



Practitioner Update for Practitioners: Overindulgence

Panel at NCFR's Annual Meeting
Pittsburg, PA - 11.08.07



Background Research



Overindulgence and Related Literature: Annotated Bibliography

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"Overindulgence is so much more than spoiled children!"



**MAKE A
DIFFERENCE!**

The Overindulgence
Project is seeking
search Participants

Learn How you can
help

This annotated bibliography was produced by searching the following online databases (Psychology Journals, PsycARTICLES, PsycINFO, Social Sciences, Criminal Justice, Dissertation Abstracts, Expanded Academic ASAP, ERIC, and Academic Search Premier). It covers the years from the beginning year of each online database through April 2007.

The key words used in this search include: overindulgent, overindulge, overindulgence, indulge, indulgence, pampering, self-indulgent, self-indulgence, self-gratification, spoil, spoiled, spoiling, overprotective, over-involvement, overprotection, narcissism, narcissistic, favoritism, materialism, material rewards, materialistic, misbehaving, permissive parenting, and children.

Thanks to the Overindulgence Project Research Assistants who conducted the search and wrote the annotations: Heather Dyslin, Jennifer van Pelt, Melissa Leach, and Chelsae Armao.

The following key words were all searched in combination with the terms "children" and "parenting."
This bibliography is organized by key word. Click on a key word to read about related research associated with that term.

[Affluent](#)

[Narcissism](#)

[Parenting Styles](#)

This bibliography is organized by key word. Click on a key word to read about related research associated with that term.

[Affluent](#)

[Aspiration](#)

[Delay of Gratification](#)

[Favoritism](#)

[Indulge](#)

[Indulgence](#)

[Indulgent](#)

[Materialism](#)

[Material Rewards](#)

[Materialistic](#)

[Misbehaving](#)

[Narcissism](#)

[Narcissistic](#)

[Overindulge](#)

[Overindulged](#)

[Overindulging](#)

[Overindulgence](#)

[Overindulgent](#)

[Over-involvement](#)

[Over-help](#)

[Overprotection](#)

[Overprotective](#)

[Parenting Styles](#)

[Parenting](#)

[Parental bonds](#)

[Pampering](#)

[Permissive](#)

[Self-gratification](#)

[Self-indulgence](#)

[Self-indulgent](#)

[Spoil](#)

[Spoiled](#)

[Spoiling](#)

Affluent Youth, Affluence

Luthar, S. S. (2003). The culture of affluence: Psychological costs of material wealth [Electronic version]. *Child Development, 74*(6), 1581-1593.

This article highlights various adjustment disturbances that can be prominent among children in wealthy families; it also reviews the potential causes of these disturbances. Compared to children in families with lower socioeconomic status **affluent youth** use more substance more frequently, and have higher levels of anxiety and depression. Possible causes mentioned are excessive pressure to achieve and literal and emotional isolation from parents.

Luthar, S. S., & Latendresse, S. J. (2005). Children of the affluent: Challenges to well-being [Electronic version]. *Current Direction in Psychological Science, 14*(1), 49-53.

Affluent youth were compared to non-affluent youth in terms of well being. The **affluent youth** reported significantly higher use of cigarettes, alcohol, marijuana, and hard drugs. Higher anxiety and somewhat higher levels of depression were also reported among

Study 1

Bredehoft, Mennicke, Potter & Clarke
(1998). Perceptions Attributed by Adults to
Parental Overindulgence During Childhood.

- N = 730
- Sample
 - (age 17-83; Mean 42.8yrs)
 - 85.5% female; 14.5% male
- Questionnaire (qualitative and quantitative items)



What is overindulgence?

- Giving children **too much of what looks good**, too soon and too long
- Giving them **things or experiences** that are **not appropriate** for their age, interests or talents
- Giving things to children that **meet the adult's need**, not the child's need
- Giving a **disproportionate amount of family resources** to one or more children in a way that appears to be meeting the children's needs but does not.
- Doing or having so much of something that it **does active harm** to or at least stagnates a person and deprives that person of achieving his or her full potential.





What is overindulgence?

- In short...
 - Too much
 - Meets the parent' s needs (not the child' s)
 - A disproportionate amount of resources
 - Does harm





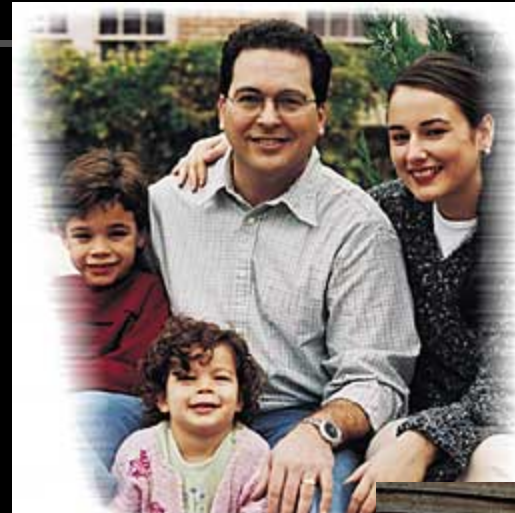
Where does overindulgence come from?

- It is motivated by some parental issue or loss



Who overindulges?

- Both parents (43%)
- Mothers (42%)
- Fathers (11%)
- Grandmothers (4%)
- Grandfathers (1%)



Overindulgence is about more than “Too Many Things”

1. Having things done for me that I could or should do for myself/No consistent chores
2. Clothes
3. Privileges
4. Toys
5. Freedom/Being allowed to take the lead or dominate the family/Not having to learn skills that were expected of other children



Overindulgence is about more than “Too Many Things”

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9. Love/Not having to follow rules
 10. Lessons
 11. Entertainment
 12. Holidays
 13. Summer camps
 14. Time with parents
 15. Sports
 16. Drugs



We Found Three Types of Overindulgence



■ Too Much
(toys, clothes, privileges,
entertainment, sports,
camps)



We Found Three Types of Overindulgence



- **Over-nurture**
(over-loving, too much attention, doing things that children should do for themselves)



Colleges try to deal with hovering parents



We Found Three Types of Overindulgence

■ Soft Structure

(no chores, no rules, don't enforce the rules, not expected to learn skills)





Adults who were Overindulged as children reported problems with:

- overeating and overspending;
- interpersonal boundary issues;
- decision making;
- deficiencies in life skills; and
- taking responsibility.



Study 2

Bredehoft & Leach (2006). Influence of Childhood Overindulgence on Young Adult Dispositions

- N = 74
- College student sample
 - (age 18-25)
 - 58% female; 42% male
- Inventories with established reliability and validity
 - FACES III; Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale; Dysfunctional Attitude Scale; Life Distress Inventory; Self-Efficacy Scale; Self-Righteousness Scale
 - OVERINDULGED (author developed scale)





Childhood Overindulgence was significantly related to:

- Lower self-efficacy (personal effectiveness);
- Increased self-importance (it's all about me!);
- Increased depressive thoughts (dysfunctional attitudes);



Study 3

Bredehoft (2006). Becoming a Parent after Growing up Overindulged

- N = 348 parents
- Web-based sample from 39 states and 12 countries outside of the US
 - (age 26-95)
 - 89% female; 11% male
- Inventories with established reliability and validity
 - FACES III; Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale; Dysfunctional Attitude Scale; Parental Locus of Control Scale, and
 - OVERINDULGED (author developed scale)





The more Parents were Overindulged as Children:

- the greater family adaptability in their family of procreation;
- the lower self-esteem; and
- the greater frequency of dysfunctional attitudes.

Overindulged children grow up to be parents who:

- Believe they are **not effective**
- Believe their **child controls their Life** (even picks their friends)
- Believe they cannot **control their children's behavior**
- Believe they **are not responsible** for their children's behavior
- Believe raising good children is due to **fate, luck or chance**



Study 4

Walcheski, Bredehoft & Leach (2007).

Overindulgence, parenting styles, and parent sense of competence

- N = 311 parents
- Web-based sample from 42 states and 4 countries outside of the US
 - (age 20-79; Mean 40.2)
 - 89% female; 11% male
- Inventories with established reliability and validity
 - Parenting Styles and Dimensions Questionnaire; Parenting Sense of Competence Scale, and
 - Overindulgence: Parental Overindulgence Assessment Scale (author developed scale)





Parents who overindulge their children

- tend to use authoritarian or permissive styles of parenting;
- feel incompetent; lack skills and knowledge about parenting;
- are not satisfied and do not value parenting; and
- overindulge their own children.




Study 5

Bredehoft & Armao (2007). Adult Relationships After Growing Up Overindulged

- N = 233 adults
- Web-based sample from 31 states and 7 countries outside of the US
 - (age 18-68; mean age 34.9)
 - 83% female; 17% male
- Inventories with established reliability and validity
 - Miller Locus of Control Scale, Index of Marital Satisfaction, the financial management and conflict resolution scales from PREPARE/ENRICH, and
 - OVERINDULGED (author developed scale)





The more adults were overindulged as children the more likely they were:

- to have money management problems;
- to believe partner controls the relationship;
- to select a partner who overindulged them, and they would overindulge their partner;
- to be dissatisfied with the relationship; and
- to possess poor conflict resolution skills.




Study 6

Bredehoft, Hulme-Lowe, & Armao (2007). The relationship between childhood overindulgence and life goals—a preliminary report.

- N = 64
- College sample
 - (age 17-42; Mean 25.48)
 - 74% female; 26% male
- Inventories with established reliability and validity
 - Kasser Aspirations Index, and
 - OVERINDULGED (author developed scale)





The more young adults were overindulged as children
the more likely they were to:

- be motivated by extrinsic means;
- be less self-motivated;
- Identify the attainment of wealth and image as a high priority; and
- see community as not important.





The community Importance Score is made up of the following Life Goals

How important is it ?:

- To work for the betterment of society.
- To assist people who need it, asking nothing in return.
- To work to make the world a better place.
- To help people in need.



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Your Turn

- As practitioners, what questions do you have of the panelists and how they connect the dots in their work with families. You may ask about their struggles or challenges in connecting the dots.
- Do you have program or practice (examples) in any of the four areas represented today, where you've connected the dots?