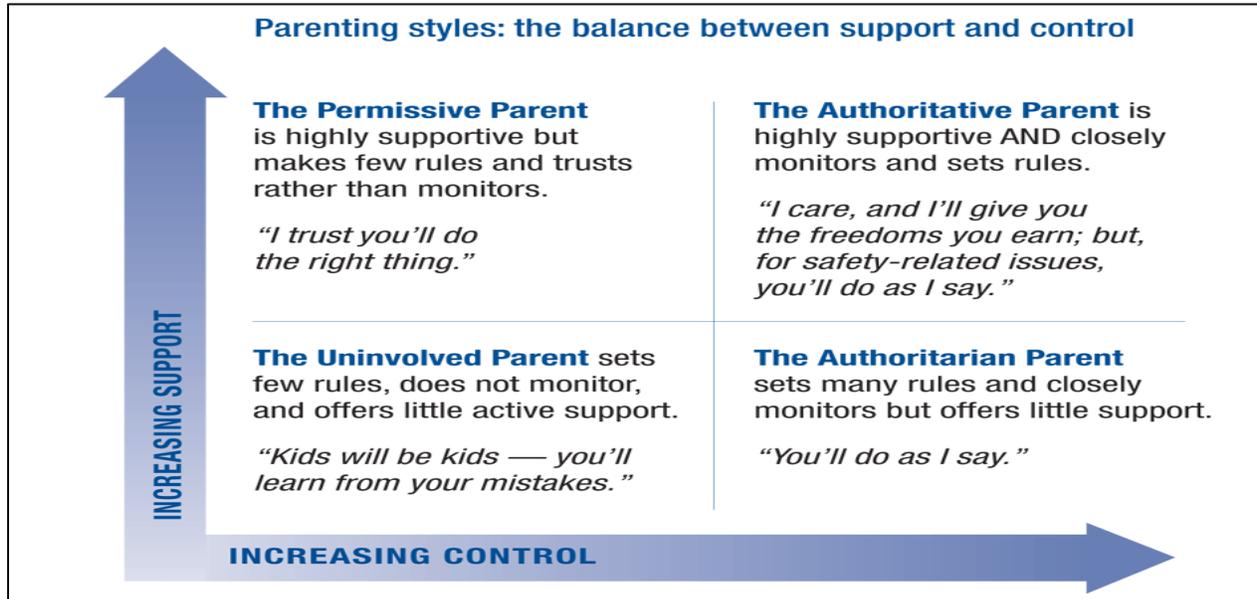


4 Types of Parenting Styles and Their Effects on Kids: What's Your Parenting Style?

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Your parenting style can affect everything from how much your child weighs to how she feels about herself, so it's important to ensure your parenting style is supporting healthy growth and development. Researchers have discovered four types of parenting styles. Each style has a different take on what a parent's role should be in a child's life.



1. Authoritarian Parenting

Do any of these statements sound like you?

- You believe kids should be seen and not heard.
- When it comes to rules, you believe it's "my way or the highway."
- You don't take your child's feelings into consideration.

If any of those ring true, you might be an authoritarian parent. Authoritarian parents believe kids should follow the rules without exception. They also don't allow kids to get involved in problem-solving challenges or obstacles. Instead, they make the rules and enforce the consequences with little regard for a child's opinion.

Authoritarian parents are famous for saying, "Because I said so," when a child questions the reasons behind a rule. They are not interested in negotiating and their focus is on obedience. Authoritarian parents may use punishments instead of discipline. So rather than teaching a child how to make better choices, they're often focused on making a child suffer for his mistakes. Children who grow up with strict authoritarian parents tend to follow rules much of the time. But, they may develop self-esteem problems. Children of authoritarian parents may become hostile or aggressive. Studies show they may also become good liars, as they may grow conditioned to lie to avoid punishment.

2. Authoritative Parenting

Do any of these statements sound like you?

- You put a lot of effort into ensuring you have a positive relationship with your child.
- You explain the reasons behind your rules.
- You enforce rules and give consequences, but you take your child's feelings into consideration.

If so, you may be an authoritative parent. Like authoritarian parents, authoritative parents establish clear rules. But, they allow for reasonable exceptions to the rules. Authoritative parents often use logical consequences that teach life lessons. They also use positive discipline to prevent behavior problems and to reinforce good behavior. So they may be more likely to create reward systems and praise good behavior. Children raised with authoritative discipline tend to be happy and successful. They're also more likely to be good at making decisions and evaluating safety risks on their own. Researchers have found kids who have authoritative parents are most likely to become responsible adults who feel comfortable expressing their opinions.

3. Permissive Parenting

Do any of these statements sound like you?

- You set rules but rarely enforce them.
- You don't give out consequences very often.
- You think your child will learn best with little interference from you.
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If those statements sound familiar, you might be a permissive parent. Permissive parents are lenient. They often only step in when there's a serious problem. They don't give out consequences very often. They're quite forgiving and they adopt an attitude of "kids will be kids." When they do use consequences, they often give in if a child begs or promises to be good.

Permissive parents usually take on more of a friend role than a parent role. They often encourage their children to talk with them about their problems, but they usually don't put much effort into discouraging poor choices or bad behavior. They may not discourage a lot of bad behaviors. Kids who grow up with permissive parents tend to struggle academically. They may exhibit more behavioral problems as they don't appreciate authority and rules. They often have low self-esteem and may report a lot of sadness.

They're also at a higher risk for health problems, like obesity, because permissive parents struggle to limit junk food intake. They are even more likely to have dental cavities because permissive parents often don't enforce good habits, like ensuring a child brushes his teeth.

4. Uninvolved Parenting

Do any of these statements sound familiar?

- You don't ask your child about school or homework.
- You rarely know where your child is or who she is with.
- You don't spend much time with your child.

If so, you might be an uninvolved parent. Uninvolved parents basically expect children to raise themselves. They usually don't devote much time or energy into meeting children's basic needs. Uninvolved parents are often neglectful. But sometimes, it's not intentional. A parent with mental health issues or substance abuse problems, for example, may not be able to care for a child's physical or emotional needs on a consistent basis. At other times, uninvolved parents lack knowledge about child development. And sometimes, they're simply overwhelmed with other problems, like work, paying bills, and managing a household.

Uninvolved parents tend to have little knowledge of what their children are doing. There tends to be few rules. Children may not receive much guidance, nurturing, and parental attention. When parents are uninvolved, children struggle with self-esteem issues. They tend to perform poorly in school. They also exhibit frequent behavior problems and rank low in happiness.