



## The Impacts of Parenting Styles on Child Development

Lian Tran

### Introduction

#### *What Does A Child Need?*

Strong and emotional bonds are built right at the start of infancy. Having consistent and responsive parenting such as holding your baby and responding to their cries is the basis of good parenting. Studies have proven that at birth, positive maternal-infant bonding such as breastfeeding predicts good children's social skills, school readiness, and academic success during school ages. Affection and nurturing are powerful during a pivotal time in a child's brain development (Haliemeskel, 2022). As the child gets older, parents must distinguish between what a child needs and what a child wants. Just because a child gets what they conventionally need such as food, clothes, and education, doesn't mean they will be satisfied with their quality of care. Parents must consider where the child is in life and what skills they need to learn such as managing their emotions, working with other peers, or problem-solving.

#### *Factors That Can Affect Parenting Styles*

While parenting goals are similar amongst other cultures, the process parents take to achieve these goals may vary. For example, higher rates of corporal punishment, such as spanking, are generally reported by African American parents, in comparison to Hispanic or white parents which can contribute to later internalizing and externalizing behaviors (Frosh, 2019).

Understanding cultural practices and beliefs can help us better understand what relational health is. Additionally, family dynamics can affect the quality of parenting. For instance, a single-parent family may discipline their children more to compensate for the lack of a mother or father in their child's life. In one study, an alarming 32% of adolescents in single-mother families experienced one or more externalizing disorders, nearly triple the diagnosis rate of adolescents with two parents in the study's sample (Daryanani, 2017). By conducting these studies, we can find the source of psychological distress in today's youth and implement parenting programs and resources to ensure a child is receiving quality care from their caregivers.

### Definitions and Literature Review

#### *The Four Parenting Styles*

There are four widely acknowledged parenting styles: authoritative, authoritarian, permissive, and neglectful. The aspect of each parenting style and how it is implemented widely varies depending on culture, environment, and parent-child relationship. They are characterized by consistency across time and context and the consistency of interaction patterns can be seen as early as the first year of a child's life. Parenting styles reflect the parent's overall feelings about the child through body language, tone of voice, displays of emotion, and quality of attention. Every parenting style has a unique set of behaviors and qualities associated with it (Bornstein, 2008).

#### *Authoritative*

Authoritative parenting is characterized by a parent who is appropriately strict, and affectionate, and allows negotiation where appropriate. The parent demands the child comply with their set of rules but is simultaneously responsive to the child's needs and is respectful and supportive of the child's autonomy. It is considered the most common parenting style and is the foundation of a popular parenting program offered in many school districts called "Love & Logic" (Paris, 2018). Children raised with this parenting style tend to be achievement-oriented, cooperative, and self-reliant ("Parenting Styles", 2017).

#### *Authoritarian*

Often confused with authoritative parenting because they both consist of the same amount of discipline, authoritarian parenting describes a parent who is controlling and limits the child's autonomy and values obedience which is often considered as a sign of love. Oftentimes, child emotional expression is limited and have unreasonably high expectations placed on them such as maturity demands and academic achievements (Bornstein, 2008). Children raised with this parenting style tend to fear rather than respect their parents. Since they are unable to freely voice their concerns, they often take out their frustrations on safer targets such as siblings or through bullying other peers (Paris, 2018). Authoritarian parenting can inflict negative effects on children including aggression, a sense of failure, and emotional and behavioral issues. While authoritarian parenting is linked to negative outcomes, researchers say it isn't considered abuse (Sachdev, 2023).

*Permissive*

Permissive parenting categorizes a parent who fails to set rules or regulations for the child. They are communicative and loving but do not believe in punishment regardless of what the child does. Parents who implement permissive parenting are viewed as friends rather than parental figures. While children are allowed to make their own rules and have an increased sense of support and self-esteem, they are unable to learn self-discipline and therefore may cross boundaries set by peers and siblings (Bornstein, 2008). Children raised with permissive parenting also display low achievement in many areas, are unable to manage their habits, and are prone to making poor decisions like delinquency and substance use (Cherry, 2022).

*Neglectful*

The neglectful parenting style, widely deemed the worst parenting style, consists of parents who are disengaged from their children. They do not set expectations for their children but neither are they warm or offer guidance for behavior. Examples of neglectful parenting include ignoring their child when they are upset, not respecting a child's interests, and failing to supervise their child (Cherry, 2023). Children who face this parenting style experience can suffer in their relationships with peers because they cannot properly articulate their emotions and experience increased levels of stress.

**Discussion of Data**

*How Parenting Styles Differ*

The Baumrind Theory states that a child's behavior is associated with parenting styles as they grow and interact with the world. In a 1983 study, researchers Eleanor Maccoby and John Martin tested Baumrind's typologies through a generalizability test on diverse sets of populations. They found that parenting styles could be assessable along two types of dimensions, responsiveness and demandingness (see Figure 1).

		Demandingness	
		High	Low
Responsiveness	High	Authoritative	Permissive
	Low	Authoritarian	Indifferent

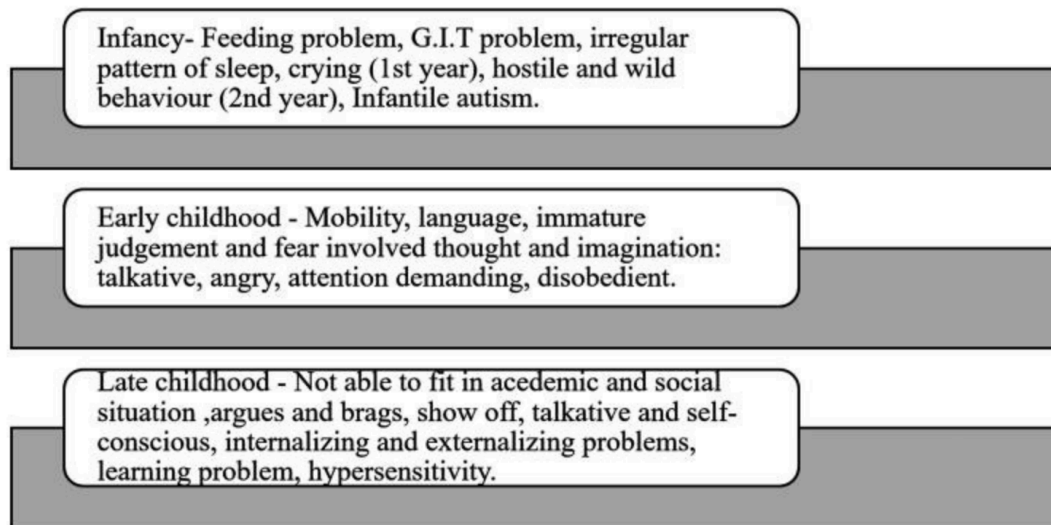
**Figure 1. Overview of parenting styles along two different aspects.**

Maccoby and Martin found that authoritative parents score high in demandingness and responsiveness, authoritarian parents score high in demandingness and low in responsiveness,

permissive parents score high in responsiveness and low in demandingness, and neglectful parents score low in both responsiveness and demandingness (Bornstein, 2008). These results can be interpreted in many ways. Authoritative parents can be considered the most involved parents out of the four parenting styles while indifferent parents do not care about their children at all. Permissive parents do not place high demands on their children but are very nurturing whereas authoritarian parents place high demands on their children but are not as nurturing. This simple model demonstrates where a parenting style's values lie and reflects the child's development as they grow. Environmental and behavioral genetic patterns also play a role in what parenting styles a parent adopts. Parenting style is determined by the mother and father's behavior and can include factors such as mood, sleep, social stress, and work stress. (Lanjekar, 2022).

### Effects of Differing Parenting Styles on Children

Individuals experience stress and peer pressure as a result of low levels of positive parenting and a high level of hostile parenting; this child presents with a negative cognitive style, vulnerability, and depressive episodes. This can be brought on as a result of early childhood neglect and indifferent or low-responsive parenting. Neglectful parenting has different effects on a child throughout their cognitive development (see Figure 2).



**Figure 2. Problems and adjustment issues faced by a child in various phases of childhood.**

Hostility can begin as early as infancy and can cause the onset of autism. Neglectful parenting can cause mental distress such as immature judgment and disobedience as well as physical issues such as mobility problems (Lanjekar, 2022).

On the other hand, consistent, positive, and involved parenting can increase a child's academic achievements and boost self-esteem. A recent study by Fan and Chen (2001) finds moderate associations between parent involvement and a variety of learning-related or academic skills, such as task persistence and receptive vocabulary, during preschool and kindergarten (El Nokali, 2010). Additionally, as children get older, adolescents who describe their parents as treating them warmly, democratically, and firmly are more likely than their peers to develop positive attitudes toward their achievement, and as a consequence, they are more likely to do better in school. (Steinberg, 1989). This type of parenting is categorized as authoritative



parenting and is a good balance between warm and firm. However, authoritative parenting can evolve into authoritarian parenting when the parent is more firm than warm.

### How Parenting Styles Affect Adult Relationships

While parental socialization ends when an adolescent reaches adulthood, previous family experiences can impact an adult's quality of life and relationships. One study found that positive parenting strategies were associated with more mutuality and satisfaction in adolescent relationships. Autonomy-supportive parenting (authoritative parenting) predicted more adaptive emotion regulation and intimacy. On the contrary, higher use of “helicopter parenting” on children resulted in a reduced interest in being involved in a romantic relationship and often viewed being single as more advantageous as opposed to being married (Candel, 2022). Good parenting also promotes romantic competency because strong familial relationships serve as a model to teach the child how to care for others. Whereas, a dysfunctional family with a neglective parenting style can make the child believe that people are dishonest and impermanent.

### **Alternative Perspectives**

Parenting styles can majorly impact a child’s outlook on life. However, some studies prove that some children are not affected by their caregiver’s parenting style, and may even act in opposition to the treatment they receive.

There is a controversial belief that “abuse breeds abuse.” Despite this belief, studies have proven that the intergenerational chain of abuse is not inevitable and the continuity of maltreatment depends on several factors. For example, in a study conducted on a sample of mothers and their twins in England and Wales, although there was a continuity of maltreatment across generations, the cycle of abuse was broken in about half of the families in which the mothers reported a history of neglect. One possibility of this is that cycle breakers actively seek warm relationships and ensure their children will not become victims of abuse. These people often have high sibling warmth and a healthy relationship with a partner (Jaffee, 2013).

### **Conclusion**

Although there is no concrete “best parenting style” it is widely believed that the authoritative parenting style cultivates the best results in regards to a child’s self-esteem, outlook on life, and relationships with friends and family. Some may believe that parenting does not affect a child’s development, since many children who grow up in dysfunctional households eventually break that cycle in the future. However, it ranges depending on the severity of the neglect and how much time the child spends among other people who provide them with proper warmth and care. The four main parenting style models provide an important categorization and explanation of why our children behave the way they do and that parenting is one of the most crucial components that can define a child’s life.



## References

- [1] American Psychological Association. (2017). *Parenting styles*. American Psychological Association. <https://www.apa.org/act/resources/fact-sheets/parenting-styles>
- [2] Bornstein, M. H., & Zlotnik, D. (2008). *Parenting Style*. Parenting Style - an overview | ScienceDirect Topics. <https://www.sciencedirect.com/topics/social-sciences/parenting-style#:~:text=Parenting%20styles%20refers%20to%20the,the%20child%20into%20their%20group>
- [3] Candel, O.-S. (2022, January 12). *The link between parenting behaviors and emerging adults' relationship outcomes: The mediating role of relational entitlement*. International journal of environmental research and public health. <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC8775879/>
- [4] Daryanani, I., Hamilton, J. L., Abramson, L. Y., & Alloy, L. B. (2016, October). *Single mother parenting and adolescent psychopathology*. Journal of abnormal child psychology. <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC5226056/>
- [5] El Nokali, N. E., Bachman, H. J., & Votruba-Drzal, E. (2010). *Parent involvement and children's academic and social development in Elementary School*. Child development. <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC2973328/>
- [6] Frosch, C. A., Schoppe-Sullivan, S. J., & O'Banion, D. D. (2019, May 26). *Parenting and Child Development: A Relational Health Perspective*. American journal of lifestyle medicine. <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC7781063/>
- [7] Hailemeskel, H. S., Kebede, A. B., Fetene, M. T., & Dagnaw, F. T. (2022, July 13). *Mother-infant bonding and its associated factors among mothers in the postpartum period, northwest Ethiopia, 2021*. Frontiers in psychiatry. <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC9326158/>
- [8] Jaffee, S. R., Bowes, L., Ouellet-Morin, I., Fisher, H. L., Moffitt, T. E., Merrick, M. T., & Arseneault, L. (2013, October). *Safe, stable, nurturing relationships break the intergenerational cycle of abuse: A prospective nationally representative cohort of children in the United Kingdom*. The Journal of Adolescent Health : official publication of the Society for Adolescent Medicine. <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC4212819/>
- [9] Kendra Cherry, Mse. (2022, December 23). *Are you a permissive parent?*. Verywell Mind. <https://www.verywellmind.com/what-is-permissive-parenting-2794957#:~:text=Permissive%20parenting%20is%20a%20type,a%20friend%20than%20parental%20figure>
- [10] Kendra Cherry, Mse. (2023, March 14). *Uninvolved parenting and its effects on children*. Verywell Mind. <https://www.verywellmind.com/what-is-uninvolved-parenting-2794958>



- 
- [11] Lanjekar, P. D., Joshi, S. H., Lanjekar, P. D., & Wagh, V. (2022, October 22). *The effect of parenting and the parent-child relationship on a child's cognitive development: A literature review*. Cureus. <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC9678477/>
- [12] Steinberg, P., Elmen, JD., Mounts, NS. (1989). *Authoritative parenting, Psychosocial Maturity, and academic success among adolescents*. Child development. <https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/2612251/#:~:text=Adolescents%20who%20describe%20their%20parents,to%20do%20better%20in%20school>
- [13] Paris, J., Ricardo, A., & Rymond, D. (2018). *Child growth and development*. Open Textbook Library. <https://open.umn.edu/opentextbooks/textbooks/750>
- [14] Sachdev, P. (2023). *Authoritarian parenting: What is it?* WebMD. <https://www.webmd.com/parenting/authoritarian-parenting-what-is-it>