


# How will my own childhood impact how I raise my children?

Earlier in the month I attended a developmental pediatrics  conference in Philadelphia. The keynote speaker, Barry Zuckerman MD, professor and chairman of pediatrics at Boston University, raised a set of thoughtful questions. Parents can use the answers as a starting point for understanding how they were raised. Here are some of the questions with modifications:

-What was it like growing up? Who was in your family? Who raised you?

-Do you plan to raise your child like your parents raised you?

-How did your relationship with your family evolve throughout your youth?

-How did your relationship with your caregivers (mother/father/aunt/grandparent/etc) differ from each other? What did you like or not like about each relationship?

-Did you ever feel rejected or threatened by your parents? What sort of influence do they now have on your life?

-Did anyone significant die during your youth? What was your earliest separation from your parents like? Were there any prolonged separations?

-If there were difficult times during your childhood, were there positive role models in or outside your home that you could depend on?

Some of these questions may be tougher than others to answer.

Ultimately you are not your parents (although you may feel otherwise when you hear a familiar phrase escape your own lips), and likewise your children are not you. Parenting techniques that worked, or did not work, for your parents will not necessarily work, or not work, for you. However, stopping to reflect on your own youth will help you understand why you parent the way that you do.

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