



## Parenting Perspectives from Western and Indigenous Worldviews

<b>Western</b>	<b>Indigenous</b>
<p>Christian values of having the mother as the sole caregiver for children in the home while the father worked. The mother would also form the primary attachment to her children.</p>	<p>The mother/caregiver is not the only contributor to children’s well-being, rather the entire community is involved with child rearing and attachment would be with relatives and the tribe.</p>
<p>Living in a “nuclear family” consists of mother, father, and children does not include aunts, uncles, and grandparents as part of their immediate family.</p>	<p>Known to engage in the extended family “to include clans, kin, elders, and leaders in their community.</p>
<p>If a family couldn’t have children, families governed by Western ideologies would have (and still do) to go through a legal process to adopt a child for their family.</p>	<p>If an indigenous family couldn’t have a child, or of a child passed away, other members of their tribe would give them a child(ren) to raise with or without formal arrangements but would not have a legal process.</p>
<p>If a child was born with a disability, Western societies had their children placed into institutions for care for hundreds of years.</p>	<p>If an indigenous child was born with disabilities, it was viewed that this person was not deficient, but could be part of their society in their own special way.</p>
<p>Social values have been considered organized as a hierarchy that is practiced in terms of becoming bigger, higher, newer, or faster in terms of structure and power. These ideals have thus, created scales for people to adhere to in order to attain their preferred goals.</p>	<p>Cultures attempt to mould their children into ideal personalities that will enable their personal strengths, both physically and spiritually. Each child in turn, will contribute to the tribe’s society to maintain traditional values and customs.</p>
<p>Societies have externalized groups that are used for social control and discipline, such as the police.</p>	<p>Societies collectively agreed on what norms their societies would adhere to in order to maintain harmony among the tribes and prevent being ostracized from their tribes. The norms were a knowledge that was internalized and also served to minimize the diversity among acceptable behaviors.</p>

For many years, indigenous people have been viewed as having deficiencies with parenting skills with their children, lack attachment to their children and how parenting traditions were deemed inferior in comparison to Western ideologies. This article by no means identified all of the differences between cultures and parenting practices. It does however highlight some of the true cultural ideologies behind approaches to Western and Indigenous practices of family life.

“To understand traditional parenting of children, one must firstly understand the Blackfoot ways of knowing and how the indigenous people used to live together as a community of their tribes, their land, and animals within the universe”.

Please see Parenting from Western and Indigenous Perspectives for more information and references.

