

What is Your Parenting Style?

How would you describe your approach to parenting? From each of the following groups of statements, check the one that best describes you:

Group 1

- 1. I believe children should be seen and not heard.
- 2. I enjoy the chaos of parenting.
- 3. I believe children can be children and also practice civility.
- 4. My children keep to themselves and don't bother me much.

Group 2

- 1. I think my children need a firm hand to direct them so they behave properly.
- 2. I believe my children need freedom to learn who they are.
- 3. I love watching my children discover things for themselves – and I am there if they have questions.
- 4. My children learn how to behave in school or at child care.

Group 3

- 1. I don't have a problem saying "no" to my child.
- 2. I hate saying "no" to my child.
- 3. Sometime I need to say "no" to my child, and sometimes I say "yes."
- 4. Mostly I just ignore my child's bad behavior.

Group 4

- 1. Every rule – big and little – must be followed.
- 2. I don't believe in lots of rules – when I am with my children I want to enjoy them and have fun, not be a disciplinarian.
- 3. I have rules that are really important, and I expect them to be followed. But I am willing to be flexible about smaller issues.
- 4. Having lots of rules is too complicated – sometimes it's just easier to ignore some behavior.

Group 5

- 1. I think discipline is correcting your children when they misbehave.
- 2. I don't believe in lots of discipline – my children need freedom.
- 3. I think discipline is an opportunity to teach your children.
- 4. The other parent takes care of most of the discipline.

Group 6

- 1. I am okay if my children are unhappy with me.
- 2. I want my children to like me.
- 3. Sometimes I need to be unpopular with my children to keep them safe and ensure they do what needs to be done.
- 4. I am not sure how to get my children to like me.

Group 7

- 1. Children must respect their parents
- 2. I like it when my child is respectful, but I must admit, that's not often. Must be the age.
- 3. Parents need to model the respect they expect from their child.
- 4. I wish my child was more respectful, but since she's not, I try to ignore it.

Group 8

- 1. I know exactly what my children are doing, who they are with and where they are all the time.
- 2. I try to keep up with my children's comings and goings, but sometimes they won't tell me.
- 3. My children and I have an agreement – I will always let them know where I am and they will do the same for me.
- 4. I don't keep track of what my children are up to – they seem fine and have teachers and child care providers to watch over them.

Group 9

- 1. I don't tolerate mistakes – I can see making a mistake once, but after that children need to be punished.
- 2. I think that if children don't feel successful, they will not have the confidence to do well in life.
- 3. Some of the greatest lessons for children come from their mistakes. I try to help my children learn from their mistakes.
- 4. Everyone makes mistakes – I don't get real upset over my children's mistakes. They will figure it out.

Group 10

- 1. I don't believe parents should be their children's friend – you will lose your authority over them.
- 2. My children are my best friends.
- 3. My children are friends with other children; I need to be their parent.
- 4. I really don't understand how parents and children could be friends – we are so different from each other.

Group 11

- 1. I don't tell my children much – these are adult matters.
- 2. I can tell my child just about anything.
- 3. I let my children know what is going on, especially if it affects them, but some things I need to talk with another adult about.
- 4. My children don't need much information; they seem to be doing fine.

So what is your parenting style?

Scoring:

Add up the number of times you responded to a question with a 1, 2, 3 or 4 and put that number in the box under “Number of Times” to the right of the appropriate response number. Look at the response number where you have the highest number of times; this is your predominant approach to parenting, or parenting style.

	Number of Times	Parenting Style	Description
1		Dominating	You are firm believer in rules and have high expectations for behavior. You show your love by expecting the best from your children, but rarely show affection. Communication is generally one way – from you to your child. Sometimes you can be rigid and harsh in correcting bad behavior.
2		Permissive	You show your children lots of love, give them what they ask for, communicate openly and let them do what they want most of the time. You have trouble setting and enforcing rules. You prefer to be friendly rather than a disciplinarian. Sometimes you feel like your children walk all over you.
3		Positive	You believe children need your love, but you also have high expectations and believe your children need rules and guidance in order to meet these expectations. You view parenting as your most important job, and serve as a role model for your children by modeling the respect you expect from them. You believe in listening to your children, but when it comes down to it, you have the final say regarding issues involving safety, values and health. Your children know what you expect and they know you will be consistent, fair and firm.
4		Unengaged	You may feel uncomfortable about parenting because you don't spend much time with your children. You may focus more on work or other interests. When you are with your children, you often are preoccupied and not focused on them. You assume the other parent is doing a pretty good job. You aren't sure what you can do that would be helpful anyway.

Source:

Pitzer, R. (2001). *What is your parenting style? A parenting styles self-assessment*. St. Paul, MN: University of Minnesota Extension.