

The Overindulged Child

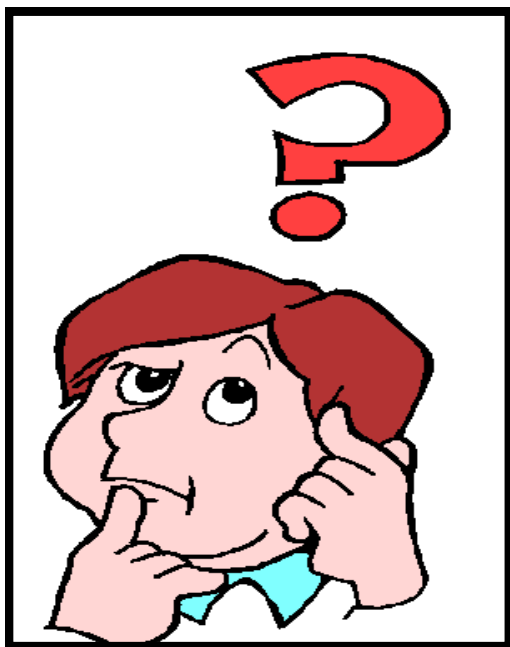


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The Overindulged Child



Definitions:

- 1. Material:** parents who give their children material items (examples: parents who buy their children items they do not earn or need, parents who increase debt to buy children things, and parents who buy their children things on demand)
- 2. Too much permission, too soon:** parents who indulge their children by letting children participate in activities and experiences they are not mature enough to handle (example: parents who let middle school children go to parties with high school kids, parents who let young children dress like older kids)
- 3. Relational:** parents who over-nurture their children, or take on the role of friend rather than parent

Consequences of having an overindulged child:



**Over-dependency,
impulsiveness**



**Anger and resentment
(oppositional behavior)**



**Loss of interdependency (loss of
concern for others)**



**Inflated self-esteem,
self-centeredness**



**Loss of self-reliance, lack of
motivation**



**Emotional distance, over
isolation**

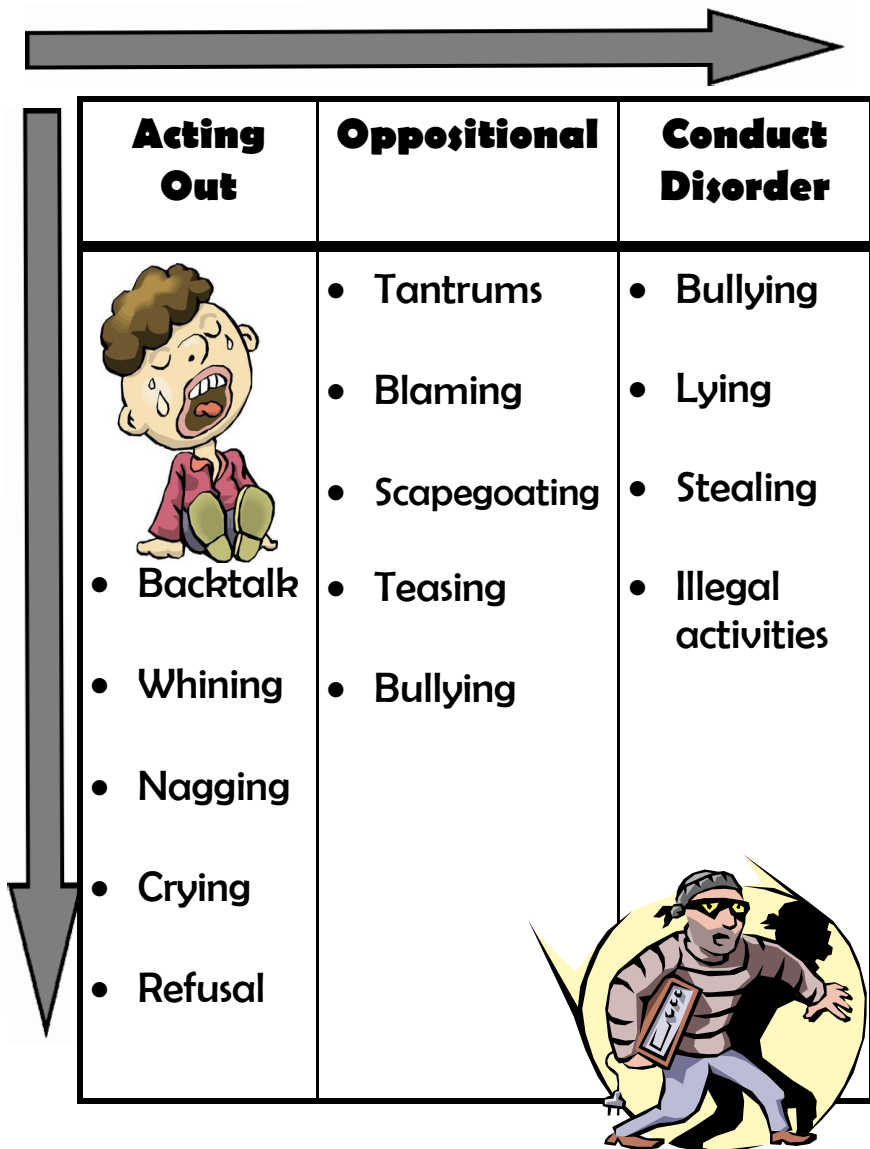


**Loss of age-appropriate skills
(since things are done for
them, or they model older level
behaviors)**



Entitlement (spoiled behavior)

Behavior Sequence of Overindulged Children



Distorted Beliefs of the Indulging Parent



Constant Happiness

Unconditional love means you get anything you want

Shield children from consequences

Sting free discipline

Highest priority is that child is happy at any expense

Wishy-washy decisions

Too trusting

Desire to correct parent's mistakes

Identity issues and role confusion

Mentoring Parents



Normal emotions are healthy emotions, life is not constantly happy, learning coping skills and taking ownership

Unconditional love is learning the difference between wants and needs

Arrange and allow consequences, promoting truth and reality

Consequences and discipline are accompanied by normal emotions and based on respect

Healthy priorities: self, family, children, ability to set boundaries (values of respect and interdependency)

Confident boundary setting

Based in truth and reality

Parental self-confidence and healthy attitudes about the past

Strong identity as parent who supports healthy behaviors and development of character (not filling role as friend)

Symptoms and Cognitive Distortions of Overindulgent Parents

The Giving Parent:

compulsively gives in to every whim of their children

- ✓ Repairing their own childhood
- ✓ Feelings of inadequacy
- ✓ Excessive guilt

The Reminder Parent:

constantly reminds and encourages their children, giving too many warnings without disciplinary back-up



- ✓ Fear of Rejection
- ✓ Fear of confrontation and lack of assertiveness
- ✓ All or none thinking—if my children do not need discipline, then I am a good parent
- ✓ Laissez-Faire parenting style

The Blinders Parent:

arents who do not see or admit to 'flaws' in their children, appropriately appreciating positive attributes, but never correcting negative behaviors

- ✓ **All or none thinking**—any attention to 'flaws' will harm self-esteem
- ✓ **Labeling**—telling children they are 'gifted' and ignoring 'flaws'
- ✓ **Narcissistic reactions**—some parents do not see 'flaws' in their children
- ✓ **Competitive needs**
- ✓ **Symbiotic self-esteem**
- ✓ **Psychological rigidity**—desire to avoid the work of changing their children's behaviors

The Glorifying Parent:

sees incredible qualities in their children that do not exist

The Permissive Parent:

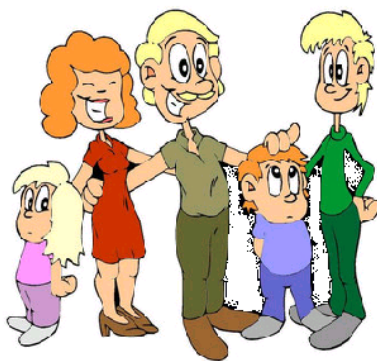
gives too much freedom too soon, too young

- ✓ **Role confusion**—being a buddy, not a parent
- ✓ **Fear of confrontation with child**

The Favoritism Parent:

preferring one child over another, indulging the preferred child and neglecting other children

- ✓ **Emotional neediness**
- ✓ **Over-identification**
- ✓ **Replaying childhood issues**



The Blaming Parent:

over protecting children and not holding them accountable for behavior

- ✓ **Avoiding personal responsibility**—by blaming others, parents do not have to change either their behavior or their child's behavior
- ✓ **Narcissism**—parents who glorify their children as perfect, or assumes when their child misbehaves, they have 'valid' reasons

The Overly Responsible

Parent:

parents blame themselves for their child's misbehavior

- ✓ **Scapegoats in their 'families of origin'**—they always took the blame when they were growing up
- ✓ **Psychological rigidity**—inability to change patterns and make difficult changes, feel safer blaming themselves
- ✓ **False sense of empowerment**—"If I take responsibility, I am helping my child."

The Ultimately Responsible

Parent:

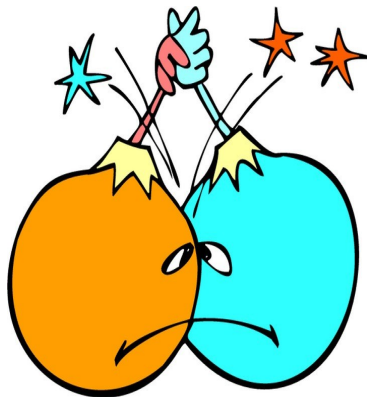
parents will rage at their children's behaviors, then take it all back by blaming themselves

- ✓ **Extreme passivity with rage response**—accumulated anger after passivity
- ✓ **Legitimate but unmanaged anger**



How to Avoid Power Struggles

- 1. Zip it or clip it**
- 2. Cool it**
- 3. Use brain-dead phrases**
- 4. More choices, fewer struggles**
- 5. Never tell children what they just learned**



Assessing Behaviors for the Clinician, Teacher, & Counselor



1. What is the behavior, and who is doing it?
2. Who is supporting the behavior?
3. Who is invested in changing the behavior?
4. Who is invested in the behavior staying the same?
5. Is there a behavior we want more of?
6. Is there a behavior we want less of?
7. Where do we want this behavior evidenced?

Do we start with the parents or the child?

Can the parents or the child take ownership of the problem?

How do we communicate patterns and habits?



Children in the United States are spending more and more time in front of the television, gaming devices, telephones, and computers now more than ever before. Recent research proves this type of passive entertainment has been linked to:

- Obesity
- Sleep apnea
- Aggression
- Language delays
- Smaller vocabularies
- Social problems
- Poorer memory
- Behavior problems
- Numb to violence

Screen time doesn't help babies and toddlers learn and in many instances has been proven to actually slow down their learning. School aged children and teens who have more than 1-2 hours of screen time a day are more likely to struggle academically and socially.

Additionally, extended amounts of time spent playing violent video games has been linked to aggressive behavior. Children who watch or play violent video games can internalize the message it's okay to act violently toward others. Also, when a child spends hours watching violence he/she can become desensitized to it which makes them more susceptible to act violently toward others.

Play on the other hand is the ultimate 'personalized educational curriculum' since each child created his or her own

challenges and solutions at little or no cost to parents. Free play teaches children to:

- Think abstractly about solutions and learn from the perspectives of others
- Explore curiosities and different types of learning
- Get moving
- Become motivated

Free play is essential to social, cognitive, emotional, physical and moral development.

So, you ask, what is a parent to do? Limiting screen time to increase interactive play and paying close attention to the game ratings are the first steps. Games rated M are for mature audiences aged 17 and older. Here's a list of ideas to help limit screen time:

- Get children involved in household chores.
- Get your family together not only at the dinner table, but in the kitchen cooking.
- Create a routine of eating together and sharing what you did during the day.
- Rather than passive TV, play music and dance.
- As an adult if you have a show you wish to watch, record it and watch it after your child has gone to bed.



<http://www.cnn.com/2008/HEALTH/family/11/03/healthmag.violent.video.kids/>
<http://center4research.org/child-teen-health/early-childhood-development/young-children-and-screen-time-television-dvds-computer/>

Overindulged Child handbook
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