

Dear Parents,

Is your parenting style preparing your child for the twenty-first century?

Are you an *authoritarian* parent?

This parent values obedience. Commanding the child what to do and what not to do, rules are clear and unbending. The parent pours the "right" information into the child who is considered an empty vessel. Misbehavior is strictly punished.

Predominant for most of Western history, authoritarian parenting is effective in societies experiencing little change and accepting one way to do things. The child learns by imitating the expert.

This style mismatches a rapidly changing society which values choice and innovation. Rebellion often results from strict punishment. Spanking, which models violence as a solution to problems, is contradictory in a society which claims to value peaceful solutions. And children raised to follow the "expert" easily copy anyone, including undesirable peers.

Are you a *permissive* parent?

Popular in the 1950's and 60's, this style was a reaction to the horrors of whole nations following the dictators in World War II. Instead of following, children are encouraged to think for themselves, avoid inhibitions, and not value conformity. Parents take a "hands-off" approach, allowing children to learn from the consequences of their actions. Misbehavior is usually ignored.

Although those raised in this style are creative and original, they often have trouble living in a highly populated community as well as fitting into the work-force. Ignoring misbehavior gives no information about expected behavior. With no intervention, the bully wins, while the passive child loses, a perfect set-up to be a victim in later life. Aggressive patterns become ingrained when children are not guided to find acceptable ways to get desires met.

Unlike the child-oriented 50's and 60's where one consistent adult was available to patiently guide self-discovery to the consequences of actions, today's society is fast-paced with a multitude of adults playing into the child's life each week. Without clear limits, children get confused, feel insecure, and can make poor choices.

Are you an *assertive-democratic* parent?

These parents establish basic guidelines for children. Clarifying issues, they give reasons for limits. Learning to take responsibility is a high priority. Children are given lots of practice in making choices and guided to see the consequences of those choices. Misbehavior is handled with an appropriate consequence or by problem-solving with the child to find an acceptable way to get desires met. Out-of-control children have "cool-off" time, not punishment. Children are part of deciding how to make amends when someone or something has been hurt. Assertive-democratic parenting is the best for today's fast-changing information age where choice is constant and there is no longer just one "right" way. Children raised by this style learn to accept responsibility, make wiser choices, cope with change, and are better equipped to succeed in a work-force which relies on cooperative problem-solving.

Parenting is the hardest job you will ever have ... but the MOST rewarding in life. It is a learning process everyday and one that's message reflects that

Children are Today's Pride & Tomorrow's Promise!