

Parenting Styles Cheatsheet (Think SparkNotes, for Moms)

A guide to the basic parenting styles and why they matter to you and your kid.
(aka "a practical guide to Baumrind parenting styles", for you psychology nerds)

How does the
child learn and
grow?



How are rules
created and
enforced?



Who guides
the child's
behavior?



What kind of
adult will this
create?



JELLYFISH PARENTING (AKA PERMISSIVE PARENTS)

NO PARENTAL INSTRUCTION

Allow children to
learn on their own,
rarely providing
them with
instruction

CONFLICT AVOIDANCE

Parent sets few rules
or consequences,
while desperately
trying to avoid
conflict with child

CHILD DETERMINED

Parent is controlled
by the child's
demands

INCONSISTENT MOTIVATION

Kids grow up to have
inconsistent drive
and motivation

DOLPHIN PARENTING (AKA AUTHORITATIVE PARENTING)

GUIDANCE THROUGH TRIAL & ERROR

Parents allow child
to make mistakes and
learn from them, but
helps and guides
them through the
process

COLLABORATE AND DISCUSS HOUSE RULES

Parent maintains
authority, but works
with the child to
establish systems for
rules and
consequences.

CHILD LED BUT GUIDED BY PARENT

Parent guides
behavior based on
the child's nature

SUSTAINABLE INTERNAL DRIVE

Kids grow up to have
consistent and
intrinsically-
generated motivation

TIGER PARENTING (AKA AUTHORITARIAN PARENTING)

RELIANCE ON PARENTAL INSTRUCTION

Parents provide
instruction for all
child activities, rarely
allowing them room
to make mistakes

RULES DETERMINED BY PARENT

Parent sets up rules
and consequences
without discussion
or consulting with
the child.

PARENTALLY DETERMINED BEHAVIOR

Parent controls all of
the child's behavior
and activities

MOSTLY EXTERNALLY MOTIVATED

Kids grow up to have
motivation which is
dependent on other
people

How Do Parenting Styles Help Me Be a Better Parent?

While most research advocates the use of dolphin-style parenting, There is also a time to let loose (jellyfish) and a time to get strict (tiger).

TAKE-HOME LESSONS FROM JELLYFISH PARENTING

- Not every situation is the end of the world. Take a breath. It'll be okay.
- Downtime is not the enemy. As long as it's in moderation, you can give your child some time to unwind after a long day.
- You don't have to fight every battle to raise a happy, functional child.

TAKE-HOME LESSONS FROM DOLPHIN PARENTING

- Take your child's disposition and preferences into account when you make decisions.
- Don't just let your child make mistakes, seek out opportunities for them to make mistakes. This is the best and most permanent way for them to learn.
- Help your child process and learn from these mistakes in a supportive, non-judgemental way.
- You are always in charge, but that doesn't mean you always have to be in control.
- Let your child have input and be a part of the process when you're setting up house rules.
- Your child does not need extracurricular activities every five minutes to have a successful life.
- Pounce on every opportunity to encourage your child in something they're passionate about. It doesn't matter if the activity is beneficial in the long term because the passion will be.
- Be authentic in your parenting. If it doesn't work for you, it doesn't matter what the research says or if someone else swears by it.
- Utilize the help of your tribe (i.e. family and friends). Don't parent in a vacuum.

TAKE-HOME LESSONS FROM TIGER PARENTING

- Children do need a firm system of rules that they can count on and trust will be enforced.
- Ambition, discipline, and self-control are all necessary skills for your child to learn.