

Raising Likeable, Responsible, Respectful

Children in an Age of Overindulgence

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Mom, Dad - Are You Ready to Pony Up \$1,000 For Your Child's Prom Night? By David Bredehoft

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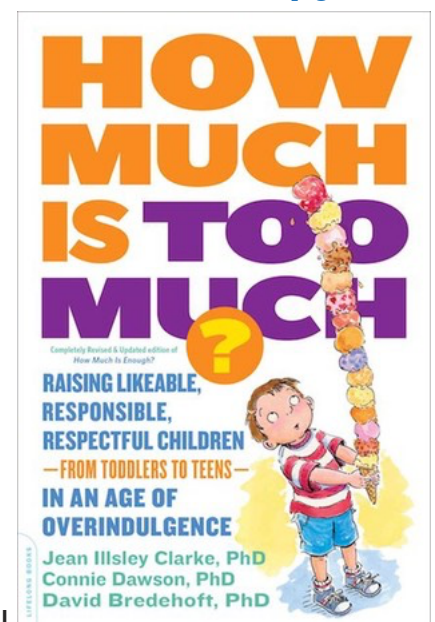
It's Prom Season.

"American households with teens are reining in spending this year [2014] on prom to \$978 – 14% less than last year's \$1,139 – [according to a new nationwide survey released by Visa Inc.](#)" Even though parents are spending less it is still a huge price tag!

Web pages such as [Prom Spot on Pinterest](#), [Prom-night.com](#), and [Proms.net](#) are fueling this industry by creating an aura surrounding proms that elevate these events to the same status that weddings once held. They suggest in order for your teen to have the "perfect prom" plans have to be made months in advance and MUST include: Promposals, tickets, prom dresses/tuxedos, accessories, a boutonniere/corsage, photographs, getting hair/nails/make-up done, renting a limousine, and dinner plans and after prom parties.

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How Much is Too Much?

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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Total Tab For this Extravaganza (sources: prom.girl.com; Washington Post; US News.com)

- Hair: \$30-\$275
- Clothing: \$100-\$400 (gown),
- Flowers: \$17-\$105
- Transportation: \$0-\$500
- Pre-Prom Dinner: \$25-\$130 per person
- Tickets: \$20-\$250
- Photos: \$30-\$125
- After party: \$0-\$150
- Promposal: \$324 average (Washington Post)
- Total: \$247-\$2,259
- In some areas the costs are higher with moms paying \$4,000 or more for the prom dress.



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New – The Promposal

According to a recent Washington Post article the promposal is the latest fad sweeping the teen prom world costing an average of \$324! Talk about adding stress to your teen's life, as if prepping for the ACT/SAT is not enough. Now he has to come up with the most ingenious way of asking her out and potentially spending a bunch of cash to do it....skywriting, organizing a flashmob, posting it on the jumbotron!

Is this price tag shocking? YES! And to market it all to your teen, schools and local businesses are joining together by creating “prom days.” Sponsored by schools, these prom days

showcase florists, local restaurants, photographers, and tuxedo and limousine companies; kind of a one stop shopping experience. Has the quest for the perfect prom turned into overindulgence?

Coming to a Neighborhood near You – Junior High Mini Prom Nights

With that kind of marketing, is it surprising that “mini prom nights” are now a common event in junior high and middle schools? The junior high school in which my wife teaches has always had an end-of-the-year ninth grade dance, but now this dance has turned into a “mini prom.” On the day of the dance, girls are absent from classes, with parental blessing, to get their hair and nails done. It doesn’t stop there. Boys rent tuxes and arrive with their dates in Humvee stretch limos with after-party reservations at high-dollar restaurants.

Is this Overindulgence?

[How Much is Too Much?](#) a book based on ten research studies with 3,531 adults describes overindulgence this way: “Overindulging children is giving them too much of what looks good, too soon, and for too long. It is giving them things or experiences that are not appropriate for their age or their interests and talents. It is the process of giving things to children to meet the adult’s needs, not the child’s.”



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Why Should Parents Care if they Overindulge or Not?

Overindulging children can cause them pain in their adult lives. Our research found that those who were overindulged often have difficulties such as:

- delaying gratification,
- becoming competent in everyday skills,
- taking personal responsibility,

- knowing what is enough, and
- giving up being the center of attention.



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What Can Parents Do Instead?

There are many ways that parents can resist prom overindulgence. **Some of them are:**

- Have a co-parent discussion and come to agreement about how your values factor into the decisions you make to further your teen’s development regarding the prom
- Have a prom budget discussion with your teen early in the planning stage
- Once a reasonable budget amount has been jointly established, ask your teen to contribute half of the amount; you offer to contribute the other half
- Set reasonable expectations about prom night curfew and enforce it
- Remind your teen that attending school is a requirement and going to the prom is a privilege. Missing school for hair appointments etc. is not allowed
- Review and discuss rules about sex and alcohol.

There is more help about avoiding overindulgence in [How Much is Too Much? Raising Likeable, Responsible, Respectful Children – From Toddlers To Teens – In An Age of Overindulgence](#) (2014, DaCapo Press Lifelong Books).

All photos from Pixels, Flickr, video from YouTube. This blog was originally published May 5, 2015.

 Mar 29, 2018 at 6:59 AM

