

Parenting Test

This test measures your parenting style. Check each statement below that you believe is like you.

- I usually give my children one or more chances before I discipline them.
- I have made some rules for my children to follow, but I usually don't enforce them.
- I have sometimes been fearful that my children would hate me if I disciplined them severely.
- Sometimes I feel all I do with my children is argue with them.
- I often find myself saying "yes" to my children when I really want to say "no."
- I have been so angry with my child that I have deliberately avoided looking at him/her.
- I expect my children to obey me without having to give them a reason why.
- I sometimes give my children a punishment that lasts a week or longer.
- My children are afraid of me when they misbehave.
- I generally expect my children to be perfect, whether at home, or in school, or in sports.

There are three parenting styles: (1) permissive/soft, (2) authoritarian/harsh, and (3) balanced/democratic. On the test, the first five statements focused on the permissive/soft side, so if you checked mostly those statements your style is probably permissive and soft. The last five statements focused on the authoritarian/harsh side, and if you checked mostly those statements your style is probably authoritarian/harsh. If you checked none or almost none of the statements in the survey, you probably have a style that is more balanced and democratic. If you have a mixed combination, then your style is mixed. All ten items are maladaptive parenting behaviors and should be corrected.

Permissive/Soft style—this style is characterized by a tendency to be weak on establishing and enforcing rules and limits for children. The soft style parent often allows children to have their own way, even when it is in their best interest not to. This style causes children to feel insecure because it does not meet their basic psychological need for limits. In a permissive home environment children feel disconnected from their parents and do not develop a sense of cooperation. Consequently, these children grow up to be at high risk for problematic and self-defeating behaviors, and very often are oppositional, defiant, and act out.

Authoritarian/Harsh style—this style of parenting is characterized by the parent's need to have absolute control over everything his children do, as well as issuing harsh consequences and having little tolerance for his children to express opinions or ask questions. Children who are brought up under the harsh style of an authoritarian parent are well behaved, but out of fear. The ridged harshness of the parent is discouraging and as they grow older these children develop strong resentments toward their parents. In rebellion they reject their parents' rules and values.

Balanced/Democratic style—this style of parenting is firm but gentle, sets limits but believes in giving explanations and views discipline as a means of teaching children how to develop into self-confident and responsible individuals. This style creates a democratic spirit in the family, so that everyone is respected. The combination of respect and clearly defined limits that come from the balanced style encourages children. They feel secure, worthwhile, self-confident, and are self-controlled. They do not see the rules of their family imposed on them arbitrarily, but instead, as having a purpose, which is focused on their self-good. Because of this they trust their parents and other authority figures and are willing to cooperate in the world they are growing up in.