

RAISING A THINKING CHILD



**2015 POOL SESSION
STATE HCE CONFERENCE
LEARNER GUIDE**

Teaching parents how to teach their children to solve everyday problems.



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What's Your Parenting Style?

Identifying your style

As a parent/grandparent, do you relate more to A, B, or C?

A

- I know what's best for my child because I am the (grand)parent.
- My (grand)child should obey me and be punished if they do not.
- When my (grand)child misbehaves, I yell and threaten.

B

- I give my (grand)child choices and their own sense of individuality.
- I have high standards and enforce the rules consistently.
- I serve as a role model for my (grand)child by modeling the respect that I expect them to give me.

C

- I do as much as I can for my (grand)child because he/she is only a child for a short time.
- If I discipline my (grand)child, I'm afraid he/she won't love me.
- I typically let my (grand)child do what he/she wants because I dislike conflict.

Although you may have identified with more than one group, based on the one you related closest to, you're parenting style is likely:

- A. The Enforcer
- B. The Negotiator
- C. The Yielder

Practical tips for positive parenting:

- Give children choices, even if the decision seems small. Preschoolers can help decide what color socks to wear or between two vegetables, for example.
- Use words like "good" or "bad" to describe behavior, not to describe the child.
- Set limits based on the child's development and consistently follow through on consequences.

Positive (grand)parenting begins with a balanced approach of nurture, discipline, and respect. By giving your (grand)child freedom of thoughts and expression, enforcing limits, and practicing positive communication, you can work together to solve problems and promote responsibility in your (grand)child.

Using your strengths

You may use a mixture of styles at various times, but striving to be a Negotiator (grand)parent (type B) is best to help children develop inner discipline by combining love, limits and respect with consistent, fair expectations. Research shows that this parenting style is the most positive and produces the best outcomes for children's health and well-being, including:

- Responsibility
- Compassion
- Problem-solving skills
- Self-control
- Acceptance of self and others

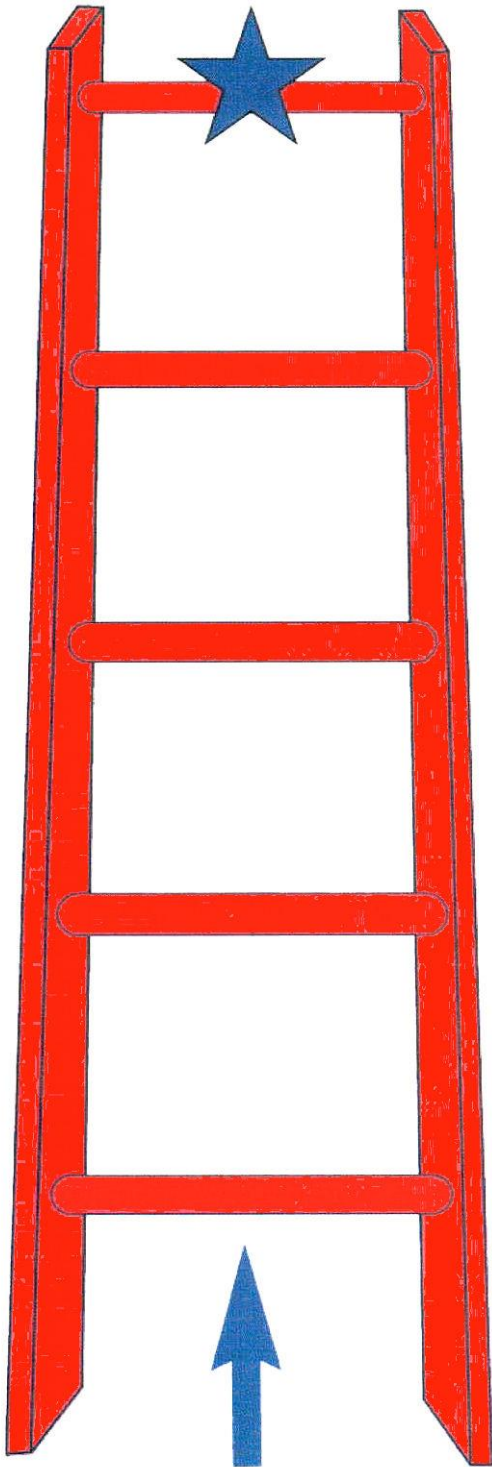
Enforcer (grand)parents (Type A) often use strict punishment and allow very little freedom. Yielder (grand)parents (Type C) often view their (grand)children as friends and have few limits or demands for their (grand)children. If you relate to either of these parenting styles, don't feel bad! You have great strengths as a (grand)parent, but remember that balance is important for (grand)children. For instance, Yielder (grand)parents' strength is love and acceptance—but it's important to think how giving in might affect the (grand)child long term. Will your (grand)child feel entitled? Or learn patience? Enforcer (grand)parents have the strength of clarity and high expectations. However, showing sensitivity to your child will be key in helping your (grand)child understand that "tough love" is rooted in "love" and not just "tough".

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References:

<http://www.extension.umn.edu/family/partnering-for-school-success/modeling/parenting-styles/>
<http://www.ces.ncsu.edu/depts/fcs/pdfs/fcs456.pdf>
<http://fyi.uwex.edu/parentingthepreschooler/>

ICPS Ladder: Climbing to ICPS Dialogues



Rung 4: **ICPS: The Problem-Solving Process**

- Is that a GOOD IDEA to...?
- What MIGHT happen if you do that?
- How MIGHT I (you) feel if that happens?
- What can you do so that will NOT happen?

Rung 3: **Suggestions with Explanations**

- If you hit, you might hurt someone.
- I feel afraid someone might get hurt when you hit...

Rung 2: **Suggestions without Explanations**

- You should ask for what you want.
- Why don't you share your toys?

Rung 1: Power, Commands, Demands, Belittles, Punishes

- Give it back now!
- How many times have I told you...!

Adapted from "Raising a Thinking Child" Workbook,
Myrna Shure, Drexel University, 2000

Four Rungs of Discipline

| | Parent Approach | Child Approach | Impact |
|-------------------------------|--|---|--|
| <u>Problem Solving</u> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “What’s the problem?” • “How do you think I (your sister) feel(s) when...?” • “Can you think of a different way to solve this problem?” • “What might happen if you do that?” | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Parent and child have same view of problem • Child tells you how he and others are feeling • Child asked to think about ways to solve the problem • Child guided to think of consequences to actions | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Child feels empowered, not overpowered • Child is more likely to carry out his/her own ideas • Child more likely to think of empathic consequences (“If I hurt him, I’ll feel sad”) vs. external ones (If I hurt him, I’ll get in trouble)-good, at best for the short-term only |
| <u>Explanations</u> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “If you hit, you might get hurt.” • “If you grab toys, you won’t have any friends.” • “I feel angry when...” | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Child may not care if he hurts someone – and that may be his goal • Immediate gratification (getting toy) more important than later consequence (no friends) • May not care how parent feels | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Same as for suggestions</i> • Also, child may tune out explanations he has heard many times before, or because he is unable to understand them |
| <u>Suggestions</u> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “You should ask for what you want.” • “Why don’t you share your toys?” • “If someone teases you, ignore him, or tell the teacher.” • “If someone hits you, hit him back,” or, “Don’t hit back, tell the teacher.” | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “He said no, it’s mine.” • “I did share my toy.” • “I’m afraid to hit back.” • “If I tell the teacher, he’ll get me after school.” | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Parent is doing the thinking for the child • Child is passive recipient, not active participant • Can stifle child’s thinking • Child may not think of what else to do if solution is unsuccessful |
| <u>Power</u> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “Give it back now!” • “How many times have I told you?” • “If you don’t stop that, you’ll get a spanking (no TV tonight, etc.).” | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Child complies, or is defiant, argumentative | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Child may comply to avoid punishment • Still feels angry, frustrated, powerless • May get message that it’s ok to hit/yell when angry • May become immune to getting yelled at, and “not care” as way of coping • May act out (take out on others), or withdraw (fear to act at all) |

The Matching Game: Four Styles of Dialogue

Styles of Dialogue: ICPS Ladder



Rung 4: Problem-Solving
Rung 3: Explanations
Rung 2: Suggestions
Rung 1: Power

Directions: Place the number of the Rung next to each Parent Statement/Question.

| Parent Statement/Question | |
|---------------------------|---|
| a. _____ | How many times have I told you! |
| b. _____ | I feel mad when you jump on the couch. |
| c. _____ | What might happen if you do that? |
| d. _____ | Tell him you're sorry. |
| e. _____ | Why don't you (e.g., share your toys/ask your brother for what you want)? |
| f. _____ | Go to the time-out chair. |
| g. _____ | Please move a little faster. I have to get to work. |
| h. _____ | Can you think of a different way to solve this problem? |
| i. _____ | I can't take you to the park now. I'll take you later. Play with your sister now. |
| j. _____ | How do you think I feel when you do that? |
| k. _____ | What happened before you did that? |
| l. _____ | If you (e.g., stand in front of the swing/run inside) you might get hurt. |
| m. _____ | How do you feel when that happens? |
| n. _____ | If you (e.g., hit someone, grab toys) no one will play with you. |
| o. _____ | Why did you hit him? |
| p. _____ | What happened before you did that? |
| q. _____ | Ask me if you want to play outside. |
| r. _____ | If you hit your brother, you might hurt him. |

ICPS Word Pairs

Is/Is Not

And/Or

Same/Different

Some/All

Before/After

Now/Later

Some of the Time/All of the Time

At the Same Time/Not the Same Time

Might/Maybe

Why/Because

Good Time/Not a Good Time

Good Place/Not a Good Place

Good Idea/Not a Good Idea

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Raising a Thinking Child ICPS Dialogue “Cheat Sheet”

ICPS Dialogue

1. Tune in. Reflect child’s feeling.

- A. You feel _____ because _____.
- B. It sounds like you’re _____
because _____.

2. State the problem ideally using ICPS word pair vocabulary.

- A. Is that a GOOD IDEA, GOOD PLACE, GOOD TIME, or NOT A GOOD _____?
- B. Can Mommy _____ AND _____
AT THE SAME TIME?
- C. WHAT MIGHT happen IF you do that?

3. Ask about the feelings of others.

- A. HOW do you think DADDY FEELS about that/right NOW?
- B. HOW does that make your brother FEEL?
- C. HOW MIGHT you FEEL about that?

4. Ask open-ended questions using ICPS vocabulary to ask how the child will resolve their problem.

- A. WHAT can you do that IS DIFFERENT?
- B. WHAT can you do so that will NOT happen?

5. Consequences: What MIGHT happen if you do that? Is that a GOOD IDEA or NOT A GOOD IDEA?

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Girls Jumping on Couch Niñas saltando en el sofá



Photo from lifespa.com

Relationship Bank Account

John Gottman, a renowned relationship researcher and expert has shown that adults involved in healthy couple relationships exchange five times more positive feelings or interactions than negative ones. Each time we do or say something positive for or to our partner, we add to our account balance of trust and love. Each time we do something negative, we make a withdrawal. Unfortunately, one negative interaction basically withdraws a value of 5 positive ones. Of course, this is fuzzy logic, but it's a good way to think about it.

Gottman did not intend to apply this principle to the (grand)parent-child relationship. However, it helps us frame our relationship with our kids in terms of a "relationship bank account." Think about yourself as a kid and your own parents...

What did a relationship deposit look like?

- + Playing a family board game?
- + The time a parent spent listening to you?
- + Having a special day with just you and dad, or you and mom?
- + Learning a new joke?
- + Family dinners?
- + Bedtime stories?

These are times when trust and love are built.

What did a withdrawal look like?

- Yelling when you wet the bed?
- Telling you what a slob you were?
- Calling you names?
- Yelling about pointless things?
- Hitting or slapping you?

These are times when you lost your trust and love for your parents.

Think about the times when, in your (grand)children's minds, you make **withdrawals**. What do these times look like? (For example, "When I am in a rush, I am mean and I yell.")

Think about the times when you make **relationship deposits**. What do these times look like? (For example, "I stop what I'm doing and go and join my son on the floor to make a puzzle.")

Connect with Kids, Even When Tired and Stressed

The point here is that we are GOING to have times when we are tired, stressed, in a hurry, or our kids are just pushing our buttons, and we let ourselves do or say something we shouldn't. We need to pay serious attention to making relationship deposits. This means spending time with our (grand)children, entering their worlds, and showing our love, concern, and playfulness. We must do this regularly, not just when we think we have time.

When we do this, it is surprising that what otherwise might annoy and aggravate us about our (grand)children doesn't provoke us to yell as much. (Grand)Children also behave differently and are calmer and more relaxed. This is because they feel safer and less anxious that we will respond negatively.

Some ideas:

- 💡 When you are driving the car, start a song that your (grand)children can sing with you. Make up rhymes, or play "I Spy."
- 💡 At home, include your (grand)children in parts of the housework - you'll be surprised at how much they can do!
- 💡 Or, stop in the middle of working, cooking, or cleaning, and pay attention to what your (grand)kids are doing and join them - right where they are.
- 💡 Talk about and elaborate on a shared memory or life story. Do you remember when...? Ask questions to get the (grand)child thinking about the details of the event.

When we teach (grand)kids that we consider them important, it doesn't mean giving in to their every desire. It means spending time with them as people and caring about their inner lives. This connection enhances our authority with our (grand)children. They take us more seriously because they trust us, love us, and care what we think. We also model behavior that teaches our (grand)children to become people who are capable of empathy and better relationships both within the family and with peers and other adults.

Make lots of deposits!

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