

Parenting Style for High Achievement by Dr. Diana Baumrind

Baumrind has categorized parenting styles into four types (summarized below). She states that the ideal for gifted students is the authoritative parent. Because of the high verbal and reasoning skills of gifted children, they can debate at a high level and then be over-empowered by parents (see also the suggestions by Dr. Sylvia Rimm following). While their mental ability is above grade level, they do not need to be treated as equal to adult status in wisdom and decision-making too early. Over-empowered children may be dominant (aggressive, argumentative, monopolizing of attention) or dependent (manipulative). The empowerment of children should be gradual and shaped like the letter V increasing with age.

Authoritative Parenting attempts to direct the child's activities but in a rational, issue-oriented manner. Rules and guidelines are established with expectations that they will be followed, but parents are responsive to their children and listen to questions. When expectations are not met, the parents are more nurturing/supporting than punishing. The parent encourages verbal give and take, shares with the child the reasoning behind his/her policy, and solicits the child's objections when he/she refused to conform. Both autonomous self-will and disciplined conformity are valued. The parent exerts firm control at points of parent-child indulgence, but does not hem-in the child with restrictions. The parent enforces his/her own perspective as an adult, but recognizes the child's individual interests and special ways. Parent decisions are not based on group consensus or the individual child's desires, but use reason and set standards for conduct. The parent does not regard himself/herself as infallible. Children have a lively and happy disposition, are self-confident about their ability to master tasks, have well-developed emotional regulation, have good social skills, and are less rigid about gender-typed traits.

Authoritarian Parenting attempts to shape, control, and evaluate the behavior and attitudes of the child in accordance with a set standard (often absolute) of conduct. The parent values obedience as a virtue and favors punitive, forceful measures to curb self will; the parent believes in keeping the child in his/her place, restricting his/her autonomy, and inculcating respect for work. The parent regards the preservation of order, traditional structure, and status as a highly valued ends in themselves. Verbal give and take is not encouraged believing that the child should accept the parent's word for what is right; reasons behind rules are not explained. Parents have high demands but are not responsive to their children. Children are anxious and withdrawn, express poor reactions to frustrations (likely to give up or become hostile), have higher levels of depression, have poorer social skills, but are not likely to engage in anti-social activities (drug and alcohol abuse, vandalism, gangs).

Permissive (Indulgent) Parenting attempts to behave in a non-punitive, acceptant, and affirmative manner towards the child's impulses, desires, and actions. The parent consults with the child about policy decisions and gives explanations for family rules. The parent makes few demands for household responsibility and orderly behavior. The parent represents himself/herself to the child as a resource to use as the child wishes,

not as an ideal for him/her to emulate, nor as an active agent responsible for shaping or altering his/her ongoing or future behavior. The parent allows the child to regulate his/her own activities as much as possible, avoids the exercise of control, avoids confrontation, and does not encourage the child to obey externally defined standards. The parent attempts to use reason and manipulation, but not overt power, to accomplish his/her ends. Children display poor emotional regulation and impulse control, are rebellious and defiant when desires are challenged, demonstrate low persistence to challenging tasks, and engage in anti-social behaviors. They do have higher self-esteem, better social skills, and lower levels of depression.

Uninvolved Parenting attempts to make few demands with little responsiveness and communication. While these parents fulfill the child's basic needs (although extreme cases may result in neglect or abuse), they are generally detached from their child's life. The children lack self-control, have low self-esteem, and are less competent than their peers in all domains.

Sylvia Rimm's Recommendations for Parents and Teachers to Help Creative Underachievers:

- Do not ally with a child against a teacher in the name of creativity
- Do not ally with a child against another parent in the name of creativity
- Encourage the child to be productive in at least one area of creative expression, and help the child to find an audience for his/her performances
- Do not label one child in the family "the creative child"
- Find appropriate models and mentors in areas of child's strengths
- Find a peer environment that combines creativity and achievement
- Encourage intrinsic motivation while also teaching competition
- Use creative strengths to build up weaknesses
- Avoid confrontations, particularly if you can't control the outcomes.