

Parenting Styles

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Practical Tips for Parenting

- ◆ Give your child choices such as what color socks to wear or choosing between two vegetables for a snack.
- ◆ Accept your child's feelings when she is angry, sad, or frustrated. Saying "I can see you're upset" doesn't mean giving in; it helps identify emotions and tells the child you understand.
- ◆ Use words like "good" or "bad" to describe behavior, not to describe the child.
- ◆ Clearly explain the behavior you expect in advance. For example, before a shopping trip say "You must stay in the cart and we won't be buying anything that's not on the list. Would you like to add one item to the list before we get there?"
- ◆ Set limits based on your child's development and consistently follow through by providing consequences that relate to the behavior.
- ◆ Praise positive behavior and always reaffirm love for your child.



Photograph by Paula Cartwright



Photograph by Mai Yia Thao

Balancing Care, Discipline, and Respect

By giving your child freedom of thought and expression, enforcing limits, and practicing positive communication, you can solve problems and promote responsibility in your child.

Parenting Styles

Identifying your style—as a parent, do you relate more to A, B or C?

A

I know what's best for my child because I am the parent.

My child should obey me and be punished if they do not.

When my child misbehaves, I yell and threaten.

B

I give my child choices and their own sense of individuality.

I have high standards and enforce the rules consistently.

I serve as a role model for my child by modeling the respect that I expect them to give me.

C

I do as much as I can for my child because he/she is only a child for a short time.

If I discipline my child, I'm afraid he/she won't love me.

I typically let my child do what he/she wants because I dislike conflict.

Although you may have identified with more than one group, based on the one to which you related most closely, your parenting style is likely:

The Enforcer

The Negotiator

The Yielder

Using Your Strengths

Many parents use a mixture of styles at various times, but striving to be a Negotiator parent (type B) is best to help children develop inner discipline.

Enforcer parents (Type A) often use strict punishment and allow very little freedom. Yielder parents (Type C) often view their children as friends and have few limits or demands for their children. If you relate to either of these parenting styles, don't feel bad! You have great strengths as a parent, but remember that balance is important for children.

Yielder parents' strength is love and acceptance but it's important to think how giving in might

affect the child long term. Will your child feel entitled? Or learn patience?

Enforcer parents have the strength of clarity and high expectations. However, showing sensitivity to your child will be key in helping your child understand that "tough love" is rooted in "love" and not just "tough."

Negotiator parents combine love, limits, and respect with consistent, fair expectations. Research shows that the Negotiator produces the best outcomes for children's health and well-being, including: responsibility, compassion, problem-solving skills, self-control, and acceptance of self and others.

UW-Extension Family Living Programs

"Raising Kids, Eating Right, Spending Smart, Living Well"



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Family Living menu - Parenting and Child Care

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