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## **The Concept of Wholeness**

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Written by Caron Goode, Ph.D.

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# Parenting the Whole Child

NURTURING THE CONNECTIONS BETWEEN EMOTION, INTELLECT, BODY AND SPIRIT

By Dr. Caron Goode

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#### The Concept of Wholeness

Around the world, traditional medicines have always perceived the interconnectedness of the mind, body and soul, treating mental, physical, emotional and spiritual sicknesses as aspects of the same system. In some ways, western medical science also supports the concept of wholeness. This is evidenced by discoveries in cellular biology, immunology, neuropsychology and other fields, which now acknowledge how energy systems coordinate thoughts, feelings and biochemistry.

But how does this concept of wholeness translate into parenting? What does it mean for raising happy, successful children?

We know what touching and bonding provide for hurt, stressed or sick children. We know what emotions to nurture for positive mental and physical health, and we know that negative emotions and limiting beliefs contribute to poor health and depression. We know the food, exercise, breathing styles and sleep patterns that are needed by children of different temperaments.

But can we use this knowledge to fulfill the needs of the whole child? What are the building blocks for wholeness?

#### The Paradox of Whole-child Parenting

Some see parenting the whole child as a paradox. It implies that we honor our children's wholeness while we dissect and discuss the parts of the whole—physical body, mind, emotions and spirit. It may indeed be paradoxical, but it's our way of understanding how the parts contribute to the whole.

We consider our children's wholeness when we:

- Bear in mind the emotional and mental factors that contribute to sleep threat.
- Look to a biochemical problem associated with a child's temper tantrums.
- Consider the negative self talk and thoughts that can float around in the head of a depressed teen.
- Regard childhood patterns from a holistic perspective. These can include a child who falls down all the time, one who has allergies, one who is shy and sensitive, one who doesn't want to be touched, and so on. We want to help, but do we help their biochemists, their behavior or their spirit?
- Think about how children spend their time, and if their activities are balanced between stimulation and quiet.

#### Basics of Energy

The foundation of whole-child parenting is understanding that our children are bundles of energy in the form of thoughts, physical activity, emotional expression and inner spirit. Rather than thinking about managing our children, think about managing their energy.

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The energy of the body needs food, touch, air and water. The energy of the emotions needs positive input like optimism, smiles and support. The energy of thought needs inspiration and imagination, or it gets bored. The energy of the spirit needs connection, faith, compassion and quiet. It needs calm moments of awareness. Most of us know these things and have our own intuitive ways of mothering and fathering our children. In fact, the joy of parenting the whole child is discovering how much you already know and do. The ease of whole-child parenting is that when one avenue doesn't work, there is always another way. For example, because we know that the nature of emotional energy can be chaotic, we can find several ways to structure and channel positive emotional energy with our child. We might follow schedules, share meals, read books or see a heart-warming movie.

#### A Soul Living in a Child's Body

Thinking of a child as an "energy bundle" helps us take our parenting less personally when a child screams, "I hate you." What we want to take to heart is that this soul is living with us in a child's body. We are responsible for helping this child to develop in the best, most fulfilling way possible.

Parenting is really about educating the mind and body so our children are happy, successful and healthy in body and soul. Working with the soul-body connection is the foundation for parenting the whole child.



Dr. Caron Goode is a psychotherapist, author and integral spiritual speaker. Gifted with compassion and a deep desire to assist others in living their passionate purpose, Dr. Goode has become a respected leader in the parent coaching industry. In addition to founding and operating the Academy for Coaching Parents International (which trains students in the empowerment model of parent coaching), Dr. Goode has shared her holistic approach to achieving parenting success and managing family relationships in magazines, newspapers and radio. She is the author of seven books, including *The Art and Science of Coaching Parents* (2007) and *Raising Intuitive Children* (2009). Find her here: [inspiredparenting.net](http://inspiredparenting.net). View article references and author information here: [pathwaysfamilywellness.org/references.html](http://pathwaysfamilywellness.org/references.html).

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