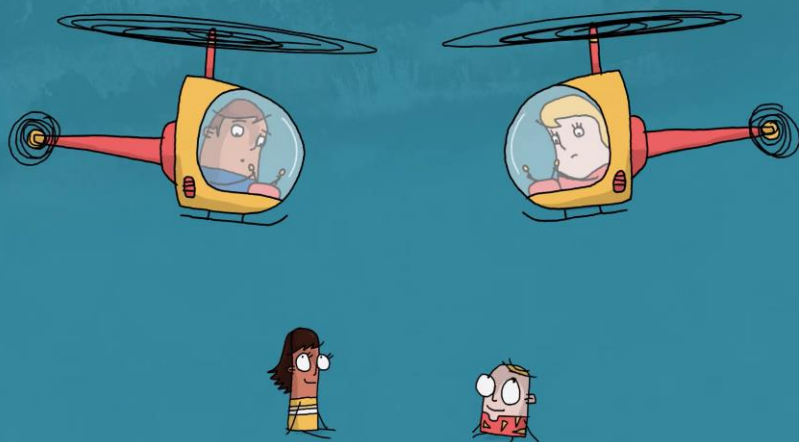




# Intensive parenting ideology among mothers and fathers: A typological examination of gendered representations of parenthood

Elli-Anastasia Lampranidou,  
Cindy Eira Nunes, Jean  
Philippe Antonietti & Stijn  
Van Petegem

Université Libre de Bruxelles, Belgium  
Université de Lausanne, Switzerland



Brothers McLeod, 2018

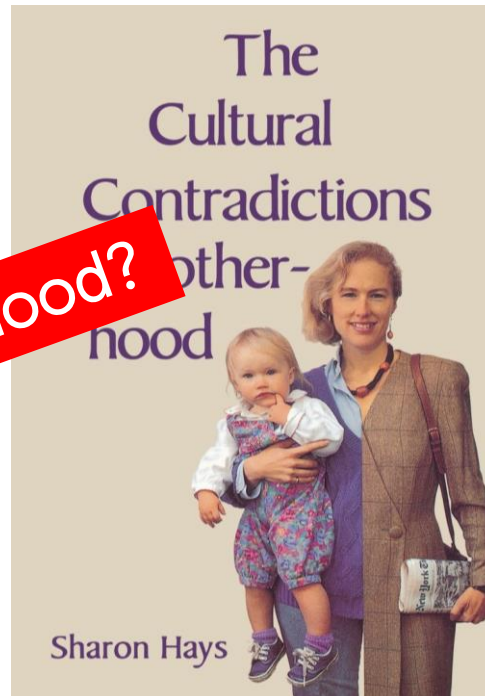


Brothers McLeod, 2018

# Intensive Mothering Ideology

“Impossible” to attain expectations towards mothers (Hays, 1996)

Interaction with traditional gender norms about motherhood (Forbes et al., 2020)



Intensification of parent hood?

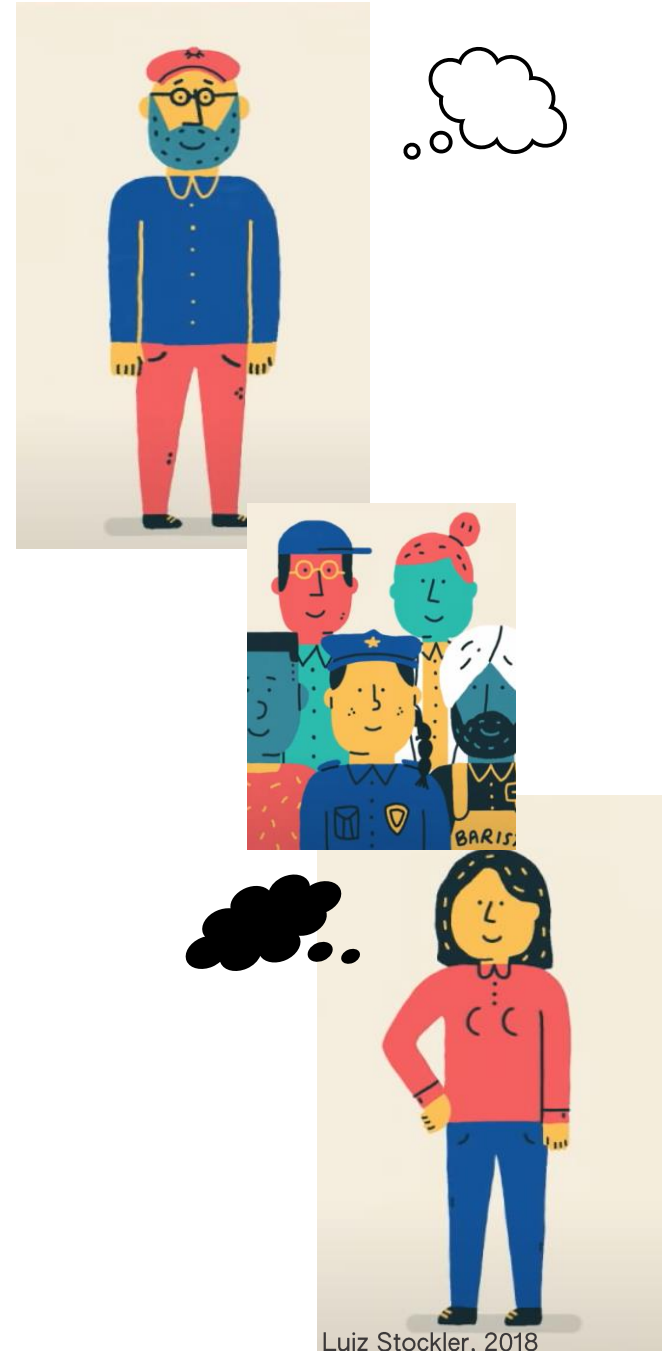


# Parental Beliefs

**Adherence to intensive parenting**  
Parents should be self-sacrificing

**Perceived social pressure**  
Feeling pressured to be a perfect parent

**Adherence to gender essentialism**  
Mothers *naturally* better parents than fathers

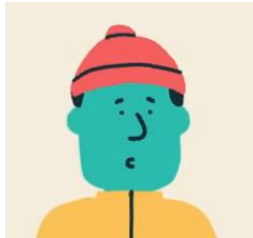


# Person-Centered Approach

Both parents as **active agents**

→ Different responses to parenting prescriptions

→ Different variable combinations - profiles



Luiz Stockler, 2018



Parents' beliefs influence how they are **involved** in their children's' life

Positive involvement

**involvement, responsiveness, autonomy support  
overvaluation, overprotection, control**

# Research Goals

Distinguish between profiles


Examine whether these profiles are differently associated to **positive** and **negative** types of involvement



Understand how social prescriptions about parenthood translate into parenting

# Sample

N=970 French-speaking Belgian parents of adolescents

( $M_{age}=16.83$ , 54% )



n=587  
 $M_{age}=48.70$



n=383  
 $M_{age}=50.62$

Civil status	In a relationship=77%	In a relationship=83%
Education	University degree=56%	University degree=57%
Subjective social status	$M_{SSS}=4.19/10^*$	$M_{SSS}=3.83/10^*$
Primary caretaker	Mostly me=38% Shared=61% Mostly other parent=1%	Mostly me=6% Shared=76% Mostly other parent=17%

\*Note: McArthur SSS scale from 1 to 10, 1 equals most privileged

# Measures

## Adherence to intensive parenting ideology

( $\alpha = .90/.89$ )

(15 items, self-constructed)

child-centeredness /parental sacrifice/ parental determinism

→ *“Children should be the greatest preoccupation in a mother’s/father’s life.”*

## Perceived social pressure ( $\alpha = .94/.94$ )

(15 items, Wuyts et al., 2015a, 2015b/ Meeussen & Van Laar, 2018)

→ *“Society wants me to be perfect as a parent.”*

## Gender essentialism ( $\alpha = .87/.84$ )

(6 items; Liss et al., 2013)

→ *“Although fathers are important, ultimately children need mothers more.”*

# Measures

## Involvement ( $\alpha = .70/.77$ )

(6 items; Grolnick, Ryan, & Deci, 1991)

→ *“I put time and energy into helping my child.”*

## Responsiveness

( $\alpha = .70/.75$ )

(7 items; CRPBI; Schaefer, 1965)

→ *“I cheer up my child when he/she is sad.”*

## Autonomy support

( $\alpha = .77/.72$ )

(8 items; Cheung, Pomerantz, Wang & Qu, 2016)

→ *“I let my child make his/her own plans for what he/she wants to do about his/her schoolwork.”*

## Overvaluation ( $\alpha = .68/.71$ )

(7 items; Brummelman et al., 2015)

→ *“My child is a great example for other children to follow.”*

## Anxious overprotection

( $\alpha = .83/.84$ )

(10 items; Chevrier et al., 2022)

→ *“I immediately see danger whenever my child wants to do something new.”*

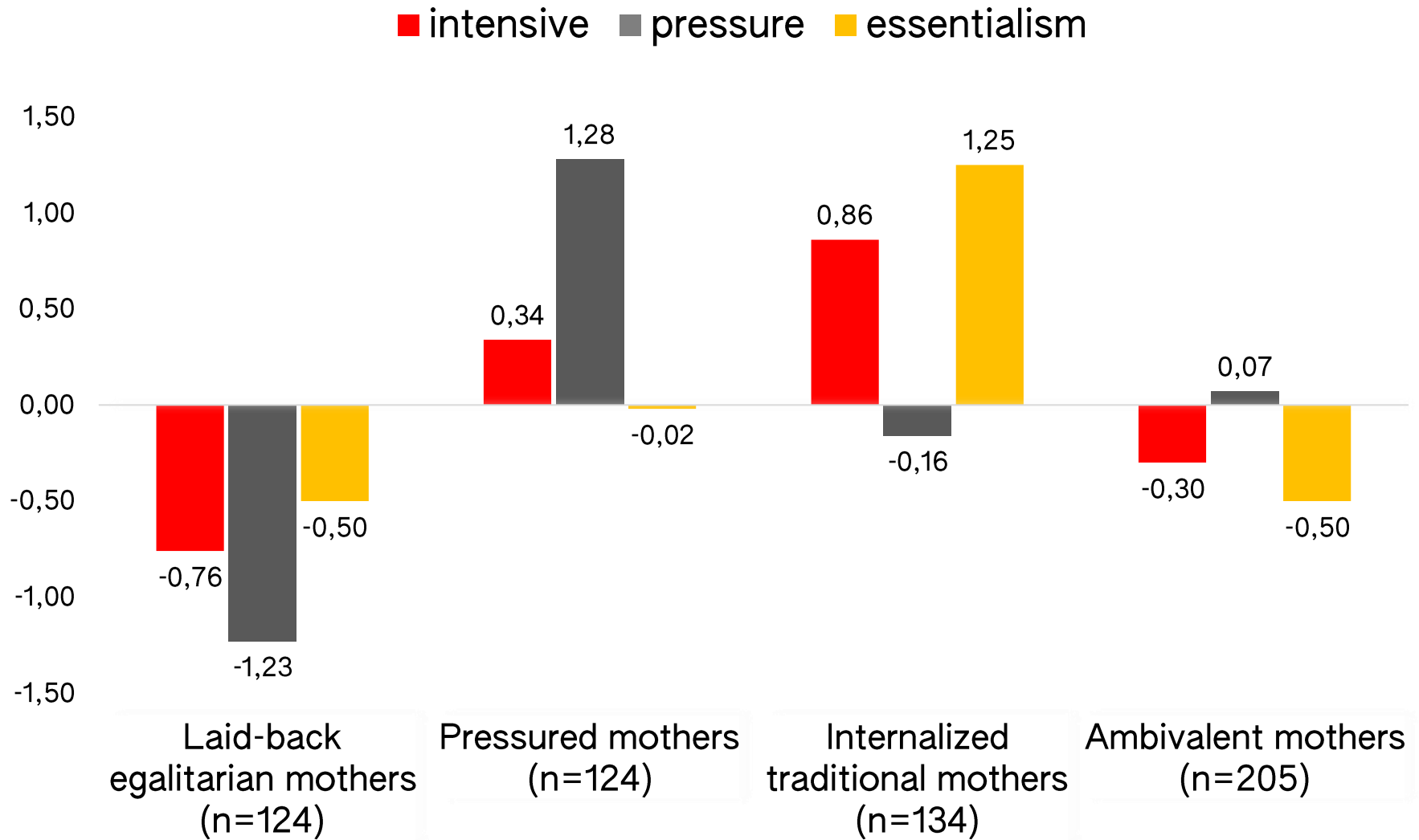
## Control ( $\alpha = .81/.81$ )

(10 items; Cheung, Pomerantz, Wang & Qu, 2016)

→ *“I let my child know that I am disappointed in him/her when he/she does not do as well as he/she should in school.”*



**Fig1. Z-scores for intensive parenting, social pressure and essentialism in the four-cluster solution for mothers**



# Results Mothers

Variable	Laid-back egalitarian mothers	Pressured mothers	Internalized traditional mothers	Ambivalent mothers	F (3.64)	$\eta^2$
Responsiv.	4.25 <sub>a</sub>	4.14 <sub>a</sub>	4.26 <sub>a</sub>	4.16 <sub>a</sub>	1.53	.01
Involvement	4.12 <sub>a</sub>	4.12 <sub>a</sub>	4.19 <sub>a</sub>	4.07 <sub>a</sub>	.83	.01
Autonom.	4.46 <sub>a</sub>	4.27 <sub>a</sub>	4.25 <sub>a</sub>	4.39 <sub>a</sub>	3.46*	.03
Anx. Overpr.	1.57 <sub>a</sub>	1.88 <sub>b</sub>	2.04 <sub>b</sub>	1.69 <sub>a</sub>	22.50***	.10
Control	1.67 <sub>a</sub>	2.07 <sub>b</sub>	2.23 <sub>b</sub>	1.83 <sub>a</sub>	18.72***	.09
Overval.	2.53 <sub>a</sub>	2.81 <sub>a</sub>	2.75 <sub>a</sub>	2.58 <sub>a</sub>	3.72*	.03

Note. Cluster means are significantly different if they have different subscripts

\*\*\* $p < .001$

# Results Mothers

Pressured mothers  
(n=124)

Internalized traditional  
mothers (n=134)

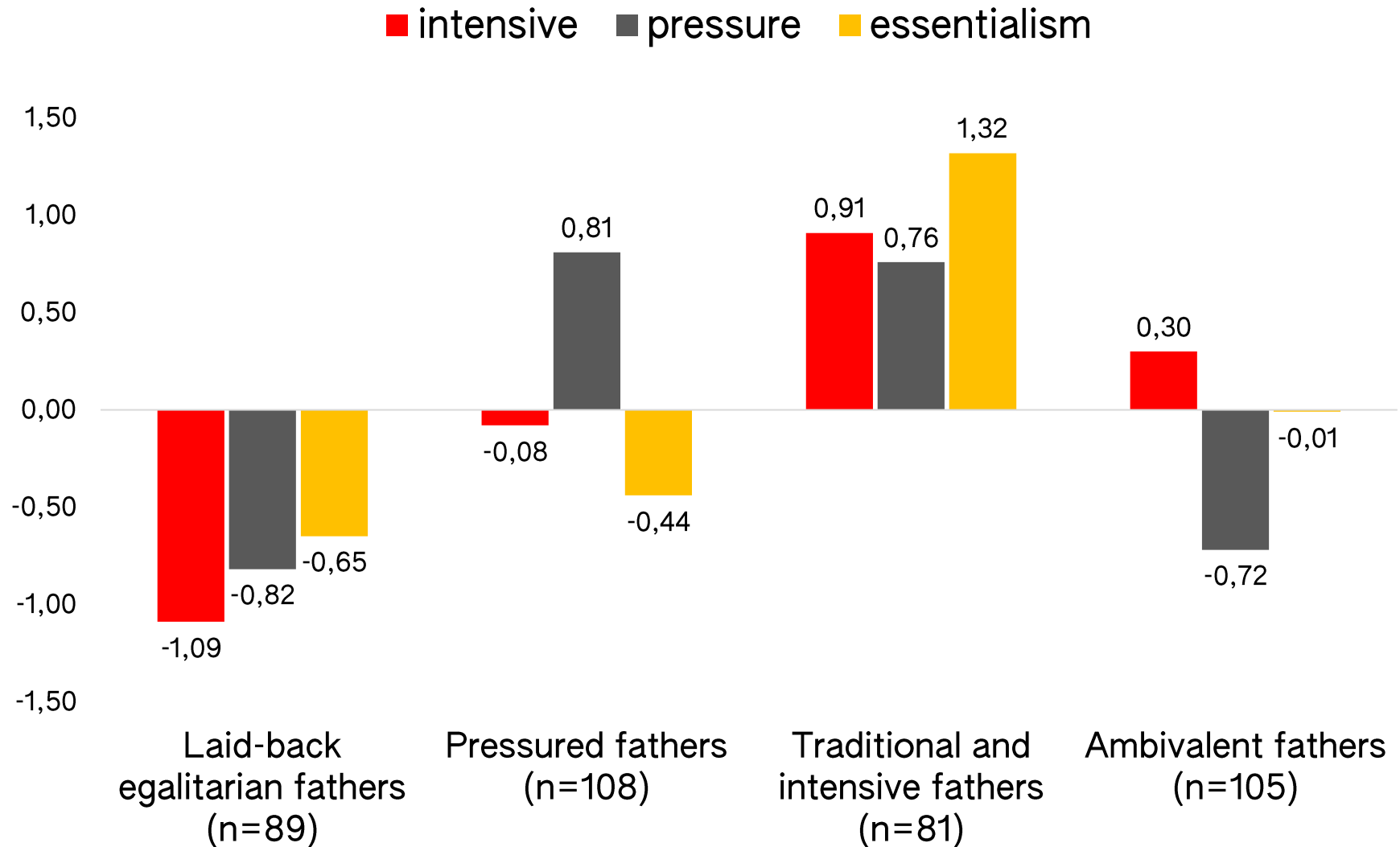


Higher adherence to  
anxious overprotection

More parental control

NO differences between clusters in terms  
of involvement and responsiveness!

**Fig2. Z-scores for intensive parenting, social pressure and essentialism in the four-cluster solution for fathers**



# Results fathers

Variable	Laid-back egalitarian fathers	Pressured fathers	Traditional and intensive fathers	Ambivalent fathers	$F$ (2.63)	$\eta^2$
Responsiv.	3.95 <sub>a</sub>	4.07 <sub>a</sub>	3.81 <sub>a</sub>	3.91 <sub>a</sub>	2.15	.03
Involvement	3.77 <sub>a</sub>	3.72 <sub>a</sub>	3.55 <sub>a</sub>	3.83 <sub>a</sub>	1.64	.03
Autonom.	4.36 <sub>a</sub>	4.33 <sub>a</sub>	4.14 <sub>a</sub>	4.20 <sub>a</sub>	2.72*	.03
Anx. Overpr.	1.46 <sub>a</sub>	1.68 <sub>b</sub>	1.93 <sub>c</sub>	2.56 <sub>ab</sub>	11.56***	.10
Control	1.76 <sub>a</sub>	2.15 <sub>b</sub>	2.53 <sub>c</sub>	2.06 <sub>b</sub>	19.36***	.13
Overval.	2.42 <sub>a</sub>	2.80 <sub>b</sub>	2.68 <sub>ab</sub>	2.55 <sub>ab</sub>	4.32*	.005

Note. Cluster means are significantly different if they have different subscripts

\*\*\* $p < .001$

# Results Fathers

Traditional and  
intensive fathers (n=81)



Higher adherence to  
anxious overprotection

More parental control

NO differences between clusters in terms  
of involvement and responsiveness!

# Discussion

Fairly **similar** profiles for mothers – fathers

→ With **some nuances**, for example internalized traditional mothers / traditional and intensive fathers

The **more traditional profiles** reported more overinvolved parenting

→ Traditional ideals of a “**good**” mother and a “**good**” father?

# Discussion

More laid-back, less pressured and more gender egalitarian parents →  
less overprotective, controlling parenting

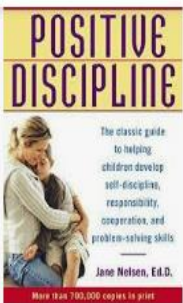
→ High social prescriptions about parenting may have an ironical effect?







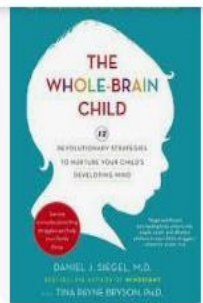
The Pragmatic Parent  
10 Best Science-Backed ...



Good Housekeeping  
20 Parenting Books for ...



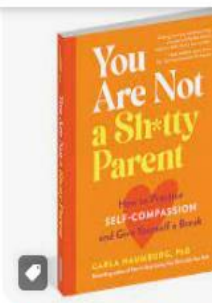
Good Housekeeping  
20 Parenting Books for 2021 - Tips for Moms and Dad...



The Cut  
24 Best Parenting Boo...



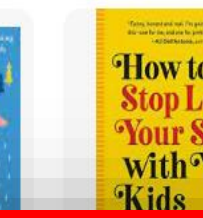
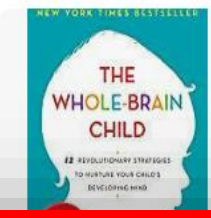
New York Magazine  
The 8 Best Parenting Books on How To Raise ...



Workman Publ... · Δ  
You Are Not a Sh\*tty Par...



3 Dinosaur  
Parenting & S...



The Cut  
4 Best Par...

Parents vary in the way they engage with society's expectations about parenting, and this variability is associated with their parenting practices!



Greater Good Science Center - University o...  
Our Favorite Parenting Books of 2019



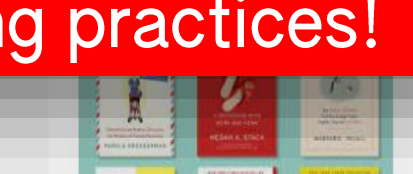
Woman's Day  
20 Best Parenting Books - Top Resources for Raising C...



TheBump.com  
Parenting Books: 28 Best Parenting Books



The New York Times  
The Decade of the Parenting Manu...



Choosing Therapy  
The 21 Best Parenting Book...



Resources for Raising Happy, Healthy

# Thank you for your attention!



[www.safesorry.be](http://www.safesorry.be)

[elli-anastasia.lamprianidou@ulb.be](mailto:elli-anastasia.lamprianidou@ulb.be)