

What Islam says about Parent's role for Children

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Islam places peace, mercy, responsibility, and justice at the center of family life. The family is one of the core institutions of society, and the relationship between parents and children has a direct effect on the moral health of the wider community. When parents raise children with faith, compassion, discipline, and wisdom, they help preserve the social fabric of Muslim society. The Qur'an contains numerous instructions for parents and children, explaining their rights, responsibilities, and proper manners toward one another. Parents are not merely responsible for providing food and shelter, because they must also guide their children spiritually, morally, emotionally, intellectually, and socially. Children, in return, are required to honor their parents, speak respectfully, show gratitude, and care for them, especially during old age. Islamic parenting is therefore based on a relationship of mutual rights and responsibilities rather than authority without accountability.

The Qur'an connects kindness toward parents with worship of Allah. In Surah Al-Isra, Allah commands people to worship Him alone and immediately follows this command with an instruction to honor their parents. Children are told not to express even a minor word of irritation when their parents reach old age, but to speak to them respectfully and pray for Allah to have mercy on them as they were cared for in childhood (Qur'an 17:23-24). These verses reveal the high position of parents in Islam, but they also remind readers why parents deserve this respect. Parents invest years of physical work, emotional care, financial support, patience, and sacrifice in raising their children. Their authority must therefore be exercised responsibly and compassionately. A healthy Islamic family develops when parents fulfill their duties and children respond with gratitude and good conduct.

Children Are a Trust From Allah

Islam explains the spirit of parenting by teaching that children are not simply possessions or sources of worldly pride. They are a trust given by Allah, and parents will be accountable for how they protect, educate, guide, and treat them. This understanding changes parenting from a personal preference into a serious religious responsibility. Parents do not have the right to neglect a child, deny education, cause unnecessary harm, or use authority merely to satisfy their own anger. Their role is to help the child develop into a morally responsible, emotionally secure, educated, and productive human being. The Prophet Muhammad, peace be upon him, taught that every person is a guardian and will be questioned about those placed under his or her care. A father is responsible for his household, and a mother is responsible for the home and children entrusted to her care (Al-Bukhari, 1997, Hadith 7138).

The idea of children as a trust also means that both mothers and fathers have meaningful

responsibilities. Islamic teaching does not treat child development as the responsibility of the mother alone while allowing the father to remain emotionally absent. Fathers must provide financial support, spiritual leadership, protection, affection, and active involvement in education and discipline. Mothers are honored for their pregnancy, childbirth, nursing, care, sacrifice, and daily influence, but their responsibilities should not be used to excuse paternal neglect. Parents should cooperate and make decisions according to the child's welfare rather than competing for control. Even when parents separate or divorce, the child should not be used as a weapon in their conflict. Islamic family responsibility continues because the child's physical and emotional needs do not disappear when the parents' relationship changes.

Valuable Investment

The original article describes children as a valuable investment, and this idea can be understood in both spiritual and practical terms. Surah Al-Kahf explains that wealth and children are an adornment of worldly life, while lasting good deeds are better in reward and hope before Allah (Qur'an 18:46). Children bring happiness, affection, companionship, and meaning to family life, but parents should not value them only as symbols of status or personal achievement. A child's grades, career, appearance, marriage, or income should not become a source of competition through which parents attempt to impress other people. The true value of parenting lies in raising a person of faith, integrity, knowledge, mercy, and social responsibility. A well-raised child may benefit the family, community, and future generations through good character and useful work. Parenting becomes a valuable investment when it is directed toward lasting righteousness rather than temporary pride.

Children are a great blessing from Allah, and family life can be enlightened when parents take this trust seriously. Grooming children according to the will of Allah involves teaching them what is lawful and unlawful while also helping them understand the wisdom behind religious values. It requires patience because moral development occurs gradually and children learn through repetition, observation, conversation, correction, and experience. Parents should not expect a young child to display the maturity of an adult or respond perfectly after one instruction. They should provide age-appropriate guidance and allow children to ask honest questions about faith, worship, relationships, and society. A child who feels safe asking questions is more likely to seek guidance from the family rather than relying on unreliable sources. Parents protect their children spiritually when they combine clear teaching with love, credibility, and personal example.

Mutual Gain and Loss

An ideal Islamic society can be supported when children are nurtured according to Islamic teachings. However, raising children is also described as a test of parental commitment, wisdom, patience, and self-control. Surah At-Taghabun states that wealth and children are a test and that a great reward is with Allah (Qur'an 64:15). This verse does not describe children as inherently harmful but warns

parents that family love can become a source of moral failure. A parent may excuse dishonesty, injustice, extravagance, or unlawful conduct because of excessive attachment to a child. Parents may also become so focused on earning money for their children that they neglect prayer, emotional involvement, or ethical guidance. Success in this test requires loving children deeply without violating religious and moral obligations for their sake.

The parent-child relationship can produce both mutual gain and mutual loss. Parents who provide loving and righteous guidance may receive respect, affection, support, and prayers from their children. Children who grow up in a secure and principled home benefit from moral direction, emotional stability, education, and a strong sense of identity. In contrast, neglectful parenting may contribute to resentment, insecurity, poor behavior, or distance within the family. Children can also hurt parents through disrespect, abandonment, manipulation, or refusal to provide reasonable care in old age. Islam therefore assigns duties to both generations rather than blaming only parents or only children for every family problem. Harmony develops when each side recognizes the other's dignity, rights, limitations, and sacrifices.

Spiritual and Moral Education

One of the most important parental responsibilities in Islam is teaching faith and moral conduct. The Qur'an instructs believers to protect themselves and their families from the Fire, indicating that spiritual guidance begins within the household (Qur'an 66:6). Parents should teach children about Allah, prayer, honesty, gratitude, modesty, justice, forgiveness, charity, and responsibility. This education should not consist only of commands or punishments because children also need explanations and living examples. Parents who demand truthfulness while regularly lying teach a lesson more powerful than their words. Similarly, parents who tell children to pray but consistently neglect prayer weaken the credibility of their instruction. Islamic education becomes effective when children see religious values practiced calmly and consistently in daily family life.

Surah Luqman provides a valuable model of a parent or elder advising a child with wisdom and affection. Luqman addresses his son gently and teaches him not to associate partners with Allah. He then advises him to establish prayer, encourage what is right, discourage wrongdoing, remain patient during difficulties, avoid arrogance, walk moderately, and lower his voice (Qur'an 31:13-19). This passage combines belief, worship, social responsibility, patience, humility, and manners. It demonstrates that Islamic education is not limited to memorizing religious information. A child should learn how faith influences speech, behavior, relationships, public conduct, and responses to hardship. Parents can follow this example by making moral education a continuous conversation rather than a collection of angry lectures.

Parents should also help children establish prayer with patience and consistency. Surah Taha commands the Prophet to instruct his family to pray and remain steadfast in doing so (Qur'an 20:132). Parents can introduce prayer gradually, explain its meaning, pray with their children, and

create a family routine that makes worship part of ordinary life. Harshness may produce temporary compliance without creating genuine love for worship. On the other hand, complete indifference may leave children without the habits they need later in life. Effective guidance combines encouragement, structure, reminders, and appropriate consequences. Parents should remember that their duty is to teach and guide sincerely, while final guidance belongs to Allah.

Love Mercy and Emotional Security

Children need emotional security as much as they need food, clothing, and education. The Prophet Muhammad, peace be upon him, demonstrated affection toward children and openly expressed love and tenderness. When a man stated that he had ten children but had never kissed any of them, the Prophet explained that a person who does not show mercy will not be shown mercy (Al-Bukhari, 1997, Hadith 5997). This teaching challenges the idea that emotional distance makes a parent strong or authoritative. Children benefit when parents listen, show affection, praise sincere effort, and create a home in which mistakes can be discussed. Love does not mean accepting every behavior or removing all boundaries. It means correcting children without humiliating them or making them doubt that they are valued.

Emotional care also requires parents to understand that children differ in personality, ability, health, sensitivity, and pace of development. A method that motivates one child may discourage another. Constant comparison with siblings, cousins, classmates, or neighbors can damage confidence and create jealousy. Parents should recognize effort and improvement rather than valuing children only for high grades or public success. They should also pay attention to signs of anxiety, sadness, bullying, social isolation, or other emotional difficulties. Seeking professional medical or psychological support when necessary does not indicate weak faith. Responsible parenting uses every lawful and beneficial means available to protect the child's well-being.

Physical Care and Financial Support

Islam requires parents to protect the physical health and basic needs of their children. This responsibility includes suitable food, clothing, shelter, medical care, safety, hygiene, and protection from abuse. Surah Al-Baqarah discusses nursing and states that a child's father must provide reasonable maintenance and clothing for the mother during the nursing period according to his means (Qur'an 2:233). The verse also teaches that neither parent should be made to suffer because of the child. This principle supports cooperation, fairness, and consideration of each person's capacity. Parents should not waste family resources on unnecessary displays while neglecting education, nutrition, healthcare, or stable housing. Providing for children is an act of responsibility and worship when it is done through lawful earnings and sincere intention.

Financial support should be balanced because both deprivation and uncontrolled indulgence can harm

children. Parents should meet genuine needs but also teach children gratitude, patience, budgeting, generosity, and the difference between needs and desires. Giving a child everything requested may create entitlement rather than happiness. At the same time, refusing reasonable needs despite having the ability to provide may create insecurity or resentment. Children should gradually learn that money is earned through effort and must be used ethically. Parents can involve older children in simple financial decisions and encourage charitable giving. This approach prepares them to manage resources responsibly in adulthood.

Education and Social Development

Parents are responsible for helping children acquire both religious and worldly knowledge. Reading, writing, science, mathematics, history, communication, technology, vocational skills, and critical thinking can enable children to support themselves and contribute to society. Religious education should not be used as an excuse to neglect useful academic or professional learning. Similarly, academic achievement should not replace moral education and spiritual development. Children need guidance that integrates faith with responsible participation in the modern world. Parents should communicate with teachers, support appropriate study habits, and respond to genuine learning difficulties. Education becomes meaningful when knowledge develops good judgment, service, and ethical conduct rather than pride alone.

Healthy social interaction is another important part of child development. Children learn cooperation, communication, boundaries, conflict resolution, empathy, and responsibility through family and community relationships. Parents should know their children's friends and online activities without creating an atmosphere of constant suspicion. They should teach digital safety, privacy, respectful communication, and the dangers of harmful online material. Children also need appropriate recreation, physical activity, creativity, and rest because development is not limited to study and formal worship. As the related discussion that children need to play suggests, play supports learning, language, social competence, and emotional health. A balanced Islamic upbringing recognizes the child as a complete person with spiritual, intellectual, physical, and social needs.

Justice Among Children

Justice is a fundamental responsibility in Islamic parenting. The Prophet instructed parents to fear Allah and treat their children justly when one companion wanted him to witness a gift that had not been given equally to the other children (Al-Bukhari, 1997, Hadith 2587). This teaching warns parents against favoritism that creates jealousy and lasting family conflict. Justice does not always require giving every child the exact same object or amount because individual needs may differ. One child may require medical treatment, educational support, or assistance because of disability or financial hardship. However, differences should be based on genuine need and reasonable judgment rather than gender, appearance, obedience, academic achievement, or personal preference. Parents should

be able to explain their decisions honestly and avoid treating one child as more valuable than another.

Justice also includes giving children fair opportunities to speak and be heard. Parents sometimes assume that age or authority makes every parental judgment correct. Islam gives parents a respected position but does not make them free from error or accountability. A child may have a legitimate complaint about punishment, unequal treatment, privacy, education, or family expectations. Listening does not require the parent to agree with every request. It allows decisions to be based on better information and teaches the child respectful communication. Parents who admit mistakes demonstrate humility and make it easier for children to accept responsibility for their own errors.

Discipline With Wisdom

Discipline is necessary because children need boundaries, routines, and consequences. However, Islamic discipline should aim to teach and reform rather than release parental anger. Humiliation, insults, threats, public shaming, and physical abuse can damage the child's trust and emotional development. Parents should first clarify expectations, explain the reason for a rule, and apply consequences consistently. A consequence should be proportionate to the behavior and appropriate for the child's age and understanding. Parents should avoid disciplining children while overwhelmed by rage because uncontrolled anger can turn correction into cruelty. After correction, the child should understand how to repair the mistake and return to a healthy relationship with the family.

Discipline is more effective when parents examine the cause of behavior instead of reacting only to its visible form. A child may become aggressive because of bullying, fear, family conflict, exhaustion, jealousy, or difficulty expressing emotions. Poor academic performance may result from a learning problem rather than laziness. Repeated dishonesty may indicate that the child is afraid of an extreme parental reaction. Understanding the cause does not remove accountability, but it helps parents choose an appropriate response. Islamic wisdom requires justice and mercy to operate together. A home built only on fear may produce obedience in the parents' presence but secrecy and resentment when they are absent.

Pleasure of Parents and the Pleasure of Allah

Good behavior toward parents is an important part of Islamic faith and character. The Prophet Muhammad, peace be upon him, is reported to have said that the pleasure of the Lord is connected with the pleasure of the parent and the anger of the Lord with the parent's anger (Al-Tirmidhi, 2007, Hadith 1899). This hadith emphasizes the seriousness of disrespecting or deliberately hurting righteous parents. Children should speak politely, provide reasonable help, maintain contact, and avoid treating elderly parents as a burden. They should also pray for their parents and remember their sacrifices. When parents need care because of illness or old age, children should cooperate

rather than leaving all responsibility to one sibling. Serving parents can become a major act of worship when it is performed sincerely and patiently.

The statement should not be misunderstood to mean that every parental demand automatically represents the will of Allah. A parent may act unfairly, become angry without justification, or command something prohibited. Children should still avoid unnecessary insult or cruelty, but they are not required to participate in wrongdoing. Islam combines respect for parents with obedience to Allah as the highest moral authority. A person can disagree respectfully and maintain good conduct even when refusing an unlawful demand. This balance protects the dignity of parents without turning parental authority into absolute control. The pleasure of parents is sought through goodness, service, and lawful obedience rather than through participation in injustice.

Obedience Within Islamic Limits

The original article describes the child's duty as total submission, but Islamic teaching places a clear limit on obedience. The Prophet stated that there is no obedience in an act of disobedience and that obedience applies only to what is right (Al-Bukhari, 1997, Hadith 7257). The Qur'an gives a similar principle when discussing parents who pressure a child to associate partners with Allah. The child must not obey that command, but must continue to accompany the parents with kindness in worldly matters (Qur'an 31:15). This instruction shows that refusal and respect can exist together. Children should not use minor disagreements as an excuse for rebellion, but parents should not use religious language to demand control over every lawful personal choice. Family decisions should be guided by consultation, wisdom, experience, and the limits established by Islam.

As children become adults, the parental role naturally changes. Parents remain deserving of respect, but adult sons and daughters also become responsible for their own marriages, careers, homes, finances, and religious accountability. Parents can advise and express concerns, especially when they possess relevant experience. However, continuous interference may damage marriages and prevent adult children from developing sound judgment. Adult children should avoid dismissing their parents arrogantly and should listen carefully even when they reach a different conclusion. Parents, in return, should distinguish between sincere guidance and an attempt to control lawful decisions. Strong family relationships are maintained when authority gradually develops into consultation, mutual respect, and support.

Righteous Children as a Continuing Reward

The original article correctly explains that righteous children can continue benefiting their parents after death. The Prophet Muhammad, peace be upon him, stated that when a person dies, ordinary deeds end except for continuing charity, beneficial knowledge, and a righteous child who prays for the deceased (Muslim, 2007, Hadith 1631). This hadith gives parenting a long-term spiritual dimension.

Parents who teach faith, honesty, charity, and useful knowledge may continue receiving reward when their children practice and transmit these values. However, parents should not raise children only as a source of personal reward. Children have their own dignity, responsibilities, and relationship with Allah. The continuing reward arises from sincere guidance and the good that follows from it.

A righteous child is not necessarily one who achieves wealth, fame, or a prestigious profession. Righteousness includes faith, honesty, mercy, lawful conduct, service, humility, and respect for the rights of others. Parents can encourage these qualities by demonstrating them rather than merely speaking about them. A child who sees generosity is more likely to understand charity, and a child who receives forgiveness is more likely to forgive. Parents should also pray for their children, as the Qur'an includes prayers for righteous spouses and descendants who bring comfort to the eyes (Qur'an 25:74). Prayer should accompany action rather than replace responsible parenting. Parents must seek Allah's help while continuing to teach, listen, protect, and improve themselves.

Conclusion

Islam gives parents a respected but highly accountable role in raising children. Children are blessings, an adornment of worldly life, a valuable trust, and a test of parental faith and responsibility. Parents must provide physical care, emotional security, education, moral guidance, spiritual instruction, justice, mercy, and appropriate discipline. They should teach through personal example and create a home where children can communicate honestly without losing respect for authority. Children are required to honor their parents, speak kindly, assist them, pray for them, and avoid disobedience in lawful matters. However, obedience is limited when parents command sin or injustice, and disagreement should still be expressed respectfully. The Islamic parent-child relationship succeeds when rights and duties are fulfilled on both sides with love, patience, fairness, and consciousness of Allah.

May Allah have mercy upon our parents, forgive their shortcomings, reward their sacrifices, and guide parents to fulfill the trust placed upon them. May He protect children physically, emotionally, intellectually, and spiritually. May He give families the wisdom to combine discipline with mercy and authority with accountability. Parents should remember that their children observe their conduct more closely than they listen to their instructions. Children should remember that many parental sacrifices remain invisible until they become adults themselves. Strong Muslim families are not created through fear, wealth, or social appearance, but through faith, service, communication, justice, and compassion. May Allah bind the hearts of parents and children together in goodness. Ameen.

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