

# The Science of Helping Your Child *Thrive*

---

*Presented by:*

Dr Christi Bartolomucci

Licensed Psychologist

Pace Academy Consulting Psychologist

Founder & Clinical Director of Atlanta Innovative Counseling Center, LLC

September 2026

# The Parenting Mind



How do I help  
my child chill  
out?

Am I doing  
this right?

Am I doing  
TOO much?

Is my kid  
going to be  
okay?

Am I doing  
enough?

Why do  
they do  
that?

Should I let  
them  
struggle?

How do I  
motivate my  
child?

What do I say  
when....?

What if  
something  
really is  
wrong?

# What Research Tells Us About Thriving

Reducing Pathology to  
Increasing Strength, Resiliency & Thriving

---

What  
Helps?

- Nurturing Relationships
- Safety and Stability
- Social Connection and Belonging
- Emotion and Self Management Skills
- Competency and Purpose

Key Researcher: Dr. Martin Seligman, Positive Psychology, The Search Institute

Every child has  
**DIFFERENT...**

Every PARENT has  
**DIFFERENT...**

**Spark!**

Dr. Peter Benson

- Genetics
- Temperaments
- Values
- Dreams & Passions
- Interests
- Skills & Abilities
- Challenges
- Motivation



# The Ladder of Thriving





## The Developmental Perspective: The Lower, Middle, and High School Student

---

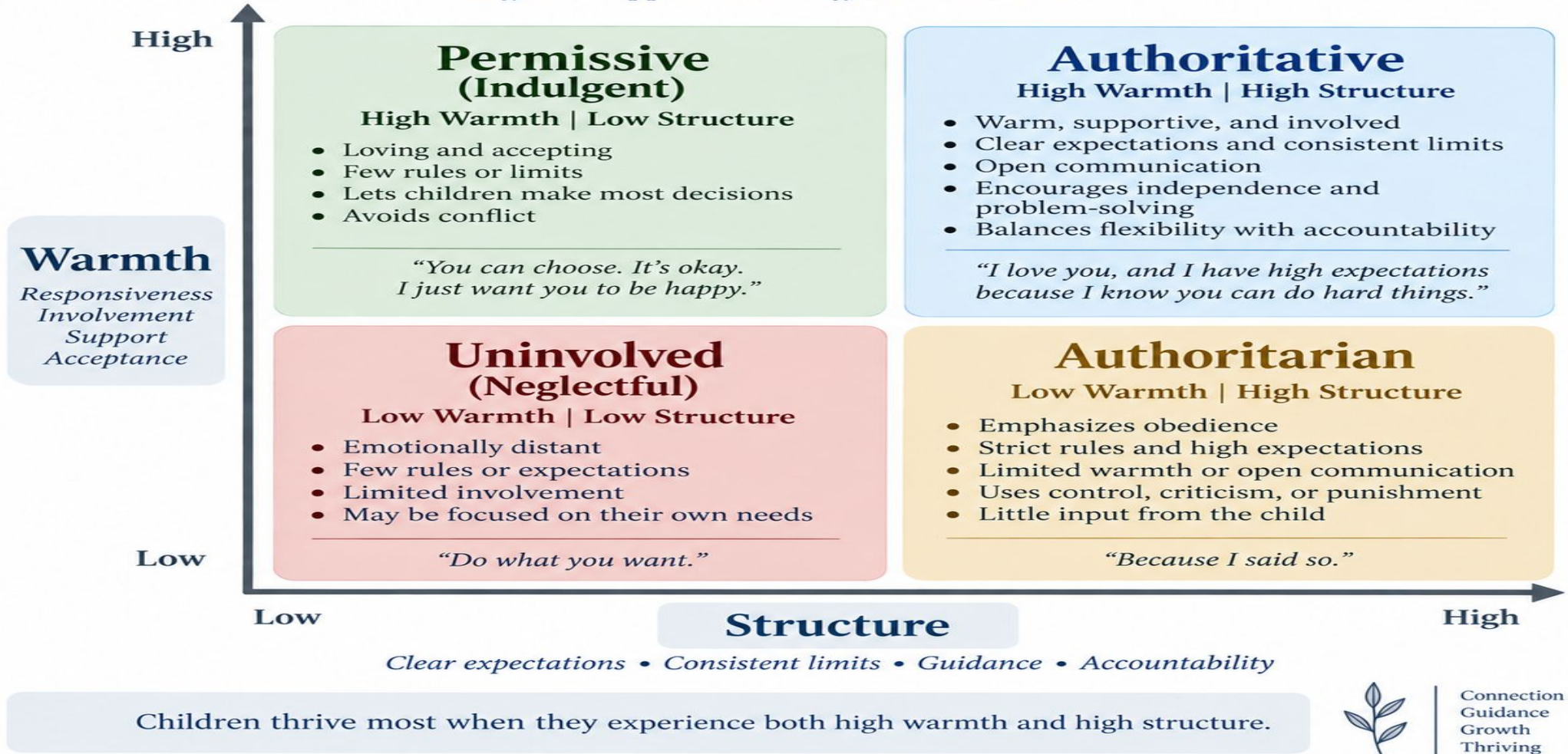
# What Am I Doing To Support Growth?

| Tending    | "I am here. Let's do it together."                     |
|------------|--------------------------------------------------------|
| Teaching   | "I am here. Let me show you how to do it."             |
| Coaching   | "I am here. You do it. I am here with you to help."    |
| Consulting | "I am here. I trust you. Here to talk if you need me." |

# Parenting Styles

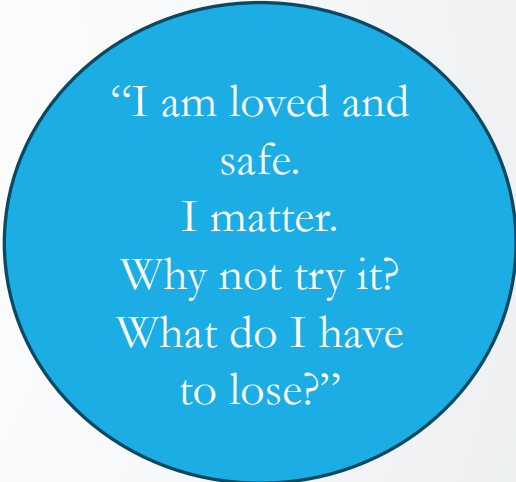
## The Balance of Warmth and Structure

*Different approaches. Different outcomes.*



# The Roots: Connection & Security

- Secure Attachment
- The 4 S's: Safe, Seen, Soothed, Secure
- Authoritative Parenting: High Structure and High Warmth
- Attuned presence
- Worth tied to **being** not **achieving**
- Model accountability, apology and repair
- “Ordinary Magic” ~ Ann Masten



“I am loved and  
safe.  
I matter.  
Why not try it?  
What do I have  
to lose?”

Key Researchers: Drs. John Bowlby, Mary Ainsworth, Dan Siegel & Tina Bryson

## *A Practical Approach*

### *“I see you. You matter”*

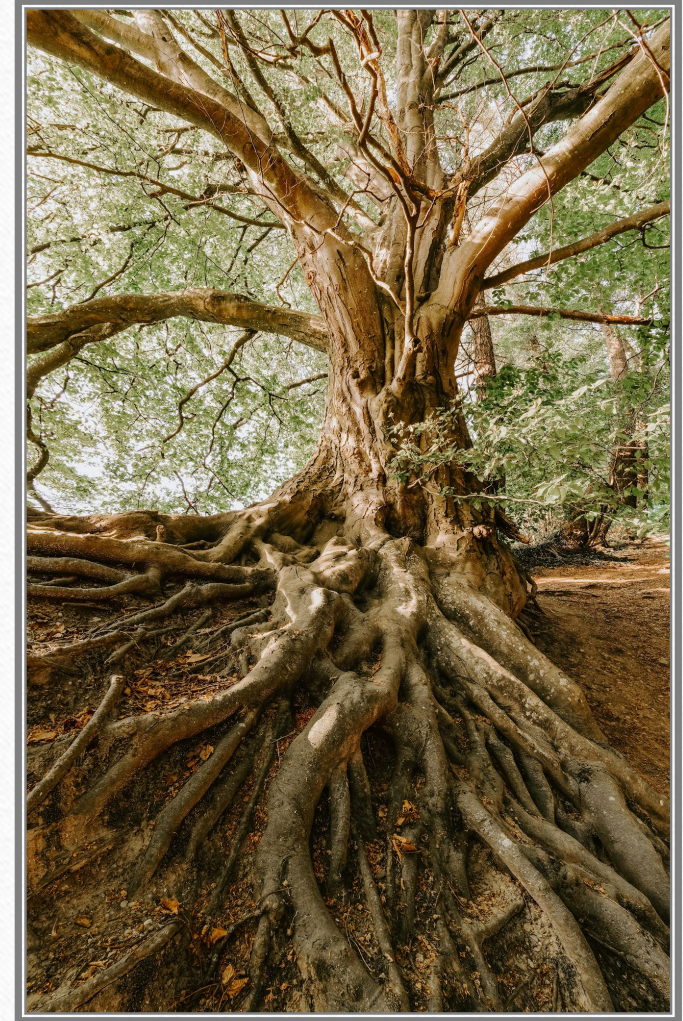
- Genuine interest: Opinions, ideas, efforts, interests, contributions
- Have fun and play together!

### *“You are your own person”*

Our children are not extensions of us.  
What is ours to deal with? What is theirs?

### *“Connection then Correction”*

“I see the root of this challenge, not just your behavior.”



# Regulation Skills

“I can manage myself as I work towards my goals.”

## Emotional Regulation

- Notice Feeling
- Name Feeling
- Tolerate Tough Feelings
- Regulate Feeling
- Respond with a “Wise Mind”

Researcher: Dr. Marc Brackett

## Executive Functioning

- Planning & Prioritizing
- Organizing & Time Management
- Monitor Self
- Impulse Control
- Task Initiation & Task Completion
- Flexible Thinking

Researcher: Dr. Adele Diamond

Connect. Name the Struggle. Regulate. Problem-Solve.

Practical Strategies for  
Building  
Self-Regulation  
(For ourselves too!)



**“Connect & Move”**

Connect. \* Pause. \* Name. \* Problem-Solve.

**“Co-Regulate then Regulate”**

- Monitor own emotions & watch assumptions
  - Need Space or company?

**“When.....Then....”**

- Reasonable, Predictable Expectations
- “**When** you complete your work, **then** you can play your game.”

**“Name It to Tame It” ~ Dan Siegel**

Understand, label, and then regulate emotions.

**Build the Reflex**

Waiting. Sustained Attention. Frustration Tolerance.

# I CAN: Competency & Self-Efficacy

- Obstacles are how we learn. Don't clear the path.
- It is EARNED and cannot be GIVEN.
- Practice opportunities: Make mistakes and learn from them.
- The Learning Curve
- Focus: Problem-solving, creative thinking, & decision-making
- Self-reflection: "Did this work? What would I do differently?"
- Celebrate the successes, reflect, and learn from the challenges.

**Key Takeaway:** *Allow children to do what they can do for themselves.*

"I CAN  
do this!  
I can try."

"I CAN DO  
THE  
HARD  
THINGS!"



## The Paradox of Supporting Autonomy

---

*We deepen their roots. We  
support their wings.*

*Yes, you may “know better”  
...build opportunities to  
TRUST themselves.*

“I can make  
decisions.  
Learn from my  
mistakes.  
Bounce back.  
Try again.”



## Launch: Autonomy & Resiliency

---

- Our child's journey is their journey.
- Child has a sense of agency, choice, and ownership.
- Parent support supports well-being while over-control undermines it.
- Autonomy doesn't mean permissive. It means supporting decisions and choice-making process.
- Use of natural consequences.
- Mistakes are normal. We learn. We bounce back.
- Self-Determination Theory: Relatedness, Competence, Autonomy.

Researchers: Deci & Ryan

# Practical Strategies to Support Autonomy & Resiliency

---

- ❖ Provide Choice:
  - ◆ “Do you want me to listen, help you work through it, or give my opinion?”
- ❖ Maintain structure, expectations, and boundaries while:
  - ◆ Providing age-appropriate choice
  - ◆ Ask and listen to their opinions on topics
- ❖ Create opportunities to contribute by helping the family (ex.: chores, problem-solving)
- ❖ Process together rather than over-protect or over-control
- ❖ Allow for natural consequences as appropriate

# Purpose

“I know what  
matters to me.  
I can make  
meaningful  
contributions to  
others and our  
world.”

A process of self-discovery that develops over time.

- What matters to me?
- What do I want to be?
- What can I contribute?
- What are my goals and how can I achieve them?
- How can I add value?

# *Mattering*

“...Kids who were thriving shared one thing in common: they felt they mattered for who they were deep at their core.”

Mattering: The secret to a life of deep connection and purpose (2026)

Authored by Jennifer Breheny Wallace

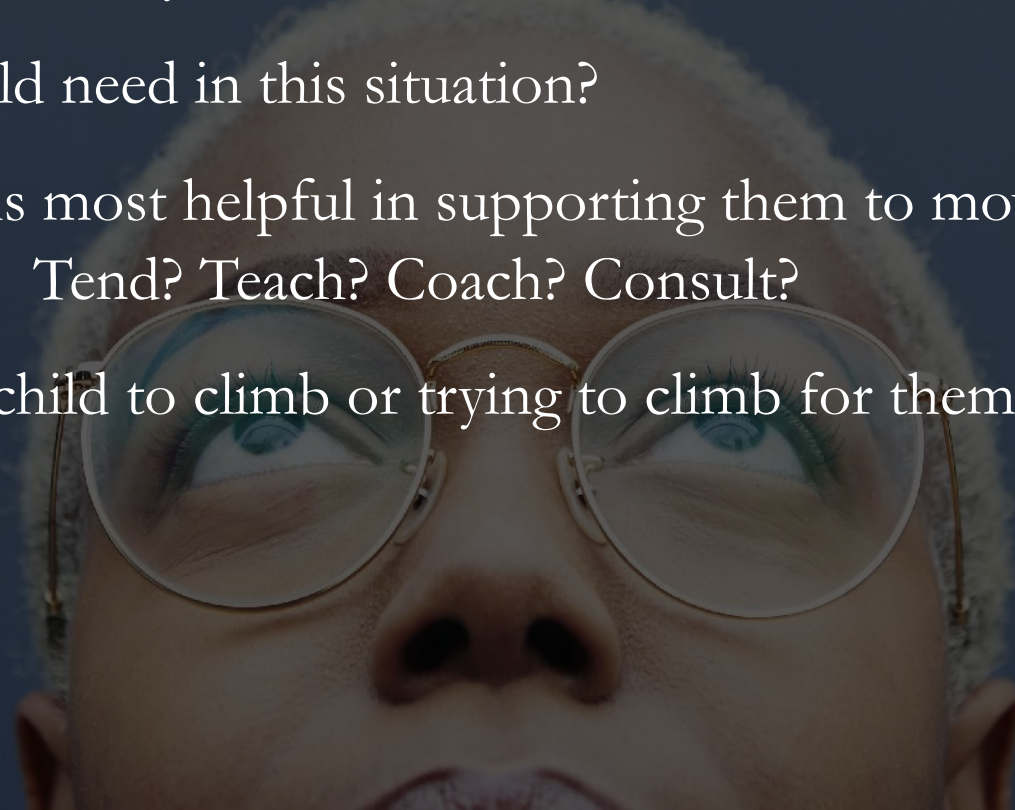
# The “Garden Approach” to Parenting



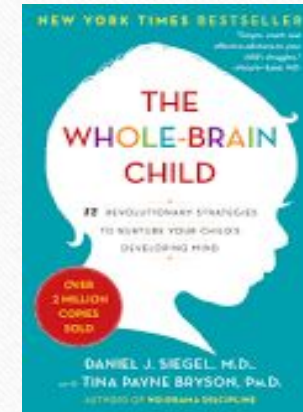
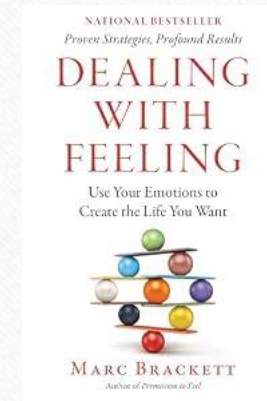
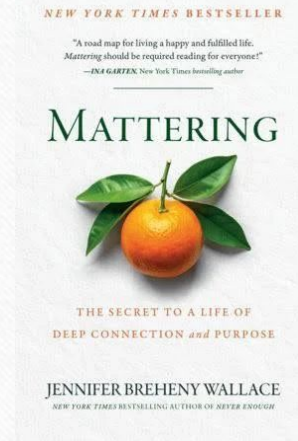
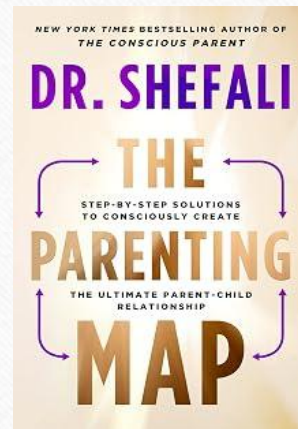
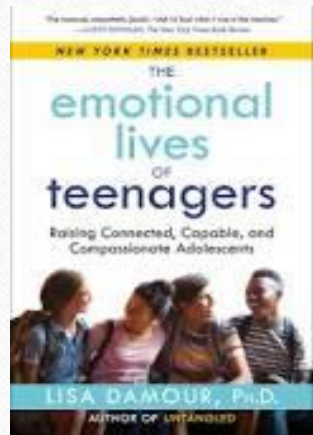
# Questions to Ask Ourselves

---

- Am I connecting with my child first? Do I see them for them?
- What does my child need in this situation?
- What parent role is most helpful in supporting them to move through the rungs of thriving? Tend? Teach? Coach? Consult?
- Am I helping my child to climb or trying to climb for them?



# Current Parenting Resources



Children's Resources  
Author: Julia Cook



The Knowledge Nook at:  
[www.atlantainnovativecounseling.com](http://www.atlantainnovativecounseling.com)



# Please Contact Me With Questions or Thoughts!

---

Dr. Christi Bartolomucci

Licensed Psychologist

[christi.bartolomucci@paceacademy.org](mailto:christi.bartolomucci@paceacademy.org)

or

[drchristi@atlantainnovativecounseling.com](mailto:drchristi@atlantainnovativecounseling.com)

770-293-1950 ext. 104

[www. atlantainnovativecounseling.com](http://www.atlantainnovativecounseling.com)