



Your style in parenting

The way parents bring up their children have a profound influence on how they will turn out.

By ALEXUS CHEANG

A PARENTING style is a psychological construct that represents attitudes and propensities that parents use in raising their children. Psychologists have identified four distinct parenting styles.

Authoritative

There are two subtypes here: strict and warm, as well as strict, but without warmth. Strict and warm parents set clear rules that children are expected to follow.

However, they do allow for exceptions to the rules as they are more willing to consider a child's feelings when setting limits. They take the time to explain the reasons for those rules.

Authoritative parents tend to teach their children proper behaviour by allowing them some freedom in making their own decisions. They also reinforce good behaviour by using praise and rewards.

Children raised with authoritative parenting tend to grow up to be responsible adults, who are often good at making decisions. On the other hand, parents who are strict, but do not display warmth, set the rules and

expect their children to follow them without exception. If children challenge the rules, they are usually told, "Because I said so". There is usually no room for negotiation, and parents don't feel obligated to explain the reasons for the rules because they know what's best for their child.

Although of authoritarian parents tend to follow rules, they may lack decision-making and problem-solving skills, or may act out, become hostile or alternate themselves. This happens because they tend to focus their frustration at their parents for being punitive.

Permissive

Apathic, there are two subtypes here: warm, but not strict, as well as neither warm nor strict (noninvolved).

Warm, but not strict parents tend not to discipline their children as they prefer to be more lenient. There are few, if any, consequences for misbehaviour as parents will say "kids will be kids".

Children raised with permissive parenting may take the approach of being a friend rather than a parent to their children. Although they may get along well with their children, they are less likely to set boundaries, and therefore,



Although children of authoritarian parents tend to follow rules, they may lack decision-making and problem-solving skills, or may act out, become hostile or alienate themselves. — Mandant

Ignore negative behaviours.

Children who grow up with permissive parents tend to struggle academically because they receive less motivation to excel. They may also exhibit more behavioural problems because they are not able to adjust well to rules and authority in society. This, often results in them having low self-esteem. Uninvolved (characterised by neither warmth nor strictness) parents tend to

repeatedly neglect their children by not setting clear base needs. If not, they expect their children to raise themselves. This could be due to a parent's mental health issues or substance abuse problems. They typically lack knowledge about parenting and may overinvest by life

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Parents should be firm, but warm

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general. Uninvolved parents are oblivious to what their children are doing or who they are with. Rules are also limited and expectations are low, if any at all. Children of uninvolved parents may lack parental guidance and attention, which could prevent them to turn out besides for support. They also lack self-esteem and perform poorly in academics.

How this affects children

As you can see, parenting styles significantly affects a child's welfare which is why adopting an authoritative parenting style has been found to increase a child's chances of success. Nevertheless, parents may not fit neatly into just one category, but may find success in varying their style, according to the situation, or even between individual siblings. In addition, both parents may naturally adopt different parenting styles.

For example, the father may be very strict and the mother may be more lenient. However, this has a negative effect because the father may become even stricter as he attempts to counterbalance the mother's

Therefore, if parents do not share identical parenting styles, they should discuss matters between themselves and come to an agreement about how to deal with the child.

How to be more authoritative

Establish a list of house rules and expectations to help your child learn what type of behaviour is acceptable and what isn't. Add rules if and when necessary, but explain to the child why the rules is important.

» Decide together with your child on the type of consequences involved for breaking

the rules. Link privileges to good behaviour by teaching the child that she needs to earn them. This rule should be consistently applied to all your children.

Be firm and follow through with the limits that were set. If you say that you are going to take away a privilege, it is essential that you honour your word. By providing consistent and firm discipline, you show them that you mean business.

Want to know what type of parent you are? Take the test on page 3, and assess whether you should change your parenting style for the sake of your children.

Alexus Cheang is a behavioural psychologist. This article is courtesy of Malaysian Paediatric Association's Positive Parenting programme in collaboration with the Nutrition Society of Malaysia, Obstetric and Gynaecological Society of Malaysia, Malaysian Mental Health Association, Malaysian Psychiatric Association, National Population and Family Development Board Malaysia, Malaysian Association of Registered Childcare Providers Malaysia. For further information, visit www.positiveparenting.org or e-mail starthealth@star.com.my

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Permissive parents may take the approach of being a friend rather than a parent to their children. Although they may get along well with their children, they are less likely to set boundaries, and therefore, ignore negative behaviours. — TNS

WHAT IS YOUR PARENTING STYLE?

How would you describe your approach to parenting? Fill out this questionnaire and find out for yourself. Choose only **one** answer from each category.

1. Parenting

- (A) I believe children should be seen and not heard.
- (B) I enjoy the chaos of parenting.
- (C) I believe children can be disciplined and practice good manners.
- (D) My children love to harmonise and don't bother me much.

2. Behaviour

- (A) I think my children need a firm hand to direct them so they don't get lost.
- (B) I believe my children need freedom to discuss what they are.
- (C) I like watching my children discuss things for themselves, and I am there if they have questions.
- (D) My children learn how to behave in school.

3. Saying "No"

- (A) I don't have a problem saying "No" to my child.
- (B) I sometimes need to say "No" to my child.
- (C) I mostly just ignore my child's bad behaviour.

4. Rules

- (A) I set very clear, big or small, rules to be followed.
- (B) I don't believe in too many rules, when an adult or my child needs to play the moment we have fun and enjoy ourselves.
- (C) I like to have rules that are easily understood, and I expect my children to follow them. I am willing to be flexible about smaller issues.
- (D) I have a lot of rules but I don't enforce them, sometimes I just expect to ignore some behaviour.

5. Discipline

- (A) I think discipline is something your children need when they misbehave.
- (B) I don't believe in strict discipline, my children need freedom.
- (C) I think discipline is an opportunity to teach your children.
- (D) My discipline does most of the disciplining.

6. Being firm

- (A) I discipline if my children are unhappy with me.
- (B) I want my children to like me.
- (C) I sometimes need to be unapproachable with my children to keep them safe, and when they do what I wish to be done.
- (D) I don't see how to get my child to do what I want.

7. Respect

- (A) Children must respect their parents.
- (B) I don't know my child's perspective of me, but I must assert, that I don't discipline why they, but I expect them to respect me, respect they.
- (C) I respect from my child.
- (D) With my child respect me, but I don't have that respect, trying to ignore it.

8. Warmth

- (A) I know exactly what my children are doing, with how they are and when they are in the room.
- (B) I like to keep up with my children's language and games, but sometimes they want out.
- (C) My children and I have an agreement. I will always let them know when we are and they will do the same for us.
- (D) I don't know how far away my children are and I try to use the radio to talk to them and then, child care providers will send them.

9. Motivation

- (A) I don't have to motivate, maybe once in a while is fine, but more than that they need to be pushed.
- (B) I do think that if children don't have accounts, they will not have the confidence in us, and in life.
- (C) I am one of the greatest reasons for children come from their mistakes. It is to help my children learn from their mistakes.
- (D) Everyone makes mistakes. I don't get too upset over my children's mistakes. We are all figures 2 out eventually.

10. Friends

- (A) I don't believe parents should be their children's friend, you will lose your authority over them.
- (B) My children are my best friends.
- (C) My children are friends with other children. I don't think that's their fault.
- (D) I really don't understand how parents and children can be friends. We are so different from each other.

11. Communication

- (A) I don't tell my children much, these are adult matters.
- (B) I don't tell my child about anything.
- (C) I tell my children what will go on, in general, if it affects them, but some things are not told to their age.
- (D) My children don't need much information, they seem to be doing fine.

So what is your parenting style?

Add up the number of times you selected a option on A, B, C, D or E and write it in the table below. The highest score is the label corresponds to the parenting style you practice. For example, if your answer most of the questions was an 'A' you are an authoritative style parent.

	Number of Times	Parenting Style
A	31	Authoritative
B	31	Permissive
C	31	Authoritative
D	31	Uninvolved

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