

PARENTING STYLES

WEEK 1

Parenting style: Gentle

Parents: Larissa (33) and Marcus (34)

Children: Levi (8) Seanna (6) Amos (4) Caleb (2)

Hometown: Adelaide, SA



Larissa, a stay-at-home mother, and Marcus, the owner of a lawn mowing business, embrace gentle parenting for their high-energy children.

Guided by their Christian faith, Larissa and Marcus approach parenting with calmness and kindness, recognising the need for patience in raising four young children under nine. Despite the inevitable noise that fills their home, they firmly believe in the effectiveness of their parenting style, pointing to their children's kind and affectionate nature as a testament to its success.

Gentle parenting prioritises maintaining a sense of calm while helping children understand and regulate their emotions. Larissa and Marcus avoid exerting control over their children, instead allowing them the freedom to express themselves and experience their emotions.

Their parenting style, while still providing guidance, respects the children's individual experiences. Rather than always instructing their kids on what to do, they engage in dialogue by questioning their behaviour. The goal is to involve the children in the decision-making process, fostering intrinsic motivation. This approach extends to minimising the use of rewards, punishments, and excessive praise.

Larissa and Marcus aim to keep their voices calm and gentle, preferring to get close to their children and communicate effectively to prevent emotions from escalating.



Parenting style: Lighthouse

Parents: Sammy (Samantha) (41) and Jason (41)

Children: Pepper (10) Jude (6) Rory (3) Lottie (2)

Hometown: Gold Coast, QLD



Sammy, a psychology student, and Jason, a business analyst, made a life-changing decision during the midst of the COVID pandemic by opting for a beachside sea change.

Sammy and Jason embody the concept of lighthouse parenting. Like a lighthouse, they maintain a watchful eye from a distance, granting their children significant independence while ensuring their safety. The older two children are allowed to swim at the beach unaccompanied, with the parents observing from the balcony. Pepper rides her bike to school, and the older kids have the freedom to visit the corner store by themselves.

When their children require guidance, Sammy and Jason offer choices, emphasising the idea that decisions have consequences.

Their family motto, "Today I will be smart, kind, brave, and strong", reflects their values and sets a positive tone for each day. The siblings are encouraged to support one another, fostering a strong bond within the family.

Despite promoting independence and self-direction, the children are naturally athletic and driven, displaying a competitive spirit.



Parenting style: Outback

Parents: Tency (32) and David (39)

Children: Vance (10) Wyatt (9) Clancy (7)

Hometown: Mareeba, QLD



Tency, a stunt-double horse rider and business development coordinator, and David, a FIFO worker, embrace a rugged lifestyle as they raise their three adventurous boys on a farm in tropical North Queensland. Their parenting approach allows the boys to engage in activities like shooting guns, riding horses and dirt bikes, and exploring unsupervised, where they learn important lessons through firsthand experiences.

Outback parenting emphasises respect, good manners, and strict consequences for misbehaviour. From a young age, the boys take on responsibilities and face the consequences of their actions, while also enjoying a significant amount of fun and freedom. As soon as they can reach the pedals, the children are allowed to drive cars, fostering independence and practical life skills.

Tency and David prioritise their children's development of essential life skills. They encourage hands-on learning, such as fixing motorbikes, feeding livestock and fishing at the river.

In certain situations, where a child's safety is at stake and they refuse to listen, Tency and David resort to physical discipline, understanding that there are life-or-death moments that require immediate attention.



Parenting style: Honest

Parent: Kat (49)

Children: Billy (female, 10) Jesse (male, 10) fraternal twins

Hometown: Adelaide, SA



Kat is an educator and single mother who proudly identifies as a Gen X'er. Her parenting style can be described as “no BS – just raw, honest, and straight to the point”. Kat rebels against the traditional Boomer parenting approach, where many important topics were considered taboo and children were expected to be seen but not heard. Kat also refuses to be the kind of parent that treats their children like a special snowflake.

Kat embraces difficult subjects, encouraging open dialogue with her children. With her refreshing approach, everything is up for discussion, and Kat remains brutally honest and open with her twins.

Day to day, Kat expresses her love for her kids randomly, sharing up to 20 heartfelt “I love yous” and showering them with affectionate cuddles. At the same time, her children are well-attuned to her discerning side glance, balancing playfulness with a clear understanding of boundaries.

Through her popular @flyyoufool8 TikTok account and her #parentingdonerightish posts, Kat has built a significant following. She celebrates both the triumphs and challenges of parenting, creating relatable content that resonates with followers.



WEEK 2

Parenting style: Spiritual

Parents: Kajal (37) and Deepak (45)

Children: Krishna (13) Mridula (mri-DUEL-ah) (7)

Hometown: Sydney, NSW



Deepak, working in change and communications in IT, and Kajal, an early childhood education professional, live with their two children in a multi-generational home of six, including Deepak's parents. Their lives revolve around a spiritual lifestyle rooted in Hindu traditions, which they have passed on to their children, Krishna and Mridula.

Despite their busy schedules, they prioritise family time. Each evening the Vinod family embark on a spiritual journey, commencing with moments of meditation, chanting, and prayer. They also read spiritual texts and play music. They cherish their cultural tradition of strong inter-generational bonds, so the children are allowed to share the bed with their parents and grandparents.

Embracing the principle of Ahimsa, non-violence, they extend kindness and respect to all living beings and follow a vegetarian diet.

Deepak and Kajal believe that spiritual parenting is not limited to those following a specific religion; it is accessible to anyone. It involves having faith, whether in a supreme creator or oneself, and prioritising kindness, gratitude, generosity, and service to others.

The Vinod family believe their children may possess spiritual wisdom beyond their years, having experienced multiple lifetimes through reincarnation. As spiritual parents, Deepak and Kajal avoid any form of shaming or judgement and address negative behaviour through communication.



Parenting style: Stage
Parents: Sarah (47) and Shane (51)
Children: Alaska (17) Xion (13)
River (8)
Hometown: Sydney, NSW



Sarah and Shane reside on a spacious property in the NSW Hawkesbury region. They embrace the notion that “creative people need space”, opting for a neighbour-free environment where they can freely express their “loud and crazy” personalities.

Sarah runs a theatre company and teaches singing, dancing, and acting, while Shane is a drama teacher. Their three children, Alaska, Xion, and River, are accomplished performers in their own right.

Alaska, since the age of five, has taken on lead roles in numerous musicals. Xion, at the age of ten, achieved a standout stage performance in Charlie and The Chocolate Factory. River wrapped up a stint on Home and Away and boasts a strong Instagram following of 19,000.

Sarah and Shane describe their parenting style as free, giving their children freedom for self-expression. While homework and screen time are not enforced, Sarah upholds strict standards when it comes to learning lines and performing. They empower their children through stage parenting, fostering unwavering confidence and disallowing tantrums.

Beyond their own family, Sarah and Shane have fostered around 40 children over the past two decades.



Parenting style: Team

Parents: Mark (46) and Leanne (42)

Children: Matthew (16) Billy (11) Ella (8) Brooklyn (6) Bobbi (4) Baylee (3)

Hometown: Sydney, NSW



One in, all in! Leanne, a teacher's aide, and Mark, an Aboriginal and social inclusions manager in construction, run their family of six children like a tight-knit footy team. (Mark is the stepfather to Leanne's eldest son, Matthew.) With a deep-rooted love for rugby league, they instil the value of teamwork and unwavering support in their children.

Their parenting philosophy centres on being coaches, utilising repetition, respect, discipline and teamwork as the foundation of their style. They foster a hierarchy among their children, with the eldest assuming the role of captain at any given time. Sports play a significant role in the family's routine, keeping the kids active and engaged throughout the week.

They prioritise having a family meal together every evening, where they discuss the highs and lows of their day and areas they can improve. Leanne and Mark believe in teaching their children the importance of contributing to the household by assigning age-appropriate chores from a young age. This instils a sense of responsibility and teamwork.

By embracing their role as coaches and promoting communication during meals, Leanne and Mark create an environment that strengthens their family bonds.

Their approach is "You must always support the team and the team will support you. Never let the team down. Leave no team member behind".



Parenting style: Influencer

Parents: Kat (36) and Jonathan (40)

Children: Latisha (18) Deja (11)

Hometown: Gold Coast, QLD



Kat, a full-time social media influencer, and Jonathan, a mortgage broker, have been together for 16 years, after Kat became a young mother to an abusive ex-boyfriend with Latisha at the age of 17. They prioritise their social media presence and content creation while raising their daughters.

With an anti-strict parenting approach, Kat and Jonathan have few rules, particularly when it comes to screen time. Their focus is on maintaining appropriate behaviour in public, fostering respect, and emphasising communication to be positive influences on their children. Both Jonathan and Kat experienced challenges growing up in strict households due to their South African and Filipino backgrounds, which has shaped their parenting style.

Drawing from their own past experiences, they share their wild stories with their kids to help them make better choices in life. While they encourage their children to have social media accounts and develop marketing strategies, Kat closely monitors their direct messages (DMs). They view social media as a valuable tool and believe in maximising their opportunities rather than imposing bans.

Both daughters have become prominent figures on social media platforms. Latisha has even started monetising her account, while Deja, who has been active on social media since the age of nine, advises Kat on the latest trends and hashtags and sells bracelets on Instagram.



WEEK 3

Parenting style: Slow

Parents: Philippa (40) and Chris (39)
Children: Peyton (9) Briar (7) Avery (4)
Hometown: Cairns, QLD



Philippa, a women's health and fitness coach, and Chris, a corporate well-being specialist, prioritise family bonds through the concept of slow parenting. They value deep connections and cherish experiencing life and nature with their children, embracing a slowed-down lifestyle.

They avoid having an overloaded schedule, allowing the children to be children and encouraging creativity when bored.

Their home doesn't have a TV, and they spend ample time in nature to foster these qualities. Camping and nature play a significant role in their family dynamic, as the children find calmness, joy, and confidence in these natural environments.

To create a more balanced family life, extracurricular activities are minimised, and Briar is home-schooled.

Their parenting philosophy finds its roots in attachment parenting, emphasising a sense of security and creating a space for their children to express their emotions.

Philippa works from home and Chris works four days a week - dedicating one day a week, known as Daddy Day, to spend quality time with the kids.



Parenting style: American
Parents: Kim (51) and Nick (52)
Child: Pia (10)
Hometown: Brisbane, QLD



Kim, a part-time teacher and empowerment educator for girls, and Nick, the vice-president of an international recycling company, embrace the American parenting style, emphasising confidence and reaching for success.

Kim and Nick met and married in Hong Kong, where their daughter Pia was born. Pia started school at the age of two and has since excelled in various activities. She has a busy schedule by her own choice, engaging in public speaking, fluent Chinese, rhythmic gymnastics, cross-country running, and soccer.

Having made Australia their home for the past five years, Kim and Nick have high aspirations for Pia, constantly raising the bar of achievement. They strive for her to be the best version of herself and hope she will earn a college scholarship like her father, who attended college in the USA on a tennis scholarship.

American parenting instils in Pia a strong sense of self-confidence through constant praise and encouragement. Kim and Nick believe that this parenting style fosters well-mannered, confident and independent children. They view confidence-building as a key aspect of American parenting, allowing Pia to believe she can achieve anything she sets her mind to.



Parenting style: Road School

Parents: Amy (39) and John (39)

Children: Jimmy (12) Gus (10) Skipper (6)

Hometown: Echuca, VIC; filmed on location in Perth, WA



Before hitting the road on the adventure of a lifetime, Amy worked in theatre at the local hospital, while John was an operations manager in his brother's family business. Originally from Echuca, Victoria, the family felt time slipping away so packed up everything they owned, leaving behind society's expectations, to call their caravan home for 18 months.

To ensure the children's education continued while travelling, Amy and John adopted a road schooling approach, tailoring their teaching methods to the kids' interests. Each morning they dedicated 1-2 hours to "schoolwork", but they also wanted them to experience important life lessons and skills. Whether it was social skills from sharing campgrounds, money management, fishing or driving, the kids were encouraged to go on all different adventures and be up to all kinds of challenges.

Amy and John's decision to break away from the conventional path of life allowed them to reconnect with their family on a deeper level.



Parenting style:

Unstructured

Parents: Melody (34) and Michael (37)

Children: Miller (8) Magnolia (4) Maisy (1)

Hometown: Brisbane, QLD



Melody and Michael, professional musicians specialising in Americana music, lead a bohemian lifestyle. As a family, they cherish the joy of playing music together.

Melody and Michael adopt a child-led approach that prioritises mental well-being over conventional measures of success. They actively involve their children in decision-making processes, allowing them to have a say in matters such as bedtimes, routines, and food choices. Rules are flexible and negotiable, granting the children autonomy in deciding what they eat, watch, and how they spend their time. The family opt to sleep together in the same bed, and screen-time restrictions do not exist.

During their music tours, the family bond over a shared love for performing. On occasion, the children join Melody on stage, showcasing their confidence in front of large audiences. Miller, in particular, has performed in front of thousands of people.

Melody and Michael cultivate an unstructured and creative environment that enhances the connectivity with their children. While this may sometimes result in chaotic moments, love underpins everything they do. The family actively supports Miller's identification as non-binary and use of they/them pronouns.

