

What We Can Learn from “Caveman” Parenting

A University of Notre Dame professor suggests that parents can learn parenting tips from their ancestors.

Prehistoric parenting was directly related to survival. Research shows their parenting methods are good for today’s kids.

With “caveman” parenting:

Kids had multiple care-givers. Extended families lived close together. More than one person could easily provide care and protect babies and kids. Family members took the loneliness out of parenting. Kids learned that all family members had roles to play. Everyone helped each other and kept the family safe.

Babies did not have to cry for long periods of time.

Someone met their needs before they got upset. This prevented stress on their little brains. Research tells us that babies do not have much self-control. They need caregivers to help during times of stress. Cave babies had caring adults to help them stay in control until they learned self-comfort skills.

Many adults held and cared for the babies.

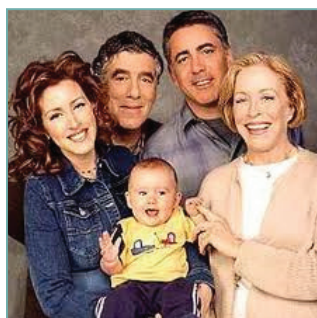
Research shows that infants who are held and cuddled grow and develop.

Kids enjoyed non-structured free play.

Nature was their playground. Free play outdoors makes kids happier, healthier and smarter. It nourishes the spirit and reduces stress and anxiety. TV’s, computers, video games and team activities take time away from free play.

All mothers breastfed babies. The World Health Organization (WHO) recommends that babies breastfeed for up to 2 years. They believe that breastfeeding reduces child deaths. It gives babies health benefits that extend into adulthood.

Adults, older kids, peers and younger kids talked to kids. They heard words and watched how people spoke words. Doctors recommend no screen-time for babies 18 months and younger. Watching TV actually decreases the number of words a child hears and learns. Distracted parents pay less attention to their children.



Maybe, the “caveman’s” life is just what kids need today.

Brought to you by Parent Help Line at HSHS St. John’s Children’s Hospital to help keep kids safe, healthy and happy.



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