

What's Your Parenting Style?

Child development experts find that a parent's style will often fall into one of four categories.

AUTHORITATIVE (POSITIVE) PARENTING STYLE

Authoritative Parents are fair and firm in their parenting. They set high expectations of their children, and set clear rules as to a child's behaviors. They believe in consistency, however are open to re-evaluating rules as the children move through developmental stages. Their children know discipline is taken seriously, but believe it will be done wisely and calmly. Do you:

- 1) Believe your job is to set and enforce rules, but remember that listening to your child is vital?
- 2) Act as a role model, making an example for your child through your own behaviors?
- 3) Have high expectations of your child while providing lots of emotional support and warmth?

INDULGENT (PERMISSIVE) PARENTING STYLE

Indulgent Parents believe that lots of warmth and support are better than seeing a child fail in the face of life's many challenges. Indulgent Parents may feel strongly about allowing a child's natural instincts to blossom without parental interference and that love for a child is more effective than strict rules. Do you:

- 1) Have trouble setting and enforcing rules?
- 2) Believe that children should have the same decision-making rights as the adults?
- 3) Believe that your child should not be forced to do things that he or she doesn't want to do?

NEGLECTFUL (UNENGAGED) PARENTING STYLE

Parents who are Neglectful struggle to meet their children's daily needs and may be overwhelmed with work or have other struggles that take up most of their time. They may question how much their input really matters, and figure their kids will be okay since there are other people (Head Start staff, relatives) involved. Do you:

- 1) Have trouble focusing on your child's schedule and needs?
- 2) Wonder if constant involvement with your child is necessary?
- 3) Find yourself preoccupied with your own life or with people other than your child?

AUTHORITARIAN (POSITIVE) PARENTING STYLE

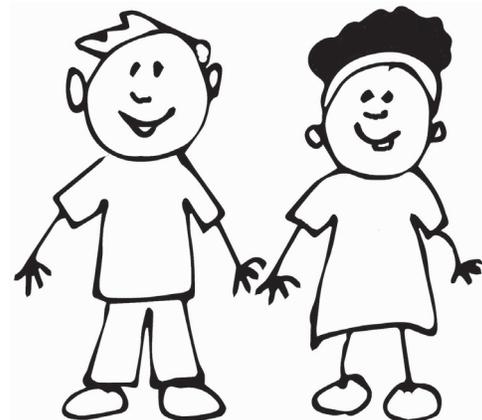
Authoritarian Parents believe that children must respect their authority. They set clear rules about how their children are to behave. Authoritarian Parents do not allow their children to question these rules, and do not want to have long discussions with the children about why they must be obeyed. Do you:

- 1) Have very high expectations of your child?
- 2) Spank your child or use other forms of physical punishment to build character?
- 3) Fear that showing too much affection can lead to negative behaviors?

What's Your Parenting Style? *(continued)*

BENEFITS OF BEING AN AUTHORITATIVE PARENT:

The relationship between the child and Authoritative Parent is a healthy one. The rules are clear and there is consistent, fair discipline for violations of rules. There is a good deal of age-appropriate nurturing and support for the child, and communication between parent and child is open. The parent has authority but speaks to the child with respect; the child is expected to treat the parent with respect in return.



WHAT ARE THE RISKS? None.

BENEFITS OF BEING AN INDULGENT PARENT: The children of Indulgent Parents know they are well loved. They have open lines of communication to this type of parent, and feel comfortable sharing information and seeking help when needed. These children don't have anxiety that their needs will not be met.

WHAT ARE THE RISKS? Children of Indulgent Parents are easily frustrated when they are not given what they want. They therefore have trouble adjusting in academic and social settings. These children have not learned to learn from and integrate failures and don't rise to difficult challenges on their own.

BENEFITS OF BEING A NEGLECTFUL PARENT: It's possible others will step in and become an additional caregiver to the child when it's clear that the parent is neglectful. However, this is not a true benefit for the child.

WHAT ARE THE RISKS? The risks of having a Neglectful Parent are many. These children have difficulty forming relationships and suffer mental health challenges, often leading to substance abuse. If the neglect is more than emotional, but medical and/or nutritional neglect as well, the child is at risk for additional, serious developmental problems.

BENEFITS OF BEING AN AUTHORITARIAN PARENT: Authoritarian Parents know that their children behave well when they are present. Their children respond immediately to the threat of punishment. Authoritarian Parents know that they have more power than their children, which is appropriate. The children know what is expected of them.

WHAT ARE THE RISKS? These children are more motivated by fear than they are by "doing right" and this means they do not truly understand the moral lesson. Children who feel powerless tend to seek power in other relationships and often make unhealthy choices as they grow (sexual promiscuity, substance abuse, bullying, etc.). Children subjected to physical punishments are at risk of having the same negative outcomes as children who are abused.

This resource was created by
a generous grant of

American Legion
Child Welfare Foundation



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