**Parenting Handout**

Children are formed by their DNA (nature) and by experience (nurture). A child who lives in a very calm relaxed household will probably be more likely to be calm and relaxed than a child who lives in a busy, noisy chaotic household. Children need to know what is happening next and what the expectations are. We call these **routines and boundaries.**

Routines are important for children who have very little control over their environment or decisions. They respond well to routines at school and it helps them to feel safe. They feel safe because they are protected and can trust their adults.

Boundaries show a child how to stay safe and behave in an acceptable way. Children need these boundaries because they are too young and inexperienced to know what to do in every situation they meet. If they don’t have boundaries. they try and work it out for themselves and end up making decisions that can lead to difficult or risky behaviours. Some children can’t manage too many choices so if you give them choice it causes them to panic.

Because children are not fully developed, they don’t know that they don’t know everything, so will think they are making the right choices. If this continues, they become defiant and confrontational. They start to control their environment through their behaviour. They might refuse to leave mum to go to school, or alienate dad, or lash out at siblings. They start to think they need to be in charge.

This can lead to a defiant, anxious or angry child because they are confused about how to manage their environment. They stop feeling safe.

Changing this needs a parent who takes charge, makes rules, sticks to their decisions and follows through with consequences. The child needs a parent, not a best friend.

Initially in this process, they might like you less but over time they will feel much safer and contained and the behaviours will settle. Changing the parenting in your house takes determination and resilience. The child’s behaviour will probably get worse before it gets better because they will escalate their responses if their usual behaviour stops working.

**Types of Parents**

**Authoritarian Parenting**

* You believe kids should be seen and not heard.
* When it comes to rules, you believe it's "my way or the highway."
* You don't take your child's feelings into consideration.

More likely to have poor self esteem and rebel when they get older

**Authoritative Parenting**

* You put a lot of effort into creating and maintaining a positive relationship with your child.
* You explain the reasons behind your rules.
* You set limits, enforce rules, and give consequences, but take your child's feelings into consideration.

Authoritative parenting results in children who are confident, responsible, and able to self-regulate. They can manage their negative emotions more effectively, which leads to better social outcomes and emotional health.

**Permissive Parenting**

* You set rules but rarely enforce them.
* You don't give out consequences very often.
* You think your child will learn best with little interference from you.

Overall, children of permissive parents usually have some self-esteem and decent social skills. However, they can be impulsive, demanding, selfish, and lack self-regulation.

**Uninvolved Parenting**

* You don't ask your child about school or homework.
* You rarely know where your child is or who they are with.
* You don't spend much time with your child.
* You’re always on your phone or online

The children of uninvolved parents usually are resilient and may even be more self-sufficient than children with other types of upbringing.

However, these skills are developed out of necessity. Additionally, they might have trouble controlling their emotions, less effective coping strategies, may have academic challenges, and difficulty with maintaining or nurturing social relationships.

## **How to Tell If You're a Helicopter Parent**

These parents are the ones who are always on top of things but to an extreme.

Helicopter parents tend to be overly involved in their kids' lives to the point where their own activities and interests take a back seat. This means the family budget also revolves around what the kids need or want.

There are different aspects to helicopter parenting, though. In some cases, these parents put too much pressure on their children to succeed in school or activities. In other cases, they shield their children from certain topics and do tasks for them. Helicopter parenting doesn't look the same in every household.4

Likewise, helicopter parents have a tendency to [over-schedule their kids](https://www.verywellfamily.com/signs-your-teen-is-overscheduled-4083061) in an effort to give them a competitive edge in everything from school to sports to music. They may even try to manage their child's [friendships](https://www.verywellfamily.com/making-and-keeping-friends-2633627) and social standing. The goal is to create every opportunity for their kids that they can. Overall, helicopter parents tend to be proud to be so involved in their kids' lives and often don't see anything wrong with their parenting style. They see their actions as a way to show their love and ensure their [child's safety](https://www.verywellfamily.com/hidden-dangers-and-child-safety-2633658) while helping them be successful in the world

**Inhibits Problem-Solving Skills**

Kids of all ages need problem-solving skills. Whether you have a 5-year-old who needs to learn how to sound out words or a 25-year-old who can’t find a job, kids need to know how to tackle their own issues and proactively solve them on their own. Hovering parents, however, often intervene at the first sign of trouble, such that kids don’t learn valuable problem solving skills.

**Leads to Dependence on Parents**

Helicopter parents do so much for their kids that it can make their kids dependent upon them. If a mother calls her 19-year-old to wake them up each morning to ensure they get to class on time, they won’t learn how to do this for themself. Parents should be helping kids learn how [to survive and thrive without them](https://www.verywellfamily.com/encourage-independence-in-your-child-620721).

**Hinders Self-Advocacy**

Helicopter parents usually advocate for their children, rather than teaching their children to advocate for themselves. It’s important for kids to be able to ask questions, gain clarification, and speak up when they need something. At school or in the workforce, these kids won’t have a parent available to help them deal with a challenging assignment or boss.

**Fosters Low Self-Esteem**

Having a parent constantly watching over everything you do can make children feel like they can never do anything right. This could lead to self-esteem issues as they grow up if the helicopter parenting and micromanaging continue into the teenage years and early adulthood.Helicopter parenting can contribute to challenges with [self-esteem](https://www.verywellfamily.com/ways-to-build-strong-self-esteem-in-your-child-3953464), problem-solving, coping, decision making, social interaction, [responsibility](https://www.verywellfamily.com/teaching-responsibility-to-your-child-3288496), and adaptive functioning.

### **Prevents Natural Consequences**

### Kids need to face some natural consequences in life. After all, in situations where parents don’t intervene, kids are going to face consequences when they fail. Yet, most helicopter parents micromanage their children's activities in an attempt to prevent them from receiving any negative consequences.

### **Impacts the Parent-Child Relationship**

### While helicopter parenting is typically done out of love, this parenting style may interfere with the parent-child relationship. If your child feels you are [constantly nagging](https://www.verywellfamily.com/is-it-okay-to-nag-kids-to-do-their-homework-1094908) them to get their homework done, making decisions for them, or checking up on their every move, they're unlikely to feel positive about your interactions. Instead, doing so may push your child away and lead them to question if you trust their judgment and abilities.

However, sometimes helicopter parenting does bring children and parents close together. If children don't feel stunted by having a parent micromanage them, they may feel grateful for this constant push to succeed.

Children of helicopter parents may feel a deep connection to their parents and feel cared for. They may also feel like they have someone to go to who will help them deal with problems that arise

## **How to Encourage Autonomy**

## **If you tend to be a bit of a helicopter parent, it's important to consider if you should back off a bit to ensure you're giving your child room to grow,**[**learn new skills**](https://www.verywellfamily.com/the-best-life-life-skills-you-can-teach-your-kids-during-school-closures-4842610)**, and rebound from failure on their own. Giving up that control, however, may be anxiety-provoking.**

If you're having difficulty tolerating the stress or worry you feel when you allow your child to engage in age-appropriate activities on their own, talk to a professional. Allowing your child to make mistakes, suffer [natural consequences](https://www.verywellfamily.com/natural-consequences-as-a-discipline-strategy-1094849), experience heartache, and solve their own problems are important aspects of growing and learning.

Keep in mind you don't have to back off completely all at once. In fact, it may be best for you and your child if you back off slowly. Give them time, space, and an appropriate level of support while they build up the skills they'll need to become more independent.7

Whether your child is going to walk to the store on their own or they want to work on their science fair project alone, give them a little bit of freedom one step at a time. Coach them from time to time, help them brainstorm solutions, and review with them how they did when they're finished. But try to avoid standing over them while they're working—or worse yet, doing the work for them.Learning to fail and bounce back while parents are around to support them will help children build these skills when their parents are not close by.

While not all elements of helicopter parenting are bad, it [can have negative outcomes for children](https://www.verywellfamily.com/lawnmower-parenting-4771519) as it may hinder their ability to be independent. Here are a few ways you can go about encouraging autonomy in your children.

### **Let Your Kids Fail**

### Failing isn't fun, but it's a lesson learned. Whether it's in school, in an activity, or in a sport, failure is all part of the growing process, and letting your kids experience failure won't derail them for life. In fact, failure teaches important skills.

### These small failures and disappointments teach children resiliency skills and help them learn to cope with hard emotions. Although it may be hard for parents to see their children experiencing difficult emotions, it helps children realize that the emotions are temporary and that they can handle them. Getting through hard things helps children build the confidence that they need to be able to handle other hard things in the future.

### **Encourage Communication**

### Encourage them to communicate thoughts and feelings by using helpful prompts. Following this up by thanking them for sharing with you to reaffirm that communication is important.

### **Give Them jobs to do.**

### Part of childhood for many families is learning life skills that will help kids as adults. If you're always doing everything for your kids, they probably won't learn these skills, which can make independence hard. Starting at a young age, [give your kids chores](https://www.verywellfamily.com/the-importance-of-chores-for-kids-1095018), Moses says. These can be as simple as doing the dishes after dinner or making their bed every morning. You can expand on them as your kids get older, continuing to teach them how to be independent.