

Healthy Parenting vs. Unhealthy Parenting

Healthy Parenting

Parent caringly understands and validates the child's protective emotions (empathy). Child learns to self regulate their own protective emotions like anger, fear, and panic. Parent may need to address inappropriate behaviour and make a final decision about a situation but acknowledgment should always come first. Healthy Parenting involves emotional care and validation which the child learns to do for him or herself. The Child is enabled to self regulate and self-soothe their own emotions.

- **Providing Emotional Support and Validation:** Recognizing and validating children's feelings and experiences, showing empathy, and offering comfort. This teaches children that their emotions are important and manageable.
- **Setting Clear Boundaries and Expectations:** Establishing and enforcing clear, consistent rules and expectations helps children understand their limits and the consequences of their actions, promoting a sense of security and self-discipline.
- **Encouraging Independence and Autonomy:** Allowing children to make choices and solve problems within age-appropriate limits fosters their sense of independence, self-confidence, and problem-solving skills.
- **Modelling Respectful Communication and Behaviour:** Demonstrating respectful, non-violent communication and behaviour teaches children how to interact positively with others and manage conflicts constructively.
- **Providing Positive Reinforcement:** Acknowledging and praising children's efforts and achievements encourages them to continue engaging in positive behaviours and builds their self-esteem.
- **Fostering a Love of Learning:** Encouraging curiosity and a love of learning by engaging in educational activities, reading together, and exploring new ideas stimulates children's intellectual development.
- **Encouraging Social Skills:** Supporting children in developing friendships and social skills, such as sharing, empathy, and cooperation, prepares them for healthy relationships throughout their lives.
- **Teaching Responsibility:** Assigning age-appropriate chores and responsibilities helps children learn accountability, work ethic, and the value of contributing to their family and community.
- **Promoting Healthy Coping Skills:** Teaching children how to manage stress and cope with challenges in healthy ways, such as through exercise, mindfulness, or talking about their feelings, supports their emotional resilience.
- **Demonstrating Unconditional Love:** Showing children that they are loved and valued unconditionally, regardless of their achievements or behaviours, fosters their sense of security and self-worth.
- **Practicing Self-Care and Self-Reflection:** Parents taking care of their own physical and emotional well-being, and being open to self-reflection and growth, model the importance of self-care and adaptability for their children.

Unhealthy Parenting

Ways that Parents react to children's anger, fear or panic (fighting, crying, failing, shyness) that inhibit self awareness and self regulation.

- **Over-Responsibility:** A parent intervenes to resolve situations out of fear for their child's experience of pain, teaching the child that pain is intolerable and must be managed or controlled by themselves, blamed on others, or always resolved by someone else.
- **Inducing Shame:** Mocking the child or comparing them unfavourably with others instills a sense of shame in the child about their own identity.
- **Invalidating Emotions:** Displaying annoyance or anger before trying to understand the child's feelings leads the child to believe their emotions are incorrect or unwarranted.

- **Neglect:** Neglecting a child conveys a message of insignificance, teaching them to feel unimportant.
- **Unwarranted Guilt:** Blaming the child without trying to understand their perspective fosters unwarranted guilt for negative outcomes.
- **Avoidance Tactics:** Distracting the child from discomfort with activities like TV or eating encourages an addictive personality by teaching avoidance of painful emotions.
- **Entitlement Mentality:** Excessively indulging the child to shield them from negative emotions undermines their emotional coping mechanisms, leading to a sense of entitlement.
- **Emotional Dismissal:** Dismissing the child's emotions as insignificant causes the child to feel their emotions are not valid, leading to suppressed feelings or unhealthy expression of emotions.
- **Fear-Based Control:** Using fear or intimidation to control behaviour instills fear rather than understanding, potentially leading to anxiety and a lack of internal moral reasoning.
- **Empty Praise:** Overpraising or giving empty praise for minimal achievements can lead to fragile self-esteem that heavily relies on external validation.
- **Unrealistic Expectations:** Setting and pressuring the child to meet unrealistic expectations can cause chronic stress, fear of failure, and the belief that love and acceptance are conditional.
- **Inconsistent Availability:** Being inconsistently available or emotionally distant makes the child feel insecure and unsure about their worth, leading to attachment issues.
- **Guilt-Tripping:** Reliance on guilt-tripping to enforce compliance fosters a pervasive sense of guilt and obligation in the child, impairing their ability to set healthy boundaries.
- **Projecting Insecurities:** Projecting one's own fears, failures, or aspirations onto the child can stifle their individuality and hinder their pursuit of personal interests and goals.
- **Verbal Abuse:** Being overly critical or using verbal abuse as discipline leads to low self-esteem, chronic self-doubt, and potentially depression or anxiety disorders in the child.