

# Parenting Series (Vol.1)

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# Evolution of Parenting

Parenting is one of the most important jobs, and yet there are no formal training platforms to prepare soon-to-be parents on how to play their role effectively. When I became a father, my career as a social worker forced me to reflect on how impactful the early years of a child are, and what that meant to me as a parent with four young children. Our parents became our first source of information as we watched them carry out their role. They influenced our view on how parenting should be.

Most parents have good intentions with their Children. However, a common question that parents will often ask is, “What if our parenting example was less than ideal?” The good news is that there are other Platforms where we can pick up good parenting skills and emulate them. All it takes is the commitment and desire to being the best parent we can be for our child. Even if we view that we are the best parent there is, it is necessary to constantly update our skills based on the current situation.

Parenting is indirectly affected by the modernisation of our society. The fast-paced technological society has brought in new information to modern parents on how they should play their role. While information can be good, it can be an overwhelming experience as parents are now bombarded with decisions such as breastfeeding vs bottle-feeding, crib-sleeping vs co-sleeping, and issues surrounding immunisation.

## Parenting at a Macro-level



In addition, dual-income households are becoming a norm in our society. The role of an income earner is no longer tied to the father. We are seeing more grandparents, domestic helpers, and childcare centres taking over the role of a parent.

In this modern society, there is a greater emphasis on productivity and activity. This leads to the emergence of two types of parenting styles; the “helicopter parent”, who spends a lot of time hovering and staying close to their children, ready to direct, help or protect them, and the “snowplower parent”, who steps ahead of their children, smoothing their path by removing any possible obstacles.





## Parenting at a Macro-level

Indeed, it is a challenging time being a parent, thus, how can we overcome this challenge? For a start, we can slow down to move fast. Slowing down a process helps to bring clarity to individuals and enables decisions to be made effectively. This deliberate time warp helps to break any information into bite-size knowledge allowing easy digestion before reacting.

Another skill for modern parents to consider is to create a safe and loving space a child can always return to when life gets tough and chaotic. This can be done by being deliberate about cultivating an effective relationship with your child through being physically present. Validating and empathising with them, being present to talk about anything even if it makes you uncomfortable, telling them that it is okay for them to fail, and having their backs are some ways to build an effective parent-child relationship.

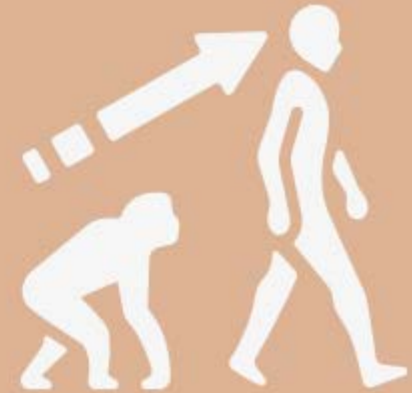
# Parenting at a Micro-level

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As I was watching a YouTube video posted by Casey Neistat titled “I don’t know what I’m doing anymore,” I was reminded by the eventual evolution of my role as a parent to my children. I see that my role as a parent to my 8-year-old daughter differs from my role as a parent to my 1-year-old son. And I foresee that the role will also keep evolving as they progress in their life.

The evolution is due to the different needs that children have at different stages of their lives. This idea has been extensively presented by the renowned psychologist, Erik Erikson in his Psychosocial developmental theory. The evolution in parenthood was also highlighted by Ellen Galinsky, a researcher in 1981, where she proposed six parental stages in relation to the child’s developmental stages. She proposed that each stage has different challenges which both the parent and child(ren) must tackle before moving on to the next phase.



So, the question is “How do I understand where my child is at?” or “Which parenting style should I adopt for my child?” One indicator that parents can use is the child’s age. However, we need to be mindful that some children do mature more quickly than others. As such, it also helps to look out for the change in your child’s responses such as, “I want to be first!” to “It doesn’t matter anymore, mummy says she still loves me”. This idea of looking out for your child’s responses further reinforces the idea that children do influence how parents play their role.