

THE GUIDE TO RAISING
HAPPIER, HEALTHY
CHILDREN AND TEENS

by

Dr. Stephanie Kriesberg

www.drstephaniekriesberg.com



STEPHANIE KRIESBERG, PSYD
LICENSED PSYCHOLOGIST

AUTHORITATIVE PARENTING

It's rare that decades of research in psychology sticks with the same conclusions. But that's the case with the research on the long-term effects of different parenting styles. In the 1960's, Dr. Diana Baumrind began studying three different approaches to parenting, and how they impact kids and the adults they become.

Here's what we know for sure.

BE AN AUTHORITATIVE PARENT

Here's why. Baumrind defined three basic parenting styles:

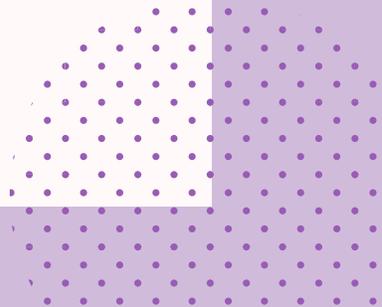
Authoritative Parents:

- Have rules for their children and teens. Kids know that parents are in charge and that kids don't run the show. These limits help kids feel safe and cared for.
- Listen to their kids, and take their perspectives into account when making decisions. They're flexible and open-minded.
- Respect their kids' feelings.
- Set limits when necessary, but mostly use positive reinforcement.
- Are warm and loving.
- Expect their children to cooperate but are not punitive when they cannot meet expectations.

Kids Raised by Authoritative Parents:

- report less anxiety and depression
- are more independent and self-reliant
- are more self-confident
- have greater ability to handle their emotions
- have better social skills
- are happier

I call this the BALANCED Approach to Parenting



Authoritarian Parents:

- like the “my way or the highway approach”
- set rigid rules with no explanation
- value obedience and conformity
- punish harshly, by withdrawing love, saying hurtful things, or even using corporal punishment

Kids Raised by Authoritarian Parents:

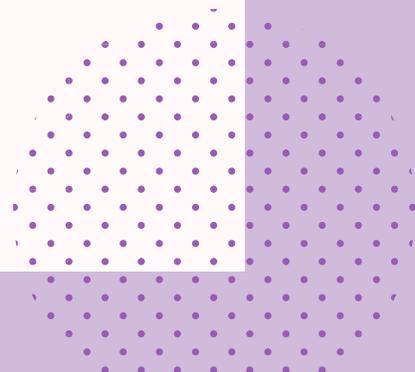
- are more likely to be anxious
- have lower frustration tolerance and greater difficulty managing their emotions
- do well in school
- have lower self-esteem
- are less socially competent
- are less happy

Permissive-Indulgent Parents:

- believe kids should be able to figure things out for themselves without adult interference
- are warm and loving, but do not provide limits or structure
- place few demands on their kids and have few expectations for their behavior

Kids Raised by Permissive-Indulgent Parents:

- have difficulty managing their emotions
- are more likely to be rebellious and defiant when challenged
- are less likely to persist at challenging tasks
- are more likely to engage in antisocial behaviors
- do less well in school
- are less happy



HOW DOES THIS LOOK?

Scenario One

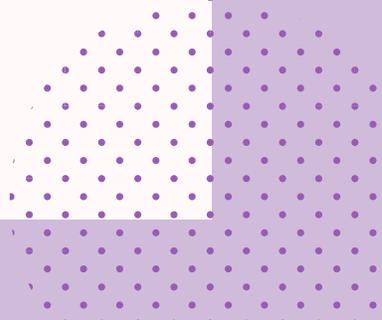
Timothy, age 9, loves to play at his friend Jacob's house. He just doesn't like his mother, Melissa, to leave. After Melissa chats with Jacob's mother, Christie, for a few minutes, she is ready to go. Christie, who works from home, wants to get to her computer. Timothy wraps himself around his mother and whimpers. What if she gets a flat tire and can't pick him up? What if she gets stuck in traffic? What if he feels sick and needs to go home right away?

RESPONSES:

Authoritarian Parent: Melissa tells Timothy he is being a baby. He needs to act like a big boy like Jacob. She's never been late before, so why would she be late now? Anyway, if she is late, Jacob will "survive." She leaves Christie to handle a miserable Timothy.

Permissive Parent: Melissa hugs Timothy and has him sit right next to her on the couch while she kisses his head. She tells him she knows how hard it is to go on a playdate. When Timothy doesn't stop crying, she tells Christie: "It's okay if I stay, isn't it? This is really hard for him."

Balanced Parent: Melissa anticipates before the playdate that Timothy will get anxious when it is time for her to leave. The night before the playdate, Melissa talks to Timothy about how worried he gets. Timothy is able to tell Melissa that he worries because he wants to make sure he has time to finish his homework since it's a school night. Now that Melissa understands this, they agree that she will come 30 minutes earlier than usual. When they arrive at Jacob's house the next day, Timothy runs off and plays without looking back.



Scenario Two

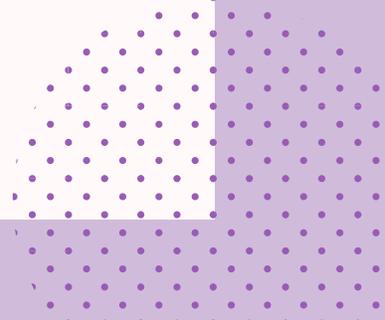
The weekend is approaching, and a major blizzard is predicted. Meredith, age 17, had been planning to go with her friends on Saturday night to see a hot new band that was a 45-minute drive away. Meredith's parents, Griffin and Betsy, tell Meredith that she cannot go see the band. It will not be safe to drive. Meredith is furious. She tells them that everyone else's parents are letting them go and they are being "crazy." She stomps upstairs and slams her door.

RESPONSES:

Authoritarian Parent: Griffin storms upstairs and bangs on Meredith's door until she opens it. He tells her she is lucky to have a car to drive at all and grounds her for 2 weeks for being disrespectful.

Permissive Parent: Griffin and Betsy think the skiing will be really great with all that snow, so they leave on Thursday for their condo in the mountains. They tell Meredith to be careful and figure she will use good judgement since she is a "good kid." Meredith and her friends take Meredith's car to see the band. On the way home, they spin out and hit another car. The officer who arrived at the scene of the accident said: "What the ___ are you kids doing out on a night like this?"

Balanced Parent: When Meredith calms down, Griffin and Betsy talk to her about the weekend. They tell her they understand she is upset, angry, and disappointed, but their decision still stands. They offer for Meredith to invite a couple of her girlfriends to sleep over instead. When Meredith huffs, they let it pass. Eventually, Meredith takes them up on their offer. Her friends sleep over and they have a good time.



Of course, being an authoritative parent is easier said than done. It is especially challenging when

YOUR CHILD OR TEEN:

- has an anxiety disorder, ADHD, or a learning disability. For example, if your child is terrified to sleep alone, you might end up sleeping with him every night just to let everyone get some rest.
- If your teen with ADHD disrupts every meal, you might be tempted to say unkind things to her or threaten her with punishments you would never carry out.

YOU:

- have an anxiety disorder, ADHD, or are simply overwhelmed by the demands of work and family
- have a history of trauma and are triggered when your child is sad, angry, defiant (you name it)
- were raised by authoritarian or permissive parents, and just don't know what a balanced parent acts like

You can become a balanced parent, and have a happier, healthier family.

Learn more about how Dr. Stephanie Kriesberg can help you with parent counseling, child or teen therapy, or individual therapy, at www.drstephaniekriesberg.com.

