



Parenting

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Parenting can be one of the most difficult, yet rewarding jobs that a person ever has. Despite its demanding nature, most parents strive to do as good as they can to ensure that their children will be respectful and contributing citizens.

A number of factors contribute to an individual's parenting style. Some of these things include:

- Income
- Race, ethnicity and culture
- How parents themselves were raised
- Unstable, violent, or abusive home life
- Child's age, developmental stage, personality, temperament, and psychological well-being
- Parents' emotional and psychological well being
- Family form:
 - ◆ Intact dual earner-both biological or adoptive parents live in the home and work
 - ◆ Intact single earner-both biological or adoptive parents live in the home, one parent works and one stays at home
 - ◆ Single mother- biological or adoptive, may or may not work
 - ◆ Single father- biological or adoptive, may or may not work
 - ◆ Blended/step-bonded by marriage or common law, both or one parent may work
 - ◆ Grandparents/relative caregivers- may or may not work

Many people have studied parenting and parent-child relationships. They seek to understand factors that can help growth and development and those things that hinder it. The following parenting styles have been identified to help parents and professionals better understand approaches to parent-child relationships.

Permissive Parents: Freedom Without Limits

- Allow children to do whatever they want
- There are few demands for respect, order and routine
- Children are allowed to regulate their own behavior and actions
- Little, if any, authority is used to correct the child

Authoritarian Parents: Limits Without Freedom

- Very controlling and dominating
- Extremely rigid and punitive
- Limited room for the child to question decisions
- Respect for authority, decision-making, and structure is held in the highest regard

Authoritative Parents: Freedom Within limits

- Parent is in charge but encourages cooperation
- Children are given expectations and directives and are told the consequences for breaking rules and why these penalties have been established
- Children and adolescents may be actively involved in the rule and decision-making process

The authoritative style seems to be the most beneficial for successful growth and development. This style recognizes that the parent has the ultimate power and control. At the same time, it takes the child's thoughts, feelings, and perspective into account.

Despite the age of a child, boundaries and limits must be set in a warm and nurturing, yet firm manner. If they are violated, a consequence should be given. Consequences are most effective if they are related to the problem and appropriate for the child. As the child gets older, parents will be able to reason with him or her more and he or she will be capable of fully understanding the reason for the discipline.

It is important to remember that parental control should not be viewed as negative. When used in a warm and loving manner it neither hinders growth

and development nor dominates children. Rather it helps children understand and respect boundaries, their role as the child, and the adults' role as the parent.

Ways to Stay Connected and Be Involved

- Keep the lines of communication open
- Invite children to share what happened in school, in extra-curricula activities etc.
- Know the names, phone numbers, and addresses of you children's friends
- Know where your children are at all times
- Visit the school and/or call teachers to discuss academic, social, and behavioral progress

References

- Berk, L. (1999). *Infants, Children & Adolescents*. Third Edition. Allyn and Bacon
- Fabes, R., Martin C.L. (2003). *Exploring Child Development*. Second Edition.

This *Parenting* Fact Sheet is part of a series prepared by the Cooperative Extension Program at Tennessee State University.

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TSU-06-0025(A)-7d-533241

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The Agriculture Extension Service and the U.S. Department of Agriculture cooperating.

Printed by:

DocuTech Printing Service
Tennessee State University
Cooperative Extension Program
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Nashville, TN 37209-1561

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