

# Levels of Parental Reasoning

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## **Abdication**

Level 0: Parent doesn't know why they do what they do or is incoherent.

Level 0.5: Parent defers to others or echoes their views.

## **Egoistic reasoning**

Level 1: Parent makes decisions based on self-interest (self-state).

Level 1.5: Parent tries to behave the way they would have wanted if they were the child.

## **Conformist reasoning**

Level 2: Parent's decisions are based on normative standards.

Level 2.5: Parent modifies normative standards on the basis of some characteristic of the child (e.g., age, sex).

## **Individualistic reasoning**

Level 3: Parent selects their own behavior in response to unique aspects of the child.

Level 3.5: Parent's reasoning includes more than one level, but is not fully individualized to child, self, and present circumstances.

## **Integrative reasoning**

Level 4: Parent's reasoning is based on the integration of information from lower levels, including the unique characteristics of the child, the self, the immediate situation, and long-term experience and consequences.

Modified from: Crittenden, P. M., Lang, C., Claussen, A.H., & Partridge, M. F. (2000). Relations among mothers' procedural, semantic, and episodic internal representational models of parenting. In P. M. Crittenden and A. H. Claussen (Eds). *The organization of attachment relationships: Maturation, culture, and context* (pp. 214-233). New York: Cambridge University Press.