Childhood Factors that influence success in later life

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Abstract: This study examined the effect of 44 childhood factors (environmental factors) on the success of a person as an adult. The respondents were professionals contacted through the professional network LinkedIn. 334 professionals took part in the survey. Life Success was measured using the question "I am definitely progressing towards my Financial and Career Goals ". Childhood factors were ascertained through a set of 64 questions. Respondents were asked to answer the questions based on their experiences they had till the age of 9. A structured questionnaire was administered among the sample group. Out of the 44 childhood factors which were included in the scope of this study, 19 of them were found to have significant predictive relationship with success in later life. The factors that were found to have a significant predictive relationship are Exposure to successful adults, Being a topper in Academics, Being allowed to pursue Talents and Hobbies, Having loving and caring Teachers, Having friends who are strivers and achievers, Being encouraged by being told "You can do it", Education level of parents compared to parents of peers, Receiving parent's love and care, Getting everything they ask for, Parents active involvement in school, Both parents being working professionals, Parents being respected by the community, Being told "winning is not everything", Having no friends and being lonely, Being advised to be precise and correct, Being told to adjust without complaining, Celebrating success, Given lot of freedom, Being told that "giving up" is never an option.

Key words: Childhood factors. Life Success. Career Success. Parenting

I. Introduction:

Every parent wants their children to lead successful lives. They want their children to be successful adults who meet Financial and Career Goals. It is understood that the environment the child grows in has a considerable impact on his/her success in later life. Though the relationship with childhood environmental factors and success in life has been clearly established, there are very few studies that explore the factors that can positively or negatively impact prospects of success in later life. Hence specific guidance is not available for parents. Though there are lots of Parenting books, most of them are not based on empirically proven data. Hence parents have to bring their children up using trial and error methods. The objectives of this study is to examine the effect of childhood factors (environmental factors) on the success of a person as an adult. This study examines the effect of 44 childhood factors on the life success of an adult. A clear understanding of the factors that affect success prospects positively or negatively can help parents to provide the environment for their children which are conducive for success.

II. **Objectives of the study:**

To determine the effect of the following 44 childhood factors (environmental factors) on the life success of a person. Life success being defined as the adult's ability to meet Financial and Career Goals.

- 1. Opportunities given to interacting with adults,
- 2. Exposure to successful adults
- 3. Being a topper in Academics
- 4. Being a reader of biographies and other books
- 5. Allowed to pursue Talents and Hobbies
- 6. Having loving and caring Teachers
- 7. Having friends who are strivers and achievers
- Encouraged by being told "You can do it"
 Encouraged by being told "You will do great things in the future"
 Demeaned by being told "you are not good enough"
- 11. Education level of parents compared to parents of peers
- 12. Time spent by parents with the child
- 13. Parental support in learning
- 14. High expectations expressed by parents
- 15. Being encouraged to take part in competitions
- 16. Receiving parent's love and care
- 17. Getting everything they ask for

- 18. Parents active involvement in school
- 19. Both parents being working professionals
- 20. Parents being hardworking and ambitious
- 21. Parents being respected by the community
- 22. Being punished by parents for non achievement
- 23. Being told "winning is not everything"
- 24. Having no friends and being lonely
- 25. Being motivated to follow a disciplined life
- 26. Being given responsibilities
- 27. Being advised to be grateful
- 28. Motivated to pray
- 29. Being compared with others
- 30. Being advised to value kindness
- 31. Being advised to speak truth and help others
- 32. Being advised to be precise and correct
- 33. Told to adjust without complaining
- 34. Spoken positively about in front of them
- 35. Punished physically
- 36. Being explained the long term positive outcomes of striving
- 37. Celebrating success
- 38. Being promised gifts
- 39. Given lot of freedom
- 40. Being told that "giving up" is never an option
- 41. Given more pocket money compared to peers
- 42. Being encouraged to be friendly
- 43. Being encouraged to keep things in order
- 44. Having sibling competition

III. Hypotheses:

Following null hypotheses have been tested:

- 1. There is no effect of exposure to successful adults during childhood to Success in life
- 2. There is no effect of being a topper in Academics during childhood to Success in life
- 3. There is no effect of being a reader of biographies and other books during childhood to Success in life
- 4. There is no effect of being Allowed to pursue Talents and Hobbies during childhood to Success in life
- 5. There is no effect of having loving and caring Teachers during childhood to Success in life
- 6. There is no effect of having friends who are strivers and achievers during childhood to Success in life
- 7. There is no effect of being encouraged by being told "You can do it" during childhood to Success in life
- 8. There is no effect of education level of parents compared to parents of peers to Success in life
- 9. There is no effect of time spent by parents with the child to Success in life
- 10. There is no effect of being encouraged to take part in competitions during childhood to Success in life
- 11. There is no effect of receiving parent's love and care during childhood to Success in life
- 12. There is no effect of getting everything they ask for during childhood to Success in life
- 13. There is no effect of parents active involvement in school to Success in life
- 14. There is no effect of both parents being working professionals to Success in life
- 15. There is no effect of parents being respected by the community to Success in life
- 16. There is no effect of being punished by parents for non achievement during childhood to Success in life
- 17. There is no effect of being told "winning is not everything" during childhood to Success in life
- 18. There is no effect of having no friends and being lonely during childhood to Success in life
- 19. There is no effect of being motivated to follow a disciplined life during childhood to Success in life
- 20. There is no effect of being given responsibilities during childhood to Success in life
- 21. There is no effect of being Motivated to pray during childhood to Success in life
- 22. There is no effect of Being compared with others during childhood to Success in life
- 23. There is no effect of being advised to value kindness during childhood to Success in life
- 24. There is no effect of being advised to speak truth and help others during childhood to Success in life
- 25. There is no effect of being advised to be precise and correct during childhood to Success in life
- 26. There is no effect of told to adjust without complaining during childhood to Success in life
- 27. There is no effect of celebrating success during childhood to Success in life
- 28. There is no effect of being promised gifts during childhood to Success in life

- 29. There is no effect of getting everything they ask for during childhood to Success in life
- 30. There is no effect of being given lot of freedom during childhood to Success in life
- 31. There is no effect of being told that "giving up" is never an option during childhood to Success in life
- 32. There is no effect of being encouraged to keep things in order during childhood to Success in life
- 33. There is no effect of having sibling competition during childhood to Success in life

IV. Method and Procedure

Respondents were professionals contacted through LinkedIn, the popular professional network. A structured questionnaire was administered among the sample group. This questionnaire had questions that had Likert's five point scale ((a) Completely disagree b) Disagree c) Neither disagree or agree d) Agree e) Completely agree). The questionnaire was made available online at http://www.surveymonkey.com for ease of data collection. No personal information (Name, Organization etc.) was solicited to ensure anonymity. Data was collected from 334 respondents. Relevant statistical tools were used for analyzing the data with the help of SPSS. Descriptive statistics were taken by analyzing Frequencies and Cross tabulations. The response to the question "I am definitely moving towards achieving my financial and career goals" was treated as the Dependent Variable. Childhood factors (dependent variables) were ascertained through a set of 64 questions. Respondents were asked to answer the questions based on their experiences they had till the age of 9. Frequency tables and graphs were made for each response. Ordinal regression was conducted between the Independent and dependent variables to find out the variables that could predict the state of achieving Financial and Career goals as an adult. In statistics, ordinal regression is a type of regression analysis used for predicting an ordinal variable, i.e. a variable whose value exists on an arbitrary scale where only the relative ordering between different values is significant. From the results of the ordinal regression, those variables (childhood factors) that could predict the state of achieving Financial and Career goals as an adult in a statistically significant way were identified. These were used to validate and accept or reject the hypotheses. Based on these variables, recommendations were made.

Once the childhood factors (independent variables) that could predict the state of achieving Financial and Career Goals (dependent variable), in a statistically significant way were identified, they were cross tabulated against the dependent variable to gain greater insights. Comparisons were made with the % of respondents who agreed with the questions on the statistically significant independent factors with the % of respondents who completely agreed to the question on success (dependent variable). They were then ranked to ascertain the Top 5 and Least 5 factors in terms of the % of respondents. To determine whether a relationship exists between the dependent variable (The intention to leave) and each of the independent variables, Spearman's rho correlation test between the dependent and independent variables was conducted. As the data was ordinal, Spearman's rho Correlation was conducted. The correlation between every pair of independent variables in the model was also checked. This was done to check whether the correlation between two independent variables was large enough to cause multi co linearity. Finally the Frequency of statistically significant factors across sample (Independent variables) were ascertained and ranked.

Data Analysis, Findings and Interpretation	1
PLUM - Ordinal Regression	

Case Processing Summary

		Ν	Marginal Percentage
I am definitely moving towards	Completely disagree	8	2.7%
achieving my financial and career goals	Disagree	24	8.1%
Source	Neither disagree or agree	38	12.8%
	Agree	174	58.4%
	Completely agree	54	18.1%
Valid		298	100.0%
Missing		36	
Total		334	

Model Fitting Information

Model	-2 Log Likelihood	Chi-Square	df	Sig.
Intercept Only	707.032			
Final	624.321	82.711	44	.000

Link function: Logit.

Goodness-of-Fit			
	Chi-Square	df	Sig.
Pearson	1179.184	1144	.229
Deviance	624.321	1144	1.000
	•		

Link function: Logit.

Pseudo R-Square		
Cox and Snell	.242	
Nagelkerke	.267	
McFadden	.117	
Link functions Logi	4	

Link function: Logit.

After conducting Correlation (Spearman RHO) and Ordinal regression, the independent variables that were found to be have a statistically significant impact on the dependent variable are flagged in the table below. The nature of the relation (Positive or negative) are also listed in the table.

	Thegeing Statistically significant Correlation and Regression (Correlation	Ordinal
		Spearman	Regression
1	Opportunities given to interacting with adults		
2	Exposure to successful adults	+	+
3	Being a topper in Academics	-	-
4	Being a reader of biographies and other books		
5	Allowed to pursue Talents and Hobbies	-	-
6	Having loving and caring Teachers	+	+
7	Having friends who are strivers and achievers	+	+
8	Encouraged by being told "You can do it"	+	+
9	Encouraged by being told "You will do great things in the future"	+	
10	Demeaned by being told "you are not good enough"		
11	Education level of parents compared to parents of peers	-	-
12	Time spent by parents with the child		
13	Parental support in learning		
14	High expectations expressed by parents		
15	Being encouraged to take part in competitions		
16	Receiving parent's love and care	+	+
17	Getting everything they ask for		-
18	Parents active involvement in school		-
19	Both parents being working professionals		+
20	Parents being hardworking and ambitious		
21	Parents being respected by the community	+	+
22	Being punished by parents for non achievement		
23	Being told "winning is not everything"		-
24	Having no friends and being lonely	-	-
25	Being motivated to follow a disciplined life		
26	Being given responsibilities	+	
27	Being advised to be grateful	+	
28	Motivated to pray		
29	Being compared with others		
30	Being advised to value kindness		
31	Being advised to speak truth and help others	+	
32	Being advised to be precise and correct	+	+
33	Told to adjust without complaining		-
34	Spoken positively about in front of them		
35	Punished physically		
36	Being explained the long term positive outcomes of striving		
36	Celebrating success	+	+
38	Being promised gifts	+	
39	Given lot of freedom		+
40	Being told that "giving up" is never an option		+
41	Given more pocket money compared to peers		
42	Being encouraged to be friendly		
43	Being encouraged to keep things in order		
44	Having sibling competition		

Flagging Statistically significant Correlation and Regression (5% level)

Based on the Correlation analysis, the independent variables (childhood factors) that have a statistically significant correlation with the dependent variable (state of achieving Financial and Career Goals as an adult are)

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Positive Correlation	Negative Correlation		
Exposure to successful adults	Being a topper in Academics		
Having loving and caring Teachers	Allowed to pursue Talents and Hobbies		
Having friends who are strivers and achievers	Education level of parents compared to parents of peers		
Encouraged by being told "You can do it"	Having no friends and being lonely		
Encouraged by being told "You will do great things in the future"			
Receiving parent's love and care			
Parents being respected by the community			
Being given responsibilities			
Being advised to be grateful			
Being advised to speak truth and help others			
Being advised to be precise and correct			
Celebrating success			
Being promised gifts			

Based on the Ordinal Regression analysis, the independent variables (childhood factors) that are statistically significant predictors of the dependent variable (state of achieving Financial and Career Goals as an adult are)

Goals as all adult are)			
Positive Predictors	Negative Predictors		
Exposure to successful adults	Being a topper in Academics		
Having loving and caring Teachers	Allowed to pursue Talents and Hobbies		
Having friends who are strivers and achievers	Education level of parents compared to parents of peers		
Encouraged by being told "You can do it"	Getting everything they ask for		
Receiving parent's love and care	Parents active involvement in school		
Both parents being working professionals	Being told "winning is not everything"		
Parents being respected by the community	Having no friends and being lonely		
Being advised to be precise and correct	Told to adjust without complaining		
Celebrating success			
Given lot of freedom			
Being told that "giving up" is never an option			

Frequency of statistically significant factors across sample (Independent variables)

Rank		Correlation Spearman	Ordinal Regression	%
10	Exposure to successful adults	+	+	52.7%
	Being a topper in Academics	-	-	
12	Allowed to pursue Talents and Hobbies	-	-	49.4%
8	Having loving and caring Teachers	+	+	62.76%
4	Having friends who are strivers and achievers	+	+	71.56%
11	Encouraged by being told "You can do it"	+	+	50.75%
16	Encouraged by being told "You will do great things in the future"	+		42.04%
20	Education level of parents compared to parents of peers	-	-	31.54% (-39.34)
5	Receiving parent's love and care	+	+	69.46%
21	Getting everything they ask for		-	30.03% (-47.15)
18	Parents active involvement in school		-	37.65% (-42.17)
22	Both parents being working professionals		+	24.40%
6	Parents being respected by the community	+		66.67%
17	Being told "winning is not everything"		-	37.84% (-28.53)
23	Having no friends and being lonely	-	-	19.94 % (-66.16)
13	Being given responsibilities	+		46.2%
1	Being advised to be grateful	+		86.41%
2	Being advised to speak truth and help others	+		84.55%
3	Being advised to be precise and correct	+	+	72.59%
7	Told to adjust without complaining		-	64.96%
9	Celebrating success	+	+	53.03%
19	Being promised gifts	+		36.97%
14	Given lot of freedom		+	43.16%
15	Being told that "giving up" is never an option		+	42.73%

Top 5 statistically significant factors in terms of frequency

- 1 Being advised to be grateful
- 2 Being advised to speak truth and help others
- 3 Being advised to be precise and correct
- 4 Having friends who are strivers and achievers
- 5 Receiving parent's love and care

Cross Tabulating Those who completely agreed to success question with statistically significant factors (independent variables)

Rank		Correlation	Ordinal	%
		Spearman	Regression	
12	Exposure to successful adults	+	+	49.2
18	Being a topper in Academics	-	-	26.3
12	Allowed to pursue Talents and Hobbies	-	-	49.2
8	Having loving and caring Teachers	+	+	63.9
6	Having friends who are strivers and achievers	+	+	70.5
9	Encouraged by being told "You can do it"	+	+	55.7
13	Encouraged by being told "You will do great things in the future"	+		47.6
20	Education level of parents compared to parents of peers	-	-	24.6
3	Receiving parent's love and care	+	+	78.7
19	Getting everything they ask for		-	26.2
15	Parents active involvement in school		-	39.3
16	Both parents being working professionals		+	28.3
5	Parents being respected by the community	+	+	72.1
17	Being told "winning is not everything"		-	27.9
21	Having no friends and being lonely	-	-	11.7
11	Being given responsibilities	+		50
1	Being advised to be grateful	+		86.9
2	Being advised to speak truth and help others	+		84.3
4	Being advised to be precise and correct	+	+	77.1
10	Told to adjust without complaining		-	52.5%
7	Celebrating success	+	+	67.3
14	Being promised gifts	+		44.2
13	Given lot of freedom		+	47.6
15	Being told that "giving up" is never an option		+	42.7

Top 5

- 1 Being advised to be grateful
- 2 Being advised to speak truth and help others
- 3 Receiving parent's love and care
- 4 Being advised to be precise and correct
- 5 Parents being respected by the community

Least 5

- 1. Having no friends and being lonely
- 2. Education level of parents compared to parents of peers
- 3. Getting everything they ask for
- 4. Being a topper in Academics
- 5. Being told "winning is not everything"

V. Results

Hypotheses:

From the 33 null hypotheses that were tested, the following 19 hypotheses were rejected after the study

- 1. There is no effect of exposure to successful adults during childhood to Success in life
- The researcher rejects the null hypothesis and accepts the alternative hypothesis that there is a positive effect on Exposure to successful adults during childhood and success in life.
- 2. There is no effect of being a topper in Academics during childhood to Success in life The researcher rejects the null hypothesis and accepts the alternative hypothesis that there is a negative effect of being an Academic Topper during childhood and success in life.
- 3. There is no effect of being Allowed to pursue Talents and Hobbies during childhood to Success in life The researcher rejects the null hypothesis and accepts the alternative hypothesis that there is a negative effect of being allowed to pursue Talents and Hobbies during childhood and success in life.
- 4. There is no effect of having loving and caring Teachers during childhood to Success in life

The researcher rejects the null hypothesis and accepts the alternative hypothesis that there is a positive effect of having loving and caring Teachers during childhood and success in life.

- 5. There is no effect of having friends who are strivers and achievers during childhood to Success in life The researcher rejects the null hypothesis and accepts the alternative hypothesis that there is a positive effect of having friends who are strivers and achievers during childhood and success in life.
- 6. There is no effect of being encouraged by being told "You can do it" during childhood to Success in life The researcher rejects the null hypothesis and accepts the alternative hypothesis that there is a positive effect of being told "You can do it" during childhood and success in life.
- 7. There is no effect of education level of parents compared to parents of peers to Success in life The researcher rejects the null hypothesis and accepts the alternative hypothesis that there is a negative effect of the Parents Higher education level as compared to peers during childhood and success in life.
- 8. There is no effect of receiving parent's love and care during childhood to Success in life The researcher rejects the null hypothesis and accepts the alternative hypothesis that there is a positive effect of receiving Parent's Love and care during childhood and success in life.
- 9. There is no effect of getting everything they ask for during childhood to Success in life The researcher rejects the null hypothesis and accepts the alternative hypothesis that there is a negative effect of getting everything that they asked for during childhood and success in life.
- 10. There is no effect of parents active involvement in school to Success in life The researcher rejects the null hypothesis and accepts the alternative hypothesis that there is a negative effect of the parents active involvement in School during childhood and success in life.
- 11. There is no effect of both parents being working professionals to Success in life The researcher rejects the null hypothesis and accepts the alternative hypothesis that there is a positive effect of both Parents being working professionals during childhood and success in life.
- 12. There is no effect of parents being respected by the community to Success in life The researcher rejects the null hypothesis and accepts the alternative hypothesis that there is a positive effect of parents being respected by the community during childhood and success in life.
- 13. There is no effect of being told "winning is not everything" during childhood to Success in life The researcher rejects the null hypothesis and accepts the alternative hypothesis that there is a negative effect of being told "winning isnt everything" during childhood and success in life.
- 14. There is no effect of having no friends and being lonely during childhood to Success in life The researcher rejects the null hypothesis and accepts the alternative hypothesis that there is a negative effect of having no friends and being lonely during childhood and success in life.
- 15. There is no effect of being advised to be precise and correct during childhood to Success in life The researcher rejects the null hypothesis and accepts the alternative hypothesis that there is a positive effect of being advised to be precise and correct during childhood and success in life.
- 16. There is no effect of told to adjust without complaining during childhood to Success in life The researcher rejects the null hypothesis and accepts the alternative hypothesis that there is a negative effect of being told to adjust without complaining during childhood and success in life.
- 17. There is no effect of celebrating success during childhood to Success in life The researcher rejects the null hypothesis and accepts the alternative hypothesis that there is a positive effect of celebrating success during childhood and success in life.
- 18. There is no effect of being given lot of freedom during childhood to Success in life The researcher rejects the null hypothesis and accepts the alternative hypothesis that there is a positive effect of being given lot of freedom during childhood and success in life.
- 19. There is no effect of being told that "giving up" is never an option during childhood to Success in life The researcher rejects the null hypothesis and accepts the alternative hypothesis that there is a positive effect of being told "giving up is never an option" during childhood and success in life.

VI. Conclusions and Recommendations

As the study confirmed that the factors- Exposure to successful adults, Having loving and caring Teachers, Having friends who are strivers and achievers, Encouraged by being told "You can do it", Receiving parent's love and care, Both parents being working professionals, Parents being respected by the community, Being advised to be precise and correct, Celebrating success, Given lot of freedom and Being told that "giving up" is never an option can positively impact the success of the adult, we should take care to facilitate the following for our children

1. Ensure that they meet and interact with successful and role model adults. Schools should ensure that they invite adults of such profile to address the students. Parents can be part of Social Organizations that honor and recognize such stalwarts. If physical proximity is not possible, parents can motivate children to read biographies of successful people.

2. Teachers must be coached to genuinely care for their students. Schools must initiate programs to recognize Teachers who role model this quality. Teachers must share best practices in demonstrating love and care for their students. Parents must take extra care to build positive relationships between themselves, their children and their Teachers.

3. Parents must constantly keep an eye on the friendship circle of their children and make sure that the children move around with students who are ambitious, confident, disciplined and well mannered. Efforts must be made to make sure that the children interact with high achievers on a regular basis.

4. Parents must create a highly challenging and encouraging atmosphere at home. They must refrain from giving negative unconditional feedback at all cost. Children must be given the confidence and belief that they, with effort can achieve anything.

5. Children must grow up with the perception that they are receiving lots of love and care. It is important that the parents spend quality time with their children and communicate effectively with them. They should constantly evaluate themselves in this are with inputs from their children to ensure that they meeting the highest standards in this area.

6. It was found that both parents being professionals has a positive impact on the success prospects of the child. Hence both parents must strive to have professional working experience. If this is not possible, both parents must at least work part time or volunteer to work in Social Organizations.

7. When the society honors the parents, it serves as a great inspiration for the children, who will then strive to attain the same levels of recognition. Hence parents are advised to earn accolades in the areas of Education , achievements (Career or Business Domain) or work actively in the Society.

8. Children must be brought up by being told that Accuracy and precision is a must have non negotiable quality in their lives. They must be exhorted to pay attention to details and do things right the first time itself. They must be encouraged to set high quality standards themselves.

9. Parents must make it a habit to celebrate the successes of the children. Even the smallest success must be celebrated in order to create an encouraging atmosphere at home.

10. Children must be given freedom, at least on par with their peers. They must be given responsibilities and allowed to be by themselves. After giving clear guidelines and fostering accountability they must be allowed to make decisions with parental support.

11. Children must be repeatedly told that "Giving up is not an option". They should be exhorted to continue what they started till fruition.

As the study confirmed that the factors- Being a topper in Academics, Allowed to pursue Talents and Hobbies, Education level of parents compared to parents of peers, Getting everything they ask for, Parents active involvement in school, Being told "winning is not everything", Having no friends and being lonely and Being told to adjust without complaining can negatively impact success prospects, we should take care to facilitate the following for our children.

12. While children must be exhorted to pursue Academic Honors, parents must ensure that this pursuit doesn't come at the cost of the development of Interpersonal, Communication and Team orientation skills. Parents should strive for the all round development of the child.

13. While parents must support their children to pursue their talents and hobbies, they must not be allowed to forget their other responsibilities. They must ensure that the children also develop the necessary skills to succeed academically and in other key areas. Unless the children are exceptionally gifted, pursuit of talents and hobbies must be just one of the key goals of the child

14. The study found that the increase in the educational level of the parents as compared to peers, lower the success prospects of the children. This could be attributed to the time available for the children. Highly educated parents might be pursuing highly challenging jobs that may restrict the time they have with the kids. While academic challenges must be pursued, this mustn't be at the cost of other parenting responsibilities.

15. This study clearly confirms that giving children everything that they ask for can be highly counterproductive. Hence parents must clearly review their gifting styles to ensure that the children doesn't grow up with a sense of entitlement. They must develop clear policies for gifting and showing affection.

16. This study shows that higher parental involvement is counterproductive. While a healthy level of engagement is very useful for the development of the child, parents must take care not to go overboard in this area. They must constantly take inputs from the teachers and the children themselves to optimize the level of involvement to avoid undue pressure for the child.

17. Children must not be told "winning isn't everything". While parents must strive to develop values in their children, being ambitious and winning must never be under positioned.

18. This study confirms that being lonely and having no friends can be counterproductive for the child's success prospects in later life. Hence parents must strive to develop interpersonal skills in children and ensure that they are in good company.

19. If children are constantly told to adjust without complaining, they may grow up without the necessary assertiveness or self esteem. While flexibility is a good trait to have it must not be at the cost of assertiveness and asking for ones rights.

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