

What's Your Parenting Style?

Understanding parenting styles gives insight into both parent behaviors and outcomes for children.

Dimensions of a Parent's Behavior

- Parent **responsiveness** (warmth and nurturing) refers to the degree to which a parent responds to a child's needs in an accepting, supportive manner.
- Parent **discipline** (control and demandingness) refers to the extent a parent expects and demands mature, responsible behavior from the child.

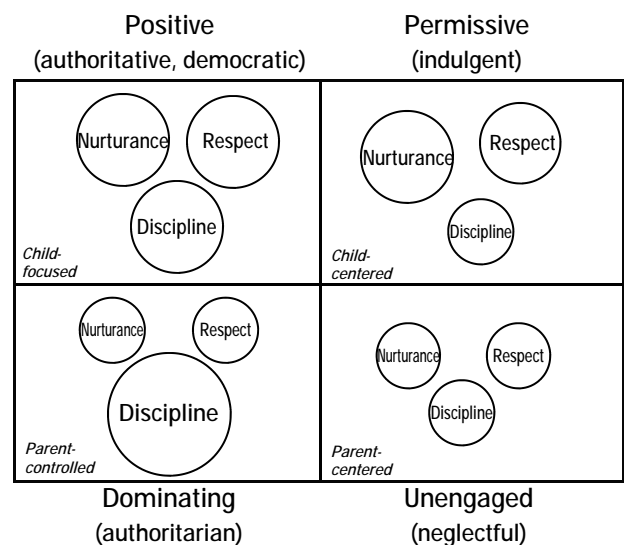
		Discipline (control)	
		High	Low
Responsiveness (warmth)	High	Positive	Permissive
	Low	Dominating	Unengaged

- Parents who discipline their children but are not very nurturing of them are **dominating**. Strict parents value obedience and discourage independence. They do not like their authority questioned.
- Parents who neither nurture nor discipline their children are **unengaged**. This parent is often referred to as uninvolved as a minimal amount of time and effort is spent with the child. The parent is unavailable to the child. Drug use and immaturity of a parent are possible reasons for unengaged parenting.

In addition to nurturing and discipline, another aspect of parenting is showing respect. Respect means giving children freedom of thought and expression. It's just as important as "love" and "limits." It's giving your child the ability to express thoughts and feelings openly which leads to higher self-esteem and confidence. Positive parenting begins with a balanced approach of nurturing, disciplining, and respecting as is illustrated here.

Parenting Styles

- Parents who nurture and discipline their child are **positive**. Positive parents set high standards and expectations, consistently enforce rules, and encourage independence. A give-and-take communication, with the ability to listen is key to positive parenting.
- Parents who nurture their children, but do not discipline them much or well are **permissive**. Although permissive parents show love and give attention, they make few demands and set no guidelines or structure for their children.



What are the outcomes for children when parents use a particular parenting style?

Positive	Permissive
Best on all measures High self-esteem and confidence Low levels of anxiety and depression High on social competence (empathy, emotional control, communication, conflict management) High on respect and responsibility Good academic performance Little problem behavior	High self-esteem and confidence Low levels of anxiety and depression Generally high on social competence Low on respect and responsibility Underachieve academically A lot of problem behavior
Low self-esteem and confidence High levels of anxiety and depression Low on social competence Moderate on respect and responsibility Average academic performance Little problem behavior (except in accepting authority)	Worst on all measures Low self-esteem and confidence High levels of anxiety and depression Low social competence Very low respect and responsibility Poor academic performance A lot of problem behavior
Dominating	Unengaged

To help you begin to discover your parenting style, check all of the items you believe to be true for you.

- ___ I believe that it is better not to have rules than to worry about breaking them.
- ___ Children should obey their parents and not talk back.
- ___ Children should be given choices.
- ___ Children can get along pretty well if you just leave them alone.
- ___ My own problems are so consuming I don't have time or energy for my child.
- ___ What I do won't make a difference, so I've given up with my child.
- ___ Sometimes children have a point. I try to listen to them.

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- ___ I make the rules of my household. Children should be punished for not following these rules.
- ___ Children should be allowed their own sense of individuality.
- ___ I have high standards which I expect my child to understand and I enforce rules consistently.
- ___ Parents should do as much as they can for their children (making their beds, getting their snacks, dressing them).
- ___ When my child misbehaves, I yell and threaten.
- ___ If I discipline my child, I am afraid he/she won't love me.
- ___ I know what's best for my child, after all I'm the parent.
- ___ I let my child do what he/she wants because I want to avoid conflict.
- ___ I have so many other things to do, the children will just have to make it on their own.

Positive	Demanding	Permissive	Unengaged
3	2	1	4
7	8	11	5
9	12	13	6
10	14	15	16

Find the numbers you checked below.

Most parents find they have characteristics of more than one style. It's important to assess your parenting style and make adjustments, if and where you feel necessary, to achieve the best outcomes for your child.

Sources:

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 Pitzer, Ronald L. (2001). **How parenting styles affect kids behavior.** Minnesota Extension Service.

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