

Surely the long-term goal of parenting is to raise healthy, well-adjusted children who have the skills they will need in adult life. Most adults begin their own parenting careers unprepared for what lies ahead, and then have to learn their parenting skills through trial and error. It can be a little like fumbling along in the dark. Many also have very high expectations of themselves – how they should feel and cope with being a parent. This is dangerous as it can lead to parents feeling guilty and bitterly disappointed when their well-meaning parenting efforts aren't successful.

Sometimes parents have overly high expectations of their children too. The “perfect child” trap is one we could easily fall into if not careful. It is the one where parents believe their child is ‘perfect’ and better than others’ children. But in reality, it isn't fair for parents to expect their children to be perfect. This is likely to lead to disappointment and conflict with their children. All children whine, complain, make a mess, have disagreements with their parents, and become upset at times. The way parents deal with these issues influences whether the problems stay the same, get worse, or improve as their child grows older. So it really is worth a little time to reflect on what's working well and what is not; so as to develop our parenting skills slowly and surely.

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