



Raising Likeable, Responsible, Respectful Children in an Age of Overindulgence

Relationship Between Childhood Overindulgence and Parenting Attributes: Implications for Family Life Education

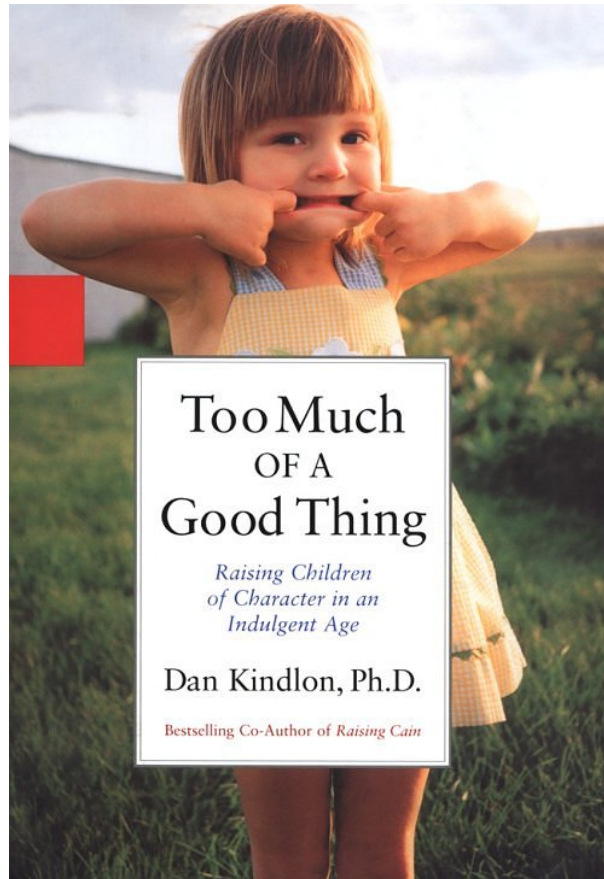
Paper presented at the 2002 National Council on Family Relations
Annual Meeting, Nov. 4, 2002 Houston, TX

David J. Bredehoft, CFLE, Jean Illsley Clarke, CFLE and Connie
Dawson

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One thing is for certain – we live in an age of overindulgence!



- Computers in child's bedroom
- Television in room
- Telephone
- Cell phone
- Parent-financed credit card
- Car or motorcycle
- Horse
- Allowance

Parents are concerned about overindulging their children

SILVER



Communicating about money in healthy ways

SPOON

Teaching strong values and compassion



KIDS



Preventing a feeling of entitlement

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Responsible
Children
in an
Irresponsible
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ADULTHOOD
ACCOUNTABILITY

Jane Nelsen, Ed.D., Cheryl Erwin, M.A., and Roslyn Duffy

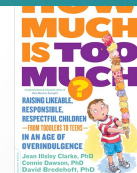
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Children are concerned about overindulgence



“Freedom can be a source of trouble. Kids today often wander anywhere and do almost anything they want to. They often don't talk to their parents very much and instead decide on their own what to do, and then do it. The less the parents are home, the sloppier children become at their chores or homework.”

Taggart Ross Johnson, age 11
Five Hawks Elementary School, Jordan

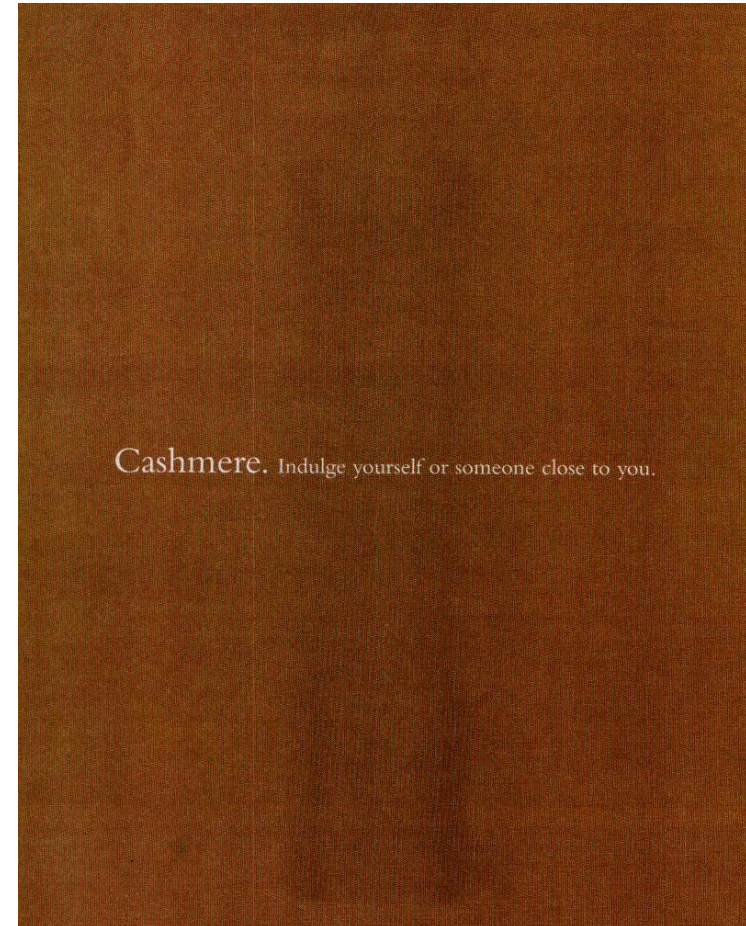
Source: StarTribune, Mindworks, Spoiling Everything 12.3.01

Lorentz Aberg, age 10, Orono Intermediate School, Long Lake

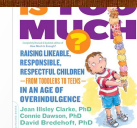
“A spoiled kid needs his or her parents to help the spoiling process...I think that the kids are more spoiled, but the parents are less responsible.”

Source: StarTribune, Mindworks, Spoiling Everything 12.3.01

A common marketing strategy



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Comparative Resources

- U.S. Adolescents spend \$141 billion dollars each year.
- That's more than the GDP of Afghanistan (\$21B), Democratic Republic of the Congo (\$32 B) and Cuba (\$25.5 B) combined.

(Source: The Fact Book - Figures are 2001 estimates)

Meet the Overindulgence Project Team



Jean Illsley Clarke, D.H.S., CFLE is a parent educator, teacher trainer, the author of *Self-Esteem: A Family Affair*, and co-author of *Growing Up Again: Parenting Ourselves, Parenting Our Children*.



Connie Dawson, Ph. D., is a therapist and co-author of *Growing Up Again: Parenting Ourselves, Parenting Our Children*.



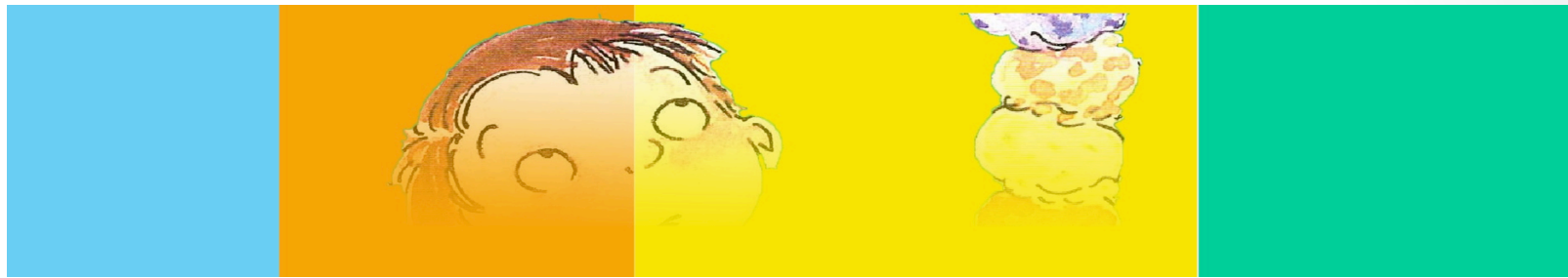
David J. Bredehoft, Ph.D., CFLE is Professor of Psychology and Family Studies and Chair, Department of Social and Behavioral Sciences at Concordia University, St. Paul, MN.





Our Mission

The overindulgence project began in 1996 with the mission of studying the relationship between childhood overindulgence, subsequent adult problems, and parenting practices



To date, we have conducted three studies investigating overindulgence involving a combined 1,195 participants.

The Overindulgence Project

- **Study I:** *“Perceptions Attributed by Adults to Parental Overindulgence During Childhood”* ;
- **Study II:** *“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”* ; and
- **Study III:** *“Relationships Between Childhood Overindulgence, Family Cohesion and Adaptability, Self-Esteem, Dysfunctional Attitudes and Locus of Control in Parents.”*

Study III: Method and Data Collection

- **Study III** Used a web-based system collecting data from 391 participants (11.0% male;89% female from 39 states and 12 additional countries).
- Participants were recruited in five ways:
 1. participants attending workshops;
 2. trained parent facilitators;
 3. parents attending parenting classes;
 4. a list serve for certified family life educators, and
 5. word of mouth.

Study III: Psychological Scales

- In addition to a standard consent form and demographic information, each subject filled out the following psychological scales:
 1. FACES (Olson, Portner & Lavee, 1986);
 2. The Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale (Rosenberg, 1979);

Study III: Psychological Scales contd

3. The Dysfunctional Attitude Scale (Weissman, 1979 & 1980);
4. The Parental Locus of Control Scale (Campis, Lyman, & Prentice-Dunn, 1986).
5. And fourteen author-developed likert-style questions on overindulgence.

Study III: Statistical Analysis

Is there a relationship between childhood overindulgence, family adaptability, family cohesion, self-esteem and dysfunctional attitudes in adulthood? Yes and no.

- Family Adaptability, $r = .129^*$
- Family Cohesion, $r = -.095$
- Self-esteem, $r = -.101^*$
- Dysfunctional Attitude Scale, $r = -.227^{***}$

Note: $*p < .05$, $**p < .01$, $***p < .001$

Top 8 Dysfunctional Attitudes Associated with Overindulgence

1. It is difficult to be happy unless one is looking good intelligent, rich and creative.***
2. I cannot be happy unless most people I know admire me.**
3. If I fail partly, it is as bad as being a complete failure.**
4. I cannot be happy if I miss out on many of the good things in life.*
5. Being alone leads to unhappiness.*
6. If someone disagrees with me, it probably indicates that he does not like me.*
7. My happiness depends more on other people than it does on me.*
8. If I fail at my work, I am a failure as a person.*

Note: * $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$

Is there a relationship between childhood overindulgence and later adulthood parental locus of control? Yes.

- PLOC Sum Score, $r=.244^{***}$
- Parental Efficacy, $r=.206^{***}$
- Child Control of Parent's Life, $r=.295^{***}$
- Parent Control of Child's Behavior, $r=.144^{**}$
- Parent Belief in Fate, $r=.200^{***}$
- Parental Responsibility, $r=.008$

Note: * $p<.05$, ** $p<.01$, *** $p<.001$

Top 10 Parental Beliefs Associated with Overindulgence

1. I feel like what happens in my life is mostly determined by my child.***
2. My life is chiefly controlled by my child.***
3. My child usually gets his or her own way, so why try.**
4. I allow my child to get away with things.**
5. It is often easier to let my child have his/her own way than to put up with the tantrum.**

Note: * $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$

Top 10 Parental Beliefs contd

6. Neither my child nor myself is responsible for his/her behavior.*
7. I have often found that when it comes to my children, what is going to happen will happen.*
8. My child influences the number of friends I have.*
9. In order to have my plans work, I make sure they fit in with the desires of my child.*
10. When something goes wrong between me and my child, there is little I can do to correct it.*

Note: * $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$

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Are there three types of overindulgence: Overindulgence (Too Many Things), Structural Overindulgence (Lack of Rules, Soft Structure), and Relational Overindulgence (Over-nurture)? Yes.

- First, we found statistically significant correlations between the responses to “Do you think you were overindulged as a child?” and every one of the thirteen Indicators of Overindulgence. (Range: $r=.151^{**}$ to $.544^{***}$)

Note: $*p<.05$, $**p<.01$, $***p<.001$

Three Types of Overindulgence Verified

Factor	Indicator of Overindulgence	Factor Loading
	<i>When growing up...</i>	
Factor 1 Material OI (Too Many Things)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>clothes I wanted.</i> • <i>lots of toys.</i> • <i>lots of privileges.</i> • <i>I was entertained.</i> • <i>activities, lessons, sports and camps.</i> 	.746 .718 .767 .638 .593
Factor 2 Structural OI (Soft Structure)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>rules that I was expected to follow.</i> • <i>enforced their rules</i> • <i>chores</i> • <i>too much freedom.</i> • <i>learn the same skills</i> • <i>lead or dominate the family.</i> 	.901 .874 .588 .637 .499 .389
Factor 3 Relational OI (Over-Nurture)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>over-loving and gave me too much attention.</i> • <i>parents did things for me that I could or should do for myself.</i> 	.745 .707

"Avoid overindulging children. It hurts!"

Teach about enough.....Enforce rules....Love without spoiling."

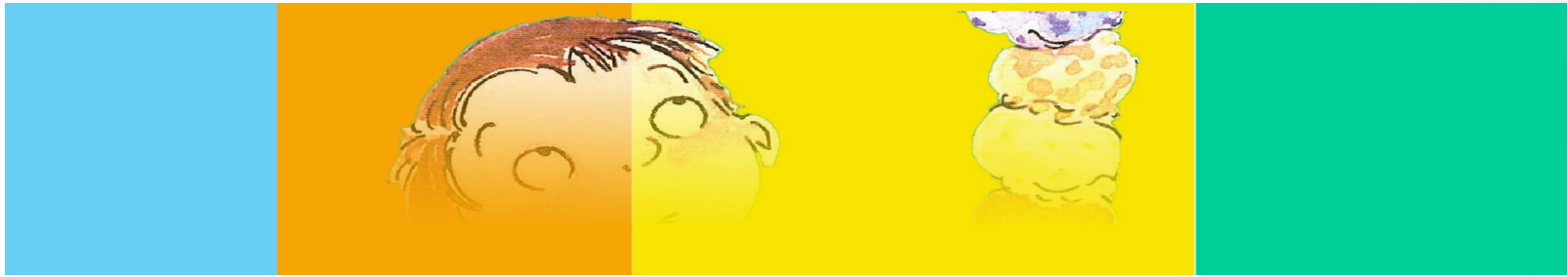
Look for our new book on
overindulgence titled.....

*Indulge Them Less, Enjoy Them More: Finding a Balance
Between Giving More and Saying No to Your Children*

to be published in 2003

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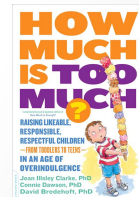




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We couldn't have done it without you – Thanks!



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