

Parent Effectiveness Training (P.E.T.)

*Forging Strong Families – the Best
Prevention*

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Background

- *Developed by American psychologist, Dr Thomas Gordon, 1962 (nominated three times for Nobel Peace Prize). Student and colleague of Dr Carl Rogers.*
- *Thomas Gordon identified Roadblocks to Communication and developed I-messages (both now routinely recognised as part of communication skills, and incorporated in many parenting courses)*
- *Rogerian, relationship-based, democratic approach to parenting*
- *Applicable across cultures (book translated into 32 languages, course taught in 43 countries, including China, Maldives, Korea, Romania, Saudi Arabia)*
- *Well researched*
- *24 hour course – 1x3 hour session for eight weeks*
- *Highly practical and experiential, teaching respectful communication skills*
- *Taught around Australia since the early 1970s.*
- *References:*
 1. <http://www.gordontraining.com/about-origins-of-the-gordon-model.html>
 2. http://www.etia.org/uploadedImages/PET_Research_Overview.pdf
 3. *'Parent Effectiveness Training' Thomas Gordon, 2005*

P.E.T. Core Concepts

- *Children do not misbehave – they behave to meet underlying needs*
- *Children and parents are people – each has needs to be met in relationship*
- *Parenting is about relationship*
- *Avoid win-lose when there is a conflict – aim for win-win*
- *Does not use rewards or punishment to change behaviour*
- *Seeks a change in child behaviour because of consideration for own and other's need, not through compliance.*
- *Parents cannot always be unconditionally accepting*
- *Parents don't need to show a 'united front', but can be supportive of each other.*
- *Flexible parenting within family values*
- *Parents can only change themselves, and can then aim to influence others through relationship.*
- *"Shifts focus in parenting from teaching compliance, to encouraging emotional self-responsibility through intensive skills training" (Wood and Davidson, 2003. Helping Families Cope. Family Matters No. 65. www.aifs.gov.au/institute/pubs/fm2003/fm65/cw.pdf)*

Major skills taught in P.E.T.:

- **Understanding self and taking self-responsibility**
 - *Through Thomas Gordon's unique model of separating parent's reactions from child's behaviour*
- **Problem Ownership**
 - *Thomas Gordon's second unique model helps parents determine whose needs are not being met in a situation*
 - *A guide for parents in choice of skill for a given situation*
- **Active Listening**
 - *Emotion coaching, empathy, emotional literacy, regulation of emotion*
 - *Major skill to uncover needs behind behaviour*
- **I-messages**
 - *Respectful assertiveness to meet parent's need, while maintaining relationship*
 - *Helps develop emotional awareness in parent; consideration of other's needs by child*
- **Dealing with resistance**
 - *Manage anger – child and parent*
- **Win-win conflict resolution**
 - *Alternative to parental power (that is, alternative to using rewards and punishment)*
- **Values collision skills**

Differences between parenting courses

Behavioural

- *Aims for compliance*
- *Parent centred*
- *Relies on reward/punishment (win/lose)*
- *External locus of control*
- *External discipline*
- *Child focuses on self to avoid reward/punishment*
- *Does not teach parent/child problem solving skills*
- *Does things 'to' children*
- *Autocratic/authoritarian*

P.E.T.

- *Aims for mutual respect*
- *Child and parent centred*
- *Involves child in solution (win/win)*
- *Internal. intrinsic locus of control*
- *Self/inner discipline*
- *Child learns consideration for self and others*
- *Teaches problem solving between parent and child, and other relationship skills*
- *Does things 'with' children*
- *Democratic/relationship*

P.E.T. complements, or is the 'how to' of:

The author of this poster believes that Parent Effectiveness Training complements, or is the 'how to' of:

- *Family Partnership Model*
- *Attachment approach to parenting*
- *Emotional intelligence as described by Daniel Goleman ('Emotional Intelligence' 1995); John Gottman ('The Heart of Parenting' 1997)*
- *'Parenting for a Peaceful World', by Robin Grille (2005)*
- *'Unconditional Parenting', by Alfie Kohn (2005)*
- *'Children are People Too' by Louise Porter (2007)*

Observed effects on families who use P.E.T.

- *Stops attribution of intent - parents do not see children as 'bad', 'deliberate' or take things as personally.*
- *Helps parents VALUE children as people*
- *Helps parents and children develop emotional intelligence and resilience*
- *Teaches life long relationship skills*
- *Parents can develop reflective parental functioning - see children as separate*
- *Reduces stress, parents more confident*
- *Parents more pro-active, rather than reactive*
- *Parents stop seeing children as being problems, but rather as having problems.*
- *Empowering for both children and parents*
- *Parents yell less, are more patient, less likely to be punitive*
- *Protective for children when there is a relationship breakdown between parents*
- *Children and parents happier with each other, enjoy being together*
- *Program attracts a high proportion of fathers and step-fathers*

Preventive Effects

- *Parents give their children more TIME when using the relationship approach. (OECD rated Australia 18/27 on the question of time parents spend 'just talking' to 15 year olds more than once per week)*
- *Children with social and emotional intelligence more likely to have positive outcomes in adult life*
- *Teaches, models and promotes respectful, warm parent- child relationships. The ARACY technical report states that "parent-child relationships are the most important mediating factors of child wellbeing".*
- *Lowest prevalence of teenage alcohol and drug use when both parents use democratic parenting style.*
- *Helps prevent self-harm, because children are validated and heard by parents. Self harm is often a result of chronic invalidation by parents.*

Parent Evaluation comments

- *"Should be mandatory for all parents"*
- *"[I] felt very unsupported by partner in parenting ways; now we support each other with arising issues. Communication is now calmer with children, less hostility, more chatting/discussions."*
- *"Overwhelming, big changes [in family]. Calmer, enjoyment together. Outsiders have commented, even though they had not known about me doing the course."*
- *"Effective, confronting, helpful. Improves self-awareness, offers opportunity to change. Assists joy to be found in parenting."*

Parent Evaluation comments

- *"[I am] calmer, more respectful, listen more, more empathic, more reflective."*
- *"My stubborn teenager has begun to be more expressive, a little more talkative and overall the family environment has been more peaceful"*
- *"[I have] much less feelings of anger and frustration, more willing to work at child's level, not impose solutions. Calmer. [My children are] generally more loving and accepting of my needs re messy rooms etc."*
- *"[I am] listening more! Not threatening the children with power. Enjoying the kids more and making time to do things with them. [My children are] willing to talk more about feelings, problems"*