

## Continuum of Parenting Behaviors

### Child-Centered Behaviors ----- Parent-Centered/Abusive Behaviors

- **Goal:** Meet child's needs
  - **Supports healthy attachment** by providing healthy emotional connection and appropriate structure
  - **Examples:**
    - showing love and affection,
    - having fair and reasonable limits,
    - trying to be understanding,
    - giving children their space,
    - listening to children,
    - being respectful of children's mothers,
    - being consistent,
    - following through with promises,
    - reading to them,
    - being accountable to children,
    - encouraging children to treat their mother respectfully
- **Goal:** Meet parent's needs
  - **Undermines healthy attachment** by providing inconsistent and/or hostile emotional connection and structure
  - **Examples:**
    - physical and sexual abuse of children,
    - exposing a child to sexual images or behaviors that are beyond their developmental level,
    - emotionally or physically rejecting child's attention,
    - consistently singling one child out for criticism,
    - showing no sensitivity to child's needs
    - intimidating behavior,
    - insults or put downs,
    - being disrespectful/abusive to children's mothers,
    - encouraging children to act disrespectfully towards their mothers,
    - using children as sources of information re: their mothers,
    - confiding adult concerns to children,
    - relying on children for emotional support,
    - not paying child support,
    - using the legal system to punish children's mothers,
    - blaming children for parental fights/separations,
    - avoiding parenting responsibilities (e.g., enforcing rules) and instead acting as a playmate for the child

### **Whose needs are being met when I make this choice?**