

Will we parent how we were parented?

For most of us, our parenting skills were learned through our own early life experiences with our parents and caregivers. As they role modelled, we paid attention and learned specific ways of doing things and ways that an adult interacted with a child.

For some of us these ways were unhealthy, for others they were appropriate and encouraging. Depending on the level of function or dysfunction in our childhood, we may find parenting less or more of a challenge.

Most parents have concerns about parenting. Many parents don't want to parent as their parents did, especially if their childhood experiences were less than happy. However, we are all able to choose how we want to parent. For some of us this will mean revisiting the skills of our parents or learning new parenting skills.

Some of us may need more support than others, we may need the encouragement and mentorship of a new role model – one other than our parent. There may be someone in our extended family whom we admired for their parenting skills and their ability to nurture healthy relationships with their children.

Regardless of how we were parented, handing down (consciously or otherwise) the things that may have made our childhood happy, difficult, stressful, unhealthy, loving, nurturing or encouraging, is up to us.

For the most part, we as parents can choose to create a loving, safe and supportive environment for our children to thrive and flourish.

