

Inappropriate Parental Expectations



If

Then



The Construct

- A parenting practice that is very common among reported cases of child abuse and neglect is the inappropriate expectations parents have for their children. Beginning very early in the infant's life, abusive parents tend to inaccurately perceive the skills and abilities of their children.



The Construct

- Parents simply don't know the needs and capabilities of children at various stages of growth and development. Ignorant of this knowledge, expectations are made that often exceed the skills and abilities of the child.



The Construct

- Many parents who abuse their children generally lack a positive view of themselves and consequently of their children. Inadequate perceptions of self as an adult generally stem from early childhood experiences of failure, ridicule, and disappointment.



The Construct

- Abusive parents generally lack the empathy that is required to determine what is an appropriate expectation for children at different stages of development. Lacking empathy, (described in more detail in the following construct), is a major contributor to the inappropriate demands parents make of their children.



The Construct

- The effects of inappropriate parental expectations upon children are debilitating. Many children perceive themselves as being worthless, as failures, and as unacceptable and disappointing to adults.



Why Expectations Matter

- Expectations shape a child's **self-worth**—positive or negative.
- Appropriate expectations foster **confidence, mastery, and effort.**
- Inappropriate expectations can lead to **frustration, failure, and low self-esteem.**



How Inappropriate Expectations Contribute to Abuse or Neglect

- Increased Parental Frustration and Harsh Discipline
- Neglecting Emotional and Developmental Needs
- Disengagement Due to Perceived Failure
- Higher Likelihood of Verbal & Emotional Abuse- Criticism, Name Calling, Humiliation
- Reinforcing Intergenerational Cycles of Abuse



Growth and Development as a Spiral

- Children develop skills in an **upward spiral**—building upon previous knowledge and abilities.
- As children **grow**, they naturally become more independent.



The Importance of Autonomy

- **Autonomy = Children learning to do things for themselves.**
- Commonly misunderstood as the "Terrible Twos," but autonomy is **critical for healthy development.**
- **Reframe:** Instead of "Terrible Twos," think "**Terrific Twos**"—growth should be encouraged!



Understanding Ages & Stages

- Appropriate expectations come from **knowing developmental milestones.**
- **Nature vs. Nurture:** Growth is influenced by genetics & environment.
- Development happens in **stages**—every child progresses differently.



Four Types of Developmental Stages

- **Physical Development** – Motor skills, coordination, physical growth.
- **Language Development** – Speech, vocabulary, communication.
- **Intellectual Development** – Thinking, problem-solving, learning.
- **Social & Emotional Development** – Relationships, self-esteem, regulation.



Key Takeaways

- Expectations **program children for success or struggle.**
- Positive, **realistic** expectations help children build self-esteem and confidence.
- Parents should learn **developmental stages** to ensure appropriate expectations.
- Encouraging **autonomy** fosters growth, confidence, and resilience.



Appropriate expectations

- Nurturing Skills Curriculum



Appropriate expectations

- Nurturing Parenting Skills SV Curriculum
- Lesson 6.2 Expectations and Development of Children



Appropriate expectations

- -What objections to this construct do you think the families you are working with will have?
- - Are there current families you are working with that need work in this area?
- -Facilitator techniques that can be used to overcome objections