

IPS study: Which kind of parent are you - loving lion, old school or new school?

Amelia Teng

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SINGAPORE - There is a new kind of parent in Singapore - the "loving lion".

The term, coined by researchers at the Institute of Policy Studies (IPS), is an echo of the well-known "tiger mum" - a mother who is hyper-focused on her children's achievement and performance.

IPS senior research fellow Mathew Mathews, who was sharing on Thursday (Aug 31) findings from a study he led on parents' attitudes towards primary schools, said that "loving lion" parents want everything for their children.

"They know academic grades are no longer enough, that their children need other soft skills and competencies," said Dr Mathews, who was speaking at a forum on parents and schooling organised by IPS and held at Orchard Hotel.

"They want to provide a happy environment, but also want good results."

All these desires cause these parents to be highly stressed. They then pass on this stress to their children, he said, adding that he uses the word "loving" because they care for the well-being of their children.

Some 30 per cent of respondents in a study that IPS conducted last year belonged to this category.

The survey polled 1,500 Singaporean and permanent resident parents.

Its main findings were released in July this year.

Overall, the study found that a majority of parents were satisfied with their children's primary schools.

The study also grouped parents into two other categories - 34 per cent of them were "new school" and 29 per cent were "old school".

"New school" parents tend to be more hands-off and do not worry so much about their children's academic results or achievement, said Dr Mathews.

Their concern is more about holistic learning, helping their children pursue their passions and character building.

"Old school" parents, on the other hand, just want their children to bring back good grades, Dr Mathews added.

"Their parenting style is from the previous generation during the 1970s or 1980s, when parents were not so familiar with schooling."

The IPS study found that ultimately, almost all parents - 94 per cent - want to provide a happy environment for their children rather than focus solely on good grades.

"However, how this is implemented may differ substantially," said Dr Mathews.