

**Three Minute Article for Parents**

## Child rearing for parents

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Child rearing is a caring process of bringing up and educating a child, starting from the time of breast-feeding. That initial care inculcates empathy and bonding as early inter-personal skills. Feeding time is the initial experience of a set-routine in life. Enjoying a variety of tastes and textures, with maternal cues, makes it a pleasant experience; a strong educational stimulus. Later, parents should spot childhood strengths and appreciate them by intellectually engaged inquiry. Parents should ask thought provoking questions. Attentive listening and respectful acceptance of the opinion of a child needs practice by the parents. However, parents should be mindful of discouraging effects of failure and be empathetic. Supportive feedback and experience sharing become necessary.

Objectives of child rearing go beyond achieving normal physical growth or developmental milestones described as abilities in motor skills or speech. Parenting should contribute towards a holistic life, empowering the child to develop resilience towards future hazards, physical maladies, socio-cultural impacts and behavioural influences. Engaged dialogue with appreciative analysis of their strengths will contribute to character building, discipline, feeding habits, inter-personal skills, empathy, spirituality and self-esteem.

Optimum growth is unique to each child. Size of the parents may determine the final size of a child as there are growth variations that are influenced by parental genetics. One should not try to over-feed a child to achieve a weight that is expected in a growth chart or one that the parents expect. Objectives of feeding extend beyond growth. Feeding time is a golden opportunity to inculcate discipline in a child. If you force feed, teachers will have to force them to learn. A child who concedes to mother's force-feeding might surrender to his colleagues' suggestions to smoke or consume alcohol. Force-feeding parents disable the autonomy and self-esteem of their children.

Four types of parenting, as determined by degree of sensitiveness and control, are known. These are authoritative, permissive, neglectful and authoritarian.

- Authoritative parents are dominating, commanding and demanding. Their children grow up sans confidence or social skills.
- Permissive or indulgent parents are sensitive but believe in unbridled freedom as against guidance.
- Neglectful or uninvolved parents do not provide adequate support or even supervision for their children.
- Authoritarian parenting encompasses working with children while guiding them and monitoring. It is perhaps the ideal. These children achieve strong personalities and higher scholastic aptitudes.

Punishments demoralize children, especially if undertaken in anger. Consistency, clear explanations and role-modelling of an expected behaviour are much more useful. If the child violates the rule, initial ignoring would be an effective first step. If violations recur, explanatory warnings or a reprimand may work. The final evidence-based method is a 'time-out' where the child is kept in a place with limited movements for 5 to 10 minutes. This somewhat harsh venture is sometimes needed to correct an unwanted behaviour of a child. Such chastisements need clear explanations. No resentment should be expressed and appreciation of good behaviour should continue.

### Reference

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