

# PARENTING INFANTS AND TODDLERS TODAY

## Family Matters Most: Key Findings From a 2009 National Parent Survey

Findings from a national survey of 1,615 parents of children from birth to 3 years, recently conducted by Hart Research for ZERO TO THREE, revealed that the way parents were raised was a major influence on their own approach to parenting. This resource is designed to identify the factors, such as family history and faith, that greatly affect parenting.

### What You Told Us

More than half of you (53%) said that the way your parents raised you has a major influence on your approach to parenting, whereas another 30% said that it has a moderate influence.

- African American parents were significantly more likely (61%) than Hispanic (49%) or White parents (52%) to identify the way they were raised as having a major influence on their approach to parenting.
- Fathers were more likely (59%) than mothers (50%) to identify the way their parents raised them as a major influence on their approach to parenting.

### Going Home Again

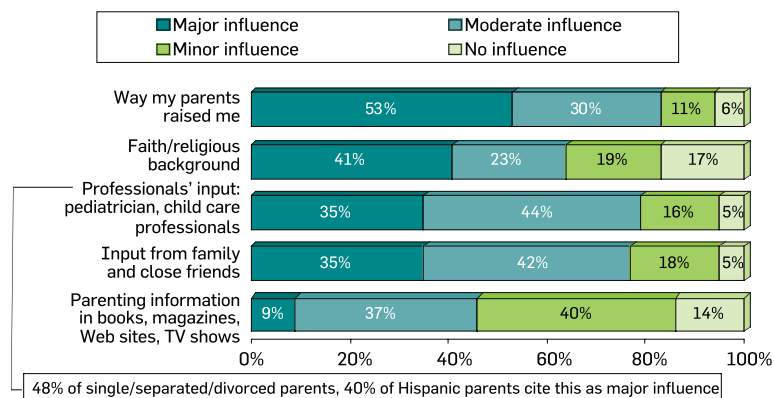
Every mother and father approaches parenting with their own ideas, feelings, and expectations about the best way to raise children. These ideas are based, in large part, on the parent's own experiences growing up.

How many times have you opened your mouth to say something and heard your parents' words coming out? You're not alone. Most parents have had this experience. It helps you see how deeply you are influenced by childhood experiences. This is why it's so important to become aware of how they shape your approach to parenting today.

Just as you are your child's first teacher, your parents were yours. The things they said and did, their way of relating to you and others, laid the foundation for many of your beliefs, values, attitudes, and parenting practices. You are doing the same with your children. Perhaps you are teaching them the value of hard work by encouraging them to keep trying when they face a challenge. If you pass their outgrown clothes to the less fortunate, you are teaching them to be empathic and give to others.

### Family History and Faith Are Powerful Influences on Parenting

How much influence does this have on your approach to parenting?



There also may be times when the child-rearing approach you learned from your own parents is not working well for you or your child. One father realized that the annoyance he felt when his toddler was sad and wanted comforting was rooted in his own memory of his father making him feel like a failure any time he expressed a need for support. This awareness allowed him to be more nurturing and supportive of his son.

### Thinking About Yesterday Can Help You With Decisions Today

- In what ways do you see the influence of your family's beliefs and values in your approach to parenting your child?
- How do you see your approach as helpful and good for your child? Which, if any, are not? Why? What might you do differently?



National Center for Infants, Toddlers, and Families

To view the full report, go to: [www.zerotothree.org/parentsurvey](http://www.zerotothree.org/parentsurvey)

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