

What's Your Parenting Style?

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

Dimensions of a Parent's Behavior

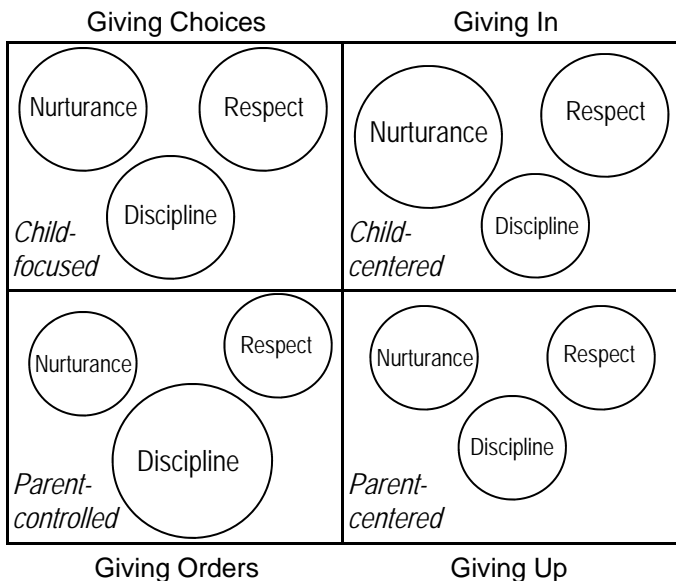
- Parent **responsiveness** (warmth and nurturing) refers to the degree to which a parent responds to a child's needs in an accepting, supportive manner.
- Parent **discipline** (control and demandingness) refers to the extent a parent expects and demands mature, responsible behavior from the child.

		Discipline (control)	
		High	Low
Responsiveness (warmth)	High	Giving Choices	Giving In
	Low	Giving Orders	Giving Up

Parenting Styles

- **Giving Choices** - Parents who nurture and discipline their child. They set high standards and expectations, consistently enforce rules, and encourage independence. A give-and-take communication, with the ability to listen is key.
- **Giving In** - Parents who nurture their children, but do not discipline them much or well. Although they show love and give attention, they make few demands and set no guidelines or structure for their children. They often give in to emotional pressure (whining and threats) by their children.
- **Giving Orders** - Parents who discipline their children but are not very nurturing. These strict parents value obedience and discourage independence. They do not like their authority to be questioned.

- **Giving Up** - Parents who neither nurture nor discipline their children. These parents spend a minimal amount of time and effort with their child. They are unavailable to the child. Parent drug use, mental health issues, and immaturity are possible reasons.



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 respect.

Outcomes for Children			
Giving Choices	Giving In	Giving Orders	Giving Up
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Think before acting • Take responsibility for actions/choices • Learn to resolve conflicts • Not to blame others for their actions/choices • Respect for choices 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Always get "own" way • Trouble getting along with others • Do as they please • Don't know how to behave • Act spoiled 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Be "bossy" • Comply or rebel • Expect payment • Fear or resent parent • Can become "sneaky" 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lacks self-control • Less competent than peers • Rebellious • Irresponsible • May show signs of psychological distress
Best on all measures			Worst on all measures

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

1. ___ I believe that it is better not to have rules than to worry about breaking them.
2. ___ Children should obey their parents and not talk back.
3. ___ Children should be given choices.
4. ___ Children can get along pretty well if you just leave them alone.
5. ___ My own problems are so consuming I don't have time or energy for my child.
6. ___ What I do won't make a difference, so I've given up with my child.
7. ___ Sometimes children have a point. I try to listen to them.
8. ___ I make the rules of my household. Children should be punished for not following these rules.
9. ___ Children should be allowed their own sense of individuality.
10. ___ I have high standards which I expect my child to understand and I enforce rules consistently.
11. ___ Parents should do as much as they can for their children (making their beds, getting their snacks, dressing them).
12. ___ When my child misbehaves, I yell and threaten.
13. ___ If I discipline my child, I am afraid he/she won't love me.
14. ___ I know what's best for my child, after all I'm the parent.
15. ___ I let my child do what he/she wants because I want to avoid conflict.
16. ___ I have so many other things to do, the children will just have to make it on their own.

Find the numbers you checked below:

Giving Choices	3	7	9	10
Giving Orders	2	8	12	14

Giving In	1	11	13	15
Giving Up	4	5	6	16

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.

References:

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