

# Effects of Parenting Styles on Anxiety

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**Abstract.** Parenting styles were proved to have an impact on many aspects of children's emotion and cognition. This paper tries to explore the impact of different parenting styles on anxiety in children and adolescents. It discusses three main parenting styles - authoritarian, permissive, and authoritative - and examines their effects on anxiety levels. The paper finds that authoritarian parenting, characterized by rigid regulations and lack of emotional support, can contribute to higher levels of anxiety in children. On the other hand, permissive parenting, which lacks defined boundaries and discipline, can also increase anxiety levels in children. In contrast, authoritative parenting, which combines firm guidelines with emotional support, has been found to lower anxiety levels in children. The paper concludes that understanding the effects of parenting styles on anxiety is crucial for promoting the well-being and mental health of children and adolescents. For future research, more studies could be conducted on the mechanisms of influence between parenting styles and anxiety.

**Keywords:** Anxiety, Parenting Styles, Authoritarian, Permissive, Authoritative.

## 1. Introduction

Anxiety is a common mental health problem that can impact people of all ages, including adults. It can significantly affect a person's relationships, productivity at work, and general well-being, in addition to their everyday life. It has been discovered that parenting styles, or the methods and techniques parents employ to raise their kids, are extremely important for the onset and treatment of anxiety in kids and teenagers. To improve the wellbeing and mental health of children and adolescents, it is imperative that parents, educators, and mental health professionals comprehend the effects of parenting styles on anxiety.

## 2. The Impact of Authoritarian Parenting on Anxiety

The hallmarks of authoritarian parenting include high standards, rigid regulations, and discipline. This type of parent is usually cold and unresponsive to their kids, as well as domineering and demanding. Scholarly investigations have consistently demonstrated that offspring reared in autocratic environments are prone to experiencing symptoms and conditions associated with anxiety [1]. These kids frequently go through stressful times because they are afraid of getting in trouble or being rejected by their parents. They might also have low self-esteem and a sense of helplessness, which exacerbates anxiety.

Authoritarian parenting's emphasis on control might foster a climate that is conducive to anxiety. Youngsters in these households could experience continual observation and criticism, which makes them tense and preoccupied with trying to live up to their parents' expectations. Children who dread punishment may experience elevated anxiety as a result of their attempts to avoid making mistakes or being rejected. Moreover, a child's sense of stability and emotional support are undermined by cold and unresponsive parenting, which increases their susceptibility to worry [2].

Emotional repression and a lack of emotional support are linked to authoritarian parenting. Growing up in these settings can make it difficult for kids to communicate their emotions and find appropriate coping strategies to deal with stress and worry. Alternatively, they can internalize their fear, which would result in ongoing concern and fear. Anxiety symptoms may be made worse by a lack of emotional support, which can also lead to feelings of loneliness and isolation [3].

### **3. The Impact of Permissive Parenting on Anxiety**

Indulgent parenting, another name for permissive parenting, is typified by a lack of control, low expectations, and a propensity to put the needs and happiness of the child ahead of rules and punishments. This type of parenting may be loving and caring, but it might be difficult to set firm limits and administer punishments [4].

Because there is less structure and emotional support available to them, children raised in permissive environments frequently have higher anxiety levels. Uncertainty and insecurity can cause children to feel anxious about their own abilities and decision-making skills if there are unclear standards and expectations. According to Bögels et al.'s study, the lack of consistent discipline can lead to an intolerant attitude and a sense of entitlement, which might worsen anxiety symptoms [5].

Permissive homes may prevent kids from developing the skills needed to control their emotions or cope with stress. Their inability to control their emotions can make them more prone to anxiety since they may find it difficult to control their fears and anxieties. Furthermore, uncertainty and a sense of unpredictability can be caused by inconsistent discipline and a lack of defined boundaries, which can exacerbate anxiety symptoms [6].

### **4. The Impact of Authoritative Parenting on Anxiety**

A healthy mix between firm standards and kind emotional support is what defines authoritative parenting. In addition to establishing firm guidelines and limits, parents who follow this parenting approach also show empathy and concern for their kids' needs. They offer direction and assistance, as well as promoting autonomy and decision-making.

According to McLeod's research in 2007, children raised in authoritative households have consistently demonstrated lower levels of anxiety than their counterparts raised under different parenting styles. Children develop a sense of security and self-confidence when they get emotional support, clear expectations, and encouragement to be independent. Along with gaining a sense of personal control over their feelings and behavior, they learn efficient coping strategies for handling stress and anxiety.

Children who live in authoritative households are encouraged to communicate honestly about their feelings and worries without worrying about being rejected or punished. Children who receive this emotional support are better able to regulate their emotions and cope with stress and worry. Children have a sense of predictability and stability from authoritative parents' clear expectations and boundaries, which lessens uncertainties that might cause anxiety [1].

Furthermore, authoritative parenting fosters resilience in kids by striking a balance between emotional support and strong standards. They gain confidence in their talents as they learn to face obstacles, make decisions, and accept responsibility for their actions. Children who have a high sense of self-efficacy are better able to handle stressful events and adjust to change; therefore, this self-assurance acts as a protective factor against anxiety [2].

### **5. The ways to correct authoritarian parenting**

As mentioned previously, children raised in authoritarianism lack emotional support from their family and often have low self-esteem. There are several ways found effective to correct authoritarian parenting, open communication, setting reasonable expectations, and being patient.

Open communication is a critical step in building a supportive relationship with the children. When the children express their feelings, the parents should pay attention and not interrupt. It will encourage the children to open up and share their feelings. It is important that the parents should create a comfortable and safe environment while they have conversation with the children. Open communication can significantly reduce the children's anxiety levels by providing emotional support, building trust, and reducing isolation.

Authoritarian parenting families usually set unrealistic goals/expectations for their children. Children are overwhelmed by unrealistic goals/expectations from their parents. The parents should periodically evaluate the goals they set for the children and adjust them based on the children's development. For example, they can set smaller milestones which will give the children a sense of control, which is crucial in mitigating anxiety. It is important that the parents understand what goals/expectations they should set for their children based on their age, interests, and abilities.

Last but not least, the parents should also understand that raising a child is a marathon, not a sprint. The parents should have patience when they raise their children and support them when they make mistakes. Children raised from authoritarian parenting usually have low self-esteem. Having parents with patience and being supportive is critical for the children to establish confidence and decrease their anxiety level.

## **6. The ways to correct Permissive Parenting**

In order to help children raised in a permissive parenting environment with anxiety issues, the parents should help the children by setting clear boundaries, developing leadership skills, and implementing discipline.

A lack of defined boundaries may increase the children's anxiety level. Parents should understand that setting clear boundaries is the foundation of effective parenting. A family without clear boundaries may cause the children confused on what behaviors are acceptable and what are not. Defined boundaries can decrease the children's anxiety level by fostering a sense of safety and reducing power struggles.

Developing leadership skills can significantly reduce the children's anxiety levels. Children can gain confidence when they develop leadership skills. By learning leadership skills, the children have opportunities to make decisions and see their impact helps them understand they have control over their decisions, which is anxiety-reducing. Leadership development typically involves improving communication skills. Being able to express oneself clearly can reduce social anxiety and improve interpersonal relationships. In essence, developing leadership skills in children can help them to foster a stronger sense of autonomy.

A permissive parenting family may raise their children with little or even no discipline, and lack of self-control, which causes anxiety for children. Parents can utilize positive reinforcement by encouraging good behavior, setting consistent/predictable consequences for breaking rules, and communicating clear expectations to help children develop self-discipline. Fostering self-discipline in children can assist them develop a stronger sense of control and a greater ability to manage their emotions and feelings.

## **7. Comparison with Previous Studies**

The results of this investigation align with other scholarly works that have explored the relationship between anxiety in children and adolescents and parenting approaches. For instance, children raised by authoritative parents showed lower levels of anxiety than children raised by authoritarian parents, according to a 2004 study by Muris et al. Similar findings were made by Pinquart in a meta-analysis, who found that authoritative parenting was linked to lower levels of anxiety and authoritarian and permissive parenting to greater levels of anxiety [7, 8].

It is crucial to remember that different parenting philosophies might have different effects on anxiety based on contextual and individual factors. According to some research, for instance, parenting methods may have a different effect on anxiety depending on cultural differences [3]. Furthermore, the association between parenting styles and anxiety may also be influenced by the existence of additional risk or protective variables, such as genetics or exposure to traumatic experiences [1].

## 8. Limitations of the Current Study

There are certain limitations to this study, despite the fact that it offers insightful information about how parenting styles affect anxiety. Initially, the study may have been biased because it used self-report measures to evaluate parenting methods and anxiety symptoms in kids. To provide a more thorough knowledge of the connection between parenting styles and anxiety, future research can combine observational techniques with self-report measures.

The study limited its scope to the three parenting philosophies that have been studied the most: authoritative, permissive, and authoritarian. There might be additional parenting philosophies or subtypes of these philosophies, though, that can affect kids' anxiety levels. The impact of different parenting philosophies, including helicopter or neglectful parenting, on anxiety consequences can be investigated in further studies.

## 9. Conclusion

The way that anxiety is developed and managed in children and adolescents is greatly influenced by the parenting approaches employed. Because they may face high stress levels, inadequate emotional support, and difficulty expressing their feelings, children raised by authoritarian parents are more likely to develop anxiety. Because there is little structure or consistent punishment, children raised by permissive parents may feel uncertain and insecure, which exacerbates anxiety.

However, it has been discovered that authoritative parenting can help prevent anxiety. Children raised in authoritative homes learn healthy coping strategies and a sense of personal control, which lowers anxiety levels. These coping mechanisms and sense of personal control are developed through the setting of clear expectations, offering emotional support, and fostering independence.

It is essential for parents, educators, and mental health practitioners to comprehend how parenting styles affect anxiety. Relevant practitioners can help lower anxiety levels in kids and teens and improve their general well-being and mental health by advocating authoritative parenting techniques and offering parents tools and support.

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