Parenting and Limit Setting as Agents of Change in Chronic Disease Prevention

Anne Wareham, R. Psych.
Psychologist & Program Lead
Janeway Lifestyle Program
Learning Objectives

• Discuss the role of parenting style and limit setting on the health behaviours of children
• Describe assessment and respectful intervention approaches in working with parents
• Reflect on the challenges that parent-clinicians face in providing parenting advice in clinical practice
What is Parenting Style?

• “General pattern of parenting that provides the emotional background in which parent behaviours are expressed and interpreted by the child.” - Rhee, 2008
• Parent behaviours are what parents DO (scold or praise)
• Parenting style is HOW they do it (with warmth or hostility
Parenting Style Differs on 2 Dimensions

• Level of warmth
• Level of limit-setting
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>What is Warmth?</th>
<th>What is Structure?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Emotional security &amp; love</td>
<td>• Clear guidelines for behaviour</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Verbal and physical affection</td>
<td>• Clearly stated expectations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Sensitivity to the child’s needs</td>
<td>• Clearly explained reasons</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Empathy with the child’s feelings</td>
<td>• Support to help the child succeed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Encouragement of independent thinking</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## Types of Parenting Style

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>High Limit setting</th>
<th>Low Limit setting</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>High Warmth</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Authoritative:</td>
<td>Permissive:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Respectful of the</td>
<td>Indulgent without</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>child’s opinions</td>
<td>discipline</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>but maintains clear</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>boundaries</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Low Warmth</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Authoritarian:</td>
<td>Neglected:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strict disciplinarian</td>
<td>Emotionally</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>uninvolved and</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>does not set</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>rules</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Balance between freedom and responsibility**
Tools to Assess Parenting Style

- Parenting Dimensions Inventory (Power, 2002)
- Authoritative Parenting Index (Jackson et.al., 1998)
- Parenting Styles and Dimensions Questionnaire (Robinson, 2001)
What Works Best

• Authoritative parenting is associated with:
  – Higher fruit and vegetable consumption (Blissett, 2011)
  – Lower screen time (Langer et. al., 2014)
  – Better academic achievement (Maccoby & Martin, 1983)
  – Better mental health outcomes (Lamborn et.al., 1991)
“The literature in favor of authoritative parenting style has been so consistent, across a number of child outcomes, that many of the recent papers on parenting/feeding style used this style as the ‘reference’ group.”
“Parenting: What’s Your Style?”

- https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ry0smCoV_f8
Janeway Lifestyle Program

The Lifestyle Team at the Janeway Children's Health and Rehabilitation Centre works with families whose children have been identified as having a risk factor for the development of a chronic disease such as high cholesterol, high blood sugars, high blood pressure, liver disease and weight concerns.

The Lifestyle Team works with:

1. All parents of preschool children who are interested in learning about raising healthy, happy and active children.

2. Families whose children (aged 2-14 years) have been identified as having risk factors for the development of chronic disease.
Positive health behaviours lead to lifelong health. The following behaviours can prevent or delay many chronic diseases, such as type 2 diabetes. Please check the behaviours that your child practices regularly.

My child:

- Eats at least 5 vegetables and fruit each day.
- Drinks no more than 6-8 ounces (¾ to 1 cup) sugar-sweetened beverages (such as pop, 100% juice and fruit punch) per day.
- Sleeps at least 10 or 11 hours per night.
- Feels good about him / herself
- Is physically active for at least 1 hour per day (at a moderate to vigorous intensity)
- Watches less than 2 hours of screen time (TV, computer, hand-held devices) per day.
- Sits no longer than 1 hour without taking a standing break.
IF YOU BUILD IT, THEY WILL COME.
Is Knowing Enough?

• “While it helps, it also highlights that emotional reactions and stress can move us from 'what we should do' to 'what we do' as parents. **Sometimes, it just makes me aware of what I am doing wrong**”
What are Some Barriers?

- Income
- Social support
- Education
- Mental health
- Child characteristics
- Culture
- Physical health
- Ethnicity
- Stress and pressure
- Guilt and shame
Blaming Parents

• Whether parents in our practice are permissive or not, they are judged as that.

• “(they are) carrying the burden of producing the ‘healthy’ child, particularly for those mothers whose children are considered at ‘ultimate risk’... positions mothers in a location of continual stress and guilt.”  
  Ward, 2012

• “…describing interactions that resulted in feeling devalued and judged as incompetent parents.”
  Hamlington et.al., 2015
Stress

• Stressed parents
  – Children less likely to meet physical activity guidelines
  – Less likely to set limits on TV

Walton et.al., 2014
behind every great kid is a mom who’s pretty sure she’s screwing it all up.
Guilt and Shame

• No longer enough to be a good parent, we must be the ‘perfect’ parent.
Parenting

Stress/guilt

Lifestyle changes
‘Good Enough’ Parenting

• All children need physical care, nutrition and protection.

• Emotionally, children need:
  – Love, care and commitment
  – Consistent limit setting
  – Facilitation of development
Good enough

Perfect parent
Successful Interventions

• Validating that parenting concerns normal
• Listening and exploring their perspective
• Being genuine and honest
• Taking partnership/non-expert approach
• Considering context of family and culture
• Self-care/addressing parental stress and anxiety
• Education
Experience of Being a Parent:

• Empathize more
• Judge less
• Relate and understand better
• ‘Best practice’ may not be ‘best for my family’
• Understand individual differences
HCP
Info expert

Parent
Family expert
What Advice Would you Give to HCP?

Don't judge, remember that there are many styles of parenting and that none of us is perfect. Parents look to us for advice and it's important that we give them a safe and professional ear.
Our society today has placed beliefs and expectations on ourselves and others at an all time high...we need to model good enough parenting in an attempt to debunk the myth that in order to raise kind, competent children, we have to be the perfect parent all of the time.
Parents are the experts on their family and kids. We need to acknowledge that and offer suggestions/ideas that might work and support them as they change. Nobody wants a lecture, collaborating with parents works better.
Do avoid being overly directive, and to recognize that skill development does not always directly translate into skill practice - we often know what to do as parents, but emotions, self efficacy, resources, or time get in the way. Sometimes helping to improve those factors make the biggest difference of all.
Contact

Anne.wareham@easternhealth.ca
709-777-4898

Website:
www.easternhealth.ca/jlp
References:


