



Preparation for Parenting

By Judy Arnall

When partners discover that they are expecting a baby, they often focus on the birth process itself. However, the birth takes 48 hours, whereas parenting takes 20 years. Although it's certainly necessary to research and inform oneself about birth options, it's also important to look at the bigger picture of parenting.

Parenting Styles

There are four main styles of parenting, and each parent consciously or unconsciously chooses a style based on their experience, values, attitudes, beliefs, and comfort level. The four styles are the parent-directed Authoritarian style, the parent-child-directed Democratic style, as well as the child-directed Overindulgent and Uninvolved styles. The democratic style is a warm, nurturing yet demanding style of parenting that has consistently been shown to have the best outcome for children. There are many books and other resources describing the parenting styles, many of which are geared to helping parents with the style that they prefer.

Common Goals

Although both partners do not need to agree upon everything, it is valuable for partners to establish three common parenting core values to help them implement aligned parenting styles, although they could have different short-term ways to accomplish their long run goals. Every couple must share at least three common core values, such as concern for the environment, appreciation of higher education, desire to accumulate wealth, philanthropist interests, mutual respect for all regardless of age, gender or culture, and value of individuals, independence or family togetherness.

Child Development

New parents can really benefit from learning about child development, so they can know if their child is achieving the normal milestones, and understand the developmental stages that their children are passing through. The better books or courses will describe the expected behaviours, the reasons for these behaviours, and some respectful parenting strategies to manage them.

Finally, the only thing guaranteed in life is change! We expect our children to change as they grow up, but sometimes it is a surprise for parents to learn that they are changing too, as they learn what works in general and uniquely for each child.

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