



New Trends  
in Psychology

## Parenting Styles and Their Impact on Child Development and the Parent-Child Relationship

Daniel Boboc<sup>1</sup>

**Abstract:** This paper explores the impact of different parenting styles on child development and the parent-child relationship. Parenting encompasses all the methods through which parents raise and educate their children. Understanding various parenting styles is essential in assessing how they affect the emotional, social, and mental development of children. Additionally, studying these styles helps us understand how they influence the dynamics between parents and children, including aspects such as communication, trust, and emotional closeness. Parenting styles have been of great interest to psychologists and researchers due to their significant impact on child development. By understanding these styles, we can identify both beneficial and harmful practices, offering parents and educational professionals the tools to support children's harmonious growth and development. Moreover, examining parenting styles is crucial in improving family relationships and preventing or intervening in children's behavioral problems from an early age.

**Keywords:** parenting styles; education; growth and development; family relationships; children

---

<sup>1</sup> Student, Faculty of Behavioural and Applied Sciences, Danubius International University of Galati, Romania, Address: 3 Galati Blvd., 800654 Galati, Romania, Corresponding author: cbrboboc@gmail.com.



Copyright: © 2024 by the authors.  
Open access publication under the terms and conditions of the  
Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial (CC BY NC) license  
(<https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc/4.0/>)

## 1. Introduction

*“Children must be left a legacy of conscience, rather than gold.”*

*Plato*

The family represents the oldest and most stable form of human community, playing an essential role not only in the perpetuation of the species but also in the evolution and continuity of social life. Beyond its biological and economic functions, the family is a unique social group, distinguished by a specific lifestyle, norms, and values passed down from generation to generation. Through these aspects, the family plays a crucial role in shaping individuals' personalities and fulfilling functions that other social groups cannot substitute (Voinea, 1993, p. 62).

Parents are undoubtedly the most important and influential educators in a child's life. From birth to adulthood, a child is shaped by interactions and experiences within the family. In the early years of life, the child is entirely dependent on the family to meet fundamental needs such as love, communication, play, nourishment, and movement. More than just a physical space, the family is a social environment where members communicate, know each other, and influence one another, providing a safe and stable framework in which the child can learn and develop.

This familial environment contributes to the transformation of the child from a vulnerable being into a self-aware, intelligent person, integrated into the culture in which they were born. The family's multiple functions—educational, emotional, social, and cultural—are vital for the balanced and harmonious development of the child. A healthy and supportive family environment is the foundation for optimal growth and development, influencing not only childhood but also the individual's adult life.

In this context, parenting styles play a crucial role. The way parents choose to raise and educate their children can profoundly affect their cognitive, emotional, and social development. Moreover, parenting styles influence the quality of the parent-child relationship, with long-lasting effects on communication, trust, and emotional closeness within the family. Thus, studying and understanding parenting styles becomes essential in identifying practices that support a child's harmonious development and a healthy parent-child relationship.

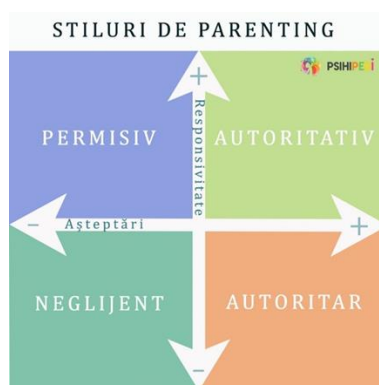
## 2. Parenting: Evolution and Styles

How did the concept of parenting styles emerge? Identifying a connection between certain parental behaviors and the subsequent behaviors of children is quite challenging because there are cases where children raised in different environments can develop similar personalities, and conversely, children raised in the same environment may develop different personalities.

Despite these difficulties, for many years, psychologists have researched the impact parents have on child development, identifying certain correlations between parental behavior and its effect on children's development.

Parenting represents the set of methods, techniques, and behaviors that parents use to raise and educate their children. This concept encompasses all the activities and decisions involved in the physical, emotional, social, and intellectual care of the child. Parenting is not limited to meeting basic needs but also involves providing guidance, support, and education to develop skills and values that enable the child to become a responsible and balanced adult.

The first ideas regarding parenting appeared in the 1930s, primarily as specific parenting practices. In the 1960s, Diana Baumrind shifted the focus from traits and domains to parenting styles, establishing three main types of parenting: authoritative or positive parenting, authoritarian parenting, and permissive or indulgent parenting. In the 1980s, with the help of Maccoby and Martin, a new parenting style was added—the uninvolved or neglectful style.



Over time, the concept of parenting has evolved significantly, influenced by cultural, economic, and social changes. In the past, parenting was often based on traditional practices and strict parental authority. Over time, it transitioned to more flexible

methods and a child-centered approach that recognizes the importance of the child's emotional and psychological needs.

*The Traditional Period:* In many cultures, parenting was oriented toward respecting authority and social conformity, where parents were seen as absolute authority figures.

*The Modern Period:* With the influence of psychology and education, greater emphasis was placed on the child's emotional needs, communication, and support for individual development.

*The Contemporary Period:* Today, parenting is viewed as a partnership between parents and children, where autonomy, mutual understanding, and emotional support are promoted. The importance of a balance between authority and freedom is recognized, with the goal of raising confident and responsible children. There are four parenting styles. Usually, parents will combine elements from all these styles, but one will be predominant.

**A. Authoritative or Positive Parenting** is characterized by rules and boundaries set with gentleness, where the child is encouraged to be independent and solve problems on their own.

Parents pay attention to the child's desires and needs, offer unconditional affection and love, allow the child to freely express their opinions, and are consulted in decision-making. The child is loved and respected, but at the same time, clear boundaries regarding behavior are established.



This parenting style is characterized by a balance between firmness and warmth, which involves setting clear and consistent expectations while also providing support and encouragement. The authoritative-positive parent is responsive to the child's needs and feelings, promotes open communication, and allows the child to express their point of view.

A child raised by an authoritative-positive parent benefits from many advantages that contribute to their harmonious and balanced development. These children feel loved and understood, which provides them with emotional well-being and a greater capacity to manage stress and negative emotions. Encouraging autonomy and respecting the child's opinions lead to the development of a positive self-image and confidence in their own abilities.

Additionally, children learn to communicate effectively, collaborate, and respect the views of others, thereby developing strong social skills and healthy interpersonal relationships. Balanced support and guidance from parents contribute to better motivation and academic performance. Problem-solving skills are also enhanced, as children become more capable of finding creative and efficient solutions. They learn to respect rules and take responsibility for their actions, developing ethical and responsible behavior.

Open communication and emotional support help build a strong, trusting relationship between the child and parent, and children learn to manage their emotions in a healthy way, having positive emotional role models from their parents. Through these advantages, children raised by authoritative-positive parents are well-prepared to become balanced, responsible adults capable of forming healthy and fulfilling relationships.

**B. Authoritarian Parenting** is a parenting style in which the child's needs are ignored, and they are not allowed to express their opinions or needs.



Emotional support is low, with parents being less concerned with their children's emotional needs. Rules are strict, non-negotiable, and parents expect obedience from their children, often achieved through punishment or intimidation. The child completes tasks because they are told to, often out of fear, without understanding the importance of the task or the steps needed to complete it. Furthermore, the child is often not supported or encouraged during the process.

This style is based on the importance of parental control over the child and is often practiced by overprotective parents who believe they know what is best for the child. While the parents' intentions are good, this approach can negatively impact the child's personal development, leading to psychological issues such as depression, low self-esteem, poor communication skills, academic underachievement, negative behavior, and increased risk of substance abuse.

Authoritarian parents often set expectations without explaining the reasoning behind them, and children are typically taught to follow instructions without question. This style of parenting can foster a relationship based on fear and authoritarian respect rather than mutual trust and understanding. Children raised in such an environment may develop self-esteem issues, become less autonomous, and have difficulty expressing their emotions and needs. While this style may initially produce obedient and disciplined children, it can have long-term negative effects on their emotional and social development.

The downsides of a child raised in authoritarian parenting are numerous. One of them is the development of low self-esteem, as these children learn that their worth depends on conforming to the strict rules imposed by their parents, rather than on their own achievements and abilities. Limited communication and lack of emotional expression can lead to difficulties in expressing their feelings and thoughts, negatively affecting their relationship and conflict management skills.

Children raised in authoritarian environments can also develop anxiety and fear of failure due to the constant pressure to meet their parents' high expectations. This fear can inhibit their creativity and willingness to explore new opportunities, affecting their ability to learn and develop independently. In addition, these children may display excessive rebellious or conformist behaviors, either resisting authority in a negative way or becoming overly submissive and dependent on external approval.

Interpersonal relationships may also be affected, as children raised in an authoritarian style may have difficulty forming and maintaining relationships based on trust and reciprocity. They may also develop a defensive or aggressive attitude in their interactions with other children and adults, reflecting the pattern of coercive and controlling behavior learned from their parents. In conclusion, authoritarian parenting styles, although they may initially produce obedient and disciplined children, can have long-term negative consequences on their emotional, social and cognitive development, affecting their ability to become well-balanced and independent adults.

**C. Permissive or Indulgent Parenting:** As the title suggests, this parenting style is characterized by excessive permission and indulgence on the part of the parent, who will constantly try to satisfy all the child's wishes and avoid any conflict.

The parent's main goal is the child's continued happiness, which leads to a lack of boundaries and rules. The permissive parent sets no expectations of academic or sporting success, but is warm and attentive to the child's needs. This parenting style creates a vicious cycle: the child gets what he or she wants by crying or other similar behaviors, and the parent gives in to make the child happy. Thus, the child learns to use these behaviors to achieve his or her goals, thus controlling the parent's schedule, mood and life.

The parent tends to become the child's friend, but it is essential to keep in mind that the parent's role is to educate and discipline. A child brought up in this way may have difficulties in adulthood, unprepared to manage responsibilities and make decisions on their own. This child may have problems adjusting socially, tending to avoid company or contact with people who do not meet their desires.



A child raised in a permissive parenting style may experience both advantages and disadvantages that affect their long-term development.

One of the, let's say, advantages of such a parenting style, is that the relationship between parent and child tends to be a warm and close one. The child feels loved and supported, trusting that the parent is responsive to their needs and wishes. This environment can contribute to the development of a strong sense of emotional security and positive self-esteem, thanks to the constant attention and affection received from the parent.

On the other hand, the disadvantages of this parenting style are significant. The lack of clear boundaries and rules will lead to the development of inappropriate behavior and difficulties in following social norms. Children brought up in an overly permissive environment may have problems taking responsibility and making decisions on their own because they have not been taught to manage frustration and follow rules. These children may become dependent on their parents and have difficulty adapting to social contexts where structures and expectations need to be respected.

Social adjustment problems may also occur, as the child may avoid interactions with people who do not immediately fulfill their wishes. Essentially, this parenting style can lead to insufficient preparation for adult life, negatively affecting the child's ability to function independently and integrate harmoniously into society.

**D. Uninvolved or Neglectful Parenting.** In this uninvolved or neglectful parenting style, the parent has no significant expectations, but is also not responsive to the child's needs and wishes. This style is characterized by a lack of communication and involvement in the child's life.

The parent does not discuss important decisions, has no plan/structure regarding the child's upbringing, and parenting becomes almost non-existent. This parental neglect leads to the confusion of the child, who lacks clear guidance, not being able to distinguish between right and wrong, not having solid landmarks to follow. Because of this disinterest, the parent does not get involved in the child's life, leaving the child to fend for himself.



Uninvolved or Neglectful Parenting clearly has more disadvantages than advantages, with a clear negative impact on child development.

The advantages are rare to non-existent compared to the prevailing negative effects.



The main disadvantage of children raised in such an environment is that they may develop major behavioral problems, as the lack of supervision and guidance makes them not clearly understand the limits and consequences of their actions. They may have difficulty regulating emotions and managing stress because they do not receive the necessary emotional support from their parents.

Children raised in this parenting style are also more likely to develop psychiatric disorders, such as depression and anxiety, due to lack of emotional stability and security. The use of psychoactive substances and involvement in delinquent behavior are increased risks for these children, who often look outside the family for validation and support that they do not find at home.

The school performance of these children will be poor, as the lack of parental support and interest affects their motivation and their ability to concentrate and excel in the educational environment. These children's social relationships may also suffer as they have not learned how to interact healthily and effectively with others, leading to difficulties in forming and sustaining relationships.

### **3. The Impact of Parenting Styles on Children's Development and the Recipe for Success for Future Adults**

Parenting styles play a significant role in children's development, influencing personality, behavior and coping skills. Each of the four parenting styles - authoritative, permissive, authoritarian or neglectful - shapes children in different ways and has both short- and long-term effects.

Children raised in the authoritative style, which offers a balance of firmness and warmth, openness to communication and emotional support, learn strong social skills, independence and self-confidence, and succeed in school. In contrast, the authoritarian style, a harsh and unapproachable system, isolates the child from friends, makes them vulnerable and insecure.

The permissive style, which involves over-indulgence and lack of boundaries, can produce children who have difficulty following rules and taking responsibility. On the other hand, the neglectful style, marked by lack of involvement and emotional support, has the most severe consequences, leading to major behavioral problems, emotional difficulties and increased risks of psychiatric disorders and delinquency.

To raise children who will grow into well-adjusted adults with mature personalities and healthy principles, it is essential that parents adopt a balanced parenting style inspired by the authoritative-positive model. Establishing clear rules, open and empathic communication, constant emotional support, encouraging autonomy and responsibility, and modeling by example are key elements for success. In this way, the parent-child relationship becomes one of mutual trust and respect, creating a safe and supportive environment in which the child can flourish and develop harmoniously.

It is essential to understand that parenting style is not fixed, but can be adjusted and adapted according to the needs and particularities of each child. Parents can learn to combine elements from different styles to create a healthy and supportive parenting environment. A balanced approach that combines clear and consistent rule-setting with empathetic and open communication can lead to a parent-child relationship based on mutual respect and trust.

It is also crucial to remember that attention to the child's needs and wishes, together with an empathic and loving approach, are fundamental to raising a happy and healthy child. Promoting autonomy and responsibility, along with constant emotional support, contributes to the development of strong social and academic skills.

In conclusion, successful parenting is not about adopting a single parenting style, but about parents' flexibility and ability to respond appropriately to their child's needs. By nurturing a positive and supportive relationship, parents can guide children to become responsible, well-balanced adults capable of contributing positively to society. Thus, the key to harmonious development lies in finding a balance between firmness and affection, encouraging healthy growth and an optimal adjustment to adult life.

## References

- Baumrind, D. (1966). Effects of authoritative parental control on child behavior. *Child Development*, 37(4), 887-907.
- Baumrind, D. (1971). Current patterns of parental authority. *Developmental Psychology Monograph*, 4(1), 1-103.
- David, D. (2015). *Tratat de psihologie clinică și psihoterapie / Treatise on Clinical Psychology and Psychotherapy*. Bucharest: Polirom.

Holdevici, I. & Crăciun, B. (2015). *Psihologia personalității / Personality Psychology*. Bucharest: Editura Trei.

Iliescu, D. (2017). *Psihometrie / Psychometrics*. Bucharest: Polirom.

Maccoby, E. E. & Martin, J. A. (1983). Socialization in the context of the family: Parent-child interaction. In E. M. Hetherington (Ed.), *Handbook of Child Psychology Vol. 4: Socialization, Personality, and Social Development*, pp. 1-101. New York: Wiley.

Mitrofan, I. (2000). *Psihologia cuplului și a familiei / Couple and Family Psychology*. Bucharest: Editura Sper.

Negru, O. (2012). *Dezvoltarea psihosocială și emoțională la adulți: O perspectivă integrativă / Psychosocial and Emotional Development in Adults: An Integrative Perspective*. Bucharest: Editura Universitară.

Rusu, P. P. & Turliuc, M. N. (2011). Predictors of marital satisfaction: Empirical data from Romanian couples. *Revista de Psihologie Aplicată*, 13(1), 23-35.

Stănculescu, E. (2012). *Evaluarea personalității. Metode și tehnici de diagnostic / Personality Assessment. Diagnostic Methods and Techniques*. Bucharest: Editura Didactică și Pedagogică.

Steinberg, L.; Lamborn, S. D.; Darling, N.; Mounts, N. S. & Dornbusch, S. M. (1992). Impact of parenting practices on adolescent achievement: Authoritative parenting, school involvement, and encouragement to succeed. *Child Development*, 63(5), 1266-1281.

Voinea, M. (1993). *Familia în tranziție / The Family in Transition*. Bucharest: Editura Academiei Române.