

Parental Engagement Scale

The scale below is a simple tool enabling you to evaluate your parental approach. My hope is that none of us are guilty of moving to either extreme on the scale, but your reflection and subsequent marks will enable you to see where improvement is needed. This is only helpful as you respond as honest and accurate as possible. Place an "X" on each dotted line, indicating where you believe you've set the example for your children. Afterward, discuss your answers.

Finding Balance in Our Parenting

DISENGAGED

OVER -FUNCTIONING

PARENT IS PRESENT BUT ALLOWS CHILDREN TO NAVIGATE THEIR INVOLVEMENT

ACTIVITIES

Parent is never at games or performances

ACTIVITIES

Parent is intrusive with coaches

PARENT IS BOTH SUPPORTIVE AND DEMANDING

EMOTIONAL SUPPORT

Parent is emotionally absent

EMOTIONAL SUPPORT

Parent over-praises or over-corrects

THE HOME ENVIRONMENT MAKES TECHNOLOGY A SERVANT NOT A MASTER

TECHNOLOGY

Child has little to no exposure to technology

TECHNOLOGY

Child instantly gets every new gadget

PARENT SHOWS LOVE WITHOUT MAKING CHILDREN THE FOCAL POINT

TIME

Child is starving for attention

TIME

Child is smothered with attention

PARENT PROVIDE RESOURCES BUT CULTIVATES RESOURCEFULNESS IN CHILDREN THROUGH BUDGETING

MONEY/BELONGINGS

Parent fails to resource children

MONEY/BELONGINGS

Children have too many resources

CHILD EATS A BALANCED DIET IN MODERATION

NUTRITION

Parent has little idea what their child is eating

NUTRITION

Parent allow children to eat whatever they want

PARENT EQUIPS CHILD TO DO THINGS ON THEIR OWN

TRAINING

Child must discover everything on thier own

TRAINING

Parent does everything for the child

CHILD LEARNS TO WORK A JOB AND EARN AN INCOME

WORK

Child must work multiple jobs to survive

WORK

Child never works a real job

PARENT DEMONSTRATES HEALTHY RELATIONSHIPS WITH FAMILY

RELATIONSHIP EXAMPLE

Parent is abusive, apathetic or absent role model

RELATIONSHIP EXAMPLE

Parent extremely mishandles priorities

CHILD LEARNS TO USE SOCIAL MEDIA BUT IS NOT ENSLAVED TO IT

TIME ON SOCIAL MEDIA

Child has no idea how to utilize this tool

TIME ON SOCIAL MEDIA

Child spends most of their discretionary time on it

CHILD ENJOYS REGULAR TIME WITH FAMILY AROUND A TABLE

TABLE TIME

Child is unstable except with families at meal, games

TIME TABLE

Child has no time with family around a table

PARENT EQUIPS CHILD TO SOLVE THEIR OWN PROBLEMS

PROBLEM SOLVING

Child feels no support when challenges surface

PROBLEM SOLVING

Child is rescued by parent in every challenge

CHILD HAS BALANCED TIME ON SCREENS AND IN PERSON

SOCIAL INTERACTION

Time with peers is all virtual on a screen

SOCIAL INTERACTION

All spare time is spent with peers face to face

PARENT ENCOURAGES CHILD TO PRIORITIZE AND OWN THEIR RESPONSIBILITIES

OWNERSHIP/RESPONSIBILITY

Child requires constant prodding to do homework

OWNERSHIP/RESPONSIBILITY

Child feels guilt with too much responsibility

PARENT WORKS WITH CHILD TO CREATE A FUTURE PLAN

FUTURE PLANS

Child has no vision for life after graduation

FUTURE PLANS

Child includes no adult in future vision

PARENT PREPARES THE CHILD FOR THE PATH NOT THE PATH FOR THE CHILD

ADULTHOOD

Child is ill-prepared for adult life

ADULTHOOD

Child is ill-prepared for adult life

Admittedly, this is a subjective scale based on your self-perception. It only represents what you believe to be your reality as you lead your children. I encourage you to talk over your marks with another adult who knows you well (a spouse, a family member, a friend, a counselor). In addition, I suggest you observe your children's behavior. What represents abundance to one, may be totally fine for another child. What is abandonment to one, may be sufficient for a different temperament. The emotional maturation of your kids (at each stage) represents a marvelous report card for whether you are striking the appropriate balance for their disposition.

Velvet Bricks

My father questions some of his decisions as a parent of three children, observing some of our challenges as adults. I believe, however, my mother and father offered me the perfect mix of "tough and tender" I needed to be prepared for adult life. For my personality, they were

spot on. To use one of our “Habitudes” (Habitudes are images that form leadership habits and attitudes), my parents were “Velvet-Covered Bricks.” They were velvet on the outside, providing love, support and attention, yet brick on the inside, providing boundaries and standards by which we should live. In short, they were both supportive and demanding—right in the middle of the scale.

I believe leading your young people is the most important priority in your life. As they become adults, it will become clear where they were under-resourced and where they were over-resourced. But beware. Both outcomes can stir emotions, positive and negative. I met Liz Murray in 2009. She was the “Homeless to Harvard” student, who literally went from the streets of New York (a homeless kid in her teens) to become a Harvard University graduate on a full scholarship.

She recalls being stunned as she entered her dorm laundry room for the first time. She stood gazing at a washer and dryer that were hers to use to her heart’s content. She told me she stood there next to another Harvard freshman, both of them crying as they looked at the appliances. Liz, of course, cried tears of joy because she’d never had access to such luxuries. Her fellow student was crying tears of desperation because she was forced to use them for the first time. Mom had always done her laundry for her.

Let’s strike a balance for our kid’s sake