

# PARENTING THE ALIENATED CHILD

Connecting with Lost Hearts



LORETTA MAASE

# **PARENTING THE ALIENATED CHILD**

## ABOUT THE AUTHOR



**Loretta Maase, M.A., LPC** is a Licensed Professional Counselor with over 25 years of expertise in family dynamics and parental alienation. Recognized as a leading expert in dysfunctional family relationships, she has been qualified as an expert witness across 13 states and successfully passed several Daubert challenges.

Ms. Maase completed over 10,000 hours of specialized training with renowned experts, including 5,000+ hours with former Harvard Medical School professor Dr. Steven Miller and 7,000+ hours with Linda Gottlieb, LMFT, who trained under family therapy pioneer Dr. Salvador Minuchin.

Through her practice, Turning Points for Families - Texas,

Ms. Maase conducts forensic evaluations, provides intensive therapy for disrupted parent-child relationships, and serves as a nationwide expert witness.

Ms. Maase holds a Master of Arts in Counseling/Family Therapy from Webster University and a Bachelor of Arts in Child Development and Psychology from the University of New Mexico. Her master's thesis on Meeting Children's Developmental Needs in High Conflict Environments, reflects her early commitment to understanding the complex needs of children caught in family conflict.

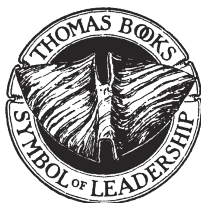
A member of the Parental Alienation Study Group, she has developed evidence-based programs for high-conflict families and presents at national conferences. *Parenting the Alienated Child: Reconnecting Lost Hearts* represents her decades of clinical experience helping families heal from parental alienation.

# PARENTING THE ALIENATED CHILD

**Reconnecting with Lost Hearts**

*By*

**LORETTA MAASE, LPC**



**CHARLES C THOMAS • PUBLISHER • LTD.**  
*Springfield • Illinois • U.S.A.*



*Published and Distributed Throughout the World by*

CHARLES C THOMAS • PUBLISHER, LTD.  
2600 South First Street  
Springfield, Illinois 62704

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ISBN 978-0-398-09485-0 (paper)  
ISBN 978-0-398-09486-7 (ebook)

Library of Congress Catalog Card Number: 2025036402 (print)  
2025036403 (ebook)

*With THOMAS BOOKS careful attention is given to all details of manufacturing  
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*Printed in the United States of America  
LD-C-1*

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

Names: Maase, Loretta author

Title: Parenting the alienated child : reconnecting with lost hearts / by  
Loretta Maase, LPC.

Description: Springfield, Illinois : Charles C Thomas, Publisher, Ltd,  
[2025] | Includes bibliographical references and index.

Identifiers: LCCN 2025036402 (print) | LCCN 2025036403 (ebook) | ISBN  
9780398094850 paperback | ISBN 9780398094867 ebook

Subjects: LCSH: Parental alienation syndrome | Parent and child |  
Dysfunctional families

Classification: LCC RJ506.P27 .M23 2025 (print) | LCC RJ506.P27 (ebook)

LC record available at <https://lcn.loc.gov/2025036402>

LC ebook record available at <https://lcn.loc.gov/2025036403>

*To the countless children—past, present, and future—who have felt the painful absence of a parent’s love through the experience of parental alienation, and to the families who continue to hold hope in their hearts: this book is for you.*

*Your childhoods began with promise, joy, and connection—and they deserve to be whole again. May these pages offer understanding, strength, and direction to the parents and loved ones who are walking the difficult road toward healing and reunification.*

*May this work serve as a steady light in the darkness, a reminder that even the most fractured bonds can be mended. Every child deserves the love of both parents—and every family touched by alienation deserves a path back to wholeness.*

*“Love never fails... When I was a child, I talked like a child, I thought like a child, I reasoned like a child. When I became a man, I put the ways of childhood behind me... And now these three remain: faith, hope and love. But the greatest of these is love.”*

*1 Corinthians 13:8, 11, 13 (NIV)*



## What people are saying about ...

### ***PARENTING THE ALIENATED CHILD***

“This new book, *Parenting the Alienated Child* by Loretta Maase, occupies an important niche in parental alienation scholarship—what to do and what to say when trying to nurture an angry, rejecting child. The book’s foundation is an understanding of normal child and adolescent development; perhaps the most obvious example is distinguishing a typical teenager’s occasional defiance and disrespect from an alienated youngster’s persistent animosity and rejection. *Parenting the Alienated Child* has dozens of sample conversations regarding many topics, for example, ways to tactfully challenge a child’s false beliefs. This book will be helpful not just for parents themselves, but also for the counselors, therapists, and coaches who provide guidance for parents who are struggling with alienation in their families.”

**William Bernet, M.D.**

*Professor Emeritus*

*Department of Psychiatry and Behavioral Sciences*

*Vanderbilt University School of Medicine*

*Nashville, Tennessee, USA*

“Parenting your child while navigating alienation dynamics is akin to drinking from a firehose. Not only is the parent trapped in an emotional roller coaster of his or her own emotions, but the related enmeshed family dynamics of adultification, parentification, and infantilization that are often present in these cases makes it extremely difficult to parent the alienated child (or a child exposed to parental alienating behaviors).

“It is not uncommon for parents who are caught in this maelstrom of family dynamics to have overwhelming feelings of frustration and despair: Damned if I do and damned if I don’t! Often, this frustration and despair results into the rejected parent lashing out at the child, or the favored parent, or against the “system,” on social media platforms and elsewhere. Such poor reaction is then confused and conflated with causation of the child’s rejection of the parent, creating further complexity.

“Loretta Maase’s new book, *Parenting the Alienated Child*, is a shining beacon of hope. It not only offers parents helpful, practical suggestions on dealing with children’s rejection, hostility, defiance, and disrespect, but also



provides valuable insight into the alienation dynamics. Ms. Maase's book is a must-read for every parent who is dealing with parental alienation, and every professional who is assisting or guiding such a parent."

**Ashish Joshi**

*Attorney specializing in cases involving  
Family Violence and author of Litigating  
Parental Alienation: Evaluating and  
Presenting an Effective Case in Court (ABA, 2021)*

"Reunification therapy for parental alienation has been the subject of much controversy and misinformation. Loretta Maase is a therapist who is at the cutting edge of reunification therapy for families who have been afflicted by parental alienation. Her new book *Parenting the Alienated Child: Reconnecting Lost Hearts* is a major contribution toward shattering misinformation about reunification therapy. Throughout its pages, the reader can see the solid foundation of this therapy which is rooted in the science of family systems therapy. The reader will also see how a master therapist treats clients with sensitivity and realistic goals.

"Reunification therapy for alienation is difficult work, and Maase prepares parents for the challenge both in the therapy and in helping them to understand the mindset and developmental stages of children who have been disconnected from their parents for many years. It is obvious from this book that Maase's heart and soul is in the trenches with her clients as she feels their pain. This book will undoubtedly give the public, therapists and policymakers an enhanced understanding of the effectiveness, safety, and need for parental alienation reunification therapy."

**Yaakov Aichenbaum**

*Parental alienation misinformation advocate*

"This is a painful book to read as a parent who lost my children to alienation for over a year and, with Loretta's help, not only won full custody but finally won back their hearts and minds. Reading it—especially chapter 21—was so hard and sad for me, a triggering reminder of where we were not so long ago with the kids being disrespectful and downright hateful to me. Chapter 22 was a terrifying glimpse into where we could have gone without your help.

"Yet this book is also a roadmap of hope, filled with practical, applicable, 'tried and true' wisdom for the alienation journey and beyond. You have so much wisdom and have surprised me with your insights again and again—so practical, doable, and compassionate. The book is amazing and clear, and you perfectly embody the 'nurturing authoritative' parent as you present loving understanding alongside cold hard (helpful) truths. Wow!!!!!!

Parenting is intensely difficult in the most normal of situations, but parenting after being alienated takes extra patience, sensitivity, guidance and sometimes superhuman strength. I'm deeply saddened for any parents still experiencing this and for all the children suffering. Loretta and her book are literally a godsend and are sure to give answers and direction to anyone needing support in this often misunderstood area. May God bring peace and reunification to all his children soon."

### **Love and infinite gratitude, Rina**

"I wish I would have had this book ten years ago. After a decade of dealing with my children being alienated and seeing the emotional and psychological toll it took on them with very little understanding in the beginning of what was happening Loretta's book would have been invaluable. As I read it, I felt as though the behavior describing, both the alienator, myself, and my children during the process was taken directly from our lives. Having no idea what was happening much less how to respond to it at the time left me with a feeling of hopelessness and constant loss. Watching your children be emotionally and psychologically abused with no idea how to stop it and the family court system only making it worse is something I would not wish on my worst enemy. The advice and techniques for responding to alienated children are invaluable to anyone going through this hell."

### **Scott Sherrill**

"As an alienated parent, I've often been told I focus too much on the alienation. But when your child is slowly turned against you through secret, emotional abuse, how could you not focus on it? If your child were being physically beaten every night, no one would ask you to 'move on'—but when the abuse is emotional, suddenly it's dismissed or misunderstood.

"This book helped me see the importance of knowing what's 'normal'—so I can better understand, document, and share what's not. It helped me realize that while not everything is alienation, recognizing what is (and what isn't) is critical, especially when communicating with professionals and the courts.

"This message is too important to be brushed off as just another 'Karen complaint.' We don't get many chances to be heard—so we have to make it count."

### **— An Alienated Mother**

"There is no one-size-fits-all solution for alienated parents, but one common challenge we face is having to tread carefully when parenting an alienated child. Loretta Maase captures the feelings of many alienated parents and

highlights what we often think but struggle to understand. How do I love a child that is just so awful to me? As a mother of an alienated son, I always wondered if he'd ever let me nurture and love him like before. I'll never forget when he last described me as caring in front of the therapist. I knew deep down his authentic self was there, but would I always have to walk on eggshells? No one shows you how to pick up where you left off.

*"Parenting the Alienated Child: Reconnecting with Lost Hearts* provides insightful lessons on reassessing your alienated child's cryptic cues, while remaining hopeful after letting go. Thank you, Loretta, for your incredible work and unwavering advocacy."

**Claudia Ovalles**

## FOREWORD

Parental alienation represents one of the most complex and challenging family dynamics that courts, attorneys, and mental health professionals encounter. This phenomenon creates unique circumstances that defy conventional wisdom about family relationships and child behavior. Regardless of one's role in an alienation case, the primary focus must always be addressing the underlying clinical issue: the psychological harm being inflicted upon the child through the alienating dynamics.

Children experiencing parental alienation suffer significant impairment of their overall emotional and psychological well-being. Alienated children often display emotional instability, distorted thinking patterns, and alarming behavioral changes that leave the alienated parent feeling confused and overwhelmed. The child's altered functioning creates extraordinary parenting challenges that do not respond to traditional approaches. This leaves alienated parents searching for guidance in situations that seem impossible to navigate.

Despite the substantial scientific recognition of parental alienation and its harmful effects on children, alienated parents encounter a troubling gap in available resources. Until now, there has been a notable absence of practical, evidence-based guidance specifically designed to help alienated parents understand and respond effectively to their children's complex needs and bewildering behaviors.

*Parenting the Alienated Child* fills this critical void, offering alienated parents the tools and understanding they need to navigate these challenging circumstances while prioritizing their children's well-being.

Ms. Loretta Maase, LPC, is an accomplished, internationally respected therapist who has filled this literary vacuum with a seminal parenting treatise. In her book, *Parenting the Alienated Child*, Ms. Maase provides a comprehensive, clinically-informed—yet easily digestible—guide for parents who are experiencing alienation. Ms. Maase's treatise represents a significant contribution to the scientific community, for both parenting in general and for parenting an alienated child specifically.



*Parenting an Alienated Child* offers practical interventions that are grounded in developmental psychology, family systems therapy, attachment theory, and trauma-informed treatment principles. Specifically recognizing the unmatched influence that parents have over their children, Ms. Maase's treatise provides the wisdom and encouragement needed by alienated parents for them to manage and inspire their children to better cope with their insufferable situation.

Ms. Maase's expertise is reflected in her nuanced understanding of the paradoxical nature of parenting within an alienating dynamic. Alienated parents frequently find themselves entrapped by insufferable double-bind situations in which traditional parenting approaches may inadvertently exacerbate the alienation process. Ms. Maase skillfully addresses these complex scenarios, providing readers with concrete strategies that respect both the child's developmental needs and the parent's authentic desire to maintain a healthy relationship.

With real-life examples from her practice, Ms. Maase keeps the reader engrossed in the book, motivated to think about the most effective parenting resolution to the many double-binds and crises occurring in alienation, and—most crucially—to understand the heart-wrenching pain that regularly confronts alienated children and alienated parents.

What distinguishes this volume is its integration of child development science with the practical realities faced by alienated families. Rather than offering simplistic solutions, the author acknowledges the multifaceted nature of alienation while empowering parents with tools to navigate these challenging waters with confidence and therapeutic precision.

For professionals working with high-conflict families and parents seeking evidence-based guidance, this book serves as both a theoretical foundation and a practical roadmap for healing damaged parent-child relationships while prioritizing the child's psychological well-being.

This work arrives at a crucial moment when the field demands more sophisticated, compassionate approaches to one of family law's most challenging phenomena. Ms. Maase has delivered exactly what the community has been hoping for: a thoughtful, comprehensive resource that honors both the science of child development and the lived experiences of alienated families.

*Parenting the Alienated Child* guides alienated parents in resolving ongoing double-bind parenting dilemmas, such as: (1) Do I enforce my parenting time and be accused of not respecting my children's wishes for no contact, or do I not enforce my parenting time and be accused of abandoning my child? (2) Do I show up to watch my child play and be accused of stalking, or do I not show up and be accused of not caring? (3) Do I give my child a gift and be accused of bribing my child for contact, or do I not give that

extra gift and be accused of being miserly with my child? (4) Do I inquire about my child's activities, health, school, and friendships and be accused of violating their boundaries, or do I not inquire and be accused of showing no interest? (5) Do I set appropriate limits on my child's reprehensible treatment of me and risk being accused of emotional abuse, or do I overlook my child's intolerable behaviors and be accused of being an incompetent parent, and also feeling not very good about myself? (6) Do I show the affection to my child that we always shared and risk being accused of sexually abusing my child, to say nothing about being rebuffed by my child?

When parenting the alienated child, Ms. Maase crucially emphasizes that alienated parents must always be mindful that their children are victims—victims at the hands of and coercive control by their alienating parents. Alienating parents have turned the world of their children upside down and pulled the rug out from under them. They have brainwashed their children to doubt their own reality, to relinquish their love and need for their alienated parent, and to sacrifice their relationship with their alienated parent as the price to pay to retain the support and approval of their alienating parent.

*Parenting the alienated child* fills a critical void, offering alienated parents the tools and understanding they need to navigate these challenging circumstances while prioritizing their children's long-term well-being. It serves as an essential resource—a must-read for alienated parents seeking effective strategies, mental health professionals working with these challenging cases, and legal professionals who are charged with helping these families find their way through one of the most difficult experiences a parent and child can face.

Linda J. Gottlieb, LMFT-LCSW-R



## **INTRODUCTION: WHY UNDERSTANDING CHILD DEVELOPMENT AND PARENTING STRATEGIES MATTER IN A BOOK ABOUT PARENTAL ALIENATION**

**B**efore tackling the unique challenges of parenting an alienated child, it is essential to first explore the fundamentals of child development and effective parenting strategies. This foundation is particularly crucial for parents who have lost time with their children, faced difficulties in maintaining contact with them, or have experienced alienation.

Rebuilding the parent-child relationship—whether by increasing parenting time, re-establishing contact, or reconnecting after a long separation—can be an overwhelming process. One of the greatest challenges is recognizing and adjusting to children’s natural developmental changes while distinguishing between alienated behaviors and typical expressions of independence, quest for autonomy, questioning authority, or occasional defiance and disrespect.

By recognizing the differences between normal developmental stages and alienating behaviors, parents can better navigate the challenges they may encounter while working to rebuild their relationship with their children. For example, a child who once enjoyed being held and tickled may no longer feel comfortable with that type of play. A teenager who previously shared everything with their parent may now seem distant and more focused on friendships. These shifts can be confusing and sometimes painful for parents who have been absent due to external circumstances, leading them to misinterpret natural developmental changes as signs of rejection or alienation.

### **RECOGNIZING DEVELOPMENTAL CHANGES IN THE CONTEXT OF PARENTAL ALIENATION**

When parents finally have the opportunity to reconnect with their children, they may be unprepared for the developmental changes that have taken place during their time apart. A child’s natural shift toward independence can sometimes be misinterpreted as rejection. For example, a parent might feel hurt if their child prefers spending time with friends rather than them. However, it is essential



to step back and consider whether this behavior is a normal developmental milestone rather than a sign of alienation or external interference.

Children and teenagers go through distinct stages of growth, with their social priorities evolving over time. Adolescents, in particular, tend to prioritize friendships and peer interactions, often engaging less with their parents. This shift is a natural part of development and should not be automatically viewed as a deliberate attempt to create distance. Recognizing this distinction can help parents avoid misunderstandings, reduce tension, and navigate reunification more effectively.

### **Differentiating Between Parental Alienation and Developmental Growth**

Parents who have experienced alienation or prolonged separation from their children often struggle to determine whether their child's reluctance to engage stems from outside influence or is simply a part of growing up. A clear understanding of child development can help parents distinguish between natural behavioral changes and those shaped by external factors. Key considerations include:

- Age-Appropriate Behavior - Understanding whether a child's actions align with typical developmental milestones allows parents to set realistic expectations.
- Emotional Readiness - Children may need time to process their emotions before fully engaging with a parent they haven't seen in a while.
- Parental Sensitivity - Approaching reunification with patience, empathy, and understanding can foster a healthier and more positive parent-child relationship.

By recognizing the balance between developmental independence and potential signs of alienation, parents can better support their child's emotional well-being while strengthening their connection.

### **THE IMPORTANCE OF A THOUGHTFUL APPROACH TO REUNIFICATION**

This is why we begin Part 1 of this book with a deep dive into child development and effective parenting strategies. Parents who are reunifying with their children or increasing their time with them will benefit significantly from understanding how to assess developmental changes versus the impact of parental alienation. By equipping themselves with knowledge and strategies, parents can create a supportive and welcoming environment that fosters trust and connection with their children.

Rebuilding relationships takes time, but with awareness and appropriate parenting techniques, parents can navigate these transitions more smoothly.

and cultivate stronger bonds with their children. The key is to remain patient, adaptable, and committed to understanding the child's perspective while fostering a nurturing environment for reconnection.

Having looked at child development and parenting strategies, we now turn to the myriad issues alienated parents face as they learn about and cope with the often overwhelming emotional, legal, and financial hurdles they face when parenting the alienated child.

## **AUTHORITATIVE NURTURING PARENTING**

Throughout this book, we will explore the meaning and application of Authoritative Nurturing Parenting, a resilient, relationship-centered approach that integrates emotional warmth with firm, respectful structure to guide children through challenging behaviors and difficult family transitions, particularly in the context of divorce.

Grounded in child development science, this parenting style empowers parents to lead with both empathy and strength. By employing the Socratic Method to foster effective communication and offering age-appropriate choices with consistent, logical consequences, parents learn to view discipline not as punishment, but as a tool to teach responsibility, rebuild trust, and nurture emotional security.

The *Authoritative Nurturing Parent* remains calm and steady in the face of rejection or provocation, modeling self-regulation while avoiding power struggles and reactive discipline. This approach emphasizes setting clear boundaries while providing a safe, stable presence that children can depend on during turbulent times.

This methodology proves especially effective for families navigating high-conflict transitions, where traditional parenting approaches may fall short. By stabilizing the parent-child bond through consistent, nurturing guidance, Authoritative Nurturing Parenting helps guide children back to mutual respect and understanding, even when they are hurting or resistant.

As we progress through the following chapters, you will discover how to implement these principles in practical, everyday situations, transforming challenging moments into opportunities for connection and growth.

## **BEGIN THE JOURNEY WITH A QUESTION: IF YOUR CHILD COULD REQUEST ANYTHING FROM YOU, WHAT MIGHT IT BE?**

This may sound like a simple question, but have you ever really thought about the answer? It may surprise you. Many of us might initially think of the obvious answers: more time with me, unwavering love, a united family, or perhaps tangible items like toys, tablets, or car keys. But let's consider their futures for a moment.

Picture your children as teenagers, young adults, parents themselves, or even middle-aged individuals navigating a world more complex than today's. They might face challenges like raising their own at-risk children, struggling in their marriages, or dealing with health or financial difficulties. Looking back on their childhoods from that vantage point, would they still ask for time, love, or material things to prepare them for life's uncertainties?

I suggest they might instead ask us to teach them how to navigate life successfully. How to . . . get it right. This idea comes to life in a poignant story shared by renowned parent educator Jim Fay (Love & Logic, Cline & Fay, 1990). Jim's son, Charley, once asked to borrow the family car for a party. When Jim couldn't lend it, he suggested that Charley ride with a friend. Charley declined and went to bed instead. Why? Because he knew his friend had a habit of drinking and driving. That night, the friend drove himself and five others off a cliff at 80 miles per hour, tragically ending all six lives. Charley's decision to stay home saved him.

What prompts a teenager to make such a wise choice, even if it means missing a big event? Contrast this with another scenario: two teenage girls face pressure from their boyfriends to engage in sexual activity. One firmly sets a boundary and asks her boyfriend to leave if he can't respect it; the other gives in, later finding herself pregnant and alone. What shapes the thoughts, goals, and motivations behind these different choices?

Charley and the resolute young woman grew up in families that prioritized learning responsibility through experience—making choices, facing consequences, and growing through trial and error. While no approach guarantees perfect outcomes, and many factors like family values and spiritual guidance play a role, the foundation of responsibility is key.

Remarkably, even children from challenging backgrounds—those who face neglect or abuse—sometimes develop an innate sense of accountability. What encourages a child to embrace family values rather than reject them? Perhaps the answer lies in this: "Guide me, day by day, choice by choice, to build my own sense of responsibility, so I can make the right decisions even when no one's watching."

This is the heart of the "Parenting Alienated Children – Reconnecting with Lost Hearts" program. As we teach our children, we grow alongside them. By setting clear boundaries, offering meaningful choices, and compassionately allowing them to experience the outcomes, we lay a groundwork for their future, and bring a bit more calm to our homes in the process.

Can we still parent effectively if our children split their time between two homes with differing styles? Absolutely. It requires dedication, effort, and preparation, but it's entirely possible. Time invested in prevention often saves us from time spent fixing problems later. As the saying goes, "An ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure."

In the chapters ahead, we'll explore how to foster responsibility and peace in our homes, regardless of our circumstances. The journey begins with the most powerful tool we possess: ourselves.

## A NOTE TO THE READER

**T**his book is not intended to serve as a primer on parental alienation theory or a comprehensive overview of the scientific literature on the subject. There are already many excellent, peer-reviewed resources available for that purpose—written by leading experts such as Dr. William Bernet, Dr. Amy J. L. Baker, Dr. Jennifer Harman, Dr. Demosthenes Lorandos, Linda Gottlieb, and others. Their scholarly contributions offer detailed analyses, validated research findings, and legal guidance on the complex phenomenon of parental alienation.

This book, by contrast, is about parenting. Specifically, it is about parenting an alienated child in a way that is grounded in developmental science, informed by parenting style frameworks, and attuned to the unique emotional and behavioral needs of children caught in high-conflict family dynamics.

My goal is to equip parents with practical tools, emotional insight, and relationship-focused strategies that help them stay steady, nurturing, and effective, even in the face of rejection or manipulation. If you are navigating the heartbreaking terrain of parental alienation, my hope is that Section One and Section Two of this book offer clarity, validation, and direction.

Please see the references at the end of this book for additional resources on parental alienation.

Most importantly, I hope these tools help you take meaningful steps toward rebuilding the bond with your child(ren). They need you—more than they know, and more than they can say.





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# **PARENTING THE ALIENATED CHILD**





## **Section One**

# **THE AUTHORITARIAN NURTURING PARENT**



# **Chapter 1**

## **WHAT'S YOUR PARENTING STYLE?**

### **Objectives**

- Understand the Connection Between Parenting Styles and Children's Behavior
- Identify Your Own Parenting Style
- Explore the Over-Involved Parent
- Examine the Controlling/Critical Parent
- Consider the Permissive Parent
- Embrace the Authoritative Nurturing Parent

### **UNDERSTANDING THE CONNECTION BETWEEN PARENTING STYLES AND CHILDREN'S BEHAVIOR**

**T**he way we parent directly influences how our children thrive. To create a peaceful home and nurture responsibility, it helps to understand our own parenting styles. This isn't a groundbreaking idea—it's a time-tested principle foundational to effective parenting.

Why does our parenting style matter so much? It shapes everything: the harmony in our homes, the responsibility our children develop, and the relationships we build with them. First, let's acknowledge the real experts—you and me, the parents. We know our children intimately—their moods, needs, hurts, and dreams—better than anyone else. That deep connection makes us uniquely qualified to guide them.

With that in mind, one goal of this program is to offer practical concepts you can adapt to your family's unique situation. A key step is recognizing your parenting style and aligning it with your goals. Ask yourself: Does my approach support what I hope to achieve as a parent? Is it fostering respectful communication, effortless chore

completion, homework accountability, or sibling harmony—or at least polite coexistence? Does it encourage honesty?

Understanding your goals as a parent—your personal parenting plan—is invaluable. Whether you’ve consciously crafted it or not, you have a style and a vision. Even if your aim is simply to guide your children safely to adulthood, that’s a worthy vision. Knowing what you want for your family and how you plan to get there sets the stage for success.

Note: If you have experienced a separation or divorce, you may have a formal Parenting Plan established with your co-parent through the courts. Court-ordered parenting plans determine access and possession of your children, define each parent’s rights and duties, and establish legal frameworks for co-parenting arrangements.

In this book, we are referring to a different type of parenting plan entirely. Here, we focus on your personal parenting plan—the vision, values, and approach you hold for raising your family, regardless of your legal arrangements.

Let’s explore the four primary parenting styles – over-involved, permissive, controlling/critical, and nurturing authoritative. Most of us blend these styles, but we typically lean toward one dominant approach, with traces of others. As you read, reflect on which resonates most with you.

### ***The Over-Involved (Helicopter) Parent***

Imagine a typical day: You wake your children with plenty of time before school, but they resist getting up. You return to their rooms several times, gently coaxing them out of bed. While preparing breakfast and getting ready for work, you remind them repeatedly to eat, warning they’ll be hungry otherwise.

After a debate about coats on a chilly day, you get them to school, only to receive a call—one forgot her homework, another his lunch. You rush home, retrieve the items, and deliver them, sacrificing work time and income in the process. Evening arrives, and you oversee homework and chores, nudging and pleading until everyone collapses, exhausted and emotional.

The Over-Involved Parent steps in to shield children from consequences—waking them when alarms fail, delivering forgotten items, hovering over tasks, and smoothing over mistakes like speeding tickets. The intention is kind: sparing them pain, especially if they’ve already faced hardship. But this approach can hinder their growth. Children may not learn accountability, relying instead on rescues.

# PARENTING THE ALIENATED CHILD

## Connecting with Lost Hearts

**P**arenting the Alienated Child was written to provide alienated parents with practical, evidence-based guidance specifically designed to help them understand and respond effectively to their children's complex needs and bewildering behaviors. It fills this critical void by offering alienated parents the tools and understanding they need to navigate these challenging circumstances while prioritizing their children's well-being. It serves as an essential resource, a must-read for alienated parents seeking effective strategies, mental health professionals working with these challenging cases, and legal professionals who are tasked with helping these families navigate one of the most difficult experiences a parent and child can face. Practical interventions are provided that are grounded in developmental psychology, family systems therapy, attachment theory, and trauma-informed treatment principles. Specifically recognizing the unmatched influence that parents have over their children, Ms. Maase's treatise provides the wisdom and encouragement needed by alienated parents for them to manage and inspire their children to better cope with their insufferable situation. With real-life examples from her practice, Ms. Maase keeps the reader engrossed in the book, motivating them to consider the most effective parenting strategies to address the many double-binds and crises that arise in alienation, and—most crucially—to understand the heart-wrenching pain that regularly confronts alienated children and their parents. For professionals working with high-conflict families and parents seeking evidence-based guidance, this book serves as both a theoretical foundation and a practical roadmap for healing damaged parent-child relationships while prioritizing the child's psychological well-being.

