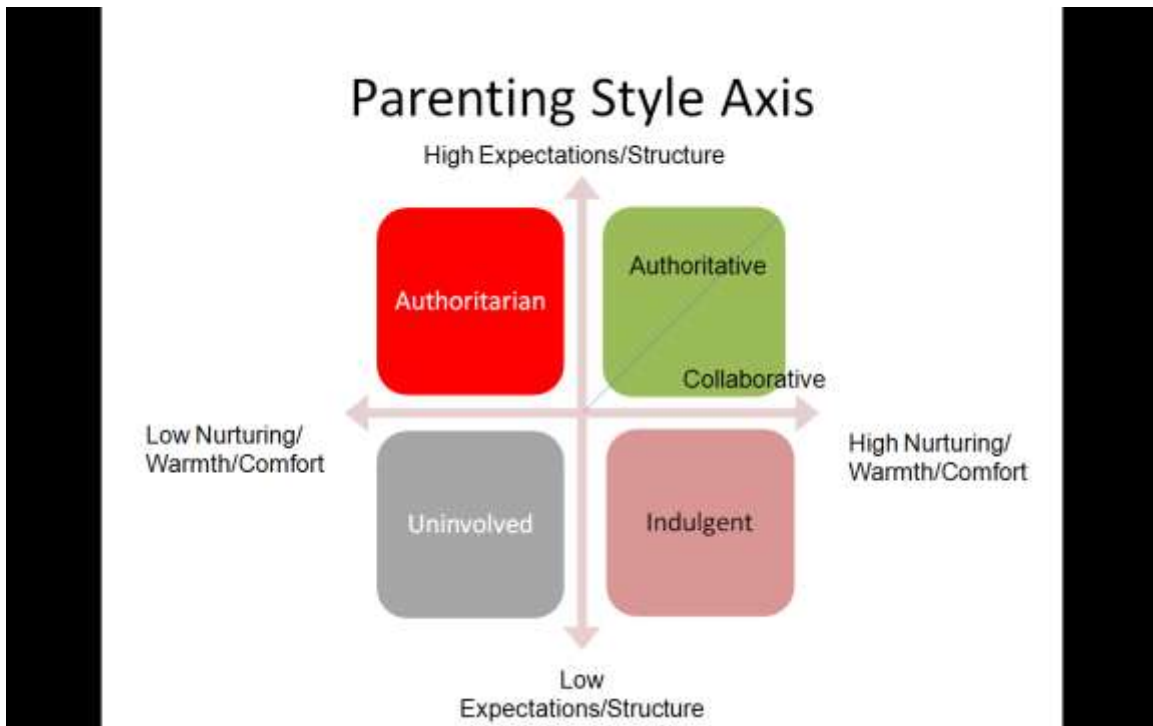
In this model, expectations and structure replace the word demandingness which can be quite off-putting to nurturing parents. In reality, everyone has expectations of others in the family, whether they are spoken or unspoken. Parents have many expectations for their children.

Expectations must be age-appropriate. It helps if parents have some idea of child development to know what to expect socially, emotionally, cognitively and physically. Most parents expect their children to attend post-secondary schooling and therefore, that expectation guides them to nudge their children to do homework and study.

Structure is the presence of rules, unspoken and spoken, routines, and consistency of family customs. Structure includes the presence of parent guidance, advice, mentoring, and teaching as well as parental supervision and monitoring of child behaviour. Structure includes celebrations, holidays, and activities present in family life.

Nurturing and Warmth

If structure is like putting on a bandage when a child scrapes her knee, warmth is the kiss on the bandage. It's not tangible or measurable in parenting, but it is critically necessary and absolutely noticeable when absent. It includes physical and emotional affection, kindness, attention, encouragement, support and comfort especially when someone is sick, hurt, or upset. Studies began in the 1950's, most notably, by John Bowlby and Mary Ainsworth, that has consistently proven the validity of attachment, warmth, nurturing and comfort, in the parenting relationship beginning at birth and never ending.



Parenting styles can predict child wellbeing in areas of

- social competence
- academic performance
- cognitive development
- physical health
- problem behaviour

The following questionnaire might help you decide where you stand in your parenting style. For maximum information, have your partner complete a separate questionnaire. Keep in mind that parents are not 100% in each style but tend towards one end or the other, depending on many circumstances: age of the child, gender, temperament, the parent's mood, and the environment, or the specific situation. Special thanks to Patricia Morgan, author of *From Woe to Wow*, for her permission to use some of the questions from her questionnaire.

PARENTING STYLES QUESTIONNAIRE

Check the most appropriate response to show how you handle the following situations. If you don't have a child in the age range, mark how you would handle the situation if your child behaved this way.

YOUNG CHILDREN Ages 0-6

Copyright 2011 Professional Parenting Canada www.professionalparenting.ca
 Judy Arnall ~All Rights Reserved~ May not be reproduced without permission

1. You have an 8-month-old crawler in the house. You have put up a Christmas tree with many breakable ornaments that your baby really wants to touch.
 - a. You let the child touch them to avoid a tantrum.
 - b. You slap the child's hands every time she reaches for the baubles.
 - c. You decorate the tree in totally non-breakable ornaments.
 - d. Let the child touch the ornaments while you supervise her and show her how to touch gently.
 - e. You keep the child out of the tree's reach by keeping her in a playpen for most of the day.

2. Your 2-year-old son won't get into his car seat to be buckled in.
 - a. You let the child sit where he wants. It's only a few blocks.
 - b. You offer your child a treat of chocolate if he gets in.
 - c. You acknowledge the child's feelings while gently pushing him into the car seat.
 - d. You distract the child and wait a few minutes until he is in a better mood, then gently position the child in his seat.
 - e. You leave the child at home with a babysitter. It's too hard to take a 2-year-old out.

3. Your 3-year-old is banging a spoon on your friend's coffee table.
 - a. You smile and let the child continue while lamenting "the stages these kids go through."
 - b. You give the girl a little spank on the bum and take the spoon away.
 - c. You offer another toy to distract her and take the spoon away.
 - d. You show the child how to bang the spoon on the rug so it won't hurt the table.
 - e. You don't notice what the child is doing.

4. Your 1-year-old daughter goes up to another small girl at a playgroup and bites her hard on the arm.
 - a. You laugh nervously and say loudly, "Gosh, she must be cutting more teeth!"
 - b. Bite her back. She needs to learn how it feels.
 - c. Say loudly, "No! Biting hurts people." Comfort the bitten child.

- d. Say “Biting hurts people, here, bite on this.” Give the child a teething toy.
 - e. Ignore it and whisk child away to go home.
- 5. Your 3-year-old won’t stay in her toddler bed at bedtime.
 - a. You let the child stay up with you until she falls asleep.
 - b. You lock the child’s bedroom door and endure two hours of screaming and crying because she has to learn to sleep on her own.
 - c. You tell the child to go to sleep on the living room couch close to where you are working and move her to her bed later.
 - d. You stay with the child in her own bed until she falls asleep so she won’t feel abandoned.
 - e. You tell the nanny to let her cry it out – she can cope with it.
- 6. Your 4-year-old son hits the new baby.
 - a. You give the son love, hugs and kisses because he is probably feeling left out.
 - b. You punish the child for hurting the baby.
 - c. You say a sharp “NO!” You pick up the baby and cuddle it while ignoring the child.
 - d. You protect the baby and ignore the child. Later, you give the child extra attention when he is behaving well.
 - e. You put the child in time-out for the rest of the day.
- 7. You have a three-month-old baby that you are trying to regulate his eating schedule. It hasn’t been four hours since he ate and he is making sucking noises in anticipation of food.
 - a. You think the baby looks thin, and offer ice cream to fatten him up.
 - b. You let the baby cry because it’s not time to eat yet, and baby must learn that food comes on a schedule. Delayed self-gratification is good to learn.
 - c. You realize that baby might be on a growth spurt and feed him anyways.
 - d. You let the baby demand feed and feed him again anyways.
 - e. You don’t notice any of baby’s hunger cues. He might just be grumpy.
- 8. Your 6-month-old baby keeps waking up in the night to feed after sleeping through the night for a few weeks.

- a. You give her a bottle of formula and breast milk and play with her until she is sleepy again, even though you are very tired.
 - b. You must train her to not wake up for food. You let her cry, but go in and comfort her at various intervals of time, and refuse to hold her.
 - c. You feed her, comfort her and put her back down to sleep in the crib, emphasizing that night time is sleep time, not playtime. You keep comforting her in the crib until she falls asleep.
 - d. You bring her in to bed with you and feed her while the two of you fall back asleep.
 - e. You make sure she is safe, but you refuse to feed her, and shut the door. You let her cry it out however long it takes.
9. Your 4-year-old is a picky eater and won't touch most things.
- a. You make 3 different meals that the child asks for and sighs when she doesn't eat it.
 - b. You make her sit at the table until she eats 4 bites, even if it takes hours. She has to learn that food is expensive and you are not a short order cook.
 - c. You have a 1 bite rule. Just taste it and if she doesn't like it, she leaves it.
 - d. You offer food but don't force the issue or time – when she's hungry she'll come and eat what is offered.
 - e. She can fend for herself. She is old enough to make her own meals.
10. Your 3-year-old girl wants a candy treat in the supermarket.
- a. You buy her the treat when she threatens a tantrum.
 - b. You slap her hands when she whines for a treat and then spank her when she tantrums.
 - c. You ignore the tantrum and acknowledge her feelings after it's over, but don't buy the candy.
 - d. You say "help yourself" to any of the healthy food in the cart and let the ensuing tantrum happen. Comfort the child but don't buy the treat.
 - e. You never take the girl shopping.
11. Your 5-year-old throws a candy wrapper in the street while on a walk.
- a. You pick up the wrapper for him.
 - b. You slap the child on the hand and order him to pick it up.
 - c. You firmly ask the child to pick it up.

- d. You say, "I don't like to see garbage on the street" and wait for him to pick it up. He hates waiting.
 - e. You don't see the child throw the wrapper or ignore it when he does.
12. Your 18-month-old is not showing any interest in using the potty. You need her toilet trained so she can start pre-school at 2.
- a. You bribe her with Smarties if she sits on the potty for you.
 - b. You force her to sit on the potty every hour whether she wants to or not. You pack away all diapers against her protest to use them.
 - c. You encourage her interest by getting a fancy potty and underpants.
 - d. You carefully look at the signs of readiness and decide that she doesn't have them and decide to wait a few months for potty training and preschool.
 - e. You skip the idea of preschool and hire a full time nanny.

SCHOOL-AGED CHILDREN 6-12 years

13. Your 10-year-old son watches so much TV that he has asked to eat meals in front of it. You decide to do something about the situation.
- a. You buy him a special TV tray so you can serve every meal in front of the TV.
 - b. You turn the TV off for at least a week.
 - c. You let him choose one show for eating lunch but dinner must be eaten at the table.
 - d. You sit down with son and problem-solve meal times and TV times so that son is not watching TV while eating but doesn't miss his favourite shows.
 - e. You are not at home for dinner or lunch so it doesn't matter what your son does for meals.
14. Your six-year-old boy won't pick up his toys when asked several times.
- a. You bribe him with more toys if he would pick them up. He doesn't, so you clean them up.
 - b. You threaten to throw the toys out or give them away if he doesn't pick them up.
 - c. You ask him if he would like to clean up before dinner or after dinner. He chooses and you make him stick to the promise.
 - d. You start picking them up yourself and ask him to come join you.
 - e. You get the nanny to pick them up later.

15. Your 7-year-old daughter needs new jeans. In the shop, the ones she chooses are not appropriate.
- You buy them for her to keep the peace.
 - You tell her to forget the jeans and go home.
 - She can choose 3 of her favourite and you pick one of the 3.
 - You give her money so she can shop later with a list of guidelines from you.
 - What jeans? The nanny shops with her.
16. Your 9-year-old refuses to attend church.
- You promise he can stay up an extra hour on Sundays if he attends.
 - You carry him into the car and drag him into church. If he puts up a fuss, you spank him.
 - You and he look at a calendar and he can choose two of the four Sundays to attend.
 - You live your life showing the benefits of church membership for you and hope that he chooses those benefits for himself, but don't force him to attend.
 - You don't go to church, so you don't care if he does.
17. You are helping your 11-year-old daughter decorate her bedroom and she wants your hated mauve color as her bedroom wall color.
- You paint the walls the hated mauve color.
 - You choose the color. It's your house.
 - You and daughter look together for a color you both like and try to include some mauve accessories for her room.
 - You let your daughter choose the mauve but you choose the flooring and rest of the house colors. It's her room and you can shut the door.
 - Let her choose. She's doing the painting and it's no big deal.
18. Your 11-year-old daughter and 9-year-old son are fighting on the family car trip.
- You buy them candy if they promise to settle down and be quiet.
 - You threaten to hit them if they don't get along.

- c. You acknowledge each others feelings and work out the solution to the problem.
 - d. You put in ear plugs, let them sort it out, and step in when they ask you to.
 - e. You vacation without your children.
19. Your 8-year-old hits his friend when his friend grabbed his favourite sword.
- a. You see no problem. Your son was provoked.
 - b. You spank your son and demand that he apologize for hitting.
 - c. You separate the two children and firmly tell your son that hitting was not appropriate. Tell son to calm down and to apologize when he is ready and if he apologizes, he can play again.
 - d. You ignore your son and shower the friends with attention. Later, you speak to your son about anger and ways to deal with it. You suggest to him to apologize but don't insist.
 - e. You pretend you didn't see anything because you honestly don't know what to do.
20. You are very tired and your 9-year-old wants to play Nintendo with you.
- a. Say that you will buy that new game your son has been wanting if you can rest instead of playing.
 - b. You respond with "Don't even ask. Can't you see that I'm tired?"
 - c. You ask for a rest now, and then play after supper.
 - d. You find something that you both like to do and is rejuvenating for you.
 - e. Say "no" and ignore his disappointment. Promise you'll play later knowing that your son will forget by then.
21. Your 8 year old won't do his weekly chores.
- a. You don't worry about it. You will do it later.
 - b. Punish the child by taking away his allowance.
 - c. Sit with the child and problem-solve it. Is the chore too hard? How to make it easier for him to do.
 - d. Realize that he hates emptying the dishwasher. Negotiate for a chore he doesn't mind doing that still needs to be done.
 - e. The housecleaning person takes care of it.
22. You have the boss and his wife over for dinner. Your 6 and 7 year old boys are talking obnoxiously to gain everyone's attention.

- a. You quietly promise them extra dessert if they quit it.
- b. You take them to the kitchen and ground them for a month.
- c. You take them to the kitchen, and say "I feel embarrassed when you talk like that in front of guests. Please stop now!"
- d. You take them to the kitchen, and say "I don't like that behaviour in front of guests." Then divert them to another activity.
- e. You get a babysitter for them and feed them earlier.

Your 6 year old child is angry because you denied him a sleepover.

- a. Orders to cheer up or else.
- b. Acknowledge feelings but still deny the sleepover
- c. Acknowledges feelings and problem solves alternatives
- d. Mom caves to anger and allows the sleepover
- e. Child goes because mom is not around to ask permission.

23. Your 9 year old son left his Gameboy on a bus. He's very sad at the loss.

- a. You buy him a new one plus a game so he will be happy again.
- b. You tell the child to "suck it up, Mister!" and secretly hope that he learned his lesson.
- c. You acknowledge his feelings of sadness and offer to drive him to the lost and found at the bus station if he does your work to make up the time.
- d. You acknowledge his feelings of sadness and ask what he can do to get it back.
- e. You didn't realize that your son owned a Gameboy.

24. Your 10 year old constantly won't do his homework.

- a. You do it for him.
- b. You take away TV, Gaming and ground him until he does it.
- c. You ask the child and the teacher what parts of homework he has problems with and the 3 of you work together.
- d. You work with him side by side to ensure that he understands the work and follows through with commitments.
- e. You let the nanny deal with homework and hide when the teacher calls for you.

TEENAGE CHILDREN Ages 13-19

25. Your 14 year old daughter is watching a movie in your house with her friends. You walk by as she swears.

- a. You ignore the swear word even if you don't like it. Teenagers swear and besides, the friend probably put her up to it.
- b. You march into the room, and drag her out to wash her mouth out with soap.
- c. You respond with an immediate strong I-message. "I'm upset when I hear swearing in my house."
- d. In the moment, you ignore it. In private, you discuss appropriate times and places for swearing. Request that your presence and house is off limits for swearing.
- e. Ignore it. What the child does with her friends is none of your business.

26. Your 18 year old daughter won't consider going to university.

- a. You bribe the child with a car if she finishes a degree program.
- b. You threaten to kick the child out of the house and give no financial support unless she goes.
- c. Problem solve why she doesn't want to go and come to a mutual consensus of choosing some kind of post secondary education in a field of her choosing.
- d. You provide consultation to the child of the financial and social benefits of earning a degree over the working lifetime, and leave the decision up to the child.
- e. She's an adult. If she wants to leave home and not go to school, then you get her room for an office!

27. Your 13 year old daughter wants to get a puppy.

- a. Say "yes" even though you hate dogs and always end up caring for the pets your children bring home.
- b. Say "no" and send back the puppy.
- c. Say "no", acknowledge your daughters feelings of sadness and frustration and discuss possibility of lesser care pets.
- d. Recognize that the child is more responsible in other areas and contract that the child will care for this puppy or the puppy will go to another home.
- e. You didn't know that she wanted a puppy because she never mentioned it to you.

28. Your 12 year old son is sulking because you wouldn't let him go on a sleepover with a friend that you think is a bad influence.

- a. You apologize to him, let him go on the sleepover, and offer restitution so he won't be mad at you.

- b. You say, "Wipe that sulk off your face or I'll give you something to sulk about."
 - c. You acknowledge his feelings of disappointment and suggest an alternative.
 - d. You state your concerns about the friend in a one-time consultation or during a positive connection time and let him decide if he goes, knowing how you feel about it.
 - e. You son's friends are none of your business, so he can make the choice.
29. Your 13 year old son refuses to take piano lessons anymore. He has gone to grade 7 piano and you feel that he should continue.
- a. You promise to do his homework if he will go to lessons and practice.
 - b. You force him to attend, despite his protests. You promise a treat if he does well practicing.
 - c.
 - d. You give him a year off if he continues next year.
 - e. You give him information of the benefits of music and possible careers and let him decide what to do.
 - f. You agree. It took a lot of time driving him and now you don't have to.
30. Your 16 year old defiant child loses driving privileges due to failure to gas up the car. He sneaks out to drive the car again without permission.
- a. You forget the curfew and pay for the gas. He's only young once.
 - b. You double ground the child, take away his allowance and ban TV for the month.
 - c. You ground the child for a week and make him pay for the gas.
 - d. You sit down with the child and discuss why he didn't pay for gas and why your trust in him is eroded. You discuss with him several ways he can earn your trust back and the driving privileges.
 - e. Ignore the whole thing and pretend you didn't notice. The house is peacefully quiet when he's gone.
31. Your 2 year old is going through major separation anxiety when ever you leave him.
- a. You bribe him with a cookie if he doesn't cry when you leave.
 - b. You yell at him to stop crying and be a big boy. It's very annoying when he carries on like that.

- c. You acknowledge his feelings, leave him with your scarf, say goodbye and hug him, and walk out, even though he's screaming.
- d. You consider that this is a stage that he will get through faster if he feels secure and decide to minimize separations for a while.
- e. You leave. You have to work. Period. He'll get used to it.

Scoring:

A's If you chose mostly A answers, you tend to parent in the Indulgent Parenting Style.

B's If you chose mostly B answers, you tend to parent in the Authoritarian Parenting Style.

C's If you chose mostly C answers, you tend to parent in the Authoritative parenting Style.

D's If you chose mostly D answers, you tend to parent in the Collaborative Parenting style.

E's If you chose mostly E answers, you tend to parent in the Uninvolved Parenting Style.

Parenting styles are reflections of the following criteria:

Expectations

Rules

Decision-making and who does it

Discipline tools

Parenting Goals

Many parenting authors use different descriptions for the various parenting styles:

Barbara Coloroso, of *Kids Are Worth It*, defines the Brickwall (Authoritarian) Backbone (Democratic) and Jellyfish (Permissive).

Jean Illsley Clarke of *Self-Esteem: A Family Affair*, defines Criticizing (Authoritarian) Structuring and Nurturing (Democratic) and Marshmallowing (Permissive).

Dr. Michael Popkin of *Active Parenting*, uses Autocratic (Authoritarian), Active (Democratic) and Permissive (Permissive).

Dr. Thomas Gordon, of *Parent Effectiveness Training* uses Authoritarian, Democratic and Permissive.

Adele Faber and Elaine Mazlish of *How to Talk So Kids Will Listen and How to Listen So Kids Will Talk*, uses authoritarian, respectful, permissive descriptions.

Parenting Styles Quick Characteristics

Authoritarian Parenting Style

Copyright 2011 Professional Parenting Canada www.professionalparenting.ca
 Judy Arnall ~All Rights Reserved~ May not be reproduced without permission

- Parent makes most decisions for the child, and sets goals for the child.
- Parent's needs are more important than the child's needs.
- Parent makes all the rules for the child and the rules are non-negotiable and rigidly enforced.
- Parenting tools used are punishments, and behaviour modification techniques such as reinforcements, extinguishment and ignoring. Tools may include sarcasm, shunning, ridicule and embarrassment.
- Consequences are logical, natural and tend to be punitive.
- Children learn that love is highly conditional.
- Children learn what to think instead of how to think, and are easily manipulated.
- Children must obey without question and often comply due to fear of the parent.
- Family life is rigid and very structured.
- Parents may or may not give warmth, comfort and nurturing.
- Educational choices are traditional, classical, and a hierarchical school model which mirrors a hierarchical family with definite rewards and punishments bestowed from adults to children.
- Parents give many orders.
- Respect is one way from child to parent, but not mutual.
- Mistakes are viewed as bad rather than learning tools.
- Feelings such as anger, fear, insecurity, sadness and most uncomfortable feelings are not allowed to be expressed in the child. Comfortable feelings are okay to feel and express.
- In win-lose battles, parents win.
- Child compliance is valued more important than a close parent-child relationship.

Authoritative Parenting Style

- Parents make most decisions and sets goals with consideration of the child's input.
- Parent and child needs are equally important and they strive to meet both at the same time, although parent's needs will triumph when true conflict presents itself.
- Logical consequences are constructed to teach the child lessons. Might not be solution based – may be punitive.
- Parents make most of the rules with the child's input, and some are negotiable. They are simply and clearly stated.
- Enforcement of rules may involve "Lite" punishments such as timed time-outs, logical consequences, grounding, withdrawal of privileges but not physical punishments.

- The parents acknowledge the feelings of the child, but what the parent says goes.
- Parenting tools are communication skills, negotiating, and problem-solving as well as some behaviour modification techniques such as reinforcement, ignoring, and praising. Family life is a balance with structure and flexibility.
- Parents discipline using “Lite” punishments with firmness but also warmth and nurturing.
- Educational choices are mainstream school with teachers and principals at the top of the hierarchy. School models may include child-centered education but within the framework of authority of adults, enforced by some punishments but not physical punishments.
- Parents give many choices.
- Mutual respect is present.
- Love is unconditional.
- Parents give warmth, comfort and nurturing.
- Mistakes are learning opportunities.
- Children are taught how to think in addition to what to think.
- All feelings are accepted, however, limits on behavior.
- In parent-child battles, parents win but children have input.
- Emphasis on relationship rather than compliance, but compliance is still highly sought after.
- The main difference between this style and the collaborative style is that the parent will use light punishment with children. Children are still treated differently in comparison to other people of different ages and relationships. In the Collaborative style, no punishment is used at all, in the same manner as all other relationships such as neighbor, friend, relative, employer, and partner.

Collaborative Parenting Style

- Collaborative parenting involves the child’s opinions, feelings, and age-appropriate decisions. Parents don’t hand the power of parenting over to the child, like giving the child the whole rope, but instead, give the child a longer end of the rope to handle independence under the watchful presence and guidance of the parent.
- Parents lends experience, and knowledge, but allows the child freedom to learn, practice, and make mistakes more so then the Authoritative parenting style.
- Parents let the child make most of the decisions as they can handle for their age, and sets goals for themselves but with the parent’s guidance and involvement.
- Parent’s and child’s needs are equally important and they strive to meet both at the same time. The parents set few rules except for safety rules, and almost all rules are negotiable. Rules may not always be enforced,

- but may be re-negotiated. Enforcement of rules involves solving the problem rather than arbitrary consequences or punishments.
- Parents give their child as much freedom as possible except for physically dangerous situations.
 - Natural consequences teach the natural order of life. Logical consequences are solution based and never designed or intended to be punitive in order to “teach a lesson.”
 - The parents acknowledge the feelings of the child and works with the child to find solutions acceptable to both.
 - Parenting tools are communication skills, problem-solving, natural consequences and facilitation of learning.
 - Family life is somewhat structured but parent involvement is high.
 - Educational choices may be alternative styles which include Montessori, Waldorf, and other non-coercive type of schooling including unschooling, self-directed and child-led learning.
 - Parents give many choices.
 - Mutual respect is present.
 - Love is unconditional.
 - Parents give warmth, comfort and nurturing.
 - Mistakes are learning opportunities.
 - Children are taught how to think, rather than what to think, and are taught to brainstorm and problem-solve.
 - All feelings are accepted although there are limits on behaviours that damage other people or property.
 - In win-lose battles, both the parents and children work together to win.
 - Emphasis is on relationship building rather than child compliance.
 - Children are treated as respectfully as other relationships outside the family.

Indulgent Parenting Style

- Children receive too many material items and too much of anything that is not healthy in moderation.
- Parents try to shield children from all possible difficult or unpleasant experiences.
- Parents work to shield children from natural and logical consequences of their actions.
- Education choices may be any type, with excessive volunteering of the parent and helicopter-type parenting. Parents often do the child’s homework and projects.
- Parents require no contributions from the child in the form of chores, financial help, educational attainment or employment.
- Second, third and fourth and many chances are given often, if rules are enforced.

- Parents give in on most conflicts.
- Parents give warmth, comfort and nurturing.
- Children have no respect for parents.
- Child's love for parents is conditional.
- Mistakes are ignored or not discussed.
- Children are not heard or discussed. Reaction rather than thinking.
- Feelings control behaviours without limits. No limits on behavior
- Uncomfortable or negative feelings such as anger, and frustration are avoided at all costs, including giving in to what the child wants.
- In power struggles and battles, the child wins most often.
- Emphasis is on making the child happy, rather than building the relationship.

Uninvolved Parenting Style

- Does not require respect or contribution from the child.
- Indulges the child, makes few demands.
- Parents are as removed as possible from their children's lives.
- Children get almost no supervision or direction from their parents.
- Parenting tools involves inconsistent bribes, threats, and punishments and emotional and physical unavailability.
- Family life is non-existent. Children and parents live separate lives but in close physical proximity.
- Children learn that love is conditional.
- Education choices are mainstream school with no volunteering or involvement of the parent, and possibly boarding schools.
- Mistakes are not discussed.
- Children's opinions and discussions are non-existent or not heard.
- Individual's feelings are not noticed.
- Conflicts are not discussed or acknowledged.
- No nurturing, warmth, or comfort is given by parents.
- No relationship present.

3

Chapter Three: Child Styles

Who is my travel buddy in the maze?

The other half of the parenting relationship is...Your Child! Parents, who believe in the Nurture Theory of Parenting, that you have a moldable person that you can sculpt into a work of art, tend to have only one child. Parents, who believe in the Nature Theory of Parenting, that kids are formed as soon as that sperm enters the egg, with a distinct personality and temperament, are parents that have more than one child! All children in a family are so different from each other.

Age and Developmental Stage

YOUR BABY'S DEVELOPMENTAL STAGE

From the ages of birth to one year, your baby is in the “being” stage of development. His job or tasks that he must accomplish this year is to develop trust, be loved, be recognized by his caregivers, and form attachments with the major caring person in his life. He needs to learn to trust his parents and caregivers to meet his needs and learn that the world is a safe, predictable, and good place to be.

Typical baby behaviors

- Cries and fusses to make needs known and communicate feelings.
- May cry incessantly at times where the cause can't be uncovered.
- Cuddles and sleeps.
- Makes a lot of sounds, such as gurgling, screeching, and babbling.
- Looks at and responds to faces, eyes, colors, and moving objects.
- Imitates those around him.
- Explores his surroundings with all of his five senses (see, hear, touch, taste, smell) as he gets more mobile; puts many objects in his mouth to taste them.

YOUR TODDLER'S DEVELOPMENTAL STAGE

Your toddler is in the “doing” developmental stage. She is quite mobile and curious and that will propel her to explore everything! This is very normal and necessary for her developing brain. She is experientially learning through her senses what her brain will be processing abstractly years later.

Most parents believe that REAL discipline starts at the toddler stage, when they are up and getting into things. Parents believe if they don't nip many behaviors in the bud at this stage, the behaviors will grow and become monstrous later on and their children will be destined to become criminals because they were too lenient when they were toddlers. NOT TRUE! The toddler stage is not a stage for real reasoning yet. They are just beginning to learn they can't have their way all the time. Hence, the reason for the temper tantrums experienced in the toddler

years. The toddler's physical development allows for lots of freedom and access to danger, yet his brain development has no self-control, internal restraints, logical reasoning, or negotiation.

This is critical. The most parents can do at this stage is keep the toddler safe by childproofing, supervision, and teach by redirection and substitution. The good news is the toddler is still small enough to pick up and move around, away from danger and non-parent approved situations. Real teaching and discipline can come later in the preschool years, when brain development is much more advanced.

Typical toddler behaviors

- Cries, whines, fusses to make needs known and communicate feelings.
- Is becoming aware of himself as a separate person and wants to explore but with the security of a home base.
- Expresses negative feelings with body language in the form of screaming, temper tantrums, crying and flailing.
- Likes to say the word "No!"
- Likes to cuddle and cling to safe parents and people.
- Expresses separation anxiety when parents leave.
- May be picky eaters and dislike separation at bedtime.
- Explores his surroundings with all of his five senses (see, hear, touch, taste, smell) as he gets more mobile; puts many objects in his mouth to taste them.

YOUR PRESCHOOLER'S DEVELOPMENTAL STAGE

Preschoolers are a fun bunch! They are easier to talk to, share play with, and are really growing into little people with opinions and quirks. They are starting to follow instructions about half the time. This is the age where real discipline starts. Their brains are learning so much during this time and their social world is expanding to include preschool, teachers, play dates, friends, friends' parents, and neighbors. They are starting to appreciate differences in the rules, customs, food, and the way things are done. They like simple jokes and unusual twists and they provide a lot of fun and play in parenting.

Preschoolers are in the "thinking" stage of development. Their minds are expanding and growing and they have a bit more restraint in their bodies, but still not a whole lot of self-control. One mom was describing how she was rushing out the door while saying "Hurry up, we are late again!" and her four-year-old son replied, "What does 'late' mean, Mommy?" It shows how even at four, a child is unable to know abstract concepts such as time.

Typical preschooler behaviors

- Learns the difference between reality and fantasy.

- Tests reality and fantasy through experimentation and experiences natural consequences of their behavior.
- Becomes aware of power – which person has it, how it's used, and how to get it. Starts learning about power by watching and engaging in power struggles with peers, siblings, and parents.
- Begins to learn socially acceptable behavior by watching models. Learning basic information about the world, himself, his body, his role, and how things work. Learning who he is and how he is in relation to other people in his world.
- Beginning to learn about rules. Young children under five follow rules less than half the time. It's normal and developmentally appropriate.
- Engages in fantasy play with imaginary companions. Tries on different identity roles by imaginary play with other children, dress up clothes, etc.
- May lie as a result of wishful thinking and fantasy, not malice.

YOUR SCHOOL-AGED CHILD'S DEVELOPMENTAL STAGE

There is a reason that children don't start their formal education until age six. Their brains are not mature enough to handle formal learning. So why do we expect children zero to five to instantly learn and behave from discipline, when we know they can't remember four times five yet? If the preschool years are the time to start learning social rules, the school-aged years are prime years for teaching right from wrong and how to fit into their families, communities, and the world. They are not into the hormonally charged emotional years of teenager age and have enough brain capacity to understand basic logic and reasoning behind the rules. They are young enough to not pay dearly for mistakes, yet old enough to solve problems. They have quite a bit of self-control and moral thinking. They still see parents as the center of their universe and still want to please them. **These are the best years to teach and guide.**

School-age refers to children aged six to 12. Preteen also refers to children aged nine to 12. In this section, I have included preteens in the larger category of school-aged, yet made distinctions where necessary. This is the stage of learning about structure and organizational skills. Children are in the prime years of developing life, academic, and hobby skills. Sports, activities, and friends take up a larger portion of their time.

Typical school-aged behaviors

- Develop skills through activities, sports, chores, and education.
- Experiments with structure, learns time management, scheduling, and deadlines.
- Learns about consequences of their actions.
- Needs to experiment with and explore social rules and roles. They learn to argue, question, and honor rules. They also learn to test and negotiate rules.

- What are they for? How are they made? What happens when rules are broken?
- How different are other families' rules?
- Make lots of mistakes and learn how to solve problems.
- Needs to try out her own values and ways of doing things to get her needs met.
- Needs to disagree with others and find out they are still friends.
- Needs to learn to separate reality from fantasy.

YOUR TEENAGER'S DEVELOPMENTAL STAGE

Mention the word “teenagers” and roll your eyes in the midst of a group of parents, and you'll get the same moans and groans of sympathy as you would in the toddler phase. There is plenty of anecdotal evidence from parents that if you can survive the moody, rebellious, argumentative, door-slamming behaviors of your teenager, then you can survive anything!

I believe most rebellion and power struggles among teenagers and their parents result from the lack of change of discipline techniques and parenting styles that should occur when children grow, particularly the use of non-punitive discipline from the time children are born. Some tools used with a toddler can be inappropriate with teens. Although, some tools are appropriate all through the ages, some do work better with certain ages than others. For example, have you ever tried to distract a teenager? It's more difficult! If the parent uses respectful techniques, from toddlerhood on, they are more likely to have teens that don't need to rebel or engage in power struggles. The problem occurs when parents use punishments and bribes liberally through the school-aged years, and then find out those methods aren't working anymore with the children who are more resourceful and bigger than they.

There is plenty of research that shows a warm and nurturing parenting style with reasonable expectations is linked to better outcomes for children, such as school achievement, self-esteem, and peer relationship connections. The existing research also shows that democratic, nurturing, and non-punitive parenting supports close parent-child relationships. I personally have found that children whose parents rely mostly on the communication tools such as negotiation, problem-solving, and modeling tools seldom have rebellious children.

The lack of research on teenagers is probably due to the ingrained use of behavior modification type punishments in our society. It would be quite difficult to find parents that never, ever used punishments in the raising of their children, unless we look outside Western culture.

However, there are plenty of studies that also show teen rebellion, risk behavior, and crime are linked to harsh physical punishment and neglect. Some anecdotal evidence comes from the home-schooling community. It's interesting to see the peer pressure that engulfs school teens is relegated to the sidelines in home-schooled teens. Family is still front and center in their lives. I've noticed the influence and warmth of family togetherness is still a priority in some home-schooled families' lives with teenagers. I'm hoping that someone will put together some studies someday to compare the differences. Even in families whose children attend school, I've seen close parent-child relationships if the parenting style was nurturing and collaborative. It's even more important in non-home-schooling families due to increased amounts of peer pressure.

The problem is that it's very difficult for parents to change their parenting style in the school years. This is where most parents fall down. Parents are too embarrassed to attend courses and tend to go for counseling, which is a reactive approach when problems become too severe, rather than a proactive approach from taking classes and learning better communication tools.

Books are always saying be consistent, yet, we wouldn't buy our children the same style, color, or size of clothing in the teen years as the toddler. We don't advocate consistency in clothes buying, why would we for discipline tools? Parents must change and be willing to be open to new ideas of parenting. Even better if it's before their children turn nine and stop communicating in the preteen/teen years. The teen years are so different in this generation. Teens' hormones and emotional changes account for much of the moodiness, sensitivity, and distraction of the teen years. Rules work better when the child respects you and that respect comes back for them also. Harsh restrictions and authoritarian parenting sometimes backfire, because teens become bigger, and more capable.

If you have been using the respectful parenting tools until the teen years, your teen should not have many special behavior concerns, such as drug use, eating disorders, sexual activity, school problems, suicide, or criminal behavior. It's important to remember that most teens experiment with those behaviors once or twice, but most do not make it a habit and quickly drop them or learn from them.

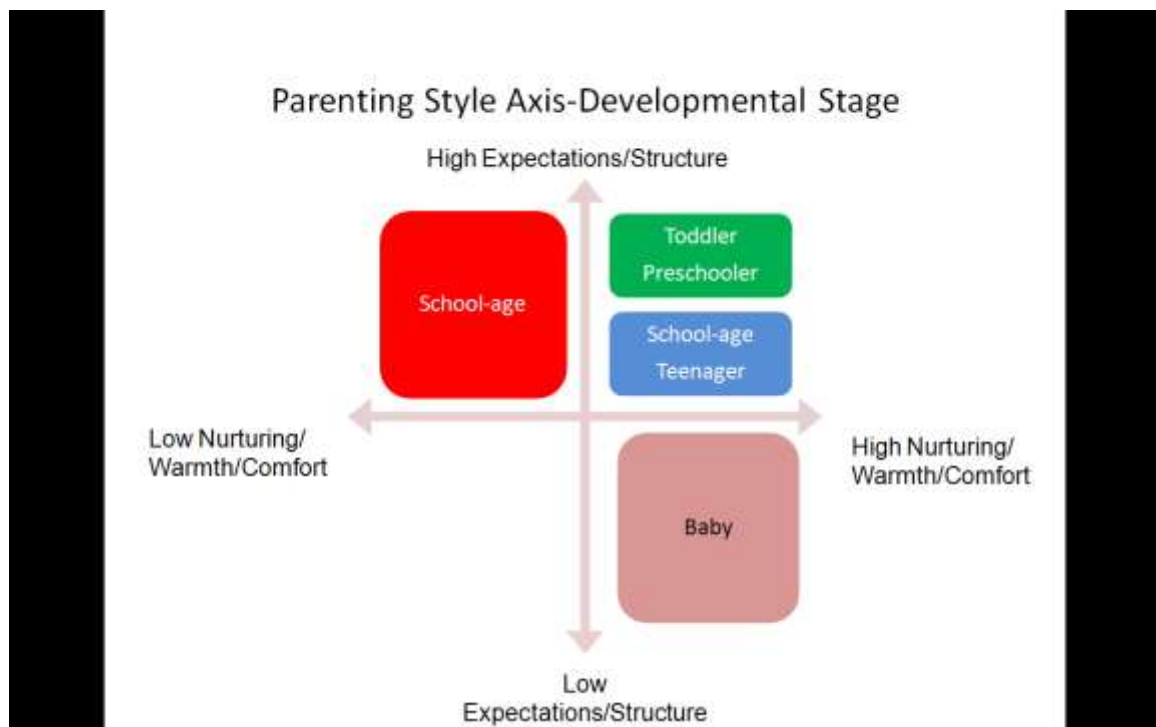
If your teen has gone beyond experimentation and is engaging in those behaviors habitually, it's time to get professional help through government agencies, psychologists, counselors, and doctors.

All relationships are about give and take. Not about who wins and who loses. The parent-child relationship is also a love relationship no different from the other love relationships in life. Compromise and negotiation is necessary more now than ever, yet many parents think that the teen years is the time to crack down and get more serious about rules.

Your teenager is in the Identity, Separation, and Sexuality developmental stage. It's a time of pulling away from parents and family and learning to shape their own lives.

Typical teenager behaviors

- The teenager's job is to experiment with sexuality and their changing body.
- They need to develop their own philosophy, values, and beliefs systems.
- They need to learn about work and life skills and prepare for entry in the adult world.
- They need to make mistakes and learn from them.
- They need to find out who they are as a person and in relation to the world.
- They need to separate from the family and emerge as a separate, but interdependent person, who takes responsibility for his own needs, feelings, and behaviors.
- Teens can regress to behaviors of earlier stages. They will act very grown up one minute and very childish the next. This is totally normal!



Temperament

We used to think babies were born as blank slates and could be molded, changed, and taught, depending on the parenting style. Now we know that children definitely come out of the womb with their own personalities and temperament. Temperament is the “how much” of personality. It’s the intensity. Dr. Stella Chess and Dr. Alexander Thomas did wonderful ground-breaking work on temperament traits. They categorized three types of temperament and focused on eight areas that children differ in temperament.

Three types of temperament:

- Easy going or low keyed – 40 percent of children
- Slow to warm – 15 percent of children
- Spirited or high need – 10-15 percent of children

An easygoing child may have a mild temper tantrum and is easily distracted when they don’t get a candy bar at the store. A high needs child will have a violent, screaming, thrashing tantrum that won’t settle for an hour if they don’t get the candy bar. Most high-need, “strong willed” children can be very challenging for their parents. They don’t need more discipline, they need greater understanding.

These are on a continuum. A low persistence child will be easygoing, but a very persistent child will be on the spirited side of temperament. It’s important to remember that temperament is no indication of parenting style. A high need baby will grow into a high need child and no difference in parenting will change that.

Eight Areas of Temperament	Easy Going Child	High Need Child
Persistence	Loses interest	Pushes to continue
Sensitivity	Not bothered	Bothered by noise, crowds, stimulation, light, smells, textures, fabrics, taste and sensory input
Adaptability	Easily adjusts	Bothered by surprises, transitions and change
Intensity	Mild reactions	Intense, violent reactions to nightmares, protests, temper tantrums
Regularity	Predictable patterns in eating, sleeping, toileting	Unpredictable
Activity level		
First reaction	Jumps in easily to participate with new ideas, places and people	Very cautious
Mood	Even-keeled and	Unpredictable, and

	predictable	changes rapidly
--	-------------	-----------------

So, easy going children are easily distractible (great for toddlers), not bothered by noise and light, so they sleep anywhere and eat anything. Easily adaptable, they travel well and are easily moved between caregivers. They have mild tantrums and usually recover from hurts very fast. They are easily put on a schedule and have regular eating, sleep periods, and potty times. They sit still for long periods in baby carriers and do not get bored easily. They participate easily in new activities and wake up happy and gurgling.

Parenting is generally easy for these children in that they respond most times and get over unhappiness fairly quickly. Because they adapt well to the adult world of schedules and conventions, they are easy to mold into a family life.

Slow to warm children are somewhere in the middle. They are stronger in some areas of temperament and less so in others.

Spirited, strong-willed, or high need children do not easily fit in the adult world and may be perceived as needing more discipline, but this is not true. What they need is more adaptation in the adult world to meet their unique needs.

High need children are not easily distractible, so it's hard to use distraction as a discipline tool. They are bothered by noisy crowds and stimulating environments, often becoming over-stimulated and stressed, and need to shake off the anxiety with a temper tantrum or two. They are slow to adapt to new situations and don't transition very well. They have intense reactions to injustices, with massive tantrums that may include vomiting and head banging. They are very irregular and difficult to schedule. They have a high level of activity and never sit still. They are constantly on the go and into things. They won't stay in strollers, car-seats, or carriers. As babies, they want to be held most of the time or changed from carrier to carrier often. They often approach activities carefully. Their mood is very irregular, changing from minute to minute. They will be cranky one minute and happier the next.

As babies, they cry a lot even when all the reasons have been checked by the parent.

High need babies and children need extra effort in empathic, collaborative parenting. Let's look closer at the high need spirited child, because, often they present extra problems in discipline.

The spirited child (high need) characteristics

Babies:

- Want to be held all the time
- Doesn't schedule well for eating, sleeping, and toileting

- Cry for no “apparent” reason
- React strongly against sleep training
- Won’t stay for long in carriers, strollers and restraints

Toddlers and preschoolers:

- Smart – won’t play with toys, mostly real items
- Frustration tolerance slower to develop
- Every day is unpredictable
- Mood swings in minutes
- Wakes up generally unhappy and crying
- Early night terrors and awakenings
- Severe separation anxiety
- Goes through most daily requirements: dressing, diaper changing, meals, bath, or tooth-brushing with negativity
- Clings in new situations and with strange people
- Wants to do everything themselves
- Not easily distractible
- Violent, intense tantrums
- Very active for the age
- Picky eater
- They are THE BOSS and things have to be done their way, in their time.
- Still requires a lot of attention and physical contact

School-aged:

- Very structured and needs routines
- Better tempered if gets adequate sleep and food
- Very determined in needs and wants
- May dislike clothing blends
- Requires a lot of physical contact
- May still have temper tantrums if goals thwarted
- May still have periods of separation anxiety and clinginess
- Need a lot of control over their lives
- Usually very intelligent
- Sensitive to others feelings and needs

Teenagers:

- Not easily swayed by peers
- Requires a lot of physical contact with loved ones
- Moodiness is intense
- Determined and self-directed
- Handles responsibility well and has perfected coping skills
- Is suited for leadership and initiative roles
- Sensitive to others feelings and needs

Discipline for spirited children

Do you have a child that when you send to time-out, you have to close the door and hold the knob? Even then, he's throwing books, blocks, and Lego™ at the door in anger? Do you have a child that sneaks out the bedroom window when he is grounded for the week? Do you have a child that when you spank her, she says, "that didn't hurt one bit!" and you know that if you spanked her harder, you are so angry, you may never stop?

You probably are raising a spirited child. They have many wonderful qualities and a keen sense of self-determination and autonomy. Yet, they are also very clingy in the early years. They do best with a very patient, non-controlling type of parent who will give them their direction and help them to make choices safely. Spirited children are not the ones you want to engage in a power struggle. Avoiding power struggles with them doesn't mean that you let them "win." It means that you are not even going to pick up the battle armor. You are taking a more quiet, guiding approach by being their mentor, coach, and protector, rather than their director, controller, or dictator. You understand their unique needs and are providing for them. Authoritarian parenting a spirited child means many unnecessary power struggles and is not ideal.

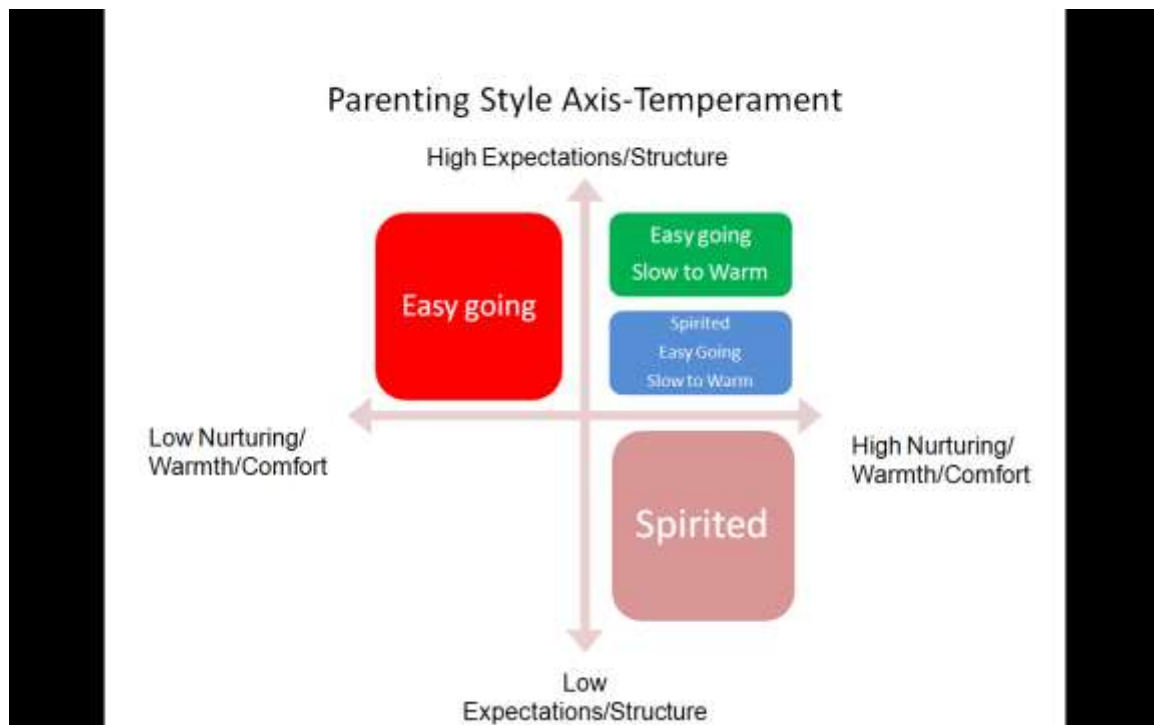
For spirited children, keep your "must uphold" rules to three. In our house, matters of 1) safety, 2) hitting and 3) mutual respect are absolute issues that I will notice and deal with, no matter how tired, sick, or worn down I feel, no matter how tired, angry, and frustrated my child is. That doesn't mean I will take action right away. It means the action will be dealt with at some point, except in the matters of safety, which requires immediate reaction. Of course, if a child insists on running out in the street, I will immediately grab them out of harms' way. But the teaching will come later. I will let everyone calm down for a while and then deal with it.

Ask yourself: is this an issue I'm willing to battle for? Don't worry about spoiling your child by backing down too much. Backing down on non-essential issues shows you are not willing to engage in power struggles. I have personally found that my three spirited children, around the age of 3.5 years, became more receptive to the word "no," as they were able to handle frustration in increasing amounts. Up until then, I used the "change the environment" discipline tool to avoid areas of frustration for them. Being so self-directed, they couldn't understand their physical and emotional limitations and if it was easier to avoid many direct confrontations in their day, then that's what we did. By about age four, they could handle more talking, negotiating, and the reasons behind their limitations, so it was much easier to teach and guide.

Spirited children also need their physical needs met regularly in order to stabilize their moods. Carry a juice box or a cracker package wherever you go so they have an instant low blood sugar remedy. It can avoid a meltdown. Regular

meals, naps and nighttime sleeps are important. As soon as they awake, a quick drink of juice helps temper their moods.

Allow spirited children their full range of emotions. Give them plenty of choices and decision-making powers. Give them a longer rope than you might for other children. They have an inborn need to have greater control over their lives. Don't worry about treating them differently than the rest of your children. They are unique and you have to treat all your children uniquely. Some have greater needs in certain areas than others. Your children will notice that each child's needs are met – not equally, but as they need it, and they will feel comforted and secure by that knowledge.



BIRTH ORDER

The place the child draws in the family has an effect on the child's perception of himself and who he is. We, parents and society, often label children. They feel they have to live up to that label in order to belong as part of the unit we call family.

Children have an inborn need to belong. If they perceive they only belong in a certain way, that's the way they act. Society and parents often have particular scripts for children to behave based on their birth order. Every parent is a different parent and has a different style to each child in the birth order.

Copyright 2011 Professional Parenting Canada www.professionalparenting.ca
Judy Arnall ~All Rights Reserved~ May not be reproduced without permission

First-born children

Traits: perfectionists, reliable, conscientious, critical, serious and self-reliant.

Parents tend to start with a parenting style that is authoritarian or authoritative because they read many books and begin to try out what the books tell them to do. Through trial and error, they figure out what works with one child may not work with the subsequent ones.

Middle-born children

Traits: mediators, sociable, independent, lots of friends, outside interests and a free spirit.

Parents adopt a more relaxed parenting style because they realize the children turn out fine even if they are inconsistent at times and break a few rules. Their style might be more of a collaborative or Indulgent style.

Youngest children

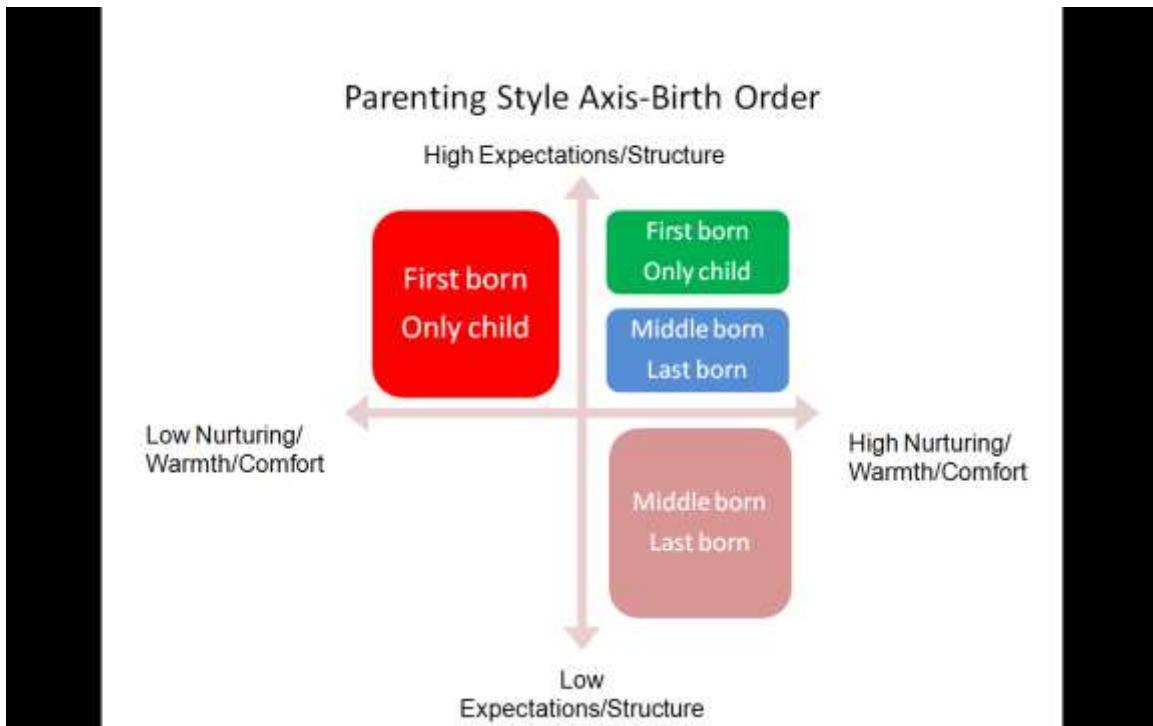
Traits: manipulative, charming, messy, blames others, precocious and rebellious.

By the time the youngest children get to rule breaking ages, parents are the most experienced they will ever be and have decided what works in their house and may loosen expectations and rules even more. They may use a collaborative style. Or, they may be tired from parenting a houseful and have let quite a few things slide due to exhaustion. Or, they may feel this is their last chance to spoil a child before the long years until grandchildren and may lean to an indulgent style. They also may be very busy, both ensconced in jobs or travel and default to a uninvolved style. Big families may be prone to this as it often falls on the siblings to parent the younger children.

Only children

Traits: self-centered, mature, popular, questions many things, reliable, perfectionist and adult-oriented.

Just like first borns, only children tend to have either, collaborative or authoritarian parents because parents have the energy and incentive to raise a “perfect” child. They may have the perception that they only have one chance to do it right and can’t afford to make mistakes, so they may lean to be overly-strict or want to invest the time and energy to a more collaborative approach.



GENDER

There has been a lot of research lately on gender differences and how the female and male brain is wired. Some skills and abilities are predominantly female wired and others are male. As much as we tried to herald a gender-neutral parenting environment, children still behave in different, gender related ways. Ask any parent who has hosted a birthday party for 10 girls and a separate party for 10 boys. You will be guaranteed there were definite differences observed!

There are structural and functional differences in boys and girls brains caused by sex hormones. Generally, right brained people tend to be more creative, artistic, spatial, musical, and flexible. They have better long term memory and look at things in the big picture. They rely heavier on feelings. Left brained people tend to be more logical and mathematical. They have more developed speech, short term memory, are detail oriented, and excel in sequencing and problem-solving.

One study from the University of Minnesota showed that boys have more testosterone, which organizes their brain and nervous system in a way that they will be more physically active. This does not operate in a vacuum though.

Socialization, environment, temperament, and personality all play a part in gender differences. Parents can consciously choose to make the socialization of

their children gender neutral, yet, there are subtle influences that children notice and parents may not. For example, we raised our children with dolls, tea-sets, cars, and video games. Both our girl and boys had access and free invitation to choose to play with whatever they wished. They did up to about age four, when their friends started imparting comments that influenced their choices. The children would notice when we went to a fast food restaurant and the clerk would ask, "Do you want a boy toy or girl toy?" Inevitably, the boy toy would be some kind of car and the girl toy would be a doll, usually pink colored!

In consideration of discipline, here is a summary of what recent research has proposed about gender differences.

In their play styles, boys tend to like more space to play, and power in play (rockets, engines revving and boosting), competition (racing cars), and physical movement. Girls tend to like more social interaction (associative play), role playing (dolls), and co-operation in their play.

In the areas of multiple intelligences, females tend to be more linguistic intelligent: better at fine motor activity and social play. They are also more intrapersonal and interpersonal intelligent. Males tend to be more spatial and visual intelligent: better at hitting targets and playing computer games, as well as logical/mathematically intelligent. Males can better rotate an object in their mind. In bodily/kinesthetic intelligences, females have an upper edge in fine motor and boys in gross motor. Boys have a larger amygdala, which is the internal part of the brain responsible for emotional arousal, physical activity, aggression, and competitiveness. They have a smaller corpus callosum that connects the two sides of the brain. Girls are more likely to use both sides of the brain on tasks, where as boys tend to use one side or the other. Could explain their inability to multitask! Boys' brains tend to mature more slowly, which may explain more high-risk behavior in the later teen and early adult years.

There are profound differences in the way both genders learn. More males are enrolled in special education classes than females, possibly due to the theory that males are more physically disruptive during classes because they need to move their bodies while taking in information. Boys learn best by moving around and manipulating objects. Educators may think that boys are misbehaving, when they really just learn differently. Boys are 10 times more likely to be diagnosed with Attention Deficit Disorder and boys are also more likely to drop out of school. Boys tend to score lower on standard tests in Language Arts. Boys typically prefer non-fiction reading material, such as manuals, reference books, and comics, and rarely see male reading models throughout their school years. Girls prefer fiction, and most often, the themes offered through the curriculum are "chick lit" rather than the action orientated themes that boys prefer. Boys learn better through computer technology. Online courses may help to rescue boys from dropping out. Girls are often left out of the high tech sector in education: computers and engineering. In an age of increasing majority of female enrollment

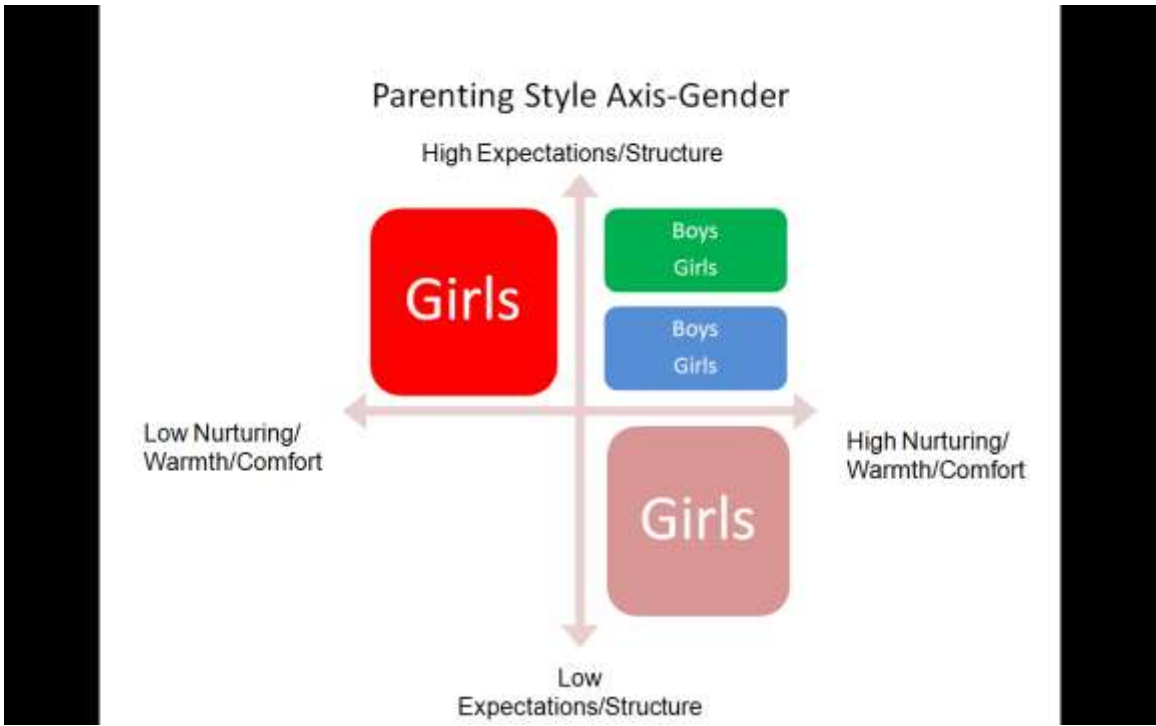
in university education, only 28 percent of computer science degrees and 18 percent engineering degrees are earned by women. Most computer games that involve problem-solving under pressure are marketed to boys. This is a serious problem if high tech jobs will be the fastest growing occupations, as predicted. Girls tend to suffer from lower self-esteem in the junior high years of age 12 to 14 and tend to do more poorly in science and math during those years. A possibility would be to incorporate math, science, and technology into language arts, history, and music classes, which is where girls excel and vice versa for boys.

Some discipline tools might work better for boys and girls, based on their differences. What this means in discipline is that girls can verbalize how they are feeling better because the emotional center is in the amygdala, and the language, reflection, and reasoning is in the center of the cerebral cortex.

Boys' emotions center only in the amygdala, which may make it hard for them to discuss or express feelings, although socialization does play a part too. For little boys, it's easier to hit than to "use their words," but it's a skill they can practice. If boys prefer competition, games like "whoever cleans up their room first gets to forego emptying the dishwasher for two days" may work better. Boys prefer action, so it might help to spice up chores a bit with some physical action. Girls would prefer collaborative approaches, such as "let's all pitch in to clean your room, and then we will all pitch in to clean your sister's room and it will all be done faster." Girls would prefer talking or telling stories to get the point across. Boys may "listen" better if directions are presented in body language, whereas girls may hear the verbal command better.

If anything, an understanding of gender differences may help create new ideas of how to motivate your son or daughter in homework, chores, and responsibilities.

Historically, parents have been stricter and more authoritarian in many cultures with girls than boys. Boys have more freedom and autonomy in decision making and rule making in many families around the world. However, in North America, the ability of girls to socialize, express feelings and collaborate in groups lends itself well to a collaborative parenting style. As well, girls are socialized to be warm, nurturing and caregiving, which may explain why parents find it easier to show affection, especially physical warmth and comfort in the form of hugs, to girls than boys. Both boys and girls are good candidates for authoritative and collaborative parenting styles, but girls tend to experience more authoritarian and indulgent styles than boys.



4

Chapter Four: The Authoritarian Parenting Style

“It’s my way or the highway.”

Key words: Strict, parent power, parent-directed, obedience, parent authority, strong-willed, children as brats or animals, train-up a child, family values, tough love, rewards, punishments, physical and non-physical discipline, independence parenting, control, willfulness, defiance

Definition: A parenting philosophy based on a hierarchy including but not necessarily, husband first, then wife, and lastly children. Higher people in the hierarchy control the people further down. Parents needs are always met, but not always the children’s needs. Unquestioning obedience and politeness is expected of the children. Parents make most of the family decisions including those involving the child regardless of age.

Role of the parent: is that of disciplinarian, and authority figure.

Parenting goal: To shape the child’s will, and behaviour, overcome defiance to any adult, and gain submissiveness. Parenting goal is geared to short term goals of making the child stop behaviours that are annoying or unacceptable to the parent and start behaviours that are pleasant for the parent.

Expectations: obedience, conformity

Decision making: parent makes most decisions

Discipline tools: behavior modification tools including physical and non-physical punishments, rewards, negative and positive reinforcement, extinction, satiation, ignoring.

Rules: made by the parent only.

Early proponents: Calvin, BF Skinner (The father of Behaviourism), Watson

Modern books/programs that promote this style: The Strong-Willed Child, Dare To Discipline, Parent Power, Babywise, Childwise, Toddler-wise, Dr. James Dobson, Dr. John Rosemond, Dr. Laura Schlessinger, Gary Ezzo, Michael and Debi Perl, Focus on the Family Programs, To Train Up A Child, Richard Ferber

History: The holders of this type of philosophy come from two distinct areas. One type of parents tend to hold true to the traditional values of strict parenting of many decades ago. Parents feel that respect, and obedience has declined over the passing decades and needs to be instilled in today's children even more diligently. The other type comes from a religious framework, where parents are taught to obey God and children are taught to obey their parents. Children gain practice in obeying authority first through their parents and then through the church.

Strengths of this style:

- Children do what parents want to do most of the time until the teen years.
- They look and act “well-behaved”.
- It takes very little time to correct behaviour once appropriate behaviour standards have been established.

Concerns of this style:

- The emotional, and social needs of the child are usually not met.
- Relies too much on external motivation of either rewards or punishments.
- It's human nature to ignore good behaviour until problems come up and need attention, so it's probable that parents ignore good behaviour and focus more on problems.
- If reward is a child's motivation, the child will come to expect more and bigger rewards. Eventually, no reward is big enough and the child has no motivation.
- Forgets that parenting is a two way relationship.
- Can focus too much on short term goals of parenting and not long term goals.
- The point of which a particular behaviour is considered inappropriate, deficient, excessive, or wrong is determined by the culture and the desires, wishes, and ethical views of the parents.
- The child feels fear, resentment and rebellion most of the time.
- Self-esteem becomes dependent on the approval of others.
- The child remains dependent and uncomfortable with taking initiatives in activities, problem-solving, and decision-making because opportunities to practice (and make mistakes) are denied by parents.
- Blocks creativity enhanced through problem-solving.
- Promotes conformity
- Children tend to have poorer social skills by trying to enact authoritarian methods to control others.
- Child may feel shamed or ridiculed
- Children become externally motivated and may lose internal motivation to behave and uphold society standards.
- Child may have difficulty making decisions.

Children of authoritarian parents tend to perform moderately well in academic areas and seem to be not involved in problem behaviour, but they have poorer social skills, lower self esteem, and higher levels of depression. (Darling 1999)

There are many concerns with this parenting style. Children need nurturing, love and understanding. Although, there is no doubt that Authoritarian parents love their children, they don't always show that love in tangible affectionate ways that the child understands.

The second concern is that technological advances make our children's world bigger. Access to the internet gives them exposure to many adults that don't always have their best interests in mind. Total supervision as children age becomes increasingly difficult and without supervision or outside controls, children can get into trouble if they never had practice in solving problems or their locus of self-control has not be internalized.

The third main concern is that this style may induce rebellion, anger, and passive resistance. Children don't feel they've been listened to or understood. Children don't like to be told what to do, much like adults. They respond more positively if have input into situation.

Parenting is a relationship that involves two people. Much parenting information in this philosophy is geared to what one person does to the other person to change them. Rarely, does it consider the other persons' reaction to the action. Often, children, with their varying personalities and temperaments, don't react according to the script and parents are backed into a corner and tend to increase their original actions in intensity which escalates the power struggles when children react back in increased intensity. Children today have much more power then they did fifty years ago. They have access to communication, cellphones, internet, transportation, buses, bikes, cars, community supports, kids help lines, resources, computers and cash, much of which is unbeknownst to parents.

The Autocratic Parenting Style; a subset of the Authoritarian Style.

Autocratic parenting style is a subset of the authoritarian style whereby one parent, usually the father makes all the decisions and the other parent, usually the mother, carries them out. The children follow. Throughout most of history, families have tended to run as autocratic parenting philosophy. Many religious groups and ethic groups believe that the father should control the family.

Would you like to read more? Order a copy of The Last Word on Parenting Advice and receive the rest of this ebook.

www.professionalparenting.ca/store

Copyright 2011 Professional Parenting Canada www.professionalparenting.ca
Judy Arnall ~All Rights Reserved~ May not be reproduced without permission