

# Family Strengths and Mindful Parenting

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*“Strength-based parenting is an approach where parents deliberately identify and cultivate positive states, processes and qualities in their children,” according to Professor Lea Waters.*



**What are the strengths in your family?**

Family Strengths Jamboard



# Qualities of strong families

<b>Appreciation and affection</b>	<b>The ability to cope with stress and crisis</b>	<b>Commitment</b>
<b>Caring for each other</b>	<b>Positive communication</b>	<b>Time together</b>
Friendship	Avoiding blame	Honesty
Respect for individuality	Being able to compromise	Dependability
Playfulness	Agreeing to disagree	Faithfulness
Humor	Shared ethical values	Sharing
Giving compliments	Hope	Trust
Sharing feelings	Compassion	Quality time in great quantity
Simple good times	Enjoying each other's company	Good things take time
Adaptability	Seeing crises as challenges and opportunities	Growing through crises together
Openness to change	Resilience	Sharing fun times

# Strengths Based Parenting

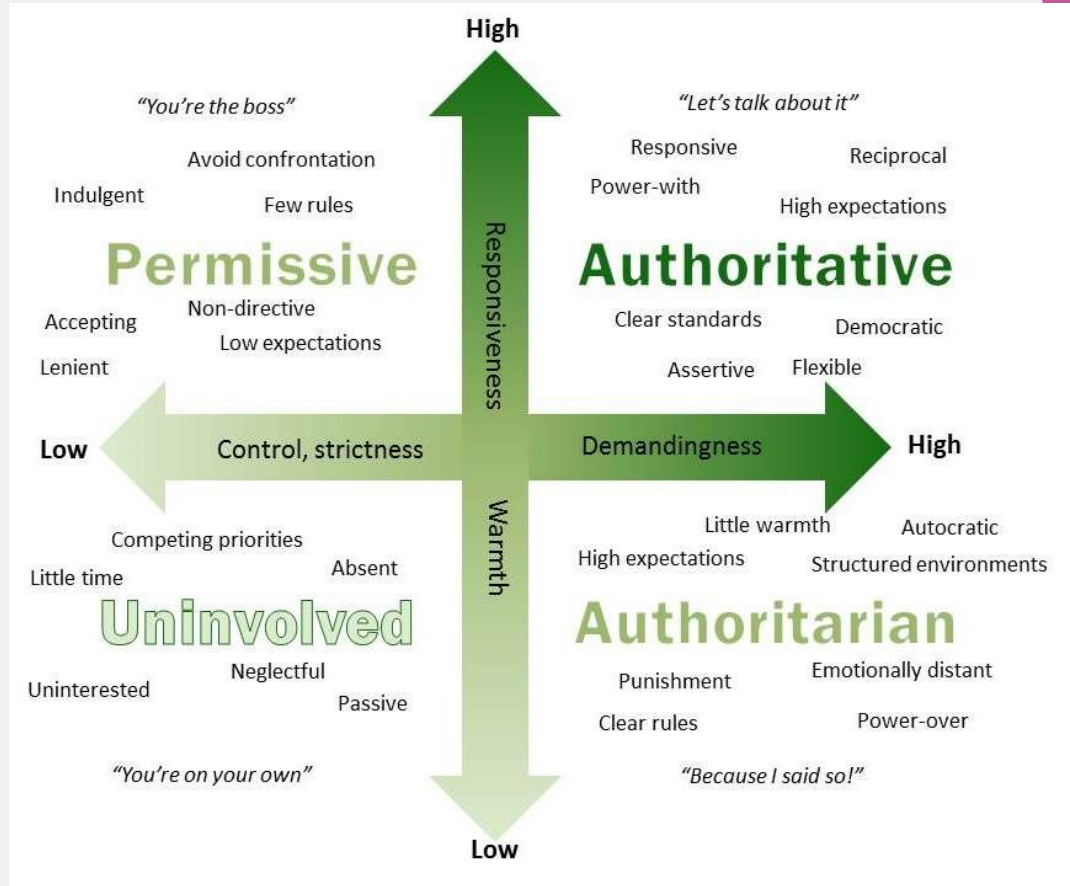
It's all  
about  
Attitude &  
Actions

Research shows that parents who respond to the needs of children in loving ways, whilst setting rules that **build independence and emotional intelligence, produce the best-adjusted, most resourceful, and highest-achieving kids.**

When parents focus on their children's strengths, which come more naturally and deliver more positive outcomes, **kids are more likely to build resilience, optimism and achieve – beyond 'competence' – in areas that are meaningful for them.**



# Parenting Styles

## Parenting Style Quiz




# How to Do It

- Begins with the belief that all children have or can develop strengths, and utilize past successes, to enhance well-being. It's considered a powerful combination of the strength-building model and solution focused communication
- Parents focus on Strength-building rather than flaw-fixing;
- Doing rather than understanding;
- Believing in every youth unconditionally - which produces optimism and feeds possibility and motivates coping and adaptive behavior even in the face of difficult odds.



Continues with practice methods that identify and marshal these strengths for necessary behavior change.

- The Goal: Change rather than insight and awareness
  - The Work: Problem-driven not problem-focused (solution-focused): Devoted to helping kids initiate actions to dispense presenting problems
  - Primarily short term Goal-oriented and focused on resolving the identifying problem
  - Assumptions: Strength-based practice does not assume that ownership of guilt is somehow automatically curative....Does assume that change is inevitable, not uncertain
  - Strength-based practice does not assume LARGE problems require LARGE efforts for solutions....Does assume that SMALL changes can ripple out to bring resolution
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# Working with Your Child's Weaknesses

Weaknesses need to be addressed if they affect a child's ability to be happy or effective. Addressing weaknesses by understanding and using the child's strengths.

One method is through re-framing.

Some more ways to work with weaknesses are included in the following slides.



# Attention Spans

Be realistic about  
attention spans

(but still  
understanding they  
can improve)

## AVERAGE ATTENTION SPANS

2 years old: four to six minutes

4 years old: eight to 12 minutes

6 years old: 12 to 18 minutes

8 years old: 16 to 24 minutes

10 years old: 20 to 30 minutes

12 years old: 24 to 36 minutes

14 years old: 28 to 42 minutes

16 years old: 32 to 48 minutes

# Gratitude

According to the American Psychology Association and Positive Psychology researchers, engaging in gratitude practices can benefit our sleep, increase our satisfaction with life, increase hopefulness, decrease depressive symptoms, increase prosocial behaviors, and increase resiliency.

## 21 Day Gratitude Challenge



Gratitude Journal

Gratitude Trips  
Around the  
neighborhood

Share favorite  
family stories  
that will uplift  
them

Help kids  
notice  
their  
abundance

# Down Time and Safe Space

Downtime gives us time and space to enjoy our personal lives and get personal tasks done. It grants us time with family, friends, and our hobbies. On a brain level, it allows us to reach homeostasis and is a necessary break from the aroused state, Dr. Hanson says.

Although safe spaces are helpful for all children, they are especially effective for children with social emotional and mental health needs.

These spaces are equipped with comforting objects and soothing materials that can promote mindfulness, breathing and reflection.

- Children learn how to self-initiate the use of coping mechanisms
- Children understand that they can safely disengage from people and situations around them
- It promotes the use and development of healthy coping skills



- Find a discrete area that is still commonly located (ex. living room, dining area, hallway)
- The area should comfortably fit one child
- There should be a few items that assist children with relaxing (ex. fidgets, coloring books, soft blankets, plush pillows)
- A list of coping skills with pictures

# Creating a Safe Space with the Parent

- #1. Recognise that your role with your teen needs to shift.
- #2. Choose a mindset of trust.
- #3. Make listening a priority.
- #4. Listen with empathy and ‘park’ your own strong emotions.
- #5. ‘Listen’ to their body language and the tone of their voice, as well as their words.
- #6 Avoid ‘fix it’ mode.

<https://www.mykidstime.com/for-parents/how-to-create-a-safe-space-so-your-teen-will-talk/>



# Identifying Strengths

Explore, with your child, how they can use their strengths to overcome challenges & weaknesses

[Handout for Identifying a Child's Strength](#)

[Identify Strengths](#)



# Family Strengths Activities

Simply notice one strength in your child and comment on it: “You used good judgment today when you decided to pack your school bag ahead of time,” or “Thanks for making me laugh—I really love how funny you are,” or “I know your brother aggravates you, and I was so proud to see you rise above and show forgiveness.”

*Repeat this strengths spotting approach as much as you can.*

Family Tree Strengths

Family Strengths Questionnaire

Strengths Surveys

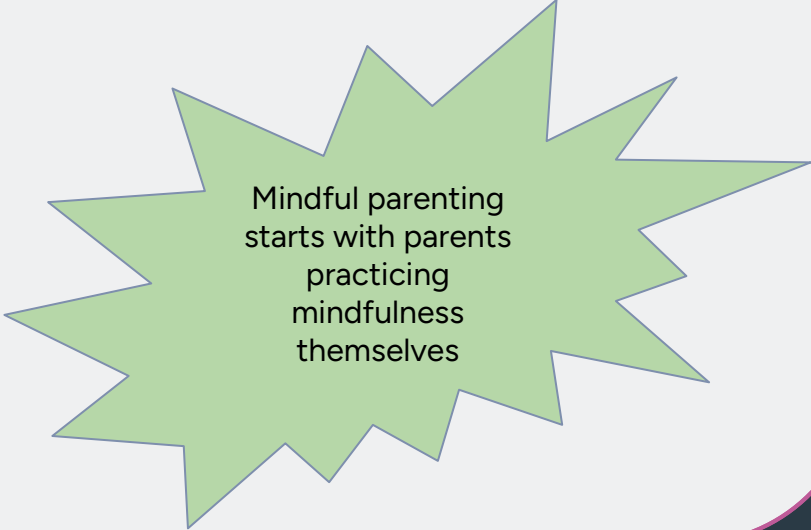
Parenting Strengths Toolkit

# Mindfulness

Mindfulness is the awareness that arises from paying attention in a particular way, on purpose, to the present moment, with non-judgment.

What is Mindfulness?

- Box Breathing
- 30 second visualization
- Grounding
- Using Your Senses



Mindful parenting starts with parents practicing mindfulness themselves



# Mindful Parenting

- According to Dr. Amy Saltzman, a holistic physician and mindfulness coach (and creator of the Still Quiet Place CDs for Young Children and Teens), **“Data shows that the greatest source of childhood and adolescent stress is not school work, extracurricular activities, or peer pressure, but parental stress.”**
- Mindful parenting does not mean being a “perfect parent” and is not something you can fail at. **It is not easy and it takes practice**, but like many aspects of parenting, some days are good and some are bad and you can always try again. You may forget to be mindful, but the second you realize you are distracted, it is an opportunity to make a different choice – the choice to be present.

Mindful parenting means that you bring your conscious attention to what's happening, instead of getting hijacked by your emotions. Mindfulness is about **letting go of guilt and shame** about the past and focusing on right now. It's about accepting whatever is going on, rather than trying to change it or ignore it.



# Mindful Parenting Practices

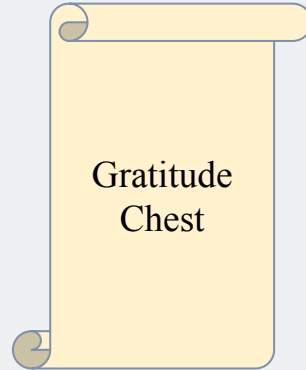
Mindful parenting behavior is about setting an ongoing intention to be present at the given moment.

This presence can take many forms: for example, it may look like paying attention to your child, noticing your own feelings when you're in conflict with them, pausing before responding, and listening to your child's viewpoints, even if they differ from your own.

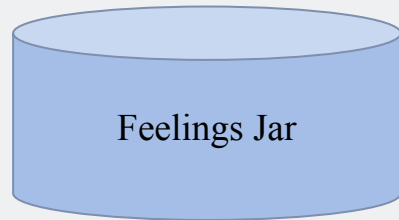
That's all to say, a mindful parenting approach involves pausing so that you can be attuned to your child's deeper needs (are they crying because they are hungry, sleepy, scared, or something else?), and respond to them in an appropriate and loving way. [Mindful Parenting Toolkit](#)

# Family Mindfulness Ideas

**Mindful Bell:** Find a place in your home to have a bell that is available for anyone to ring. When it is rung, everyone in the home pauses for 3 breaths. Stop whatever you are doing, and just feel the breath in your body.



Create a little chest or box at home that your son or daughter can keep mindfulness reminders. It can be a safe space they go when they are feeling upset.



Have some fun and get out the bubbles. This is a great way to help younger kids (and adults) get in touch with the feeling of the outbreath.

