

## **Pocket Reference:**

### **Parenting Styles and Kids' Temperaments**

Take this [quiz](http://www.extension.umn.edu/family/parents-forever/docs/parenting-style-assessment.pdf) to find out your intuitive parenting style: <http://www.extension.umn.edu/family/parents-forever/docs/parenting-style-assessment.pdf>. Once you understand your parenting style, you can develop your parenting skills to “tweak” it to become a more effective parent.

**There are four Basic Parenting Styles.** Most likely you will see aspects of all four in how you parent, depending on what is happening in the moment, past experience, your temperaments, and how you and your child are feeling.

**Positive or Authoritative** parents set high expectations for their children and temper these expectations with understanding and support. This type of parenting creates the healthiest environment for a growing child and helps to foster a productive relationship between parent and child. How to recognize if you are an authoritative parent:

- Does your child's day have structure to it, such as a planned bedtime and understood household rules?
- Are there consequences for disrupting this structure or breaking the household rules?
- Does your child understand the expectations that you have for their behavior, and are these expectations reasonable?
- Do you have a healthy and open line of communication with your child? That is, does your child feel that they can speak to you about anything without fear of negative consequence or harsh judgment?

**Unengaged or neglectful** is unlike the other styles in that parents rarely fluctuate naturally into neglectful parenting as a response to child behavior. If a parent recognizes themselves as a neglectful parent, or if a friend recognizes that they may know a neglectful parent, it is important to understand that those parents (and the children involved in the situation) need assistance so that they can get back on track to having a healthy and communicative relationship within the family.

**Permissive** parents are responsive but not demanding. These parents tend to be lenient while trying to avoid confrontation. Few rules are set for the children. When the rules do exist, they are inconsistent. This lack of structure causes these children to grow up with little self-discipline and self-control. How to recognize if you are a permissive parent:

- Do you not have set limits or rules for your child?
- Do you often compromise your rules to accommodate your child's mood?
- Do you avoid conflict with your child?
- Do you have a willingness to be your child's best friend rather than their parent?

**Dominating or authoritarian** parents expect children to follow a strict set of rules and expectations, relying on punishment to demand obedience or teach a lesson.

Recognizing your authoritarian style:

- Do you have very strict rules that you believe should be followed no matter what?
- Do you often find yourself offering no explanations for the rules other than “Because I said so?”
- Do you give your child few choices and decisions about their own life?
- Do you find yourself utilizing punishment as a means of getting your child to do what you ask?
- Are you reserved in the amount of warmth and nurturing you show your child?

### **Your Child's Temperament**

Temperament broadly refers to the aspects of personality that are biologically based, or innate.

By understanding temperament, you can learn how to help your child express their preferences, desires, and feelings appropriately. Caregivers and families can also use their understanding of temperament to avoid blaming themselves or a child for reactions that are normal for that particular child. Most importantly, adults can learn to anticipate issues before they occur and avoid frustrating themselves and the child by using approaches that do not match her temperament.

- **Activity level**
- **Approach and withdrawal:** the way a child initially responds to a new stimulus (rapid and bold or slow and hesitant), whether it be people, situations, places, foods, changes in routines or other transitions.
- **Adaptability:** the degree of ease or difficulty with which a child adjusts to change or a new situation, and how well the youngster can modify his reaction.
- **Intensity:** the energy level with which a child responds to a situation, whether positive or negative.
- **Mood:** the mood, positive or negative, or degree of pleasantness or unfriendliness in a child's words and behaviors.

- **Attention span:** the ability to concentrate or stay with a task, with or without distraction.
- **Distractibility:** the ease with which a child can be distracted from a task by environmental (usually visual or auditory) stimuli.
- **Sensory threshold:** the amount of stimulation required for a child to respond. Some children respond to the slightest stimulation, and others require intense amounts.

## Articles exploring aspects of the interplay between parenting styles and temperament (both the child's and the parent's):

How Your Temperament Influences the Way You Parent Your Child

<https://www.verywellfamily.com/how-a-parents-temperament-influences-parenting-style-1094783>

Your Child's Temperament: Finding the Right Parenting Style

<https://www.parentmap.com/article/your-childs-temperament-finding-the-right-parenting-style>

Raising Successfully Children <https://www.nytimes.com/2012/08/05/opinion/sunday/raising-successful-children.html>

Temperament and Heart-Mind Well-Being <https://heartmindonline.org/resources/temperament-and-heart-mind-well-being>

Temperament: Parent-Child "Fit" <https://heartmindonline.org/resources/temperament-parent-child-fit>

How temperament affects parents, children, and family life: Don't assume family friction is a result of your child having LD or ADHD. It could be because of his temperament — and yours!

<https://www.greatschools.org/gk/articles/temperament-affects-parents-children-family/>

Understanding Your Child's Temperament <http://www.pbs.org/parents/expert-tips-advice/2015/09/understanding-childs-temperament/>

## What about when you have children with different temperaments:

A Tale of Two Temperaments: Same Parents, Different Kids

[https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/parenting/wp/2016/05/20/a-tale-of-two-temperaments-same-parents-different-kids-2/?utm\\_term=.d86cce26034b](https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/parenting/wp/2016/05/20/a-tale-of-two-temperaments-same-parents-different-kids-2/?utm_term=.d86cce26034b)

Playing Favorites: Do We Treat Our Kids Differently?

<https://www.parentmap.com/article/playing-favorites-do-we-treat-our-kids-differently>

Raising Young Siblings That Love Each Other <http://ageofmontessori.org/raising-young-siblings-love/>

Siblings Under Stress <https://childmind.org/article/siblings-under-stress/>

The Other Child (when sibling has ADHD) <https://www.additudemag.com/the-other-child/>

It's not fair, and that's ok. Supporting your children when a sibling is struggling

<https://imperfectfamilies.com/when-the-siblings-of-a-difficult-child-feel-ignored/>

**Share ideas with other parents, join our Facebook group: COPE Center - Supporting Parents of Essex County, NJ (a closed group, you must be invited to participate):**  
[\(https://www.facebook.com/groups/copespenj/\)](https://www.facebook.com/groups/copespenj/)