

Parenting Styles

Authoritative Parenting Style - Consistent Parenting?

Authoritative means to be dependable, reliable and convincing.

Authoritarian means to be strict, controlling and dictatorial.

These definitions certainly paint a clear picture of the differences between these two styles of parenting.

- The authoritative parent encourages independence, originality, open communication, and listens to the child's point of view as well as expressing his or her own, while at the same time maintaining a fairly high level of expectation from the child in terms of conduct and responsibilities.
- The authoritative parent believes in developing close, loving and nurturing relationships with their children, giving them **clear, firm and consistent guidelines**.
- Open communication encourages verbal give-and-take.
- Authoritative parents encourage their children's independence, individuality and creativity by being highly responsive toward the children and expecting a degree of responsiveness in return. In terms of demands, age appropriate behaviour is expected, along with clear standards and boundaries which are firmly set.
- Because children are encouraged to think for themselves, a high level of autonomy is achieved for the child. This is placed right alongside a balanced and disciplined conformity which is of equal value.
- Children of authoritative parenting style grow up experiencing safe boundaries, against which they are also encouraged to push and question in a mutually respectful environment.
- Authoritative parents exert firm control but do not hem the child in with restrictions. These children become socially responsible, able to control aggression, self-confident, and **high in self-esteem**.
- By encouraging independence, the child learns a high awareness of social responsibility through openly discussing how their actions will affect other people.
- Authoritative parents want their children to be assertive as well as socially responsible, and self-regulated and motivated as well as cooperative.

Development of the Child:

Parenting style has been found to predict child well-being in the areas of social competence, academic performance, psychosocial development, and behaviour problems.

Both **parental responsiveness and parental demandingness** are important components of good parenting.

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Authoritarian Parenting Style

An authoritarian parenting style tends to equate obedience with love, requiring strict adherence to structures and rules as a way of showing that love. Often this type of parenting style is associated with more rigid forms of religious belief, where strict parenting regimes can be supported by scriptural references such as, "Spare the rod and spoil the child".

- The parent is **highly demanding**, but **not responsive**
- Attempts to control to an absolute standard.
- Values obedience and does not encourage give and take.
- Emphasises strict family rules and is often referred to as military style parenting
- Authoritarian parents attempt to exert complete and total control over their families.
- They can be restrictive and rigid, demanding absolute obedience, often in a 'do as I say not as I do' style of parenting. Punishment is often harsh and punitive, and can become abusive, both physically and emotionally.
- Authoritarian parents tend to be high in psychological control of their children which has a detrimental effect to the child's natural growth and maturation.

Authoritarian parents expect their children to accept their judgments, values, and opinions without questioning. In contrast to this, [authoritative parents](#) tend to operate from give and take with their children and make good use of explanations, drawing their children into open discussions. Parents of aggressive children tend to be authoritarian parents. Authoritarian parenting suppresses a child's intellectual growth and creativity. It encourages children to either rebel against their parents, or to become submissive toward life in general.

Permissive Parenting Style

This style is sometimes also referred to as an indulgent or non-directive parenting style.

The **inconsistency** of the **permissive parenting style** often leaves devoted parents grieving for their parenting mistakes.

Permissive parents have the belief that really showing their child love and feeling their love, in return, is their ultimate goal in parenting.

They do love their children and are highly bonded to them. But their relationship is one of equals rather than as parents to children.

To gain compliance from their children they will often resort to gift giving and even outright bribery, rather than setting boundaries and expecting obedience.

Permissive means to be lenient, liberal, lax and hands-off.

- The parent is **responsive** but **undemanding**

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- Is accepting and affirmative of the child but makes few demands for responsibility or conduct.
- The permissive parent tends to take a tolerant, accepting attitude toward the child's wants and impulses, including sexual and aggressive impulses.
- Permissive parents have trouble saying no and setting boundaries and guidelines for their children. They tend to be lenient and to avoid asserting authority, or imposing controls or restrictions, or indeed, any confrontation wherever possible.
- Few demands are made for mature behaviour, like displaying table manners, or sharing responsibilities around the home. There are very few rules governing the child such as for bedtimes, homework schedules, mealtimes, or TV watching.
- Permissively raised children are generally allowed to control their own behaviour and to make their own decisions.
- Inconsistent discipline creates problems around lack of responsibility, motivation and self control become more apparent.

Permissive Parenting Style - Defined:

Parenting style has been found to predict child well-being in the areas of social competence, academic performance, psychosocial development, and behaviour problems.

Both **parental responsiveness** and **parental demandingness** are important components of good parenting.

Findings for the permissive parenting style show that it appears to have more **negative** than positive effects, with children often being impulsive, aggressive, and lacking in independence and in personal responsibility.

Insecurity because of the lack of boundaries also creates problems which leave parents feeling perplexed after they have poured so much love into their children.

A permissive parenting style often creates children who are **demanding and selfish**, rather than loving and supportive in their approach to others.

The pendulum swing effect from strict, controlling, unresponsive parenting a few generations back, to the responsive and indulgent parenting of this style often brings great shocks for parents who believe they have done all they can to raise their children in a loving environment.

Often children from permissive homes, because of the high responsiveness from parents, have good **self-esteem** and better social skills, however they are also more likely to be involved in problem behaviour and be less motivated in school, through not having been held accountable for their own behaviour.

Permissive parents are more likely to also be **overprotective parents** too. This brings with it another whole new set of problems for the children who tend to be drowned and smothered by their parents.

Just as an upbringing with strict rules and punishments produces children who are more likely to have an external, rather than internal, moral code of conduct for themselves, so it is with children from the permissive parenting style.

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An uninvolved parenting style is Unresponsive – Undemanding – Unavailable

An **Uninvolved Parenting style**, often called neglectful, indifferent or dismissive parenting, is both unresponsive and undemanding toward the child.

In extreme cases, this type of parenting style might encompass both rejecting-neglecting and neglectful parents.

Sometimes, the uninvolved parenting style is referred to as the "indifferent parenting style" due to its **lack of emotional involvement** and supervision of children. The parents are generally not involved in their child's life, but will provide basic needs for the child.

Sadly for their children, these types of parents are usually struggling to manage their own neglected childhoods, lacking personal, financial and supportive help for themselves, often the result of their own toxic parenting.

- The parent is both **unresponsive** and **undemanding**
- Usually **psychologically unavailable** to the child.

Dismissive parenting is in many ways similar to permissive parenting but the parent does not care much about the child.

These parents do as little for their children as they can get away with, and often go to great lengths to minimize their involvement.

There are many similarities here with Toxic Parenting - I would encourage you to seek professional help if your childhood has been harmed by an uninvolved parenting style.

The phrase toxic parent was coined to describe parents whose own negative behaviour grossly inflicts emotional damage which contaminates their children's sense of self.

This means parents who abuse their children verbally, physically and/or sexually, as well as parents who are inadequate or ignore their children's emotional needs.

Sometimes these patterns are so established they continue into adulthood, and often are either not recognised or addressed.

There are some toxic parents whose consistently negative patterns of parenting leave a legacy of guilt and shame within their children, and worse still there are parents whose outright cruelty would be considered illegal if exhibited toward animals, let alone their own children.

Development of the Child:

Uninvolved Parenting Style

- The parents' needs and wants are always first priority, so that the lack of a good, loving relationship with the child has a significant negative impact on the child's psychosocial development.
- Most uninvolved parents are unable to encourage, teach or enable their children. They are often indifferent in their behaviour toward their children and lack the knowledge to meet their children's even basic needs.

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- As the parents themselves are often experiencing financial, emotional and social stress, the impact on their children can be devastating.
- Social isolation and lack of friendship and support from relatives often leaves the children suffering from loneliness, fear and anxiety.
- Often uninvolved and neglectful parents are heavily involved in addictive behaviours, leaving the children to act as their parents caregivers. This creates its own set of problems for the children's future development.

Overprotective Parents

Overprotective parents generally want to protect their children from harm, from hurt and pain, from unhappiness, bad experiences and rejection, from hurt feelings, failure and disappointments.

When you hear them say it like that, it sounds admirable to begin with, but look closer and think about what experiences their children are prevented from having.

Overprotective parents often prevent their children from trying new activities such as discovering the joy of climbing and safe risk taking at adventurous play grounds. Many sporting activities are discouraged, along with social activities which would include opportunities for gaining [social competence](#).

What many overprotective parents fail to see is that their own fears from childhood are now being lived out through their children, thus creating a new generation of the same fear filled life that was theirs.

It is difficult for overprotective parents to admit the reality of their fears for their children.

These fears feel very real and are made obvious through statements that often include watch out and /or be careful.

"*Watch out - you'll fall*", when at a playground, or "*Be careful, you'll have an accident*", while riding their bicycles.

Overprotective parents envision fear in most situations and by putting this fear on their children; they are creating fear filled, anxious, emotionally immature children.

Over protective parents create continuous situations from which their children struggle to escape, until eventually there is no escape as the fears have become part of the patterned response for their child's way of thinking.

This type of parenting or smothering rather than mothering, is ineffective and fails to instil virtues and values such as responsibility, courage, self esteem, self respect, confidence in your child.

Letting Go.....

Let go and allow your children to fall, make mistakes, experience rejection, feel jealousy and suffer defeat.

Let go and watch them grow in confidence, skill, responsibility and emotional intelligence as they learn from all life has to offer them.

Let go your attachment to be an overprotective parent and find constructive ways to release yourself from your fears before you give them to your children. Get professional help if your fearfulness is acute.