

Parenting Styles - Explainer

Parenting styles are typically described in terms of how much **warmth**, and how much **structure** a child experiences.

AUTHORITATIVE PARENTING

High warmth
High structure



Authoritative parenting combines warmth and connection, with clear and consistent boundaries. It often involves inductive discipline where parents explain the reasons behind rules and boundaries and invite children's reflections.



Children tend to be more confident, self-regulated, empathic, caring and considerate.

AUTHORITARIAN PARENTING

High structure
Low warmth



Authoritarian parenting tends to be high in control but lower in warmth. There is a strong focus on rules with little explanation of the reasoning behind them. Communication is often a one-way process.



Children may be more obedient, but also more likely to be driven by fear of consequences than by internal values.

PERMISSIVE PARENTING

High warmth
Low structure



Permissive parenting is very warm but with few rules or boundaries. Children experience easily negotiable limits. Guidance is inconsistently enforced, and parents tend to play more of a friend-like role to their children.



Children feel loved but may struggle with self-discipline and self-guidance. They can also show risky behaviour & a sense of entitlement.

NEGLECTFUL PARENTING

Low warmth
Low structure



Neglectful parenting is characterised by low parental warmth, emotional detachment, and minimal rules or expectations. Parents provide little guidance or support, leaving children to manage their own needs and behaviour.



Children are most vulnerable to insecure attachment, emotional difficulties & behavioural problems.

OVERINVOLVED PARENTING

High control
High involvement



Overinvolved parenting is marked by high involvement and high control, with parents closely managing and often intervening in their child's experiences, particularly to remove obstacles or prevent struggles.



Children may develop lower resilience and reduced confidence in handling challenges, even when parenting is well-intentioned.



AUTHORITATIVE PARENTING

High warmth
High structure



How does
ONE parenting style in particular
help children develop their
social & moral orientation towards others?



When kids feel safe, it's easier for them to care about others

When children experience authoritative parenting, they're **more likely to develop secure attachments**.

This sense of safety changes what's happening inside them:

- They're less preoccupied with protecting themselves
- They're less preoccupied with earning approval
- They feel more **safe, seen, and valued**

...and that creates the emotional space to **notice others**.



Instead of worrying:

"Am I okay?"

They can begin to wonder:

"What is that other person feeling?"



But it's not just safety, it's guidance too...

Authoritative parents don't just set boundaries, they **teach through them**.

They use something called **inductive discipline**, which means:

- Explaining the reasons behind rules
- Helping children see how their actions affect others
- Inviting children to reflect on those effects.

*"How do you think that made
your friend feel?"*

*"What do you think you could
do differently next time?"*



...over time, children understand **the why behind behaviours**, instead of simply 'following the rules', and this helps them to **internalise values** as **personally meaningful**, rather than just being externally imposed.



What builds over time and WHY that matters...

This combination of **security + guidance** helps children develop:

- ♥ Empathy (understanding others' feelings)
- 🌱 The ability to respond with care & consideration
- 🧠 Self-regulation (pausing before acting)

Research consistently shows that people who can form caring and reciprocal relationships tend to experience:

- 🧠 Better mental health
- ♥ Greater emotional wellbeing
- 🤝 Stronger, more supportive life connections



Authoritative parenting isn't about raising kids who 'behave well' or 'achieve highly'

It's about helping them become people who:

♥ love well 🌍 contribute meaningfully, and 🔗 build strong, connected lives.

And ultimately... isn't that what we really want for our children?