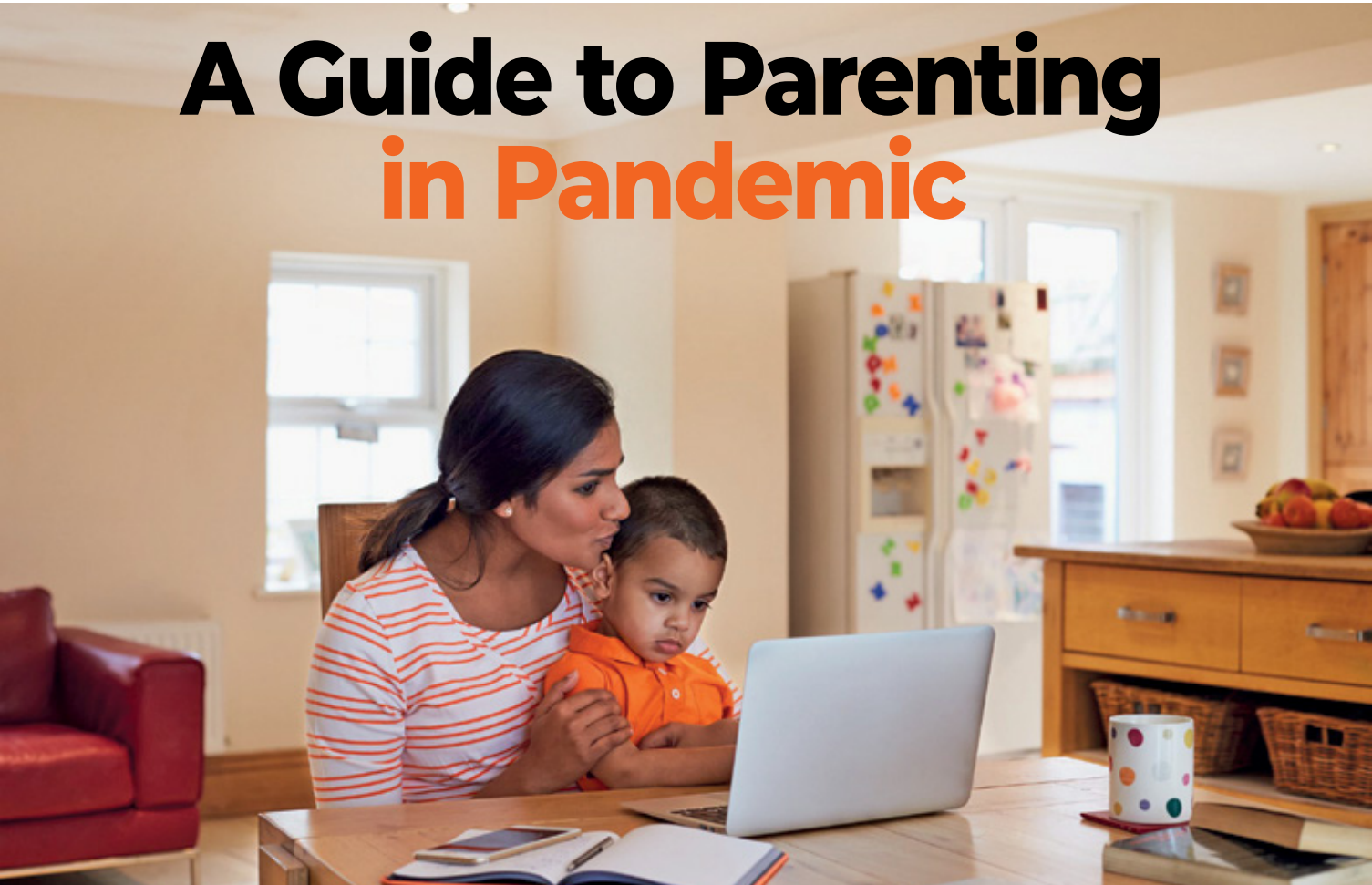




A Guide to Parenting in Pandemic



Parents are now juggling between responsibilities of parenting, teaching and evaluating their children full time apart from attending to their jobs and household chores



The ongoing pandemic has been a major agent of drastic changes in the modern world. When we think of our students, this could be the only one they have experienced and has disrupted their lives beyond imagination. Who, in the wildest of dreams would have thought that schooling would happen with them sitting in their homes? With a paradigm shift in the modality of transactions in the field of education, the role of the stakeholders has transformed too. Due to the fact that the students are spending their entire time at home, the parents have turned into a hybrid version of themselves doing multiple roles of a parent, an educator, an evaluator,

and a full-time observer besides taking care of their own work responsibilities. PerriKlass, M.D. and Lisa Damour in their article, 'How to be a modern parent' sums it beautifully, "Throughout the circus act of parenting, it's important to focus on balancing priorities, juggling responsibilities, and quickly flipping between the needs of your children, other family members and yourself."

First Teachers

For many, parenting is not only the most challenging of tasks but also one of the most unacknowledged one too. It demands one to be diverse and unique in



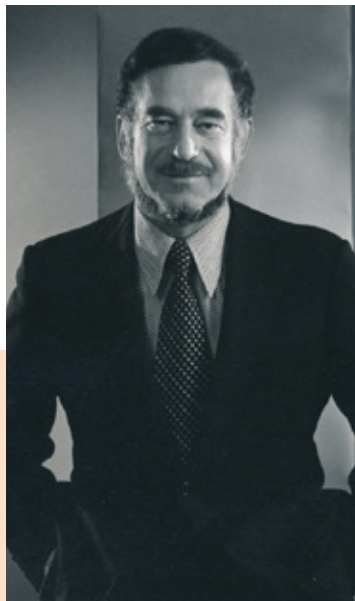
**Anupama
Ramachandra**

Principal, Delhi Public
School, Electronic City,
Bangalore



styles because no two children are alike, even in the same family. The life of every child begins at home and it's a very common adage that 'parents are the first teachers'. Everything the child comes to school with (information, knowledge, habits, behaviours, and expectations) at the entry-level class is what one has imbibed from home. How many parents are aware that nearly 80%-90% of the brain development of a human has taken place by the ages of 6 years? This roughly means that by the time the child reaches grade I, the process of brain development is almost complete and all the functions of the brain are active. The school can only build on what has been laid as a foundation for students. Studies have shown that babies and young children who grow up in safe, stable, and nurturing environments, with lots of positive interaction with parents and caring adults, will go on to be healthier and more successful

in school and in life. (<https://azpbs.org/2017/11/early-childhood-brain-development-lifelong-impact/>) This is a clear indication that parents have a critical role in defining the personality of a child who eventually will turn out to be an adult. In such a scenario, how can parents enable their children to become intrinsically motivated and enable the home activities to teach new skills and capabilities?



'Treat a child like he already is the person he is capable of becoming'

— Haim Ginott

Positive Parenting

First things first, parenting is a full-time job. Being firm and consistency are the hallmarks of positive parenting. The lovely, innocent toddlers as young as a year old can turn out to be a controlling child if, the parent exhibits the trait of caving into tantrums. With due respect to the material provided on this topic on the internet, a word of caution- all information on raising children are mere suggestions! There is no guarantee that your child will fit the bill as defined by the gurus of the virtual world. So, begin to formulate your parenting style based on the kind of person your child is and what works in your home. Educators will endorse that children can be encouraged to better with love and respect rather than anger and demeaning the child.

Assertive Approach

Patience on the part of the parent will send out clear signals of who is the adult, in control of the situation. Once we recognise the interests and potential of the child, as a parent, one has to focus on the strengths to develop the self-esteem of the young one. Our responsibility is to build on what the child is good at rather than keep pointing at what

he/she is not. Research shows that children thrive in families that are assertive with guidelines as compared to laissez-faire approach. But, let us also recognise that there is a thin line between being authoritative and an authoritarian. Being in control of everything and not allowing the child to learn from one's own mistakes are characteristics of a 'Helicopter parent'. Like in everything, moderation in disciplining is the most effective in creating a nurturing environment of joyful learning.

Intrinsic Motivation

Nurturing intrinsic motivation is the culmination of a beautiful journey of raising a child with a fine balance of acknowledging the achievements and assuring support if he/she fails. Unconditional love and acceptance have to be reiterated on a daily basis so that the child does not have the fear of trying and subsequently, being judged in case of failure. This can begin with entrusting the child with simple household chores (even if not done well) and thanking for helping. Organising skills, time-management, introduction to money, people skills, communication, collaboration, creativity are all intimidating, fancy jargon that can be achieved by parents, with the involvement of the child (young adult) in most decisions of the family. As Haim Ginott puts it, 'Treat a child like he already is the person he is capable of becoming'.

We tend to be on a bandwagon that propagates the myth that our children should not be made to do the hard work that we went through (even if it has positive outcomes)! For a child to be intrinsically enthused to love, care, share and forgive, one should have been at the receiving end of these very values during the majority of their childhood life. Are we, as parents ensuring that our kid has not been robbed of these simple, pure joys that result in a healthy attitude towards learning and life as a whole? James Comer rightly mentions, 'No

significant learning occurs without a significant relationship.'

- Ensure that child does a task because of the logical reasons provided, value she recognises of the task to her growth rather than out of fear of displeasing the parent.
- Communicate to the child that she/he is free to refuse a chore with valid reasons and not persist on 'obey me' attitude.

of the family are allowed to do.

- Provide breaks in between online studies while you catch a breather too. This way, they respect their space and others' too.
- Interact with parents and teachers to understand what's going on in online classes.
- Ration digital interactions judiciously between school work and leisure activities. Everyday



- Make it clear that nothing can be claimed as a sense of entitlement and everything has to be earned by sharing responsibilities and putting in efforts for performance. Whether the child succeeds or fails should not matter if sincere attempts were made.
- Keep rules equivalent for all member of the family when rewards and punishments are discussed. Children get confused with discrepancy in this matter and tend to become rebellious about not being allowed to do something that other members

should have family time of doing something together like cook/garden/play a game/read a book/ call relatives etc.

In nutshell, there is no right or wrong way to raise your child. Give it your best and you will see indications of success when you see a happy, emotionally balanced, responsible, caring child. In the pursuit of raising perfect children, let us not forget to enjoy the most endearing experiences of parenting. 'The best and most beautiful things in the world cannot be seen or even touched - they must be felt with the heart.' Helen Keller 