

PARENTING 101



Parents often complain of their children's lack of respect and compassion without understanding the role they play in shaping their child's character. What makes a good parent? Let's find out.

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PHOTOS: PRABIR DAS

Salma and Anisul Islam welcomed their precious little son four years ago. The moment these two became first time parents to a baby boy, Arka Islam, they vowed that they would leave no stone unturned to bring up a 'good' child.

"We were overwhelmed by the well-intended but unsolicited advice of all our family members; a list of

'expert' opinions about what to do and what not to do from other parents and comments on how they did it," remembers Salma with a smile on her face.

Anisul recalls Salma looking for an 'ideal' baby care book, browsing over the many available choices for hours.

"During these past few years, we were careful

about not spanking him, and not allowing him to spend too many hours in front of the television. We made sure that we went on yearly vacations with him."

But they unknowingly made one mistake. They heeded to every single demand of their only son.

Arka's toy box is now a stockpile of every kind of the latest available toy in the market. "Even then it was fine, until he was captivated by all kinds of videogames - on his consoles, on our phones and laptops."

His parents thought this was natural since every other kid in the neighbourhood had the same kind of console games and they were not willing to become overbearing and intimidating parents. Initially they took pride in how smartly he beat the evil minions of the game. But it started getting worse when they discovered that he was addicted to these little boxes.

"Spending a certain amount of quality time, 2-3 hours a day for example, could do wonders for your relationship with your child. But this doesn't mean that you need to keep him entertained during that time."
— Rumela Ali

When they would attend a family function, Arka would get bored after a while and would be found in a corner playing on someone's smartphone. When they had guests over to their place, instead of greeting them, he would be busy playing with a console, his eyes fixed on the screen, hardly realizing that they were talking to him.

"He is just 4 years old and we cannot blame him, as we are the ones who have bought him these games. At times I feel frustrated wondering whether I am a good parent. How do you know how much is too much? Do self-help books and tips like '10 Easy Steps for Becoming a Good Parent' actually work?" asks the mother in frustration.

From the innumerable number of books on parenting we know that there are no set rules to good parenting. Parents from the last generation, our grandparents, our great grandparents didn't really follow any strict rulebook. While on the one hand, kids nowadays are sometimes better informed than their parents, thanks to all the available resources, on the other, these very same resources can have a detrimental effect on the ethical values in children.



"Children experiencing physical punishment may become aggressive and demonstrate anti-social behaviour in adult lives."
— Laila Khondkar

"We have many parents coming to us with similar problems" says Rumela Ali, consultant, Department of Clinical Psychology, Dhaka Community Medical College and Hospital. "Either their child is spending too much time in front of a digital media or they are too insolent. Some parents even think that their children lack in sensitivity and empathy. The first thing that we ask these parents is whether they are spending enough time with their kids."

According to Rumela, it's very important to know how much time is enough time.