

## Appendix B

### The Overindulgence Project

THE Overindulgence Project began in 1996 with the mission of studying the relationship between childhood overindulgence and subsequent adult problems and parenting practices. To date, we (myself, Jean Illsley Clarke, Connie Dawson, and our research assistants) have conducted ten studies investigating overindulgence involving a combined 3,531 participants (Bredehoft, Mennicke, Potter & Clarke, 1998; Bredehoft, Clarke & Dawson, 2001; Bredehoft, Clarke & Dawson, 2003; Bredehoft, Dawson, Clarke & Morgart, 2003; Bredehoft, 2006; Bredehoft & Clarke, 2006; Bredehoft & Leach, 2006; Bredehoft, 2007; Walcheski, Bredehoft & Leach, 2007; Bredehoft & Ralston, 2008; Bredehoft & Slinger, 2010; Bredehoft & Sims, 2012; Bredehoft, 2013). These studies provide the scientific backbone for this book. Despite each of our samples’ convenient nature, we feel that the results add to the body of knowledge on childhood overindulgence and give us new insights into the parenting problems associated with this issue. A brief summary of the findings from our ten studies are presented here.

### CONCLUSIONS AND SUMMARY FINDINGS\*

STUDY	CONCLUSIONS AND SUMMARY OF FINDINGS
<p><b>Study I:</b>                      Perceptions                      Attributed by Adults                      to Parental                      Overindulgence                      During Childhood                      (Convenience sample:                      730 adults)  <a href="#">(Bredehoft, Men-                      nicke, Potter &amp;                      Clarke, 1998)</a></p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Parents are responsible for the majority of overindulgence.</li> <li>2. The overindulgence was most often related to some issue from the parents’ experience (e.g., growing up in poverty, or working all of the time).</li> <li>3. Overindulgence is complex. In addition to too many things, it involves soft structure and over-nurture.</li> <li>4. Adults who were overindulged as children report feeling unlovable, needing constant outside affirmation, having a lack of skills, and not knowing how to take care of themselves.</li> <li>5. Adults who were overindulged as children report being self-indulgent as adults resulting in their gaining weight, feeling guilty, lower self-esteem, poor health, and loneliness.</li> <li>6. Adults who were overindulged as children identified the pain resulting from not knowing “What is enough”.</li> </ol> <p>**Findings from this study resulted from a researcher-developed inventory based on interviews with adults who were overindulged as children.</p>

<p><b>Study II:</b> Relationships Between Childhood Overindulgence, Family Cohesion and Adaptability, Self-Esteem, Self-Efficacy, Self-Righteousness, Satisfaction with Life, Dysfunctional Attitudes, and Life Distress in Late Adolescence and Young Adulthood (Convenience sample: 74 college students) (Bredehoft &amp; Leach, 2006)</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Overindulgence is complex. It is related to too many things (e.g., clothes, toys, being entertained), soft structure (e.g., didn't have rules, rules not enforced), and over-nurture (e.g., too much attention, doing things for children they should be doing for themselves).</li> <li>2. Overindulgence occurs in all family system types in the circumplex model (balanced, midrange and extreme).</li> <li>3. Childhood overindulgence is related to adolescent/young adulthood dysfunctional thinking, feelings of ineffectiveness, and self-righteousness.</li> <li>4. In this small sample of college students childhood overindulgence does not appear to be associated with late adolescent/young adulthood self-esteem, life satisfaction, or life distress.</li> </ol> <p>**Findings from this study resulted from the use of the following normed psychological scales with established reliability and validity: <i>Family Adaptability and Cohesion Evaluation Scales</i>; the <i>Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale</i>; the <i>Dysfunctional Attitude Scale</i>; the <i>Life Distress Inventory</i>; the <i>Self-efficacy Scale</i>; the <i>Self-righteousness Scale</i>; the <i>Satisfaction With Life Scale</i>, and <i>OVERINDULGED: Indicators of Overindulgence scale</i>.</p>
<p><b>Study III:</b> Relationships Between Childhood Overindulgence, Family Cohesion and Adaptability, Self-Esteem, Dysfunctional Attitudes, and Locus of Control in Parents (Convenience sample: 348 parents) (Bredehoft, 2006)</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Childhood overindulgence is related to ineffective parenting beliefs such as: “My child controls my life,” “I have little control over my child,” “Neither my child nor myself is responsible for his/her behavior.”</li> <li>2. Childhood overindulgence is related to adult self-esteem, adaptability in the family they are raising, and dysfunctional attitudes.</li> <li>3. There are three types of overindulgence: material overindulgence (too many things), structural overindulgence (soft structure), and relational overindulgence (over-nurture).</li> </ol> <p>**Findings from this study resulted from the use of the following normed psychological scales with established reliability and validity: <i>Family Adaptability and Cohesion Evaluation Scales</i>; the <i>Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale</i>; the <i>Dysfunctional Attitude Scale</i>; the <i>Parental Locus of Control Scale</i>, and <i>OVERINDULGED: Indicators of Overindulgence scale</i>.</p>
<p><b>Study IV:</b> Overindulgence, Parenting Styles, and Sense of Competence (Convenience sample: 311; 89% mothers) (Walcheski, Bredehoft &amp; Leach, 2007)<sup>1</sup></p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Parents who overindulge their children are more likely to be authoritarian (use verbal/hostility and corporal punishment), and/or permissive (lack of follow-through, ignore misbehavior, and lack parental self-confidence).</li> <li>2. Parents who <b>do not</b> overindulge their children are more likely to be authoritative (use information and reasoning).</li> <li>3. Parents who overindulge their children don't feel competent as parents. They lack parenting skills, feel frustrated, anxious, and are</li> </ol>

<sup>1</sup> Study IV consisted of 311 parents (89% mothers, 11% fathers). Since there was not an even balance between mothers and fathers, Study IX was launched (the exact same study) just for fathers. We combined data from Studies

	<p>poorly motivated as parents.</p> <p>4. Finally, if a parent was overindulged as a child, it increases the chances that they will overindulge their own children.</p> <p>**Findings from this study resulted from the use of the following normed psychological scales with established reliability and validity: <i>OVERINDULGENCE: Parental Overindulgence Assessment Scale; Parenting Styles and Dimensions Questionnaire; and Parenting Sense of Competence Scale.</i></p>
<p><b>Study V:</b>          Answering Questions About Growing Up Overindulged and Adult Relationships          (Convenience sample: 233 adults)          (Bredehoft &amp; Clarke, 2006)</p>	<p>As adults overindulged children:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. have money management problems</li> <li>2. select a partner to control the relationship</li> <li>3. find a partner to overindulge them</li> <li>4. overindulge their partner</li> <li>5. with their partner overindulges their children</li> <li>6. are dissatisfied with their relationship</li> <li>7. have trouble resolving relationship conflicts</li> </ol> <p>**Findings from this study resulted from the use of the following normed psychological scales with established reliability and validity: the <i>Miller Marital Locus of Control Scale, Index of Marital Satisfaction</i>, the <i>Financial Management Scale</i> from <i>PREPARE/Enrich</i>, the <i>Conflict Resolution Scale</i> from <i>PREPARE/Enrich</i> and <i>OVERINDULGED: Indicators of Overindulgence scale.</i></p>
<p><b>Study VI:</b>          Factors Connecting Childhood Overindulgence and Adult Life Aspirations          (Convenience sample: 369 adults)          (Bredehoft &amp; Ralston, 2008)</p>	<p>The <b>MOST</b> important aspirations for overindulged children in adulthood are extrinsic goals:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. wealth (to make the most money/wealth and to own expensive possessions)</li> <li>2. fame (to be famous and admired by many people)</li> <li>3. image (to have people comment on how attractive and stylish they are)</li> </ol> <p>The <b>LEAST</b> important aspirations for overindulged children in adulthood are intrinsic goals:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. meaningful relationships (to share life with someone they love in a committed relationship)</li> <li>2. personal growth (to learn new things and have a meaningful life)</li> <li>3. community contributions (to work for the betterment of society and to help others without anything in return)</li> </ol> <p>**Findings from this study resulted from the use of the following normed psychological scales with established reliability and validity: the <i>Aspiration Index</i> and <i>OVERINDULGED: Indicators of Overindulgence scale.</i></p>
<p><b>Study VII:</b>          Test-Retest Reliability and</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Established test-retest reliability for <i>OVERINDULGED</i> a 14-item measure of childhood overindulgence.</li> <li>2. Established construct validity for <i>OVERINDULGED</i> using the</li> </ol>

IV and IX, and reanalyzed it. The combined results stayed virtually the same as in Study IV and are presented in Study IX below.

<p>Validity Findings for A Measure of Childhood Overindulgence (Convenience sample: 124 college students) (<a href="#">Bredehoft, 2007</a>)</p>	<p><i>Parental Authority Questionnaire (PAQ)</i>. The PAQ measures parental authority and disciplinary practices from the point of view of the child of any age.</p> <p>**Findings from this study resulted from the use of the following normed psychological scales with established reliability and validity: <i>Parental Authority Questionnaire</i> and <i>OVERINDULGED: Indicators of Overindulgence scale</i>.</p>
<p><b>Study VIII:</b> Pathways between Childhood Overindulgence and Delayed Gratification, Material Values, Gratitude, and Subjective Happiness in Adulthood (Convenience sample: 466 adults) (<a href="#">Bredehoft &amp; Slinger, 2010</a>)</p>	<p>Childhood overindulgence leads to the following characteristics in adults:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. the inability to delay gratification (lack of self-control)</li> <li>2. an increase in materialistic values (selfish and greedy)</li> <li>3. unappreciative and ungratefulness</li> <li>4. unhappiness</li> </ol> <p>**Findings from this study resulted from the use of the following normed psychological scales with established reliability and validity: <i>Material Values Scale</i>, <i>Bredehoft – Slinger Delayed Gratification Scale</i>, <i>Gratitude Questionnaire</i>, <i>Subjective Happiness Scale</i>, <i>Self-Control Scale</i>, <i>Generalizability of Deferment of Gratification</i> and <i>OVERINDULGED: Indicators of Overindulgence scale</i>.</p>
<p><b>Study IX:</b> Empirical Connections Between Parental Overindulgence Patterns, Parenting Styles, and Parent Sense of Competence (Convenience sample: 298 mostly fathers; Study IV &amp; Study IX total 609 parents) (<a href="#">Bredehoft, 2013</a>)<sup>2</sup></p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Mothers and fathers who overindulge their children are more likely to be authoritarian (use verbal/hostility, and corporal punishment), and permissive (lack of follow-through, ignore misbehavior, and lack parental self-confidence).</li> <li>2. Mothers and fathers who <b>do not</b> overindulge their children are more likely to be authoritative (use reasoning and induction).</li> <li>3. Mothers and fathers who overindulge their children don't feel competent as parents. They lack parenting skills, feel frustrated, anxious, and are poorly motivated as parents.</li> <li>4. If a mother or father was overindulged as a child, it increases the chances that they will overindulge their own children.</li> <li>5. Overall, fathers overindulge children more than mothers do</li> <li>6. Compared by age, younger parents (age 20-41) overindulge their children more than older parents (age 42-79); younger mothers overindulge more than older mothers; and younger fathers overindulge more than older fathers.</li> </ol> <p>**Findings from this study resulted from the use of the following normed psychological scales with established reliability and validity: <i>OVERINDULGENCE: Parental Overindulgence Assessment Scale</i>; <i>Parenting Styles and Dimensions Questionnaire</i>; and <i>Parenting Sense of Competence Scale</i>.</p>

<sup>2</sup> Study IV consisted of 311 parents (89% mothers, 11% fathers). Since there was not an even balance between mothers and fathers, Study IX was launched (the exact same study) just for fathers. We then combined data from both Studies (IV and IX) and reanalyzed it for a combined subject pool of 609 (47.8% female, 52.2% Male). The findings from the combined results are virtually the same as those in Study IV.

<p><b>Study X:</b> Pathways Linking Childhood Overindulgence and Helicopter Parenting to Psychological Entitlement and the Erosion of Spiritual Involvement and Beliefs in Young Adulthood (Convenience sample: 579 adults) <a href="#">(Bredehoft &amp; Sims, 2013)</a></p>	<p>The path analysis showed that adults who were overindulged as children:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. were parented by helicopter parents</li><li>2. feel that they are entitled to more of everything and that they deserve more than others</li><li>3. are not interested in spiritual growth</li><li>4. have difficulties finding meaning in times of hardship</li><li>5. are less apt to develop a personal relationship with a power greater than themselves</li></ol> <p>**Findings from this study resulted from the use of the following normed psychological scales with established reliability and validity: <i>Helicopter Parenting Scale</i>, <i>Spiritual Involvement and Beliefs Scale</i>, <i>Psychological Entitlement Scale</i>, and <i>OVERINDULGED: Indicators of Overindulgence scale</i>.</p>
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\*For detailed information about these studies point your browser to [www.overindulgence.info](http://www.overindulgence.info) and click on research.