

PEDAGOGICAL INPUT

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61_Can there be two parenting styles?

Parents are often unsure how it affects children when father and mother have different opinions on parenting issues.

It was long ago recommended by experts that parents should form a 'united front' and always have one opinion towards the children. Today we know that a unified opinion is not decisive for the children's well-being. However, it is important for parents to exercise leadership in the family.

People are different.

Father and mother are different personalities. They each have a different story behind them and will always be different. That's okay. Children cope very well with the differences between their parents. It doesn't make them feel insecure or confused. Parents should agree on one thing though: that it is okay to be different. Danish family therapist Jesper Juul is convinced of this.

What should parents do when they disagree about parenting issues?

If the individual differences between the parents lead to arguments and conflicts, this is a good opportunity to think about your own childhood and share this with your partner. This avoids discussions about the right way to be a father or mother. Instead, you can find out what kind of parent you are, what's important to you.

Discussions about parenting should not be about who ultimately wins, but what conditions are best for the children. Children benefit from having mothers and fathers who are comfortable parents, who value each other—and their differences.

You should ask yourself the following questions: What is important to me - and why? What is important to my partner - and why? When talking to your partner, is it really about parenting and our children, or is it actually about something else? Are we in a power struggle right now? Is the problem with the child or with us parents? We parents can agree to do some things differently, advises Juul.

Raising children is a mutual learning process.

It is important that parents take children's reactions seriously and are therefore curious about what is good for children and what is not. When children become aggressive, withdrawn, frustrated, sad, or anxious, it is time to change their behaviour until they regain their natural joy and enthusiasm. Children's behaviour shows us what is good for them and what is not.

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