

**❖ Topic #2: Parenting Styles—Raising Independent Children****Suggested reading for this gathering:**

- [\*Beyond Baby Wearing\*](#) By Anne Christina Michelsen (Pg. 7)
- [\*Where's My Center\*](#) By Scott Noelle (Pg. 62)
- [\*Risky Play-Why Children Love It and Need It\*](#) By Peter Gray, Ph.D. (Pg. 48)
- [\*A Powerful Trust\*](#) By Eliane Sainte-Marie (Pg. 53)
- [\*Beautiful Consequences\*](#) By Sarah MacLaughlin, L.S.W. (Pg. 56)

**Talking Points**

In this edition of Pathways to Family Wellness Magazine we are introduced to a parenting style known as The Continuum Concept.

In the article “Beyond Baby Wearing” author Anne Michelsen points out three standards around the Continuum Concept, a parenting style used by the Yekuana Indians that result in happy, well adjusted, and independent children. Their early practices were revealed to the western culture as “Attachment Parenting.” The continuum concept follows the attachment parenting style beyond the early stages of baby wearing right into adulthood by outlining some core beliefs.

- 1) Profound Trust in the child
- 2) The child should NOT be the center of attention
- 3) Interaction between people of many different ages

While the tribal nature of Yekuana Indians makes their parenting style difficult to emulate in our western society Scott Noelle writes in the Pathway’s article “Where’s My Center” some practical tips in utilizing the core beliefs of the continuum concepts while combining progressive parenting strategies to prepare our children to be independent in a western culture. Despite the continuum concept that suggests a child not be the center of attention, life coach Scott Noelle suggests that child-centered parenting can be healthy if you avoid being a compulsive rescuer. “If you realize you’ve been a compulsive “rescuer” inadvertently blocking the development of your child’s ability to seek and find comfort – then I suggest a gradual transition from reactivity to availability” suggests Noelle.

In the article “A Powerful Trust” author Eliane Sainte-Marie highlights this notion that by allowing her children the independence to problem solve from an early age and to constantly be learning through natural consequences unhindered by her over-protection, they were able to handle life’s bigger problems as they grew. She shares the story of her daughter at a very young age asking if she could jump off the counter and her response “I don’t know, can you.”

By doing this she is allowing her child to ultimately be responsible for her actions and assess the possible dangers therein.

Dr. Peter Gray informs us throughout the article “Risky Play-Why children love it and need it” of the harmful consequences of disallowing risky play and its negative effects on child psychology. He also interestingly points out that while some play appears risky to on looking parents, free form play is actually safer than supervised sports.

These articles point out not only the importance of trusting in our children and allowing them certain freedoms, but also the importance of allowing them to fail and learn important lessons from those failures so that they are equipped with the necessary skills to navigate through life.

### **Group Questions:**

1. What challenges do we face in western culture that makes protective parenting feel necessary?
2. What are some ways we can overcome these challenges and cultivate more independence in our children?
3. What are some examples of ways we can be available to our children without being reactive before they request our involvement to handle a situation?
4. What are some ways you’ve allowed your children to struggle and ultimately seen the reward of that challenge?
5. Does involving yourself in adult task with less focus on your children cause you to feel guilty?
6. What are some ways your child could be included in your daily adult tasks to learn more skills and independence?

The quote on the back cover sums up this parenting style:

“Nothing could be more simple, or more difficult. Difficult because to trust children, we must first learn to trust ourselves, and most of us were taught as children that we could not be trusted.” -John Holt