[PARENTING](https://www.parentingforbrain.com/category/parenting/)

**What Is A Parenting Style?**The parenting styles commonly used in psychology today are based on the work of Diana Baumrind, a developmental psychologist at the University of California at Berkeley, in the 1960s. Maccoby and Martin also contributed by refining the model in the 1980s.

**Diana Baumrind’s Parenting Styles Theory**Baumrind noticed that preschoolers exhibited distinctly different types of behavior. Each type of behavior was highly correlated to a specific kind of parenting.

**Reader Favorites From Parenting For Brain**

Play Video

Baumrind’s theory is that there is a close relationship between the type of parenting style and children’s behavior. Different parenting styles can lead to different child development and child outcomes.

Based on extensive observation, interviews and analyses, Baumrind initially identified three different types of parenting styles: authoritative parenting,   
authoritarian parenting and   
permissive parenting​.

Although Diana Baumrind is known for her work on categorizing parenting styles, Maccoby and Martin (1983) were the ones who expanded this 3-parenting-styles model using a two-dimensional framework​2​.

They expanded Baumrind’s permissive parenting style into two different types: permissive parenting (also known as indulgent parenting style) and neglectful parenting (also known as uninvolved parenting style).

These four parenting styles are sometimes called the Baumrind parenting styles or Maccoby and Martin parenting styles.

**The four types of parenting styles are:**

* Authoritative
* Authoritarian (or Disciplinarian)
* Permissive (or Indulgent)
* Neglectful (or Uninvolved)

**Parenting Styles Chart Infographic**

**Parenting Styles Definition and Their Effects on Children’s Behavior**

Parenting styles are categorized based on two dimensions of parenting behavior:

**Demandingness** refers to the extend parents control their children’s behavior or demand their maturity.

**Responsiveness** refers to the degree parents are accepting and sensitive to their children’s emotional and developmental needs.

**1. Authoritative Parenting**

**High demandingness. High responsiveness.**

[**Authoritative parents**](https://www.parentingforbrain.com/authoritative-parenting/) have high expectations for achievement and maturity, but they are also warm and responsive​3​.  
These parents set rules and enforce boundaries by having open discussion, providing guidance and using reasoning.

These parents provide their kids with reasoning and explanation for their action.   
Explanations allow children to have a sense of awareness and teach kids about values, morals, and goals.

Their disciplinary methods are *confrontive*​4​, i.e. reasoned, negotiable, outcome-oriented, and concerning with regulating behaviours.  
Authoritative parents are affectionate and supportive. They provide their children with autonomy and encourage independence.

They also allow bidirectional communication. This parenting style is also known as the democratic parenting style​5​.

Children of authoritative parents are *cherished*.

Based on Baumrind’s research on parenting styles, children of authoritative parents tend to​6​:

* Appear happy and content.
* Are more independent.
* Are more active​.
* Achieve higher academic success​7–9​.
* Develop good self-esteem​10​.
* Interact with peers using competent social skills​11​.
* Have better mental health, less depression, anxiety, suicide attempts, delinquency, alcohol and drug use​12–14​.
* Exhibit less violent tendencies​15​.
* Are [**securely attached**](https://www.parentingforbrain.com/what-is-attachment-parenting-attachment-theory/).

**2. Authoritarian Parenting**

**High demandingness. Low** responsiveness**.**

High levels of parental control and low levels of responsiveness are the two characteristics of authoritarian parents.

Although [**authoritarian**](https://www.parentingforbrain.com/authoritarian-parenting-tough-love/) parenting and authoritative parenting styles have similar names, they have several [**important differences**](https://www.parentingforbrain.com/authoritative-vs-authoritarian-parenting/) in parenting belief, demand and approach.

While both parental styles demand high standards, authoritarian parents demand blind obedience using reasons such as “*because I said so*“. They only allow one way communication through rules and orders. Any attempts to reason with them are seen as backtalk.

These parents use stern discipline and often employ harsh punishment, such as corporal punishment, as a way to control children’s behavior. Their disciplinary methods are *coercive*​4​, i.e. arbitrary, peremptory, domineering, and concerned with marking status distinctions.

Authoritarian parents are unresponsive to their children’s needs and are generally not nurturing. They usually justify their mean treatment of their kids as [tough love](https://www.parentingforbrain.com/toughen-up/).

Children whose parents have an authoritarian parenting style tend to:

* Have an unhappy disposition.
* Be less independent.
* Appear insecure.
* Possess low self-esteem.
* Exhibit more **[behavioral](https://www.parentingforbrain.com/oppositional-defiant-disorder-strategies/)** problems​16​.
* Perform worse academically.
* Have poorer social skills.
* Be more prone to mental issues​17​.
* Be more likely to have drug use problems​18​.
* Have worse coping mechanism​19​.

**3. Permissive Parenting (Indulgent)**

**Low demandingness. High responsiveness**

Permissive parents set very few rules and boundaries and they are reluctant to enforce rules.  
These indulgent parents are warm and indulgent but they do not like to say no or disappoint their children.

Children of [**permissive parenting**](https://www.parentingforbrain.com/permissive-parenting/) tend to have the worst outcomes:

* Cannot follow rules.
* Have worse self-control.
* Possess egocentric tendencies.
* Encounter more problems in relationships and social interactions.

**4. Neglectful Parenting (Uninvolved)**

**Low demandingness. Low responsiveness.**

Neglectful parents do not set firm boundaries or high standards.

They are indifferent to their children’s needs and uninvolved in their lives.

These uninvolved parents may have mental issues themselves such as depression, or physical abuse or child neglect when they were kids.

Children raised by neglectful parents:

* Are more impulsive.
* Cannot self-regulate emotion.
* Encounter more delinquency and addictions problems.
* Have more mental issues — e.g. suicidal behavior in adolescents.

**Which Parenting Style Is The Most Effective?**

From decades of studies, researchers found that authoritative parenting is consistently linked to the best outcomes in kids.

Authoritative parenting style is considered the best parenting style by psychologists and psychiatrists.

This classification of child rearing styles has been studied for over 25 years in different countries.

Results are generally found to be as expected for each parenting style.

However, inconsistencies and exceptions in some areas remain.

Here are some factors that may also play a part in determining how a child turns out.

**Cultural and Ethnics Differences**

Some studies found that the authoritative style isn’t always linked to the best school achievement across families from *diverse ethnic*(e.g. Asian, Black, Hispanic) and *socioeconomic backgrounds* (e.g. income level, parental education, number of active parents)​20​.

For example, in one study, researchers found that African-American students with authoritative parents but without peer support did not perform the best academically.

As for Asian-American students, in some studies, they performed the best in school when they had authoritarian parents and peer support​21​.

In Spain, a study showed that both indulgent and authoritative parenting styles were associated with good outcomes​22​.

**Child Temperament**

Children’s own behavior can affect the parent’s choice and the outcomes, too.

For example, kids with a more sensitive temperament may be perceived as [**difficult**](https://www.parentingforbrain.com/easy-baby-what-is-temperament/) causing the parents to change their parenting style towards more authoritarian.

In a study, it was also found that some aspect of child behavior such as sociable and aggressive behaviors are better correlated to the child’s temperament than to the parenting style of their parents.

It seems like parenting style is not the only determining factor in the child’s outcomes.

Differences in social context and in child temperaments can make a difference, too.

But it is worth noting that, despite being widely publicized, not all of these study results have been successfully reproduced by other researchers.

In addition, these results are also not consistent across other types of outcomes, such as behavior or mental health.

For example, while some studies found the use of authoritarian parenting in the Chinese American population was associated with the best academic outcomes​23​, others found the authoritative parenting to be the best in predicting school performance​24​.

To this date, no study has conclusively disproved the benefits of authoritative parenting, while many others have consistently shown its advantages.

**Authoritative parenting is still the parenting style of choice recommended by experts.**

**Parenting Styles vs Parenting Practices**

Another component that can impact the outcome is the distinction between parenting style and parenting practice.

**Parenting style** is the emotional climate and control in which parents raise their children.

**Parenting practices** are specific actions that parents employ in their parenting.

Even for parents with the same parenting style, they may choose to utilize different parenting practices which may affect the ***degree***of outcomes.

**Limitations And Criticisms Of Parenting Studies**

When interpreting research results, it is important to note that most of these parenting studies only find *links*between parenting styles and outcomes.

That is, the results are only **correlation**and **not causation**.

For example, parents who are warm and responsive tend to have children who exhibit less behavior problems. One is tempted to say that therefore warm and responsive parents result in better behaving kids.

But you can easily turn that around and say that kids who behave cause their parents to be more warm and responsive.

Different children have different temperaments and they can in turn affect parents’ behavior.

These parenting research do not tell us which one is the correct cause-and-effect relationship.

So why do most psychologists and experts still recommend authoritative parenting style?

One reason is that there are overwhelming volumes of studies showing these connections consistently.

Another reason is that there is ***no***research that shows authoritative parenting style causes harm to children.

As a parent, if I have to choose one parenting style, without any research data, I would consider my parenting goals and the type of parent I want to be.

My ultimate parenting goal is to raise a healthy, happy, kind and responsible person who will love me and our family when she grows up. AND I also want to enjoy the experience of parenting.

It is hard to imagine being cold and strict (authoritarian), cold and indifferent (neglectful) or warm and indulgent (permissive) will achieve all of my goals.

Authoritative parenting style simply makes sense to me.

**Nature Vs Nurture**

Nature vs nurture is one of the oldest debates in the history of psychology. Which one matters more?

A [recent study](http://www.medicaldaily.com/nature-vs-nurture-debate-50-year-twin-study-proves-it-takes-two-determine-human-334686) by the Queensland Brain Institute and the VU University of Amsterdam has pretty much settled the Nature vs Nurture debate. 14.5 million pairs of twins from almost every twin study ever done in the past 50 years were collected and analyzed​25​.

Researchers have found that a person’s behavior and character traits are influenced roughly the same by genetics (nature) and by environment (nurture).

Parenting is one of the most important part of the environment a child is exposed to since birth. Its impact on a child is significant and undeniable.