

# Aware Parenting Frequently Asked Questions

## **What is Aware Parenting?**

Aware Parenting is a child rearing approach developed by Aletha Solter, Ph.D. It is based on research in the fields of attachment, child development, psychotherapy, cross-cultural studies, and the neurobiology of trauma. Parents who follow this approach raise children who are cooperative, compassionate, competent, nonviolent, and drug free.

## **Who is Aletha Solter?**

Aletha Solter is a Swiss-American developmental psychologist who studied with Dr. Jean Piaget in Switzerland before earning her Ph.D. at the University of California. She is the author of six books and is recognized internationally as an expert on attachment, trauma, and non-punitive discipline.

## **How is Aware Parenting different from attachment parenting?**

Aware Parenting is a form of attachment parenting. We recommend breastfeeding, co-sleeping, baby wearing, and prompt responsiveness to crying. Aware Parenting adds another element by recognizing the stress-release function of crying in addition to its communication function.

## **How is Aware Parenting different from the cry-it-out approach (controlled crying)?**

Aware Parenting strongly opposes all cry-it-out approaches and sleep training methods. Research has shown that babies have higher stress hormone levels when they are left alone to cry. We therefore recommend maintaining close connection when babies or children cry.

## **Does Aware Parenting support the use of corporal punishment?**

Aware Parenting strongly opposes the use of corporal punishment. Research has shown that spanking can increase children's aggressive behavior and lead to emotional problems later in life such as anxiety, depression, and substance abuse.

## **Does Aware Parenting support the use of time-out?**

Aware Parenting strongly opposes the use of time-out. Research has shown that the use of time-out can make children feel insecure and can actually increase power struggles between parents and children. Children with behavior problems need connection, not disconnection.

## **Does Aware Parenting support the use of logical consequences?**

Aware Parenting does not support the use of any artificially contrived consequences for misbehavior, because this approach can lead to resentment toward the parents and damage the parent/child relationship.

**Does Aware Parenting support the use of behavioral techniques such as star charts or other reward systems?**

Aware Parenting does not support the use of rewards or bribes. Research indicates that the use of rewards can backfire by reducing children's intrinsic motivation.

**Is Aware Parenting a form of permissive parenting?**

Aware Parenting is not permissive parenting. We teach parents how to maintain loving limits, encourage cooperation, and solve behavior problems.

**How does Aware Parenting solve behavior problems without punishments or rewards?**

Aware Parenting solves behavior problems by addressing the underlying needs and feelings. We recognize disconnection, unmet needs, lack of information, stress, and unhealed trauma as primary causes of behavior problems.

**This all sounds very theoretical. Are there any specific Aware Parenting "tools" or techniques?**

One of the basic Aware Parenting tools is respectful listening, especially when children express painful emotions. Other important tools include specific kinds of playful interactions that strengthen the parent/child connection while also helping children heal from stress or trauma. These tools play a major role in solving behavior problems.

**Is it ever too late to start using Aware Parenting?**

No, it is never too late to start using Aware Parenting and improve your relationship with your children. You can start this approach even with teenagers.

**How can I learn more about Aware Parenting?**

You can learn more by reading Aletha Solter's books or by attending a workshop with her or with one of our certified instructors around the world. The Aware Parenting website also includes numerous free articles by Aletha Solter.

**What are the titles of the books?**

Aletha Solter's books have been translated into many languages. The English titles are: *The Aware Baby*, *Cooperative and Connected*, *Tears and Tantrums*, *Raising Drug-Free Kids*, *Attachment Play*, *Healing Your Traumatized Child*, and *Raising Joyful Lifelong Learners*. They are available from major online booksellers.

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