

Permissive mothers as a parenting style and its impact on human development**Madres permisivas como estilo de crianza y su impacto en el desarrollo humano**

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Abstract

Much has been said in recent years about parenting style, becoming an interesting topic essentially referring to the education of children at home. This research is important for parents and scholars of child rearing. The methodology is research with a quantitative approach, the type is transversal and synchronous and includes the development of an instrument to detect the parenting styles of the population under study. The inclusion criteria are people over 18 years of age, who know how to read and write and who wish to participate in the survey. Preliminary results show how permissive and authoritarian parenting reveal children who are not happy. It is proposed to continue deepening parenting styles that provide effective guidelines in raising children.

Inclusion, Permissive, Authoritarian, Proposed, Approach

Resumen

Mucho se ha hablado en los últimos años sobre el estilo de crianza, tornándose un tema interesante refiriéndose esencialmente a la educación de los hijos en el hogar, esta investigación es importante para los padres de familia y estudiosos sobre la crianza de los niños. La metodología es una investigación con enfoque cuantitativo, el tipo es transversal y sincrónico y cuenta con el desarrollo de un instrumento para detectar los estilos de crianza de la población objeto de estudio. Los criterios de inclusión son personas mayores de 18 años, que sepan leer y escribir y deseen participar en la encuesta. Los resultados preliminares muestran como la crianza permisiva y autoritaria revelan niños que no son felices. Se propone continuar profundizando los estilos de crianza que brinden pautas efectivas en la crianza de los niños.

Inclusión, Permisivo, Autoritario

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Introduction

Nowadays it is common to hear that people have not attended any school to learn how to be parents, the truth is that they have attended and it has to do with the upbringing they have received from their parents at home. In the best of cases there are parents who have chosen to update their parenting skills and attend parenting school at their children's schools or attend counselling to improve their parenting skills.

Five parenting styles are known: authoritarian, authoritative or democratic parenting, also known as balanced, permissive, neglectful and ambivalent parenting.

Between the innate characteristics of the human being in childhood and parenting reflected by external influences and the way they interact in the budding human being;

Aim: To find out the ways in which mothers' and fathers' permissive parenting styles impact on human development.

Background

Parenting styles have been studied and developed over several decades through research in psychology and child development. Some of the historical and theoretical background of parenting styles is presented below (Camposano Cerrón & León Galarza, Pérez Montenegro, 2019; Rafael García & Castañeda Bermejo, 2021):

Kurt Lewin (1930s): Psychologist Kurt Lewin developed the Field Theory, which focused on the interaction between the individual and his or her environment. While he did not focus directly on parenting styles, his focus on how the environment influences behaviour and perception has influenced the understanding of how parenting and family environment affect children (Ibidem).

Also, B.F. Skinner (1950s): Psychologist known for his work on operant conditioning and human behaviour. Although he did not focus specifically on parenting styles, his research on reinforcement and punishment has had implications for understanding how parenting strategies can influence child behaviour. (Ibidem).

On the other hand, John Bowlby's Attachment Theory (1950s): John Bowlby pioneered Attachment Theory, which emphasises the importance of early and secure relationships with caregivers in children's development. His work highlights how parenting interactions can influence the formation of secure or insecure emotional attachments. (Ibidem).

Importantly, the work of Erik Erikson (1950s and 1960s) contributed to the understanding of child development and the importance of the parent-child relationship in his theory of psychosocial development. While he did not focus specifically on parenting styles, his work emphasised the importance of loving and supportive parenting for the development of a strong identity in children (Ibidem).

Similarly, Donald Winnicott (1950s-1960s): a paediatrician and psychoanalyst made important contributions to the understanding of child development and the role of parents in parenting. He introduced the concept of the "good enough mother" to emphasise the importance of adequate and supportive parenting in children's development (Ibidem).

Also Mary Ainsworth (1960s): psychologist famous for her research on infant attachment. Her work on Attachment Theory examined how the quality of the parent-child relationship can influence the development of secure or insecure attachment in children. Her research has been influential in understanding how parenting affects children's emotional security (Ibidem).

Similarly, Diana Baumrind (1960s): psychologist known for her influential research on parenting styles in the 1960s. In her work, she identified three main parenting styles that are still widely used today: authoritarian, permissive and authoritative. His research was based on observations and interviews with parents and children, and his work provided a solid foundation for the study and understanding of parenting styles. (Ibidem).

Indistinctly, Information Processing Theory (1970s): This theory focuses on how children process and use the information they receive from their environment. While it does not focus exclusively on parenting styles, it has helped to understand how parental communication and support can influence children's cognitive development. (Ibidem).

These are just some of the antecedents that have contributed to the understanding of parenting styles. Over the years, research and theories in the field of child development have refined and expanded our understanding of how parenting styles affect children and their emotional, social and cognitive development. Parenting styles are an important part of parenting and continue to be an active area of study in psychology and education, impacting on children's self-esteem (Aishwarya, 2022; Chauhan & Nancy, 2023).

Parenting styles

Parenting styles refer to the ways in which parents or caregivers interact with their children and guide them in their development. These styles can have a significant impact on children's emotional, social and psychological development (Gavilánez, Allauca, Palacios & Acencio, 2021; Martínez, Romo, Ortiz & Espino, 2021; Olmos Acevedo & Vilca Magallanes, 2020; Pérez Montenegro, 2019; Rafael García & Castañeda Bermejo, 2021). The five common parenting styles and their main characteristics are described below:

Authoritarian parenting style: authoritarian parenting style is characterised by a combination of specific features that make it a distinctive approach to parenting. Authoritarian parents are firm and set clear rules, but tend to be demanding and inflexible. They expect their children to meet their expectations without question. They can be critical and controlling. Although they mean well, they can sometimes create an environment in which children feel pressured or fearful of making mistakes (Ibidem).

These characteristics include:

Firmness and control: Authoritarian parents are firm and set clear rules and expectations for their children. They expect compliance with these rules and standards, and have little tolerance for non-compliance.

Demanding: Authoritarian parents tend to be demanding and expect high levels of performance and obedience from their children. They may set high standards and pressure their children to achieve them.

Consistent discipline: Discipline in this parenting style tends to be consistent and may include the use of punishments when rules are broken. Punishments may be severe in some cases.

One-way communication: Communication in this parenting style is often one-way, where parents give orders and expectations, but listen less to their children's opinions or wishes. Decision-making often rests with parents.

Little encouragement of independence: Authoritarian parents may find it difficult to encourage autonomy and independence in their children, as they tend to make decisions for them and control their activities.

Emphasis on respect for authority: Authoritarian parents value respect for authority and expect their children to show respect for them and other authority figures.

Low expression of affection: Although they may love their children, authoritarian parents often show fewer expressions of affection and affection compared to other parenting styles.

Focus on academic achievement and success: They may focus on their children's academic performance and future success, often with the expectation that they will achieve specific academic and career goals.

It is important to note that the authoritarian parenting style has its advantages and disadvantages. It can help set clear boundaries and responsibilities, but it can also lead to a more strained parent-child relationship and less emotional communication.

Balance is key, and some parents can adapt their approach to be more flexible and encourage open communication with their children without giving up necessary structure and boundaries. (Ibidem).

Permissive parenting style: Permissive parents are lenient and tend to be undemanding. They are prone to indulge their children and allow them to make decisions without many restrictions. While this can lead to a close relationship, it can also lead to a lack of boundaries and responsibility (Ibidem).

The permissive parenting style is characterised by a number of features that distinguish it from other parenting styles. In this style, parents tend to be lenient and have a relaxed attitude towards imposing limits and rules for their children. Some of the main characteristics of the permissive parenting style include:

Lack of clear boundaries: Permissive parents often do not set clear boundaries and rules for their children. They may allow their children to do whatever they want and have little structure in their daily lives.

High tolerance for independence: They encourage their children's independence and allow them to make decisions for themselves, even in important matters. They may let children make decisions that other parents might consider inappropriate for their age.

Open and caring communication: Despite their permissive approach, permissive parents often maintain open and caring communication with their children. They listen to their opinions and concerns and can be very affectionate.

Lack of clear consequences: Instead of applying consistent consequences for inappropriate behaviour, permissive parents are often reluctant to discipline their children or may give in to children's wishes to avoid conflict.

Focus on satisfying immediate desires: Permissive parents may be more concerned with satisfying their children's immediate desires than teaching them the importance of self-regulation and delaying gratification.

Encouragement of self-expression: They value their children's self-expression and individuality, which can be positive in terms of promoting self-esteem and creativity, but can sometimes lead to a lack of responsibility.

Risk of lack of boundaries and structure: One of the risks of this parenting style is that children may lack clear boundaries and structure in their lives, which can negatively affect their development and behaviour.

Possible difficulty in establishing authority: It can be difficult for permissive parents to establish authority over their children when necessary, which can lead to discipline problems.

It is important to note that the permissive parenting style can have advantages and disadvantages. It can create an environment where children feel loved and respected, but it can also result in a lack of boundaries and structure that children need to learn responsibility and self-regulation. As with any parenting style, it is critical to find a balance that promotes the well-being and healthy development of children (Gavilánez, Allauca, Palacios & Acencio, 2021; Martínez, Romo, Ortiz & Espino, 2021; Olmos Acevedo & Vilca Magallanes, 2020; Pérez Montenegro, 2019; Rafael García & Castañeda Bermejo, 2021).

Neglectful or disinterested parenting style: Neglectful parents show little interest or involvement in their children's lives. They may be neglectful of their children's attention and care, which can have negative effects on children's development. Children raised in this style may feel abandoned and neglected (Ibidem).

The neglectful parenting style is characterised by a lack of adequate attention and care for children by parents or caregivers. This parenting style is considered to be one of the least effective and can have detrimental effects on children's development. The following are some of the main characteristics of the neglectful parenting style:

Lack of supervision: Neglectful parents tend to fail to supervise and pay adequate attention to their children's activities and needs. They may be physically or emotionally absent from their children's lives.

Disinterest and lack of involvement: Neglectful parents may show little interest in their children's lives and may be unwilling to participate in family activities or parental responsibilities.

Neglect of basic needs: They may consistently fail to provide for their children's basic needs, such as adequate food, clothing, medical care and a safe environment.

Lack of emotional support: Neglectful parents may not offer emotional support or affection to their children. Children may feel abandoned and emotionally neglected.

Lack of clear boundaries or rules: In some cases, neglectful parents may not set clear boundaries or rules for their children, which can lead to uncontrolled behaviour or insecurity in children.

Poor school follow-up: They may not be involved in their children's education and may not pay attention to children's academic needs.

Risk of physical neglect or abuse: In extreme situations, neglectful parenting can lead to situations of physical neglect or abuse, where children are not only neglected, but may also be exposed to physical and emotional danger or abuse.

Neglectful parenting can have serious effects on children's emotional, social and cognitive development, which can lead to mental health problems, risky behaviours and difficulties in adult life.

It is important to note that neglectful parenting is usually not a conscious approach on the part of parents, and can be the result of various factors, such as stress, mental health problems, addictions or personal difficulties. Children raised in a neglectful environment often face significant challenges and may require professional intervention to help overcome the after-effects of this parenting style. The protection and well-being of children is a primary concern in cases of neglectful parenting, and authorities may intervene if a child is suspected to be at risk (Gavilánez, Allauca, Palacios & Acencio, 2021; Martínez, Romo, Ortiz & Espino, 2021; Olmos Acevedo & Vilca Magallanes, 2020; Pérez Montenegro, 2019; Rafael García & Castañeda Bermejo, 2021).

Democratic or authoritative parenting style: The authoritative parenting style, also known as the democratic or balanced style, is a parenting approach that combines the establishment of limits and rules with a high degree of emotional support and open communication. It is considered one of the most effective and beneficial parenting styles for the healthy development of children. Democratic parents set clear rules and limits, but also encourage open communication and mutual respect. They listen to their children's opinions and involve them in age-appropriate decision-making. This style fosters autonomy, responsibility and a healthy parent-child relationship (Gavilánez, Allauca, Palacios & Acencio, 2021; Martínez, Romo, Ortiz & Espino, 2021; Olmos Acevedo & Vilca Magallanes, 2020; Pérez Montenegro, 2019; Rafael García & Castañeda Bermejo, 2021).

Some of the key characteristics of the authoritative parenting style are presented below:

Open and affectionate communication: Authoritative parents maintain open and affectionate communication with their children. They actively listen to their thoughts, feelings and concerns, and encourage emotional expression.

Clear and consistent boundaries: Despite their focus on communication and emotional support, authoritative parents set clear boundaries and rules for their children. These limits are explained in an understandable way and are consistently enforced.

Realistic expectations: They have realistic expectations for their children's development and behaviour, taking into account each child's age and individual abilities.

Empowering: Empowering parents encourage independence and age-appropriate decision-making. They enable them to take responsibility and learn from their mistakes.

Support and encouragement: They provide emotional support and encouragement to their children in their efforts and achievements. They celebrate successes and provide support when their children face challenges.

Flexibility: Although they set rules, authoritative parents are flexible and willing to negotiate in appropriate situations. They listen to their children's opinions and can make adjustments when necessary.

Teaching values and morals: They transmit values, ethics and responsibility to their children through example and communication. They encourage empathy and respect for others.

Involvement: Authoritative parents are actively involved in their children's lives, participating in activities, school projects and important events.

Tolerance of individual expression: They accept and value individual differences and respect their children's preferences and choices as long as they do not conflict with fundamental values or boundaries.

This parenting style is associated with positive developmental outcomes for children, such as higher self-esteem, well-developed social skills, strong academic performance and a lower likelihood of engaging in risky behaviours. Authoritative parents strike a balance between structure and emotional support, which promotes a strong and healthy parent-child relationship. (Ibidem).

Ambivalent parenting style, sometimes also known as anxious or preoccupied parenting style, is a term used to describe a parenting approach in which parents or caregivers display a combination of contradictory behaviours towards their children. In this style, parents may alternate between being overprotective and preoccupied with their children at one moment and, at another moment, being distant or critical (Ibidem).

Some common characteristics of the ambivalent parenting style include:

Emotional inconsistency: parents may have difficulty maintaining a consistent emotional response to their children. They may be loving and affectionate at one time and critical or distant at another.

Overprotectiveness: Parents may be overly concerned about their children's safety and well-being, which can lead to a high degree of control and limitations on children's independence.

Relationship insecurity: Children may feel that they cannot predict their parents' response and may become insecure in the relationship. This can lead to anxiety and confusion in children.

Lack of clear boundaries: Sometimes ambivalent parents may have difficulty setting clear and consistent boundaries for their children.

It is important to note that the ambivalent parenting style is not necessarily an intentional approach on the part of parents, but may be the result of their own insecurities or difficulties in parenting. This style can have negative effects on children's emotional and social development, as they may experience confusion, anxiety and difficulties in developing healthy self-esteem (Gavilánez, Allauca, Palacios & Acencio, 2021; Martínez, Romo, Ortiz & Espino, 2021; Olmos Acevedo & Vilca Magallanes, 2020; Pérez Montenegro, 2019; Rafael García & Castañeda Bermejo, 2021).

Effective parenting is generally based on consistency, emotional support and open and respectful communication with children. If parents feel that their parenting style is ambivalent and is causing problems in their relationship with their children, they can seek guidance and support from mental health professionals or family counsellors to improve their approach and strengthen their relationship with their children.

In summary, it is important to keep in mind that parenting can be a combination of these styles, and parents can adapt their approach according to their children's individual needs and circumstances. Furthermore, an effective parenting style may vary according to culture and family beliefs. What is most important is that parents are aware of their parenting style and seek a balance between setting limits and fostering their children's independence and self-esteem. (Ibidem).

Parenting styles and their impact on human development:

Parenting styles have a significant impact on human development, as they influence how children perceive the world, interact with others and develop socioemotional skills (Gavilánez, Allauca, Palacios & Acencio, 2021; Martínez, Romo, Ortiz & Espino, 2021; Pérez Montenegro, 2019; Rafael García & Castañeda Bermejo, 2021; Rodríguez-Villamizar & Amaya-Castellanos, 2019; Zavala & Lucia del Carmen, 2019). Here we describe how some common parenting styles can affect human development:

Authoritarian parenting style:

Impact: This style tends to encourage high compliance with rules and academic achievement, but can result in low self-esteem and a lack of social skills due to a lack of autonomy (Ibidem).

Permissive parenting style:

Impact: can result in children who are creative and expressive, but may also have difficulty following rules and limits, which can affect their ability to adapt to structured environments. (Ibidem).

Neglectful parenting style:

Impact: This parenting style can have profound negative effects on development. Children may experience a lack of security, affection and structure, which can contribute to mental health problems, poor academic performance and difficulties in establishing healthy relationships. (Ibidem).

Authoritative parenting style:

Impact: It is considered the most balanced and beneficial parenting style. Children raised in an authoritative manner tend to develop healthy self-esteem, strong social skills and good academic performance. They also learn to be responsible and make informed decisions.. (Ibidem).

Overprotective parenting style:

Impact: Children may feel secure and protected, but may also have difficulties in developing autonomy and independence. This can lead to anxiety and a lack of self-confidence in independent situations (Ibidem).

Indulgent parenting style:

Impact: Children may feel loved and respected, but may lack boundaries and structure, which can affect their ability to self-regulate and adapt to situations where authority or compliance with rules is required. (Ibidem).

It is important to note that the effects of parenting styles may vary according to the temperament and personality of the individual child, as well as other factors such as culture and family environment. In addition, parents are not necessarily limited to one parenting style and can adapt their approach according to the changing needs of their children over time. An effective parenting style tends to be balanced, providing structure and boundaries, but also emotional support and autonomy for the child. On the other hand, studies such as Chan, et al. (2023), emphasise how permissive parenting exhibits a reinforcing effect by presenting a buffering effect in relation to the perfectionism of the authoritarian style; or when parents must pay attention to the use of language in the context and situation at hand (Kurniawan, 2023). Including the influence of gender or genes due to parenting according to del Puerto- Golzarri, et al. (2023).

In this research we focus on the permissive parenting style because it is characterised by the lack of clear limits and leniency towards children, it can have several impacts on human development in today's society (Gavilánez, Allauca, Palacios & Acencio, 2021; Martínez, Romo, Ortiz & Espino, 2021; Olmos Acevedo & Vilca Magallanes, 2020; Pérez Montenegro, 2019; Rafael García & Castañeda Bermejo, 2021).

Methodology

A review, search and bibliographic consultation of primary and secondary sources in Spanish and foreign languages was carried out, preferably from the qualitative paradigm, associating the elements of the problematisation of the topic. From the prospective of parenting styles, methodological peculiarities were considered, which were verified in the bibliographic exploration.

According to Jacob (1987, cited in Buendía Eisman et al, 1998), the implicit methodological attributes of interest were the description of parenting styles, towards impact and behaviour; the intelligibility, the verification as observed scientific work, which exalted an authentic empirical science, its reality, the study of people in their natural environment, was visualised in the understanding of the process of evolution of perceptions and interpretations, in if the magnitude to distinguish how individuals learn the meanings in concrete instance of the interaction with the mother and the father especially of the permissive parenting style in mothers of family, In short, this approach at the level of the goal of going beyond was realised in micro-analytical designs (ontological level of intervention), so that it can be an additional incentive in the future focus group technique.

Results

The results of this research are shown below.

Lack of self-regulation: Children raised in a permissive environment may have difficulties in developing self-regulation and self-control skills. Unaccustomed to clear boundaries, they may have difficulty managing their impulses and emotions, which can affect their ability to function effectively in society.

Lack of responsibility: Permissive parenting often involves allowing children to make choices without clear consequences for inappropriate behaviour. This can lead to a lack of responsibility and a lack of understanding of the repercussions of their actions in society.

Low frustration tolerance: Children raised in a permissive manner may have a low tolerance for frustration, as they are used to getting what they want immediately. This can hinder their ability to cope with challenges and difficulties in adult life.

Difficulties at school and at work: Lack of structure and boundaries in permissive parenting can negatively affect academic and work performance in society. Children may have difficulty meeting deadlines, following rules and working in teams.

Problems in social relationships: Children raised in a permissive environment may have difficulty establishing healthy social relationships, as they may have difficulty understanding social norms and expectations in interactions with others.

Impact on self-esteem: While children raised in a permissive environment may feel loved and respected, they may also experience a lack of self-esteem and self-confidence, as they may not receive the support needed to face challenges and overcome obstacles in society.

Risk of risky behaviour: In the absence of clear boundaries, some children may engage in risky behaviour in society, such as drug use, alcoholism or involvement in criminal activities. **Consumerism and materialism:** Permissive parenting, which often involves immediate gratification of children's wants and whims, can foster attitudes of consumerism and materialism in children. They may grow up expecting instant gratification and focus on the acquisition of material goods as a source of happiness.

Difficulties in goal setting: Children raised in a permissive environment may have difficulty setting long-term goals and working towards them, as they may not be accustomed to self-regulation and persistence in achieving goals.

Lack of conflict resolution skills: The lack of clear boundaries in permissive parenting can lead to a lack of conflict resolution skills. Children may not have learned to negotiate, communicate effectively or deal with disagreements constructively.

Impact on mental health: The lack of structure and boundaries in permissive parenting can contribute to the development of anxiety and stress in children. They may also experience confusion and lack of security in a world where rules and expectations are not clearly defined.

Lack of adaptability: Children raised in a permissive environment may have difficulty adapting to situations where authority is required, such as at school or at work. They may have difficulty following rules and conforming to the expectations of others.

Possible lack of empathy: If children do not experience clear boundaries and are not taught to consider the needs and feelings of others, they may have difficulty developing empathy and understanding for others in society.

It is important to note that not all children raised in a permissive environment will experience all of these effects, and some may adapt better than others in society - the impact may vary according to individual and contextual factors. In addition, effects may be influenced by other factors, such as individual personality and social interactions, and some parents may combine elements of permissiveness with other parenting styles. Effective parenting generally involves finding a balance between emotional support, autonomy and authority, and helping children develop skills of self-regulation and responsibility as they grow up and can adapt their approach to promote their children's well-being and healthy development in today's society.

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Conclusions

The results show how permissive and authoritarian parenting reveal unhappy children. Permissive parenting style is characterised by a lack of clear limits and rules for children.

Permissive parents tend to be lenient and have a relaxed attitude towards the imposition of limits.

They may allow children to make decisions for themselves, even in important matters.

This style can result in creative and expressive children.

However, children raised in a permissive manner may have difficulty following rules and limits in structured situations.

They may also experience a lack of self-regulation and self-control.

Lack of clear limits can lead to low frustration tolerance in children.

It can foster consumerist and materialistic attitudes in children.

Permissive parents often show a lot of affection, but may have difficulty establishing authority when necessary.

Improving a permissive parenting style involves setting clear limits, maintaining consistency and teaching children self-regulation skills.

Suggestions for intervention

Aquí hay algunas propuestas y estrategias que can help improve a permissive parenting style:

Set clear limits: One of the first steps is to set clear limits and rules for children. These limits should be understandable and consistent. Parents can sit down with their children and discuss the house rules, explaining why they are important.

Maintain consistency: It is essential to maintain consistency in the application of rules and limits. This means that parents must apply consequences fairly and consistently when rules are broken. Lack of clear consequences is one of the most common characteristics of permissive parenting.

Encourage open communication: Parents should encourage their children to express their thoughts, feelings and concerns openly and respectfully. Actively listening to children can strengthen communication and the relationship.

Teach self-regulation skills: Parents can help their children develop self-regulation skills by teaching them strategies to manage their emotions and behaviours appropriately. This includes teaching conflict resolution and decision-making.

Set realistic expectations: Parents should have realistic expectations for their children's development and behaviour, taking into account each child's age and individual abilities. Not all children can meet the same expectations.

Offer emotional support: It is important for parents to provide emotional support to their children. This includes showing affection, empathy and understanding. Children need to feel loved and valued by their parents.

Promote responsibility: Parents can encourage responsibility in their children by assigning them age-appropriate tasks and responsibilities. This teaches them the importance of contributing to the functioning of the family.

Seek guidance and support: If parents are having difficulty changing their parenting style, they can seek guidance from a mental health professional or family counsellor. Therapy can provide specific strategies and support to improve parenting.

Model desired behaviour: Parents can serve as role models for their children. If they want their children to develop skills such as self-regulation and empathy, it is important for parents to demonstrate these behaviours in their own lives.

Be patient and flexible: Changing a parenting style takes time and effort. Parents must be patient with themselves and their children as they work together to achieve a healthier balance in parenting.

It is proposed to continue to deepen the permissive parenting style that provides effective parenting guidelines.

Improving a permissive parenting style may take time and effort on the part of parents or caregivers, but a healthier balance in parenting is possible and can be beneficial to the well-being and development of children, as well as to the parent-child relationship. The key is to find a balance between emotional support and authority, and to adapt the approach according to individual children's needs and family circumstances.

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