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## Parenting style

Parenting style is influenced by a number of things, including how you were raised, current stresses in your life, your temperament and your child's temperament. There are two sides to parenting style:

- Demanding side expects age appropriate behavior and sets limits
- Accommodative side makes adjustments for the child's needs/temperament

Parents who have a child with a challenging temperament are more likely to be pushed to extremes of parenting styles. Understanding your child's temperament helps you find a middle ground approach. Middle ground parenting combines demandingness and accommodation. Research shows that children do best with middle ground parenting. Middle ground parenting takes children's temperament into account when deciding what parenting strategies to use - which promotes goodness of fit. A good fit means parents match their demands or expectations with what their child is able to do, given the child's temperament, age and abilities.



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## Fears of “coddling”

Does adjusting your parenting approach to fit your child's temperament mean “coddling”? **No!** You still decide the rules and limits. But parents who understand their child's temperament know when to be demanding and when to accommodate. For example, parents of a child who is irregular in his sleep patterns may set a bedtime and expect their child to stay in bed. But they may be accommodative to the child's needs (his irregular biological rhythm) and allow their child to look at books until he is ready to fall asleep. Parents of a child who is low in adaptability may be accommodative by giving their child 10 minute and 5 minute warnings before she needs to come to dinner, but then expect her to stop playing and come to the table.

## *What is your parenting style?*



Do you tend to be very demanding or very accommodative in your parenting? Parents in the same family may have somewhat different parenting styles. Here are some questions to help you figure out your parenting style. In the space provided mark whether you agree (A) or disagree (D) with each statement.

1. A tantruming child usually needs more discipline from parents. \_\_\_\_\_
2. Spelling out clearly your expectations to your child is important. \_\_\_\_\_
3. A child struggling with a problem should be left to figure it out on his/her own. \_\_\_\_\_
4. It is important not to ignore your child's provocative or defiant behavior, but to deal with it promptly. \_\_\_\_\_
5. A crying child who is not really hurt should be left alone. \_\_\_\_\_
6. It is not really important to understand your child's behavior. \_\_\_\_\_
7. Children become bad only when parents tolerate misbehavior. \_\_\_\_\_
8. A significant part of a parent's job is making children face the consequences of their actions. \_\_\_\_\_
9. Parents need to be consistent in enforcing the limits they set for their children's behavior. \_\_\_\_\_
10. Parents should expect more than they generally do from their young children. \_\_\_\_\_
11. Even if children are tired or not feeling well, parents should not relax their expectations for good behavior. \_\_\_\_\_
12. Once you have made a decision regarding your child you should not back off. \_\_\_\_\_

If you agreed with most of the statements you are very demanding in your parenting style. If you disagreed with most of the statements you have a very accommodative parenting style. If you agreed with some statements and disagreed with others you tend to take a more middle ground approach in your parenting.