

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

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Should Parents Pay Children for Chores? Then What About Children Paying for Services and Privileges? by Jean Illsley Clarke

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SHOULD PARENTS PAY FOR CHORES?

(Click here to download a free copy of this blog)

“We had been paying the children for doing chores. I know that works well in some families, but it was getting out of hand. Our third and fourth graders started asking to be paid for everything. They didn’t appreciate anything, and they whined and complained a lot.” ([click here for related story](#))

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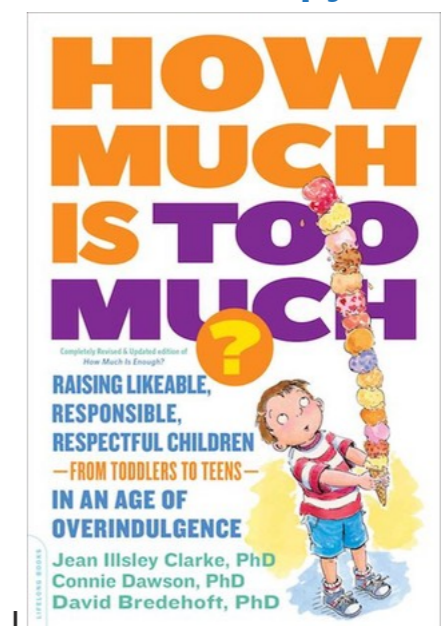
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Julie told her story with the high-gee energy of a parent who has triumphed over a problem. “When I asked Carrie to take her clean laundry to her room and she asked how much money she would get, I blew up!” Julie smacked a fist in her palm. “**I said it’s time for the hammer to come down!**”

Julie’s friend startled. “What was the hammer?”

“They had to pay for everything. I told them that from now on nothing was free. Everything they did, everything that was given to them, they had to earn. Everything cost points.”



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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JULIE SUGGESTED WAYS TO EARN POINTS

- ✓ Feed the cat – 10 points
- ✓ Change the litter box – 40 points
- ✓ Practice the piano, read, or do homework – 1 point per minute

- ✓ Make your bed – 10 points
- ✓ Make your bed really smooth – 20 points
- ✓ Straighten your room – 20 points
- ✓ Clean your room – 60 points
- ✓ Sweep the garage – 150 points
- ✓ Vacuum the floors – 175 points

Click here for a related story: [Mom I'm Too Busy To Do Chores](#)

Soon the children were identifying ways to earn points. They posted their point lists on the refrigerator. What did they have to pay for? Everything! Julie was relentless.

COST OF SERVICES AND PRIVILEGES

- ✓ Breakfast – 10 points
- ✓ Lunch – 20 points
- ✓ Snacks, an apple – 5 points
- ✓ A cookie – 15 points
- ✓ A ride to soccer practice – 25 points

Every privilege, every service, every material thing required points.

“Can Lisa come over to play?”

“Yes, that will be 20 points.”

“But Mommmmm, she wants to come now. If I practice for twenty minutes maybe she won't want to come.”

“Maybe not. And you lose 10 points for whining.”

Carrie and Raymond quickly learned to bank points. The lists on the refrigerator became more sophisticated.

Julie's friend was intrigued. “Didn't this take a lot of work on your part?”

“**No. It took less energy than dealing with the whining.** We played it like a game, and as soon as the children got over being shocked, they started to come around. We had great discussions. The issue of the school bus was a biggie. Why the school bus was provided, why it wasn't safe for them to walk, how many points for a ride if they had a big project to carry to school versus if they just missed the bus.”

“**How long did this go on?**”

“Four days. It only took four days for them to get it. We agreed they could stop paying points as long as they did their tasks without grumbling and appreciated all they were getting. And no more paying for chores. They each get an allowance, but they do household tasks because we all live in this household. It's been over a year now and they still talk about the week we did points. The other day it was raining and Raymond had a big project to take to school, so his

dad drove him. As Raymond left the car he called, 'Thanks a lot, Dad.' My neighbor, who had also driven that day, heard Raymond.

She called me to ask how we did it. I said, "**SOMETIMES YOU HAVE TO BRING DOWN THE HAMMER!**"

Adults who participated in the [Overindulgence Research Studies](#) indicated that one of the hazards of having been overindulged as children was not having given up believing they were [the center of the universe](#).

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 MorgueFile free photo. Thanks to Patti Amstrad for this story.

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