

## **Issues on Parenting: Counselling for Positive Nurturing**

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### **Abstract**

Globally, general observations and trends as reported in news shows a great paradigm shift from how parents from generation x (1960's) and y (1990's) raised their children and the challenges confronting the twenty first century parents today. Parenting is a duty, which should be an intentional and a deliberate practice that parents activate into action on daily basis to nurture their children for healthy growth and development, with focus to basic human needs including physical, psychological, social, and Spiritual needs. This study interrogates some issues in parenting and also illustrates some parenting challenges and concerns that parents face while raising their children. They include economic issues, behavioural issues, changing times, increasing demands for survival of the home and family, among others. The study also incorporates some counselling blocks that could be adopted by the parents in this digital age for effective disciplines and behaviour management, communication, academic and social development, mental health and safety, balancing work and the family, and dealing with complex family dynamics and generational gap challenges, time management, availability for parent-child-bond in the digital age. In order to promote enduring positive responsiveness from parents to children, it is recommended that parents should be intentional and deliberate in the attention given to their children in early ages and as preteens, teenagers, and youths.

**Keywords:** Parenting, Issues on Parenting, Counselling, Positive Nurturing

## **Introduction**

Parenting has become a daunting task for parents in this era in which we find ourselves. There are a lot of changes seen in the way societies have evolved today. Most homes and families with very little children and preteens and teenagers are not exempted from the changes taking place in the societies. Parenting practices and raising children is a task that is being confronted with many issues such as economic issues, increase in children school fees, cost of feeding and basic human needs, high cost for educational services and children schooling, both parents having to spend many hours from home just to make ends meet; advancement in technology and digital gadgets and how parents are able to regulate or guide their children to embrace all these changes in a healthy way. Most importantly for many, the way of living has changed completely over the years. Parenting is the most important influence in a child's life in terms of endorsing self-direction, social integration, emotional and academic development. Parents role modelling provides an emotional climate for positive parent-child relationship, predicts child well-being in the domains of mental health, personality improvement, psychosocial development and adaptable behaviour in the society. Killian (2019) As children grow and progress through life, they continually adapt to new expectations, and, therefore, a certain degree of acceptable norms, standards, qualities of behaviour is to be expected at each developmental stage.

In the present times, a common trend is that both the parents are working to bring financial stability to the home and to provide sufficient welfare for everyone in the family, especially the children. This commitment is increasingly tough for parents to strike balance between raising children and the demand of work life. Due to this, many parents have adopted newer styles of parenting.

Common to the parenting styles today is the challenge of availability and time to bond with the children. The demand on parent-child-time is one of the big challenges. Most parents have to combine many official duties, heavy workloads, managing deadlines, doing household chores, and looking after children, including checking the state of healthcare, paying school fees, feeding and clothing, utility bills in the home... to mention a few. Observations in recent times had shown that due to increase life stress, some parents are choosing to become parents much later in life, once they are financially settled. Stavroulaki, & Gupta (2020).

Many children are increasingly getting diverted towards doing wrong things. One of the biggest reasons for this is that they lack moral values. The parents are already managing so much in a time pressed shadow. They hardly find time to teach children the fundamental moral values.

The very little children in elementary schools lack the wisdom to differentiate between what is right and what is wrong. Due to smartphones all around, parents are unable to track the activities of the children. This may be very dangerous for the child's development and may put him or her on the wrong track if their actions are not closely monitored.

The true essence of life is lost, somewhere with this whole rat race of proving ourselves and earning more with time. The families are falling apart due to a lack of time for each other. The children suffer when they don't find their parents around. Some children develop inferiority complex when they are not assured of support and love from their parents.

Although career is very important, but having sufficient time for children and other responsibilities concerning raising them well can't lead to a fulfilling life. Unavailability of parent in the life of their children can lead to the emotional bonding between a parent and a child fading away with time.

Most children are hesitant to open up in front of their parents due to a lack of emotional tie - up. This is the reason why children are increasingly seeking help from their peers rather than approaching their parents. When the children are not attached to their parents, they are emotionally wrecked and feel lonely. No doubt, that parents have become much aware of the importance of good nutrition and work hard towards it, but still, the children today suffer from nutritional deficiencies. The increased contamination in in fast foods has created a major barrier to provide sufficient nutrition to children. The availability of junk food everywhere has further challenged the way children eat today.

The heavy use of chemicals and pesticides for preservation have deteriorated the nutritional value of the food. The children these days suffer from an increasing number of diseases and they seem to have weak immunity.

The growing popularity of digital devices and social media has also created new challenges for parents. For example, many parents struggle to set limit around screen time for their children as children become more digital-savvy, many parents feel like they are always playing catch-up when it comes to technology. It is said that the generation of children in the 90s were the last generation to play outdoors. Some years back, children are completely healthy with minimal health issues, as there are so many apps to distract them. However, in the present times one will notice that due to frequent screen exposure, there are heightened eye sight problems arising in children. Moreover, the physical and motor skill development suffers when children

don't get enough movement of the muscles while playing outside. Food gets stored up in the body. Many children are overweight which was never seen in the previous generation.

Keeping children off gadgets is another challenge for parents today. The parents have to really pressurize children to go out to play rather than playing games on the phone. If the screen exposure is not cut down, it will have a very bad impact on the physical as well as mental development of children.

On a social gathering or outing, one would find children using apps on phones to play games etc. Many children get encouraged to use these gadgets by their peers, and many get more and more introduced to unhealthy websites just by the influence of peers as long as no adult to guide them on the right paths. You would find them look straight back at adults, arguing their course and doing only what they feel like doing. The movies that they see or watch are filled with actions and violence. Even the cartoon shown are filled with negative traits of anger and violence. Children get exposed to insecurities, stress, negativity, aggression right from the beginning. Most children misbehave, get annoyed, and have trust issues with their parents when they are called to orderly behaviour. This behaviour gets too upsetting at times and some parents have to put in a lot of effort to come down to the level of the children.

Most parents are too busy to attend to children activities at the school. There are plenty of issues to handle right from the beginning year of schooling. At times, the child gets beaten up or is a victim of another child's aggression. Many parents these days have to put in a lot of effort to make their child come up to expected benchmarks only to help them get accepted socially.

Many children have to study and meet up to the mark to survive in a cut-throat competition. Generally, life is like survival for the fittest. Observations show that many children are either a victim of sexual or physical abuse when parents are not there for them. Even cases of kidnapping, rapes and murders are increasing at an alarming rate as reported by the National crime records bureau. The changing complexities of life has expose children to a different set of challenges in current times.

Parents are made to be so much more aware of a child all the time. Children need to be guided, protected, supervised by significant others, especially by parents. Especially the girl child, needs to be protected and keenly watched for their safety. Odeleye (2020). Sending them to a neighbor's also is not safe these days. They need to be guided against male servants like drivers,

cooks etc. The societal moral values are entirely faded away with time. It is scary for parents to read and learn about the dirty things happening to children.

Many parents concern has grown so much over the time in buying "Aso- Ebi" and living frivolous life. If parent wants to really focus on the healthy upbringing of a child, then they need to be a constant watchdog for children these days. Positive reinforcement, consistent discipline, expression of love, regular parent-child bonding and effective communication coupled with constant prayer are associated with better child outcomes including but not limited to areas such as academic achievement, social competence and emotional regulation. (Killian 2019)

Parents are mirrors through which children sees the world around them. Hence, it is important for parents to be intentional and authentic in raising their children. While it is true adult are responsible for their life outcomes. It is essential to note that parents have an unquantifiable influence on their children's choice and patterns of growth, especially in the first seven years of life. The nature-nurture challenge plays out well in child's life. In a call for Godly parenting. The holy bible attests to a divine conception of humanity and that everything see is ruled by spiritual (Genesis 1:1). If the first humans were born by the supreme being (God) everything beyond the scope of humanity should be referred to him.

For positive nurturing of children, parents have to be intentional about their actions and have to give sufficient commitment and conscientious dedication to everything concerning every child in their care to nurture, considering the physical development of the child, emotional development, cognitive development, social development, moral development, psychological development,

Odeleye (2020), suggested that parents should returned to the almighty God for succor and redirection on how to raise and nurture their children. While advocating for Biblical Spiritual Parenting (BSP) approach to Parenting, he maintained that humanity is firstly spiritual, and that the spiritual rules the physical. He submitted that nurturing a child is the most important vocation for human since it is at the heart of procreation and generational sustenance. Odeleye's (2020) BSP may be an answer to the problem and failure of parenting. The relationship between parents and their children serves as a link between development and well-being.

Killian (2019a,2019b), agreed that good and sound health in all ramification, lays the foundation for learning and achievement. Healthy parenting, serve as a building block for life-long benefits of learning, behaviour, cognitive, emotional, social, physical and mental health.

Counselling for effective parenting could include making use of the following positive nurturing blocks:

### **Parenting and Discipline**

Discipline is the structure that helps the child fit into the real world happily and effectively. Effective and positive discipline is about teaching and guiding children, not just forcing them to obey. To be effective, discipline needs to be:

- a. Given by a parent with an effective bond to the child.
- b. Consistent, close to the behavior needing change.
- c. Perceived as fair by the child.
- d. Developmentally and temperamentally appropriate.
- e. Self-enhancing that is, ultimately leading to self-discipline.

It is important to set clear goals and priorities and to be realistic about what you can achieve on a daily basis. It is crucial to build a strong support system such as a supportive partner to help navigate the various challenges of parenting, ultimately with patient, discipline and positive mindset, you can succeed as parent. And the best way to handle it, is by working together with the common goals set both the mother and the father and efficiently following the same parenting methods and working as a team, being a considerate yet firm in your leadership roles as parents.

In addition, paying attention to your children's internal world you need to access the quality of your relationship with your child in considering, trust, safety, a sense of caring, concern, and commitment as building up, teaching and modelling the qualities that contributes to emotional, healthy relationship. More so, to be mindful of children's self-esteem work to maintain a loving and trusting relationship and also be a good parent, as well as maintaining effective connection to your children as they mature and become independent.

### **Personality Development and Consideration**

Personality development aids in the development of a good outlook in life. Be an excellent role model for your children as a parent, show love, use positive reinforcement in the home, be available for them, do not be an absentee parent, as a result, your children see life as more

attractive and face the world with a smile. A child's personality has numerous dimensions from confidence, courage, and self-esteem, and to how they treat and respect others. Parents should be deliberate in molding, shaping their children's behaviour, character, integrity, and overall nurturing for positive personality development.

### **Effective Behavioural Management Strategies for Parents**

Behavioural management is an approach that emphasis keeping things in order, organized behavioural modification that focuses on developing and maintaining beneficial habits while discouraging bad ones and this requires the development of good learning partnerships and naturally encouraging children to learn. Every parent should observe: "Does it make my child feel special by respecting the child's individuality?" It may be quite damaging to your child's individuality to compare him or her to other friends, family, and neighbours.

### **Parental Attention in Handling Tech Devices**

Parents have increase concerns about how their children life revolve around handling gadgets especially, technological devices. A phenomenon that is affecting a growing number of families. Addition to playing games on devices, it is observed that, it reduces the time for social contact. There is need to manage the young ones behaviour in handling electronics and tech-devices, parents should create spending more time, playing outdoor games and traveling with the children. To teach them to value the people they meet and the things around them, more than the stuff they see in a computer.

Parents of young children are responsible for their care, their physical safety, psychological, cognitive and emotional development. They micromanage the child's cognitive and psychosocial development. They should consult for counselling. Professional counselling enable parents to better manage problematic situations that arise with their child's learning and emotional need by providing in- school parental education sections which would facilitate and measure parental effectiveness and the perception of parents' necessity of counseling in school system.

### **Parenting and Effective Communication**

To effectively communicate with your children, you must first build a relationship with them, you also need an understanding of their development and after this, you can learn how to communicate with them in more effective ways of listening to them, demonstrating that you understand, expression of empathy and being present for them.

### **Health and Safety of Children**

Parents of children under 18 years of age should make their home and environment well okay for their children. Accident is an important cause of serious injuries and disabilities and it occurs when parents are not aware of children getting into dangerous situations. Parents need to take every possible precaution to protect their children from this. In building safety for children, parents should take all possible precaution to prevent falls, supervise them, prefer using window grills rather than fixed grills, discourage or prohibit children from playing on roofs and balconies and encourage the use of ground level safe play areas. Injury prevention in adolescents should include in a broader discussion of healthy life style and relationship issues, positive body image, and identity formation, reinforcing high self-esteem in them, discuss peer pressure and negative influence especially of alcohol or other drug use.

### **Parenting and Academics Achievement**

Academic comes with a certain life style, scheduled along with flow of work that essentially amounts to two intense semester sprints that can sometimes leave a student's gasping for breath and energy. With the challenges of having the energy physically, mentally and emotionally for raising children, for parents that are academics, and it can often feel like after dedicating so much attention to your students, you have little or no time left for the little children at home. As your child grows up, you will find out that you have gaps of time you should have invested when you are waiting. The time you have invested in the waits: Waiting for 10 minutes to pick up a child from school, practice, waiting for 15 minutes at the doctors' office, and waiting or hold on the phone, in time at the store, for water to boil for bathing or for tea, for your children to brush their teeth or clean their rooms or pack their bags, you do so much waiting... being able to identify all the waits, and filling up the essential time impact your parent child relationship positively.

### **Time Management and Parenting**

Being a parent requires some serious time management skills. No matter how busy your schedule may be. It is very important for parents to establish regular routines that help guide and give structure to what they do. The time planning would also assist a busy parent in balancing the workplace with the home or family. Below are some management tips for busy parents.



- i. Parents should create what works for the family. For example, a parent could establish a new school routine for the older children or form a structure for the younger ones. Having routine in place for regular house or family chores will reduce the amount of decision you have to make each day.
- ii. Make your calendar/planner your best friend. Whether you prefer a paper or digital calendar or planner, use this time-saving best friend on a daily basis. Refer to your calendar every morning so you know what you have scheduled for that day and update it.
- iii. Learn the art of saying “NO”. We understand that saying no can be easier said than done but turning down the things that aren’t top priorities will help you as a parent to create the mental space to better handle the things that are most important.
- iv. Share household responsibilities: meal planning, shopping, preparing and cooking are just a few examples of what parents do! Delegating household tasks can be extremely difficult at first. But after you have practice handing over some activities others can handle for you a bit, depending on the ages of your children, you can practice it as a routine.
- v. Pre-schoolers can help pick up their toys, learn how to organise their shoes on the shelf, older children in elementary school, should fold laundry and organise the table, and older children can take responsibility for bigger, tasks such as, dusting, sweeping or vacuuming floors. It will help to take baby steps in establishing these activities, it will pay off in the long run.

### **Conclusion**

Globally, general observations and trends as reported in news shows a great paradigm shift from how parents from generation x (1960’s) and y (1990’s) raised their children and the challenges confronting the twenty first century parents today. Parenting is a duty which should be an intentional and a deliberate practice that Parents activate into action on daily basis to nurture their children for healthy growth and development with focus to basic human needs including physical, psychological, social, relationship and Spiritual needs. This study interrogates issues in parenting and counselling for positive nurturing. It also illustrates parenting challenges and concerns that parents face while raising their children. They include disciplines and behaviour management, communication, academic and social development, health and safety, balancing work and the family, and dealing with complex family dynamics and generational gap

challenges, time management, changing times, demanding needs for survival of the home and family, availability for parent-child-bond, digital culture and the digital age. In order to promote enduring positive responsiveness from parents to children, the paper recommended some counselling blocks that should be adopted by the parents of generation z and generation alpha.

### **Recommendations**

1. Parents should endeavour to build up their capacity on parenting from time to time. They should be consciously lead as role models, mentors and coach. They should also take time to resolve their own internal issues, because, it is when they are of sound health holistically, they can give their best to raise their children.
2. Emotional quotient, family fun, communication and information, relationship and friendship, discipline and correction, commitment, acceptance, appreciation, time and availability, affection, and accountability are a must have component for healthy and successful parenting of children in the 21st century.
3. Parents should inculcate emotional quotient in their children. Every child needs balance and stability emotionally, family fun gives relaxation and coping with stress, communication and information builds social skills, knowledge and human connectedness, discipline and positive correction maintains consistency, commitment develops character, survival and happiness while acceptance gives your child a sense of security, time and your availability gives him/her a sense of importance and self-worth, affection builds a sense of lovability, and accountability gives a sense of responsibility.
4. Parents should practice and understand more of the recent changes in technology and gadgets in this changing and technologically awakened era. Being up-to-date in this ever-dynamic century and knowledgeable of awareness' and happenings in the world of their children should be of paramount importance to parents among other things they focus on.

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