

PARENTING



Raising Boys and Girls

It is a subject that sparks great debate among parents. And while there usually isn't much variance during the baby stage, the differences really start to become noticeable at about 18 months. Here are some differences as reported on aboutourkids.org, a site developed by the Child Study Center within the NYU Langone Medical Center.

BOYS

HEAD

Risk Takers: The pleasure center of the brain actually lights up more for boys when they take risks.

MOUTH

Late Talkers: Generally speaking, more boys than girls are late talkers and boys use more limited vocabularies.

HEART

Emotional: Young boys, like girls, tend to wear their emotions on their sleeves, never afraid to let their parents know how they feel.

HANDS

Motor Skills: Boys like to use their fine motor skills to squeeze, throw and catch toys.

LEGS

Up and Running: Boys tend to be ahead of the fairer sex in running, jumping and balancing.

GIRLS

HEAD

Thinkers: Girls are more apt to watch and study risky behavior than partake in it.

MOUTH

Verbal Connection: Girls are better at reading signs like tone and expression, making them better communicators early on.

HEART

Emotional: Dramatic displays of emotion – both happy and sad – are a common occurrence from little girls.

HANDS

Motor Skills: Girls tend to improve fine motor skills first, often showing an interest in painting, writing and coloring before boys.

LEGS

Height: Girls grow taller faster during late elementary school, but boys generally catch up and exceed them within a few years.



Keep the Memories

You know the cliché. Life passes by in the blink of an eye. For parents, this statement perfectly epitomizes the growth of their children.

One minute you have a beautiful new baby. Before you know it, he or she is starting school, finding friends and growing into an independent person.

Your camera or video camera can be the greatest tool in capturing your child's youthful spirit as it evolves.

MAKE VIDEOS

An annual video is a great way to capture and share memories. Compile a slideshow with photos and videos from the past year of your child's life, and burn it onto a DVD.

You can even package the DVD by buying blank cases and printing a customized cover. These videos will constantly serve as reminders of just how much your baby has grown.

Share them with friends and family for great holiday presents.

MAINTAIN A WEBSITE

Social media is becoming the popular forum for sharing your child's growth with the world. But what if you want something a little more private?

Building a website can be the perfect solution. Many online companies offer



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affordable, customizable website templates that can have you set up in no time. Be sure to find a hosting site that offers top-notch security features to protect your child's identity.

Many online portfolio sites

require passwords to enter, so you can ultimately decide who gets to visit the photos and videos you post.

SCRAPBOOKING

Of course you can always

ditch the digital and focus on more old-fashioned methods of preserving your child's most memorable moments.

Scrapbooking has become an obsession for many people as craft stores – both

online and brick-and-mortar – have revolutionized the hobby.

Brightly colored paper and unique emblems can adorn each page of your customized scrapbook, giving personality to your projects.

Looking to Get Involved?

Parent Teacher Associations have long provided a forum for fostering positive student learning environments through collaboration.

PTAs are broken down into local, state and national levels and serve as valuable resources to their school communities by providing access to beneficial programs improving overall school processes.

By joining, you can build relationships with those close to your children, whether they are in pre-school, middle school or high school.

If you're staying home with your children with later hopes of re-entering the workforce, getting involved with organizations like your local PTA can make for a positive addition to your resume when you're ready to get back to work.

EARLY CHILDHOOD PTAs

Preschool groups are often looking for community-minded adults to help with programming.

These contributors are concerned with the education and development of children from birth to age five and have fairly flexible schedules.

Pre-school schedules are generally only half-day, so if you have a free morning or afternoon, these PTAs may be your way to become more involved in your child's education.



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PTSAs

PTSAs actually provide youth members with hands-on opportunities to make a difference by working on skills related to leadership, self-esteem and volunteerism.

Adult members also benefit by helping develop program activities and goals while also

staying actively involved with their area's next generation of leaders.

SPECIAL EDUCATION PTAs

Special Education PTAs are designed to help parents advocate for special-needs

children.

They are often focused on key issues and opportunities to advance each child in reaching his or her full potential and can serve as a pillar of support for parents and caregivers.

START A PTA

Your school already most

likely has a PTA, but if not then there are steps you can take to build one.

Local PTAs are tied to the national organization, so there are specific steps to take if you want your group to be official. Contact National PTA at info@pta.org or call 800-307-4PTA to get started.

Ignoring a Public Tantrum

The public tantrum: An unbridled ball of emotional anguish combined with screaming, rolling, pounding and whatever other acts of discontent your child prefers to use.

We have all experienced it. If not, we have witnessed it first-hand.

Public tantrums are hardest to deal with because there is no corner or room you can send them to cool down. There are also people watching, judging and commenting.

You may feel shame, embarrassment or the urge to have a meltdown yourself.

Before you do, remember that you are not alone. Those on-looking parents probably aren't judging you at all. They are probably empathetic toward your situation and just happy that it isn't happening to them.

So keep your emotions in check and follow these steps to temper the tantrum.

SIMPLY LEAVE

Sometimes the best option for controlling a full-blown public tantrum is simply heading back to your car.

When combined with a straightforward explanation of why you are leaving, this tactic can draw a line of what is acceptable and not acceptable in public. If followed through, your child can learn from the experience and may think twice before acting the same way next time.

COOL-DOWN SPOT

Even though you don't have access to your child's room or usual discipline spot, you can usually still find a quiet place to reason with your tantrum-thrower.

Seek out the restroom, dressing room or parking lot and let your child cool down. Explain the consequences of another tantrum and stick to it.

KEEP YOUR CALM

Remember, your child is still trying to learn the rules of life. He or she is likely testing the boundaries or crying out for extra attention and is just unsure of how to do so.

Keep your calm and just know that you are not the first parent to experience the public tantrum. Screaming at your child in public will only bring more attention to the situation.



The Art of Single Parenting

Data from the 2010 census shows that the number of children living in single-parent homes has nearly doubled since 1960.

One-third of American children – 15 million – are being raised without a father. Nearly five million more children live without a mother.

The effect on children without a two-parent structure is often debated by child psychologists and researchers. One thing is for sure: Single parenting is a tough job.

Along with the added responsibilities of daily life, a single parent is charged with disciplining, nurturing and protecting his or her children with little help.

THE CHALLENGES

Single parents who have job responsibilities may find it hard to balance their career and child-rearing duties.

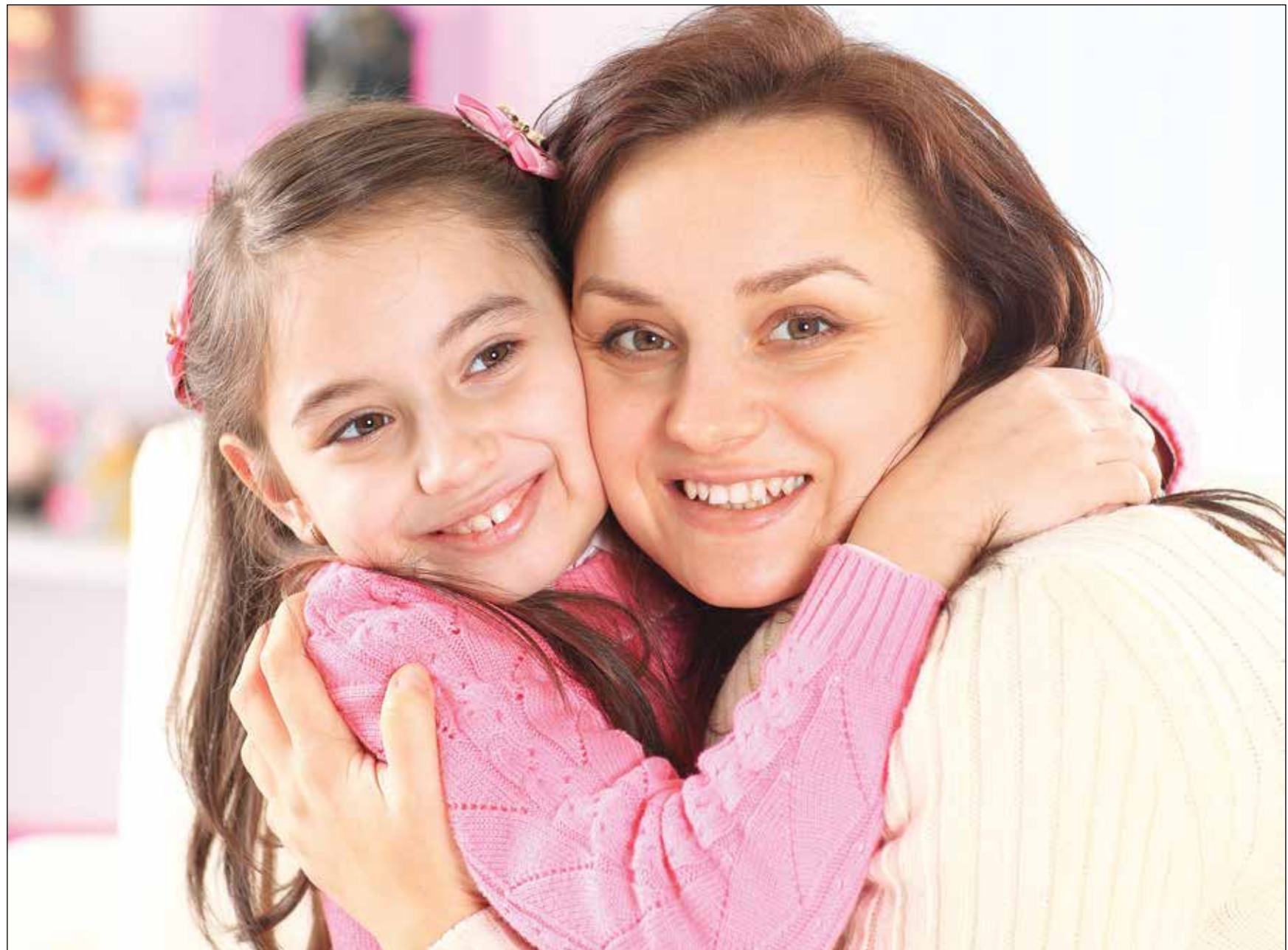
Juggling work and child care can be financially difficult, and can also lead to fatigue, lack of sleep and an overall negative outlook on life. This can lead to a high-stress and an edgy demeanor that can actually trickle down to a child's behavior.

ASK FOR HELP

Before letting it get to this point, reach out to those around you. Parents, friends and even co-workers are generally willing to help if you ask them, even if it is by watching your children for a few hours on a weeknight so you can visit your friends or go shopping.

Many cities have local single-parent groups, as well, and can provide the perfect opportunity to meet people who are in similar situations as you.

Building a network of supporters



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can help you get through the tough times of single parenting.

FAMILY TIME

It is easier said than done, but by showing your children extra attention

you can cut down on the risk of them acting out in negative ways.

Think of activities to stimulate them physically and mentally, and encourage them along the way. Schedule play dates so they can interact with children their age.

If they are older, spend time taking your children to the movies, the museum or even just the backyard for a fun outdoor game.

After all, spending time with your children is the most important thing you can do as a parent.

What's Your Style?

There have been 999 billion parenting books written over the past decade alone. OK, that may be a slight exaggeration, but the act of parenting is a complex one that often leaves fully capable adults desperately seeking external guidance.

The truth is this: There are no easy answers to the many questions that accompany parenting.

Many of the biggest lessons are learned “on the job” and through trial and error. During this process, you will develop your own parenting style that will be driven by your expectations, temperament and communication skills.

Child development researchers have pinned down three styles of parenting and how they affect children. What's your style?

AUTHORITARIAN

This group of parents can be described as extremely strict and highly controlling of their child's behavior. There is not a lot of give-and-take exercised within this approach, as children are expected to remain obedient in all settings and situations.

Researchers have found that children raised by authoritarian parents are slow to develop their own sense of self and expression. They are generally well-behaved and reliant on the voice of authority to drive their life decisions.

AUTHORITATIVE

Described as a more moderate approach to parenting, authoritative adults still expect a lot out of their children, but are more willing to compromise on some issues.

They set limits but rely on natural consequences for children to learn from making their own mistakes. Authoritative parents foster more collaboration with their child, encouraging them to discuss their points of view and how they are feeling about certain situations.

Children raised by this style of parents have been found to be independent and respectful of others.

PERMISSIVE

Also labeled indulgent, this set of parents treat their children like peers. They are warm and accepting of their child's feelings and needs and exert little or no control over their behavior.

They generally allow children to set their own limits, schedules, bedtimes and eating habits. They are submissive in nature, especially compared to authoritarian and authoritative parents, and depend more on their children to make and follow rules.



For Young Parents

Equal parts exciting and scary, the act of raising a child is an emotion-filled journey for new parents.

And it is one that comes with great changes to all aspects of their lives. From financial to physical, adding a child to the family is a major adjustment.

THE COST

Parents who welcomed a baby in 2012 will spend an average of \$217,000 to raise him or her. These latest statistics reported by the United States Department of Agriculture don't even include the cost of college, which can quickly rack up tens of thousands per year in tuition costs.

The price tag on raising a child has been on a steady incline – a 24 percent increase since 1960, according to the USDA. Lofty numbers, indeed.

But through proper planning and reachable goals, taking on the increasing costs can be an achievable challenge for many new parents.

THE LACK OF SLEEP

A study by the National Sleep Research Project found that a new baby typically results in 400 to 750 hours of lost sleep for parents in the first year.

Many newborns come home from the hospital wak-



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ing only once or twice during the night to eat. Some wake up more frequently while others refuse to sleep at all while the sun is down.

New parents may find themselves sleeping in shifts during this difficult time of child-rearing, or reaching out

to loved ones to help with their restless baby.

THE EMOTIONS

New parents will find that with the birth of their child comes the urge to protect him or her. This encompasses

everything from financial security to physical safety.

The emotional connection with a new baby is a special experience for new parents, and with it can come feelings of overwhelming happiness, fright and even depression.

Many new moms can suffer

from post-partum depression while others will have no major emotional issues.

Whatever camp you fall into, it is important to speak with your doctor, therapist or loved ones to help you through the emotional world of new parenting.