

Style Matters!

Research has identified four basic parenting styles. Some of these styles are associated with more positive outcomes, including **decreased risk for alcohol and other drug use**. Which parenting style do you use most often?



Authoritarian (dictatorship): High on discipline and setting limits, low on love and affection. If challenged by their child on a rule, these parents are likely to say, “Because I said so, end of discussion.”

Authoritative (democracy): High on setting appropriate limits and positive discipline and high on love and displays of affection. While these parents still make the final call, they welcome discussion with

Permissive (indulgent): High on love and affection, low on discipline and limits. While these households are filled with love, they lack hard and-fast-rules; and when one of the few set rules are broken, the children are able to negotiate their way out of any consequence.

Neglectful (uninvolved): Low on discipline and limits and low on love and affection. These parents provide food and shelter for their child, but little else. They are either incapable of appropriately caring for and supporting their child or they are simply too caught up in their own lives to concern themselves with their child’s wants and needs.

As you consider your own parenting style, you may solidly fall into one of these four categories, or you may find that your parenting is a combination of styles. Can you guess **which parenting style is best** at directing children away from alcohol and other drugs? If you said

Authoritative, you’re correct!

Here’s why: Authoritative parenting is centered on effective communication. Parents set rules and guidelines and are clear on their expectations. When the rules are questioned, authoritative parents are willing to listen and provide an explanation in a calm and loving manner. If a rule is broken, they will follow through on the consequences, and do so in a nurturing and forgiving way. These parents have open and honest conversations about alcohol and other drugs, provide the facts and answer any questions their children have on the subject. These children understand why to say “no” and, through their parents’ parenting style, have learned decision making skills which can be used even in their parents’ absence.