

Raising Likeable, Responsible, Respectful

Children in an Age of Overindulgence

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5 Things Grandparents Can Do Instead of Overindulging Their Grandchildren by David Bredehoft

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Do grandparents have a right to overindulge their grandchildren?



If not, what can they do instead that is much better for them? I often hear them say:

“She’s my favorite grandchild. I have a right to spoil her if I want to! I don’t see a problem with that!”

“Why shouldn’t I give my grandchild everything he wants? I have the money to do it, and besides, I enjoy it and he really likes it!”

What’s the harm in overindulging my grandchild?”

There is harm!

(click here to download a free pdf copy of this blog)

Click here for a related story: [What’s the Harm In Overindulging Anyway?](#)

Here are a few of the **RISKS** your grandchildren face as a result of being overindulged.

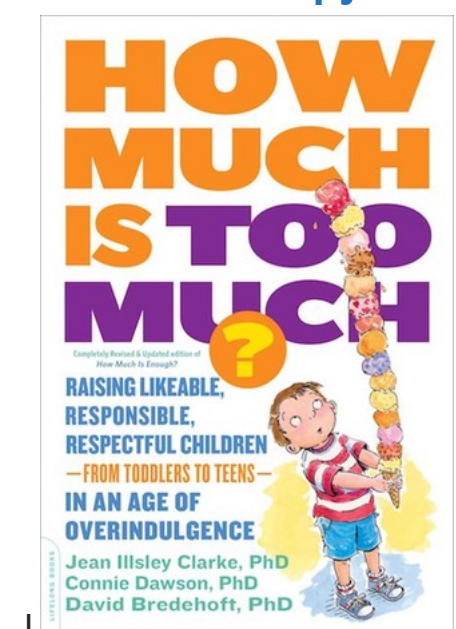
As adults:

- ✓ They grow up believing they are the center of the universe.
- ✓ They develop a disrespectful attitudes.
- ✓ They become helpless, as a result of not knowing skills they need to function as adults.
- ✓ They grow up with a overblown sense of entitlement.
- ✓ They are irresponsible, feel ungrateful and unhappy.

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How Much is Too Much? is the only book on overindulgence with scientific support that tells parents and professionals what to do instead.

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Click here for a related story: [Grandparents Are Worried About Overindulgence](#)

WHAT CAN GRANDPARENTS DO INSTEAD OF OVERINDULGING THEIR GRANDCHILDREN?

Here are five suggestions.

1. SET CLEAR EXPECTATIONS

Often grandparents fail to state clear expectations for their grandchildren and are upset when they fail to live up to expectations. Being straight forward and clear about your expectations is the best policy. Remember, your grandchildren are not mind readers **You need to be very clear with your expectations. For example:** State them up front.

SCENARIO 1

✓ **Your 5-year-old granddaughter** comes over to your house. You have several clear plastic boxes filled with toys she likes to play with. She takes out every toy and has a great time playing with them, but neglects to pick them up and put them back in the boxes. Consequently, she leaves you with a big mess to clean up. You think to yourself, “How irresponsible children are today!” Instead, the next time she comes over you need to say,



”I have a new rule. If you are going to play with grandpa’s toys, you need to pick them up and put them back where you found them when you are done.”

At first she will need reminders of your new rule. The reminders will help her adjust to your new expectations. After a while it will become second nature for her to put things back where she got them when she is finished.

SCENARIO 2

✓ **Instead of getting upset with your teenage grandchildren** for not engaging in conversation at the dinner table because they are on their smartphones.....Make a rule. “No smartphones at the dinner table.”

If you don’t want your **teenage grandchildren** to use their smart phones at the dinner table, **NO EXCEPTIONS**, place a basket on a side table and tell everyone (including the adults) to put their phones in the basket. “**NO** phones until the meal is over and everyone is done.”

SCENARIO 3

✓ **If you loan your 23-year-old grandson** your car, and expect that he return it with a full tank of gas, make this clear from the outset. Instead of not saying anything about it, or worse, giving him a weak expectation like, “It would be nice if you filled the tank before you return it.” Say, “I expect that you will fill the car with gas before you return it.”

Remember, you are help your grandchildren by being clear and stating your

expectations.

2. SHARE YOUR STORIES

Every afternoon I came home from school to find Grandpa Bredehoft smoking his pipe on our front porch (Grandpa and Grandma Bredehoft pictured below). Taking the empty chair next to him, he would ask how my day was and then begin to tell me and my brothers stories.

He was a wonderful storyteller! He told me tall tales of his youth, most I still remember today! In these stories he gave the gift of himself, more precious than any toy he could have given me! Stories that have lasted my lifetime. Stories that taught me about character. Stories that shared his cherished values. Stories that had a moral center to them. ([read My Grandpa, written by me for a grade school assignment](#))

Instead of showering your grandchildren with gifts that fall apart, get lost, or quickly lose their interest.....**share your stories**

Your stories will last your grandchildren's lifetime. (Photo above: My grandparents John and Emma Bredehoft)



3. SHARE YOUR FAVORITE HOBBY OR PASTIME

Do you have a favorite [hobby](#) or pastime that you are passionate about? If so, share it with your grandchildren! If you love it, they will love it especially when they are small.



(Photo: My father-in-law Gene Shepherd with scope birdwatching)

Maybe your hobby or favorite pastime is quilting, stamp collecting, photography, gardening, looking for fossils, scrapbooking, painting, canning, dancing, sewing, kayaking, horseback riding, fishing, magic, antiquing, art collecting, reading, ice skating, or bird watching. If you love it, they will love it too.

These shared moments with your grandchildren will last forever.

Take plenty of pictures! Share the moments together!

4. MODEL YOUR CHERISHED VALUES

Walk the walk, don't just talk the talk! Whether we realize it or not, we all have cherished values. Ideas and beliefs that we hold near and dear.

Do you know what your values are? If not, follow these [6 steps from MindTools](#) to decide what's most Important in your life.

Step 1: Identify the times when you were happiest

Step 2: Identify the times when you were most proud

Step 3: Identify the times when you were most fulfilled and satisfied

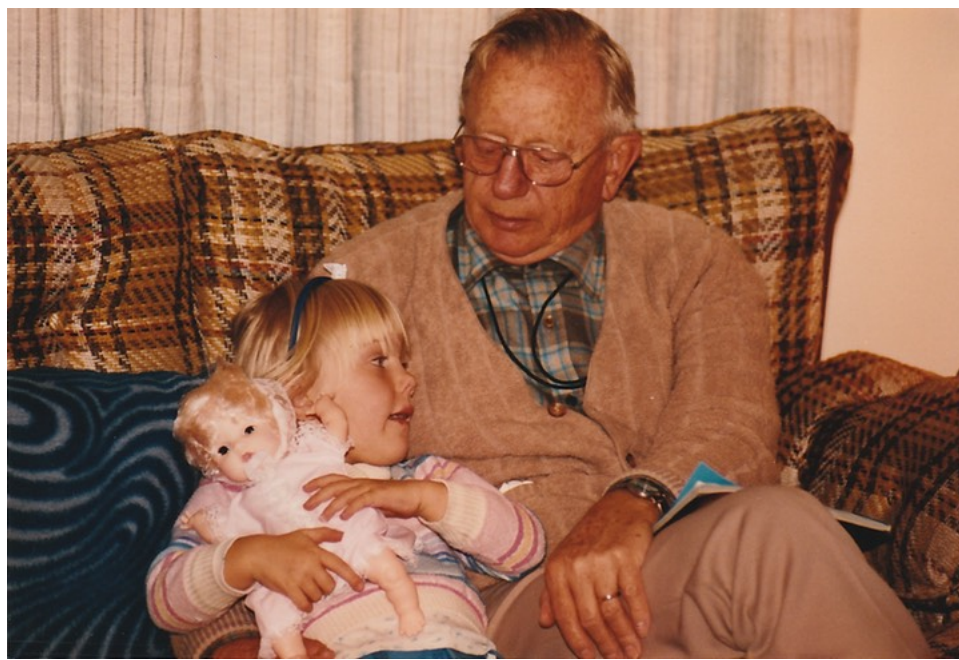
Step 4: Determine your top values, based on your experiences of happiness, pride, and fulfillment

Step 5: Prioritize your top values

Step 6: Reaffirm your values

Remember, your grandchildren are watching. What's more powerful, words or actions? The old adage is true, "Actions speak louder than words!"

Don't just **TALK THE TALK** when it comes to your cherished values, **WALK THE WALK!**



(Photo above: My father John Bredehoft with his granddaughter Jennifer)

5. START A COLLEGE FUND

One thing a grandparent can do instead of overindulging their grandchildren ([Too Much, Overnurture, & Soft Structure](#)) is to start a [college fund](#). Instead of sending them money that gets spent on what you might consider as frivolous things, set up a college fund. Yes, it won't be seen by your grandchild as "cool" as the latest and greatest hot toy every other kid wants, but come college time it will be a welcome choice: (1) money from a college loan to be paid off over twenty years **or** (2) money from the college fund? Which do you think they will choose and be very happy about then?



(Photo above: My mother Elsie Bredehoft with grandsons Joe and Michael)

Do your homework. A good place to start your homework is by reading an article in the New York Times by John F. Wasik, ["The Best Way to Help a Grandchild With College"](#), May 27, 2016.

[You will find four new chapters focusing on grandparents and overindulgence in our book.](#)

Chapter 29. When Momma Says No, I Call 1-800 Grandma: For Parents Dealing with Grandparents Who

Overindulge - The Grandparent Gene.

Chapter 30. From infants To Adults: Grandparents Can Overindulge Family Members of Any Age.

Chapter 31: Grandparents Who Want to Spoil but Can't: The Parents Beat Them to It.

Chapter 32: Now I'm a Grandparent, What Am I Suppose to Do? Give Me a Job Description.

Get your copy today: [How Much is Too Much? Raising Likeable, Responsible, Respectful Children – From Toddlers To Teens – In An Age of Overindulgence](#) (2014, DaCapo Press Lifelong Books).

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 Nov 8, 2016, 6:00 AM

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