

What's the Bar for Good Parenting?

Aftab Kadir

Writing for Social Sciences, City College of New York

ENG 21002

Professor Crystal Rodwell

March 23th, 2025

The online community that I have chosen to focus on is a parenting community. This parenting community has about 8.1 million members on Reddit. The page was first made accessible to public viewing on March 24, 2008. The main goal of the page is to focus on the difficulties parents face in raising their children, which aren't discussed nearly enough in the modern world. This group's members focus mainly on discussing how to be a good parent and how childhood works. My outside fact-based research will show the difference between the challenges and realities of parenting and what "good parenting" really looks like. In order to illustrate this difference an online parenting guide for kids of different ages will be presented to compare and contrast community parents' approaches with those found in a real parenting guide. The research provided will be able to prove that successful parenting comes from the experiences of a parent.

The community reflects a support function for people who are dealing or currently have children. At first the community sounded quite like it should, parents asking basic questions about what to do if their kids are sick or acting up. There is this feeling of a support group where one can come to receive and give advice when needed. A comment by a woman who goes under the name (u/zarya2) on reddit. Apparently this user has a 3.5 year old and a 2 year old she is taking care of with the help from her mother in law. However her mother in law will be leaving soon to continue dealing with her own life which leaves the user concerned about her ability to take care of both kids on her own. Sarah expresses the fact she is not quite ready and feels that she will be "outnumbered". Sarah seems fearful, her post in only two sentences but it creates this feeling of urgency and lack of confidence in herself. While being fearful of what yet has to come the comments give suggestive advice in which the 3.5 year old is able to keep itself preoccupied with tasks that it will most likely be engaged in and take the stress off the mother of worrying

about both children. Most comments usually get to the point of “oh I’ve been there before” which creates this support function between the people.

The disciplining tab which focuses on giving the child instructions is the best way to keep children engaged and focused. For the most part when it comes to children at the ages 2-5 it’s more comprehensible to give kids simple tasks. As a parent one would also want to get their child's full undivided attention in order to give these clear instructions. There is a reality check here for parents that teaching these kids from a young age on how to listen and focus will create less stress on the parents while instilling discipline. The comments seem to have already grasp these same ideas through personal experiences which adds on more to the fact that this is a support function between parents because instead of parents having to go online and search through the confusion of the internet to find trustworthy sources of how to parent by their lonesome, they can go to this reddit community and explain their situation while hearing from parents who have been in the same situation before.

The parenting community on reddit doesn’t just offer advice and support functions it also offers this place where people can relate the effects having children has on the world around them too. There was another story from a user that goes by the name of Sufficient_Radish811 who expresses a conflict she came across with friends over a dinner plan. An important thing to note is all the friends in the dinner plan don't have kids. So this reddit user has a 6 month old daughter who is normally well behaved according to him or herself. Because they had no family to look after the child, the user wanted to take the child to dinner. When the nine friends heard that the six-month-old would be coming, they changed their reservations. The friends claimed that the restaurant is too small for the stroller to fit. The Reddit user, their partner, and the six-month-old were removed from the group due to the friends feeling uncomfortable with the

child coming. The reddit user of this post is expressing their feelings towards their life being affected by the fact that having children will change their lives in more ways than they can understand. This is where the parenting guide lacks in terms of emotional support as the fact that the guide doesn't necessarily speak on these types of topics. Sure it focuses on raising children but what about the parents? Their parents' lives change in ways that make them have to choose the tough decisions in life and realize when they will have to make sacrifices. This is where the reddit community really stands by the people by actually focusing on how the parents feel. The comment section of this post is heavily followed up by people who elaborate on the fact that sooner or later they will have to let go of these friends because it is quite normal that friends will come and go whereas family sticks. This page stands out as a place that's almost like a guide to living with this new life you have created for yourself and those around you. So the guide may be useful towards understanding children but it lacks in areas where parents themselves may be affected by this new world they have created around them.

This online community serves as a second home for parents. The community provides this safe space where parents can come and share their experiences not just raising kids but having to adapt to this new life they have brought into the world around them. Parents are able to confide within each other whenever they are feeling distressed or hurt, they won't just sit there thinking that their struggles will be the death of them. These people can seek advice and help from adults who have been in their shoes before, a place where they won't be seen as a person who just gives birth to children but another human being with feelings who push through the challenges they are faced with before them. This concept is what actually stood out to me because it really stands by the meaning of a community and that being supporting each other in any way possible. I was able to adapt my focus on this specific idea of the community being a

second home as we have all types of parents coming here to share their experiences, conflicts, and concerns of the near future. The most supporting factor to this paper though is my primary source being the parenting guide I have found online. This guide helped me compare and analyze people's responses on certain posts which actually supported their ideas on how to go about raising a child while also taking care of themselves in the process.

My overall experience when writing essays was amusement. When selecting this online community I found so many different situations from parents that sounded, confused, scared, outlandish, relatable to an extent and just downright hilarious. These situations made it easier for me to focus on this community and prompted me to focus on where the bar for parenting is and that being there is none. Comparing an online guide to an online community shows a huge difference and that being a guide can't relate to human emotion as much as another person can. Now my focus shifts from comparing two different sources to understanding that parenting is what a person makes it. People can only take advice not follow a whole article on how to raise a kid into a full blown adult. The parents will have to learn from experiences not just their own but also others like them to grow, equating that the success of raising a child is dependent on the parents actions. This has to be by far the most entertaining experience because you get to hear all the stories that these people have to tell about their daily lives which ranges from the most out of pocket sentence ever said or a middle aged parent complaining about life. One thing that doesn't change is the experiences and struggles parents will come across.

When reviewing the guide it touches up practices and ideals that many parents do follow till this day. These practices are mainly built well in time with the experience of understanding how a child develops and how to grasp the attention of that child in the most effective way possible. The significant difference between the guide and the community is that the guide

doesn't focus on the self care of a parent meaning there isn't much for the mental support on the parents side of struggling. This is where the online community outperforms the parenting guide as it not only portrays real world situations where a child may need attention and behavioral training but real people with real world experiences are able to confide and grow off of each other's mistakes. Thus being the online community more reliable than the parenting guide.

Works Cited

Parenting Guides. (n.d.). Boys Town Parenting.

<https://www.parenting.org/guides/Pages/default.aspx>

r/Parenting. (2019). Reddit. <https://www.reddit.com/r/Parenting/>