

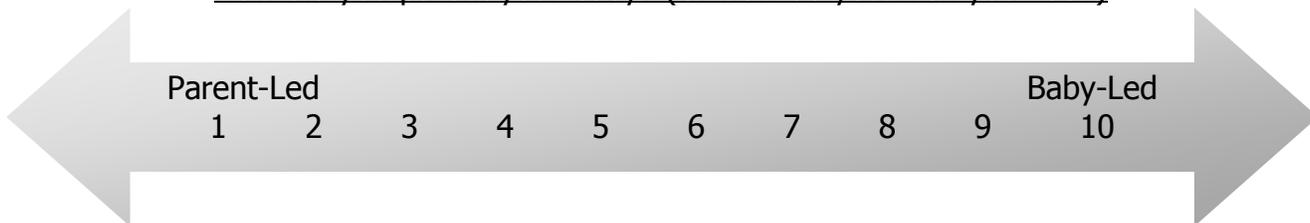
# Parenting Style: what "label" best describes you?

By Janelle Durham, MSW. Parent Educator, Bellevue College. <http://bellevuetoddlers.wordpress.com>

Popular media likes simple, black and white labels for more complicated ideas. On this handout, I've gathered some trendy labels for different parenting styles. On each section below, I put one dogmatic method at one end of the continuum and its polar opposite at the other. (I've described each in the positive terms used by its proponents. This isn't intended to imply any judgment about the "best" way to parent.)

Go through this handout and mark where you are on each line – you'll likely not be on one end or the other, but somewhere along the spectrum. (Have your partner mark their views: it's interesting to see where you're different!)

## How did you parent your baby? (Or how do you wish you had?)



**Parent-Led:** Parents determine a schedule for baby's feeding, diaper changes, and nap times. Parents provide structure, a predictable environment, and a consistent response style to train baby's internal clock. They may leave a baby to "cry it out" as it learns self-soothing behavior.

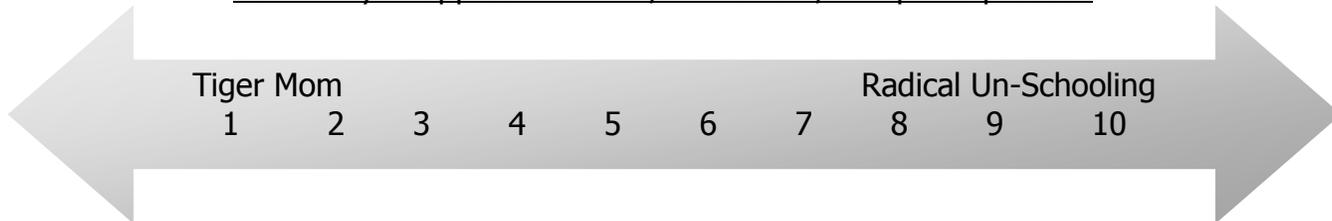
One proponent of parent-led style is Gary Ezzo, author of *On Becoming Baby Wise*.

**Child-Led:** Parents watch baby for hunger cues and feed on demand. They watch for toileting cues to know when a diaper change is imminent. When tired cues appear, they settle baby to sleep. Parents always respond to crying. Parents focus on being responsive to the child, and the family's schedule adapts around baby's needs.

One proponent of baby-led style is the Sears family, authors of *The Attachment Parenting Book*.

Here's an article comparing a daily schedule for Parent-Led vs. Baby Led families.  
[www.babble.com/baby/baby-care/baby-sleep-feeding-parent-led-schedule-routine/](http://www.babble.com/baby/baby-care/baby-sleep-feeding-parent-led-schedule-routine/)

## How will you approach school, homework, and piano practice?



**Tiger Mom:** Amy Chua, self-described "Chinese Mother", says in *Battle Hymn of the Tiger Mother*: "What Chinese parents understand is that nothing is fun until you're good at it. To get good at anything you have to work, and children on their own never want to work, which is why it is crucial to override their preferences... Once a child starts to excel at something—whether it's math, piano, pitching or ballet—he or she gets praise, admiration and satisfaction. This builds confidence and makes the once not-fun activity fun."

<http://online.wsj.com/article/SB10001424052748704111504576059713528698754.html>

Video: [www.youtube.com/watch?v=TIHLyHw47AU](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TIHLyHw47AU)

**Radical Un-Schooling:** Dayna Martin, in *Radical Unschooling* says "Unschooling includes trusting your child in what they choose to learn; you extend that same trust to other areas of your child's life, like foods, media, television, bedtime. Parenting is supposed to be joyful, and it can be when we learn to connect with, rather than control, our children. The focus of our life is on happiness and pursuing our interests with reckless abandon together. We totally immerse ourselves in our passions every single day.

<http://daynamartin.com/unschooling-blog/radical-unschooling-the-gift-of-mindfulness/> <http://learninghappens.wordpress.com/2011/09/24/unschooling-is-not-child-led-learning/>

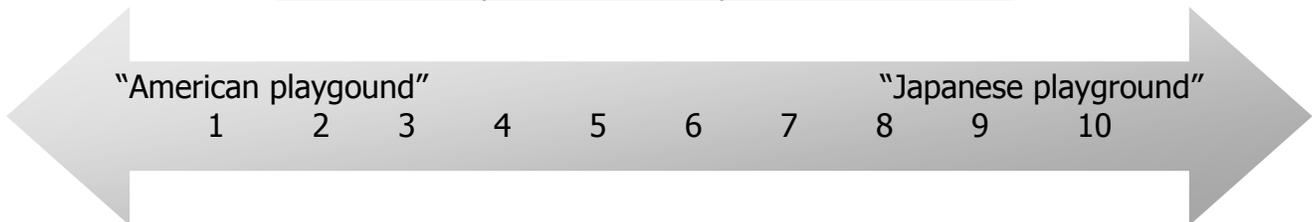
Video: [www.youtube.com/watch?v=aFqVqRvmSeM](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aFqVqRvmSeM)

How much do you protect your child vs. allowing free exploration?



<p>Helicopter Parents have a high level of oversight and supervision, providing frequent advice, reminders, and assistance. Parents protect from harm and upset, and help with decision making. Parents “smooth the way” by being actively engaged with teachers, coaches, etc.</p> <p><a href="http://parenting.blogs.nytimes.com/2009/03/04/in-defense-of-helicopter-parents/">http://parenting.blogs.nytimes.com/2009/03/04/in-defense-of-helicopter-parents/</a></p>	<p>Free Range Parents encourage children to actively and independently explore their worlds. “We don’t want our kids to fall off a bike. But we do want them to learn to ride. We can [either] hold onto handlebars forever, or wish them luck and then let go.”</p> <p><a href="http://www.time.com/time/magazine/article/0,9171,1940697,00.html">www.time.com/time/magazine/article/0,9171,1940697,00.html</a></p>
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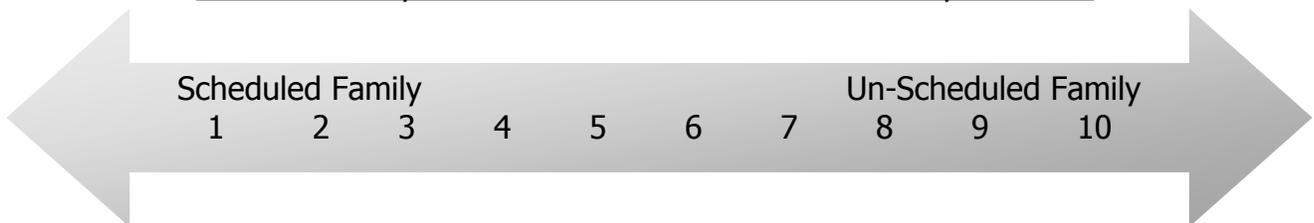
How much do you intervene in your child’s conflicts?



<p>“I tried to be prepared and attentive. I would get up mid-conversation to help my boys negotiate and share if I sensed trouble was brewing. I parceled out snacks, helped them on the swings, and watched over my kids... being on top of things... was what good parents did.”</p>	<p>“Adults didn’t impose their notions of correct behavior onto the children’s natural, boisterous play. Play fighting was considered [normal]... Fighting, crying, and making up again were normal ways of figuring out how to get along... it was important not to interfere in this...”</p>
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These summaries are taken from Parenting without Borders by Christine Gross-Loh

How much do you schedule enrichment activities for your child?



<p>“Children are exposed to enrichment videos... from early infancy as well as specialized books and toys [and enrichment activities] designed to ensure that they are well-rounded and adequately stimulated for excellent development... considerable family resources are being invested to ensure that the children have what are marketed as the “very best” opportunities.”</p>	<p>“He doesn’t need toys... He sometimes picks up a stick and one moment it’s an airplane. Then it becomes a car, then a train, then a monster from the lagoon. What amazes me about this is his creativity and delight as he plays... In order for a child to be able to play like this and be inventive, he needs unscheduled time.”</p> <p><a href="http://www.schoolfamily.com/blog/2013/08/15/unscheduled-time-does-your-child-get-enough">www.schoolfamily.com/blog/2013/08/15/unscheduled-time-does-your-child-get-enough</a></p>
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AAP article on the importance of play (and unstructured time): <http://pediatrics.aappublications.org/content/119/1/182.full>