

How Incentives fit in with Parenting Styles: And how constructive spanking relates to parenting styles and outcomes

What are Incentives?

*“There are two, and only two, general ways in which humans can be taught and encouraged to conduct themselves in socially acceptable ways. They are **Incentives** and **Reason**.”¹*

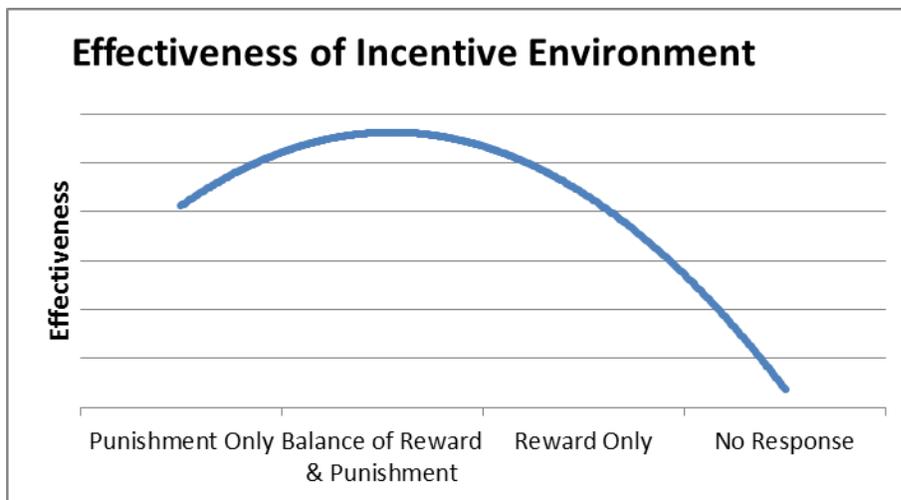
Incentives can be positive to promote certain behaviour (reward) or negative (consequence, punishment, sanction) to deter certain behaviour.

Background on the Effectiveness of Incentives

In 2003, Robert Marzano published research entitled, *“What Works in Schools: Translating Research into Action”*². This work included the results of a real-time study that investigated the effectiveness of the spectrum of incentive environments in actual school settings.

In summary, what he found was that there is value in using incentives (chart below).

Deferring or ignoring behaviours demonstrated the worst outcomes. Where only positive incentives (rewards) were used showed a measureable benefit. Similarly, where only negative incentives were used showed a measureable benefit. However, ***the best outcomes hail from an environment which uses both of rewards and punishments in a balanced way.***³



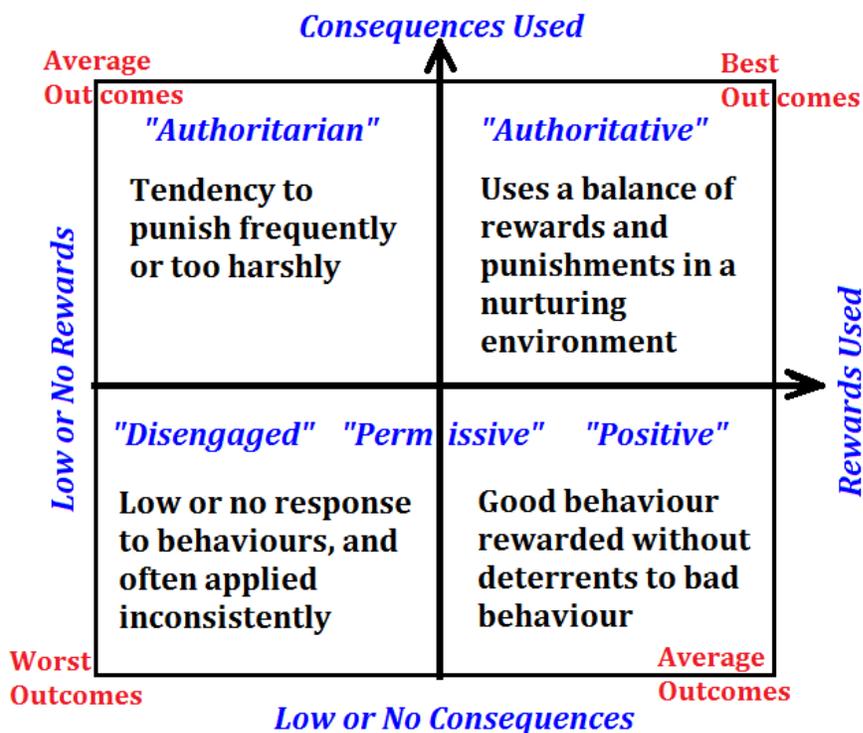
How does this relate to Parenting Styles?

Dr. Diana Baumrind (UC Berkeley) is credited with defining seven parenting styles by relating "Responsiveness" with "Demandingness", "Baumrind's seven Parenting Styles", 1989, and Baumrind, Larzelere & Owens, 2010).⁴

Based on 40 years of clinical studies in parenting styles by Dr. Baumrind, and Dr. Larzelere (et al) Oklahoma State U, we present the Parenting Styles of Authoritarian, Authoritative, and the Disengaged – Permissive – Positive spectrum.

Figure 1: Illustrates Parenting Styles Vs. the Prevalence or Absence of Incentives

Relating Parenting Styles to the use of Positive Incentives (Rewards) and Negative Incentives (Consequences)



In General, here is the synopsis:

"Disengaged and Permissive" styles defer or ignoring behaviours

"Positive" styles use rewards only, no punishments

"Authoritarian" styles use punishments, no rewards

"Authoritative" styles use a balance of rewards and punishments

Figure 2: Illustrates Parenting Styles vs. Overall Outcomes

These are general observations. There will be exceptions to every style because each child is unique, and not all respond to particular environments in the same.

Relating Parenting Styles to the use of Positive Incentives (Rewards) and Negative Incentives (Consequences)

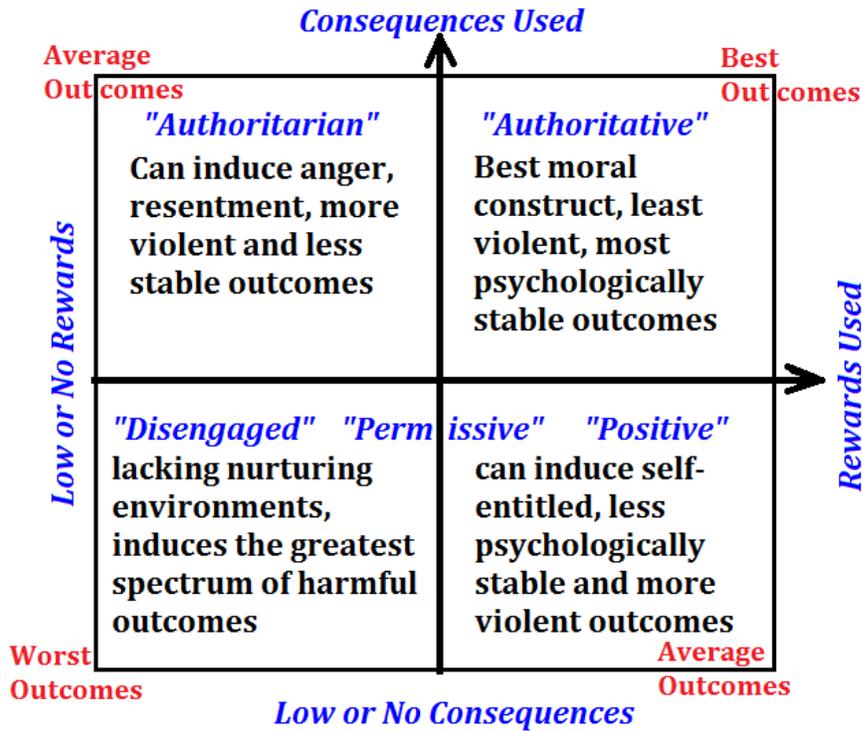
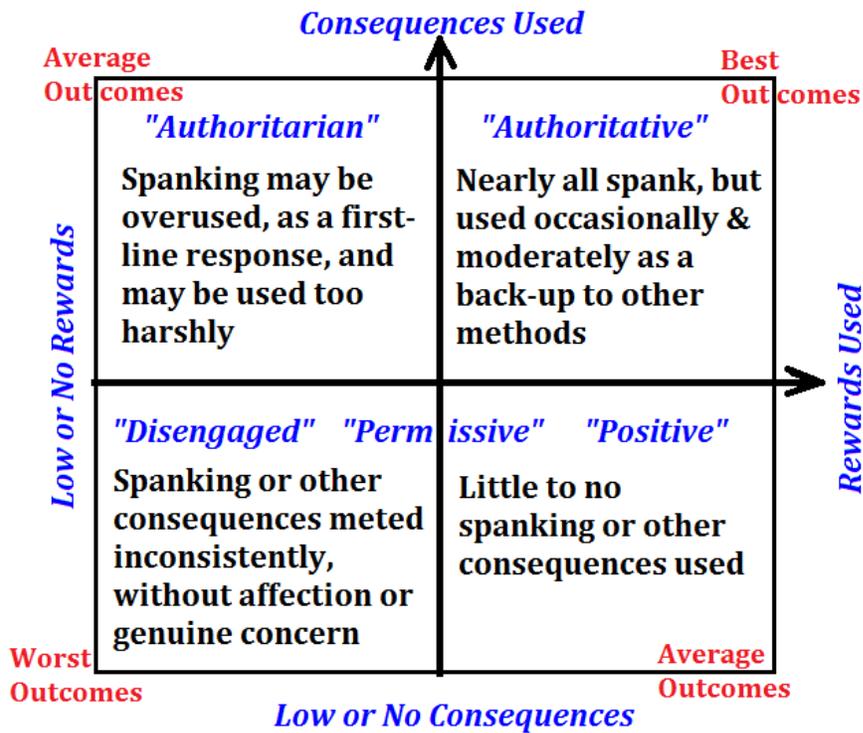


Figure 3: Illustrates Parenting Styles vs. Usage of Spanking as a Consequence

Relating Parenting Styles to the use of Positive Incentives (Rewards) and Negative Incentives (Consequences)



How Constructive Spanking fits in:

Research comparing the effectiveness of consequences in real-time (by studying recidivism or “repeating” the behaviour) shows that moderate spanking is more effective than a spectrum of alternative consequences for preteen children. ¹ The effectiveness is greatest under the age of 8 where children cognitively reside entirely in the physical world (they don’t generally develop abstract thinking until 8 to 11).

Recent polls (Canada, USA, UK, France...) generally indicate that 82% to 87% of preteen children are spanked at some time in their childhood.

The proportions of parents that are truly “Authoritative” (by Dr. Baumrind’s definition) represent only 20% of all parenting styles. However, Authoritative parents all spank.

What differentiates them from other parenting styles is *HOW* the method is used. Authoritative parents use occasional and moderate spanking **as a back-up** to other methods, and do so in a nurturing environment. It is never a first-line or typical response, and is used constructively (non-abusively) with discussion of the behaviour being addressed, consolation and affirmation of love.

There is a lot of deceptive material masquerading as science which denigrates spanking. However, we recognize it for what it is: it conflates harsh, frequent and abusive treatments in dysfunctional environments and does not screen for emotionally and psychologically abusive treatments, all of which necessarily draw false conclusions.

Yet, forty years of clinical research consistently confirms that the best developmental outcomes come from highly nurturing, highly demanding and highly responsive Authoritative styles. We believe the best form of Authoritative Parenting is a style we call "**Progressive-Authoritative**"

This is a style that follows the "PIE" principle; the use of "Preventions, Interventions and Enforcements". All moral construct and behavioral management begins with methods of reason and communication "Preventions". Where undesired behaviours arise, mild interventions, positive and negative are first availed. Only when P & I fail, should formal consequences be used.

To read about PIE, go to
<http://www.keep43.ca/definitions/>
and scroll down to "How does spanking fit into the behaviour management spectrum?"

A Final Thought on Consequences:

Consequences work best when used least. There is a strong deterrent value in simply issuing a warning that if the undesired behaviour doesn't stop, (the chosen consequence) will happen next. This will usually adjust the behaviour without having to apply the consequence. One caveat: Only warn once, and never issue empty threats. It is crucial to follow through on a warning or the deterrent value will be lost and your parental authority undermined.

We hope this has been worthwhile and educational, and Thank You for reading it!

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www.keep43.ca

Notes:

1 Hoff, H "*Corporal Punishment: Is It Effective? An Empirical Study of School Punishment Records*", 2014, Iron Gate Research, ISBN 149759748X, Chapter 1 "*A Perspective on Behaviour Modification*", p.17

2 Marzano, Robert J, "*What Works in Schools: Translating Research into Action*", Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development, Alexandria VA, USA, 2003, pp.90-92

3 1 *ibid*, p.28

4 <http://www.keep43.ca/claims-research/> "2 Parenting Styles"