

NEWSLETTER FOR MAY, 2016

Dear Parents,

From the time you felt the need to discipline your child, you must have debated on what is the best method to do so. From the dictum of ‘spare the rod and spoil the child’ to the modern day notion of ‘one should be a friend to one’s child’, there are opinions galore around us regarding the best possible way to raise a child. In this issue, let us take a look at what are some of the important techniques of disciplining a child.

The **Authoritarian parent** is one whose word is the law; someone who does not take ‘no’ for an answer. He is dictatorial in his approach. The child is expected to strictly abide by the rules laid down by the parent. Failing to do so often leads to corporal punishment. No effort is made to explain the rationale behind the rules. The child in such a situation is in terror of the parent, confused and often feels rejected. As a result the self esteem of the child may suffer, and they may react by going into a shell or by becoming aggressive.

In contrast the **Authoritative style** is one where the parent lays down strict do’s and don’ts which are expected to be followed but at the same time gives reason for doing so. In other words the child has a scope to question and discuss the rules that he/she is expected to follow. Often the child and parent sit down to decide on the boundaries that the child is supposed to function within and also the consequences of not adhering to the same. This style of parenting is also known as the **democratic method**. Here the child learns important skills of communication, negotiation, critical thinking and problem solving and also the value of commitment, honesty and transparency in relationships. Children who grown up in such a structured environment, knowing what is expected of them and why, and that they have the support and strength of their parents usually grow into mature, responsible and self sufficient adults.

Another school of parenting known as **Permissive or Laissez Faire** believes that children are best left alone; that it is best for them to grow up naturally without any restrictions or impositions from the outside environment. They are rarely given guidelines or rules to live by; nor are they pulled up when they are naughty and in disciplined. In such a situation, children gradually start feeling neglected and lost. They crave for a structure and boundary which will give them a sense of security. Not to mention that after having grown up in such an uninhibited manner, they find it difficult to adjust, obey and adhere to rules when they are expected to do so in the outside world.

The question that still remains is 'what is the ideal method of parenting'? The answer is that this varies from child to child and from situation to situation. There are situations where the child can be given a free reign in choosing or deciding something, for example, the dress he/she wants to wear for a friend's birthday. Again there will be situations where we have to say a firm no and put our foot down, irrespective of the child's opinion or even tantrums in some case. This might be required where the child's safety and well being is in question. However, most of the time we should aspire to give the reasons behind our demands and impositions, gradually navigating the child towards taking independent decisions, regarding what to do in a particular situation. This in the long run will enable the child to have self-control and be self – disciplined, and self motivated.

Hope the above information will help you to deal more effectively with your child!

With Good Wishes from-
The School Counsellors
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