

National Council on Family Relations **72nd Annual Conference**

Hilton Hotel and Towers, Minneapolis
November 4, 2010

Moving Overindulgence Research from Data to Action – Seven Ways

This interactive workshop on overindulgence is an opportunity for teachers, parent coaches, counselors, and clinicians to experience and evaluate seven activities that

- present research based data on the negative impact of childhood overindulgence on adult life,
- identify multiple ways of helping parents move research data from information to understanding, attitude examination, and action by reaching the mind through the ears, eyes, and body and through interaction with others.

The data come from eight Overindulgence Research Studies done through Concordia U, St. Paul. The consistent findings point to overindulgence as a serious problem, and the implications of it go beyond the individual and the family. It has become a cultural phenomenon. (See Overindulgence – A cultural problem under Background for the Workshop Leader.) The ubiquitousness of its occurrence is reflected in media offerings and books on various aspects of it. (See a list of books that address overindulgence under Background.)

Presented by

Jean Illsley Clarke
jiconsults@aol.com

Moving Overindulgence Research from Data to Action – Seven Ways

The workshop - Beyond sound bites – Using the whole body to reach the mind

The activities to be experienced and evaluated have been selected from over forty activities included in the *How Much Is Enough? Leader's Guide* (Clarke, 2008) overindulgence curriculum. They are designed to include diverse learning style preferences and to use the whole body to reach the mind. They can be used separately or together. The curriculum has been tested and evaluated in four states with consistently positive evaluations by participating parents. Further data are currently being collected.

The Overindulgence Research Studies create an umbrella under which the diverse aspects of overindulgence can be addressed. The workshop learnings about each of seven studies include a short review of findings and whole body activity that invites parents to consider their own behaviors, possible negative impacts of overindulgence on their children, and what to do instead.

ACTIVITIES

Study 1, Adults report on childhood overindulgence (Mennicke & Potter & Clarke, 1998) – 71 % of the 124 people who identified themselves as having been overindulged as children reported that they had difficulty knowing what is enough. Enough what? Anything: food, alcohol, sleep, money, activity, work, play, relationships, entertainment, seasoning in food, etc.

Activity: *How Much Is Enough?* – a paper and pencil exercise on too little, enough, abundance, and too much, done in groups of three and reported to the whole group. (*Using the whole body to reach the mind, the activity includes moving, seeing, listening, writing, and talking.*)

A cupful of enough

(20 minutes – from *How Much Is Enough? Leader's Guide*, Meeting 2, pg. 6)

Say: Each of the three ways of overindulging left children not being sure about how much is enough.

Part 1

Ask: Will you use Meeting 2, Handout #3, How Much is Enough?,
Will you move into groups of four, and describe:

Too Little Enough Abundance Too Much

You can talk about anything - food, toys, attention, love, etc.
Choose any topic you want, but choose your topic quickly and take about four minutes to fill in your responses.



Meeting 2 Handout #3

After four minutes call the group back together.

Ask: Which was the **easiest** to identify?
Which was most **difficult** to identify?

Ask: Will three groups **share** their responses?

Briefly discuss their responses. Emphasize that abundance makes life better; too much is overindulgence.

Say: Many people who were overindulged as children do not know what is enough. We will do an exercise to help us all think about **enough**. (Not included here.)

How Much Is Enough?

Topic:

(food, clothing, toys, allowance, recreation, etc.)

Write some words or sentences that explain your response to each of the following questions.

Too little

What is scarcity?

Enough

What is enough?

Abundance

What is abundance?

Too much

What is overindulgence?

Study 2, Young adults (Bredehoft & Leach, 2006) – The data from Studies 1 and 2 identified ways of having been overindulged that fell into three categories: Material overindulgence – Too Much, Relational overindulgence – Over-Nurture, Structural overindulgence – Soft Structure.

Each has its own set of negative outcomes, but all three are highly correlated with not knowing what is enough and with believing one is the center of the universe. Over-Nurture and Soft Structure correlate positively with an overblown sense of entitlement and expecting immediate gratification.

Activity: *Overindulgence Risk Factors* – an exercise that presents the risk factors of each kind of overindulgence and invites a personal assessment of which way of overindulging is easiest for the individual to do. (*Involves seeing, listening, moving, and talking.*)

Overindulgence risk factors

(5 minutes – From *How Much Is Enough? Leader's Guide*, Meeting 2, pg 5)

Say: At our last meeting we learned that the Overindulgence Research Studies showed there are three ways of overindulging. These items were identified by adults who were overindulged during childhood.

Point to the Three Ways of Overindulging, Poster #3

Say: Look at Meeting 2, Handout #2, Overindulgence Risk Factors. Remember the three ways that overindulgence occurs.

Too Much

Say: One way to overindulge is to give **too many or too much** of anything that costs money.



Meeting 2 Poster #3

Over-Nurture

Say: A second way of overindulging is by **over-nurturing**. That is, by constantly doing things children ought to be doing for themselves, by smothering them with love or by coddling.

Soft Structure

Say: A third way of overindulging is with **soft structure**, by not having rules or not enforcing them, by not having children do chores, by not teaching standards or making sure that children learn the information and skills that they need, and by letting children run the family.

Self-Assessment

Say: Remembering that overindulgence comes from a good heart, think about which of these could be **easiest** for you to do. For some of us it is easy to do all three.

Say: Remembering your right to pass, let's do a self-assessment. As I read each one, please close your eyes and indicate **how often you want to** overindulge in that way by holding your hand near the floor for never or almost never to above your head for almost always or always: Too Much, *pause* Over-Nurture, *pause* Soft Structure *pause*.

Ask: If your hand was high on **Too Much**, the information in this meeting is especially for you. What are some of the things we could give too much of?

Say: Each area of overindulging led to some problems in adult life. I will read the main risk factors for **Too much** as that is our focus today.



Meeting 2 Handout #2

Overindulgence Risk Factors



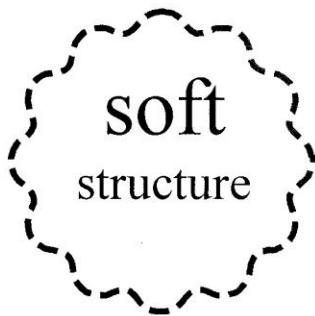
Too Much

- Not knowing how much is enough
- Disrespect of things and other people
- Believing one is the center of the universe



Over-Nurture

- Not knowing how much is enough
- Trained helplessness
- Confusing needs and wants
- Overblown sense of entitlement
- Expecting immediate gratification
- Believing one is the center of the universe



Soft Structure

- Not knowing how much is enough
- Having lax boundaries
- Trained irresponsibility
- Uneven competencies
- Overblown sense of entitlement
- Expecting immediate gratification
- Believing one is the center of the universe

RISK FACTORS: Distorted sense of self

From the book, *How Much is Enough? Everything You Need to Know to Steer Clear of Overindulgence and Raise Likeable, Responsible, and Respectful Children*, by Jean Illsley Clarke, Connie Dawson, and David Bredehoff, NY: Da Capo Press, 2004



Study 3, Parenting attributes (Bredehoft, 2006) – The more parents were overindulged as children, the more they agreed with statements such as:

- * *My child usually gets his or her way. So why try?*
- * *My life is chiefly controlled by my child.*
- * *In order to have my plans work, I make sure they fit in with the desires of my child.*
- * *Neither my child nor myself is responsible for his/her behavior.*

Activity: Who Is In Charge? – a worksheet about what children should be in charge of at each age and a whole audience demonstration of how ending a directive with “okay” confuses children and weakens parents’ power. (*Involves reading, speaking, writing, talking.*)

Part 1 Who Is in Charge? – Chores

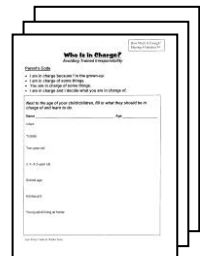
(10 minute – From *How Much Is Enough? Leader’s Guide*, Meeting 4, pg. 6-7)

Say: When asked, “How were you overindulged?,” the two most frequent responses of research subjects were: **Having things done for you** and **no consistent chores expected**. People complained that they did not know how to organize and complete jobs and that they lacked everyday skills for living. That was very painful for some of them. Many missing skills were obvious like, *I don’t know how to care for my clothes, cook, maintain my car, budget, clean house, shop wisely, etc.* Some of the missing skills were less obvious and very embarrassing.

Say: Children learn to be responsible by doing household tasks and learning self-care skills. If parents do everything, stay in charge of everything, they train children to be irresponsible.

Ask: Will someone tell the group what you think “**trained irresponsibility**” means?

Say: Look at Handout #4, Who Is In Charge – Avoiding Trained Irresponsibility.



Meeting 4 Handout #4

Say: This **Parent’s Code** puts the parent in charge of leading the family and changing what children are expected to do according to their developmental stage.

Read the Parent’s Code aloud.

Ask: Do you agree with this **Parent’s Code** or do you have a different code?

Ask: Will you fill in some of the things your child should be responsible for at his age?

If there is time,

Say: Share with a partner **how you teach** your child the skill to do one of her chores. Share what standards you expect at that age, and how you teach those standards. Remember, children may resist doing chores at the time, but regret it later if they didn’t learn to do many household tasks.

Who Is in Charge? *Avoiding Trained Irresponsibility*

Parent's Code

- I am in charge because I'm the parent, and it's my job to lead the family.
- I am in charge of some things.
- You are in charge of some things.
- I am in charge and I decide what you are in charge of.



Next to the age of your child/children, fill in what they should be in charge of and learn to do.

Name _____ Age _____

Infant

Toddler

Two-year-old

3, 4, & 5-year old

School age

Adolescent

Young adult living at home

Part 2 of Who is in charge – Alternatives to saying okay, okay??

(10 minutes – From *How Much Is Enough? Leader's Guide*, Meeting 3, pg. 13)

Say: One of the ways we can over-nurture is by giving a child a **choice** when we mean to give a **direction**. Sometimes we discount the power of a directive by presenting it as a question. Let's think about the difference between a directive and a question. *Time to put on your shoes* is a directive. *Time to put on your shoes, okay?* is a question.

Ask: What is the question? (*Are you willing? Do you understand?*)

Ask: If the adult means, *Do you understand?* and the child hears *Do you want to do this?* what happens next? (*Disagreement, argument, hassling, resistance, non-compliance*)

Ask: **Could a constant use of “okay?” encourage a child to feel entitled to agree or disagree with all directives?**

Ask: How would this play out in the workplace in later life?

Say: Look at Handout #6, *Don't Say Okay, Okay?* Notice that the title is making fun of saying okay. Let's have half of the group read the okay question with an over-nurturing voice and then the other half read the directive with a firm structure voice.



Meeting 3 Handout #6

Sides take turns reading the items.

Ask: Will someone tell how the sides differed?

Ask: Anyone want to give an example of a directive it is easy to say okay to and we'll think of a structuring alternative? (*Time to come in the house, okay? Will you set the table now, okay? We need to have a family meeting, okay? Let's talk about your report card, okay?*)

Suggested alternatives to “Okay?”

Say: Here are some alternatives to asking “Okay?”

Action words

- Here we go!
- In one minute.
- Show me the way.
- Come on.
- NOW!
- Got it?
- Who will be first?

Attitude words

- This is how our family does it.
- You can do it.
- I know you care about ...
- Remember the rule.
- I expect you to...

Don't Say Okay, Okay?

"I'm going to belt you into the car seat, honey. Okay?"

***"I'm going to belt you into the car seat, honey.
Hold up your arms."***

"It's time to go to bed now. Okay?"

"It's time to go to bed now. Race you!"

"Don't forget your bike helmet, okay?"

***"Don't forget your bike helmet.
Protect that great brain of yours!"***

"Call me when you get to your friend's house, okay?"

***"Call me when you get to your friend's house.
We need to know where you are."***

Study 4, Parenting styles (Walcheski & Bredehoft & Leach, 2007) – Researchers, comparing overindulgence by Baumrind’s authoritarian, authoritative and permissive parents, expected to find a high amount of overindulgence by permissive parents, but were surprised to learn that authoritarian parents are also likely to overindulge.

Activity: Parenting from our Strengths - a potent standup activity that helps people recognize authoritarian and permissive parenting and encourages authoritative parenting. (*Involves moving, centering, listening, and talking with others.*)

Parenting from our strengths

(10 minutes – From *How Much Is Enough? Leader’s Guide*, Meeting 1, pg. 19)

Say: As we look at the research and the Test of Four we may realize that we have been overindulging to some degree. Welcome to the real world. None of us parent perfectly. It’s not possible. Let us remember that if we missed supporting some of our children’s developmental tasks in the past, our children are resilient and can learn these skills later, as can we. **We do the best we can**, building on the ways we were parented and on what we learn about parenting as we go along. Sometimes we parent well, sometimes not. We parent unevenly.

In this class we focus on our **strengths**. Let’s do an exercise in which we claim those strengths. First we will claim the strengths from the parenting we got as children.

How you were parented?

Ask: Will you stand and explore with me? Remember your right to pass.

Say: * Stand comfortably and **center** yourself.

* Take one step **forward** (if the room is crowded, use right and left). Notice your body and how you feel.

* Think about one positive thing you got from your family of origin. Notice how you feel. Notice your body – how you stand, what your arms and hands are doing.

* Now move back to your starting place and **center** yourself.

* Now move one step **backward**.

* Think about one thing that you got from your family of origin that didn’t work well. Notice your body and how you feel. Be aware of any tight spots in your body.

* Now return to your starting place and **center** yourself.

* Now step **forward** and recapture that strong feeling that helps you parent well.

* Now return to the center and feel **centered**.

How you parent

Say: * Think about how you parent your children.

* Take one large step **forward**.

* Think about *one* positive way you have related to your child. Notice your body and how you feel.

* Now return to your starting place and **center** yourself.

* Now move one large step **backward**.

* Think about *one* way you have parented that you wish you had done differently.
Notice *how you feel*.

* Now return to your starting place and **center** yourself.

* Now move **forward** and recapture that strong feeling of having done well. In the future, when you are not sure about what to do, step forward, center yourself, take a deep breath, and parent from your strengths. This is your positive parenting power position.

Say: Please return to your chairs and tell the person next to you **what you learned** from doing this exercise. Take about 3 minutes. Remember your right to pass.

Ask: Will someone tell about **how you felt** at each position? What did you **learn**?

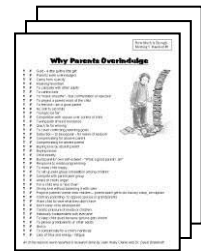
Study 5, Adult relationships (Bredehoft & Armao, 2007) – The more highly overindulged as children, the more people were apt to find mates who overindulge, and then both overindulge their children, forming a triangle where overindulgence can be reinforced.

Activity: Why parents overindulge – a paper and pencil test that encourages participants to recognize that overindulgence is done not for the welfare of the child but to fulfill unmet needs of the parents. (*Involves reading, writing, talking, and listening.*)

Why parents overindulge

(10 minute – From *How Much Is Enough Leader's Guide*, Meeting 5. pg. 5)

Say: Since overindulgence is a form of neglect and causes such pain, inconvenience, and distress later in life, why would parents do it? We often hear that it is because of affluence, or that parents give what they didn't have. The overindulgence studies indicate that overindulging can happen **at any income level**.



Meeting 5 Handout #2

Take the true-false quiz on your Handout #2 and guess which reasons were identified in the overindulgence research. Circle T if you believe the reason was reported or F if you believe the reason was not reported.

This half of the room start at the top of the list, and the other half work from the bottom up. Answer as many as you can in three minutes.

After they have taken the quiz,

Say: All the reasons are true for someone according to the research.

Ask: Can you think of other reasons?

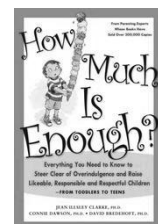
Ask Will you work in pairs to choose reasons from the list that could invite parents to deny the hazards of overindulgence?

Ask the pairs to report to the group.

Ask: Will somebody pick one reason from the list so we can share ideas about how parents could meet that need other than through the children?

Ask: Will you open your book to page 80 and look at the graph?

Say: Because children often don't know what the family income is, the researchers asked adults who had been overindulged as children, "How did your family's income compare to the people in your area?" Notice that **lot more** and **lot less** are about equal. Overindulgence can happen in **any** family.



Why Parents Overindulge

- T F Guilt – a little guilt/a little gift*
T F Parents were overindulged
T F Came from scarcity
T F Masking favoritism
T F To compete with other adults
T F To control kids
T F To “make smooths” – fear confrontation or rejection
T F To project a parent vision of the child
T F To feel like I am a good parent
T F No skill to set limits
T F Trying to be fair
T F Competition with spouse over control of child
T F Taking path of least resistance
T F Quick fix for whining
T F To cover conflicting parenting goals
T F Seduction – need to be popular with the child
T F Compensating for abusive parent
T F Compensating for absent parent
T F Buying love by absent parent
T F Buying favors
T F Child idolatry
T F Build parents’ own self-esteem – “What a good parent I am.”
T F Response to media programming
T F To make child happy
T F To set up peer group competition among children
T F Compete with parent peer group
T F Afraid of child’s anger
T F For a child who is “less than”
T F Giving love without balancing it with rules
T F Projects parents’ needs onto children – parent didn’t get to do hockey camp
T F Contrary parenting – to oppose spouse or grandparents
T F Want child to have what they didn’t have
T F Don’t know about child development
T F Yield to pressure of media or children
T F Habitually codependent with everyone
T F To keep child quiet because spouse gets violent
T F To please grandparents or other adults
T F Illness
T F To compensate for a child’s disability
T F Lack of time and energy – fatigue

From Growing Up Again by Jean Illsley Clarke and Connie Dawson



Study 6, Aspirations (Bredehoft & Hulme-Lowe & Armao, 2007) – Parents need to be aware that overindulging encourages children to have life aspirations for wealth, fame, and image (materialistic values). They were not interested in the betterment of society, helping people in need, making the world a better place, or helping others unless they got something in return. Kasser (2002) documents that “people with strong materialistic values and desires report more symptoms of anxiety, are at greater risk for depression, and experience more frequent somatic irritations than those who are less materialistic” (p. x).

Activity: Which Aspirations - a line of people hold large cards with alternative life goals and audience members identify which aspirations they think are supported by which type of overindulgence. (*Involves seeing, listening, movement, and talking with others.*)

Make large signs with the following words.

Lots of overindulgence	Little or no overindulgence	Wealth
Fame	Image	Betterment of society
Help people in need	Make the world a better place	Not helping others unless they get something in return

Ask: Will two people hold these signs, and will the person with the little or no overindulgence sign stand at one side of the room and the person with the lots of overindulgence sign stand on the opposite side of the room?

Hand the other seven signs to seven people, and ask them to display their signs one at a time.

Ask: Will the group to tell them where to stand – on one side of the room or the other or the middle?

After they have finished,

Ask: Will the group and the sign holders tell what they learned?

Thank the sign holders and debrief them.

Study 7, Overindulgence scale (Bredehoft, 2007) – Practitioners who need to identify whether or how much a client was overindulged as a child can use the Parental Overindulgence Assessment Tool. This is used as a pre and post test in the six meeting overindulgence *How Much Is Enough? Leader's Guide*. (involves reading, and writing)

Activity: Parental Overindulgence Assessment Tool.

Parental overindulgence assessment tool

(10 Minutes – From *How Much Is Enough? Leader's Guide*, Meeting 1, pg. 2)

Ask: To help me gauge the effectiveness of this class series and to help you assess your learnings, will you please fill out Meeting 1, Handout #1, Parental Overindulgence Assessment Tool. If your children are younger than two, guess what you will do. If you have no children, write what you remember from your own childhood. Put some designating mark on your paper, so you can tell it is yours.

Meeting 1 Handout #1

Say: Hand your paper to me. I will keep it for comparison at the last meeting.

How Much Is Enough
Meeting 1 Handout #1

Parental Overindulgence Assessment Tool

(For parents of children age two and older)

The majority of the time...				
1. I give my child all the clothes she/he wants.	___ Yes	___ No		
2. I give my child all the toys he/she wants.	___ Yes	___ No		
3. I allow my child lots of privileges.	___ Yes	___ No		
4. I make sure my child is entertained.	___ Yes	___ No		
5. I schedule my child for lots of activities, lessons, and sports.	___ Yes	___ No		
6. I give my child more than he/she asks for.	___ Yes	___ No		
7. I give my child things that she/he has not asked for.	___ Yes	___ No		
The majority of the time...				
8. I do not make rules for my child.	___ True	___ False		
9. I do not enforce the rules I make for my child.	___ True	___ False		
10. I do not have my child do chores.	___ True	___ False		
11. I give my child lots of freedom.	___ True	___ False		
12. I let my child take the lead and dominate family matters.	___ True	___ False		
13. I do not expect my child to learn the same skills as other children.	___ True	___ False		
14. I do not hold my child to consistent standards.	___ True	___ False		
The majority of the time...				
15. I am involved in everything my child does.			___ Yes	___ No
16. I give my child a great deal of attention.			___ Yes	___ No
17. I do things for my child that he/she should be doing for him/herself.			___ Yes	___ No
18. I do things for my child rather than see her/him in distress.			___ Yes	___ No
19. I do things to make my child love me.			___ Yes	___ No
20. I hate to see my child be frustrated.			___ Yes	___ No
21. I anticipate what my child needs and provide it.			___ Yes	___ No
Total number of Yes/False answers	Too Many = Yes _____	Soft Structure = False _____	Over-nurturing = Yes _____	

SCORES

© Jean Illsley Clarke, Connie Dawson and
David J. Bredehoff

**TOO MANY
SCORE**

0-1 Overindulgence unlikely
2-3 Possible Overindulgence
4-5 Caution-Overindulgence
6-7 Serious Overindulgence

**SOFT STRUCTURE
SCORE**

6-7 Overindulgence unlikely
4-5 Possible Overindulgence
2-3 Caution-Overindulgence
0-1 Serious Overindulgence

**OVER-NURTURING
SCORE**

0-1 Overindulgence unlikely
2-3 Possible Overindulgence
4-5 Caution-Overindulgence
6-7 Serious Overindulgence

Background for the workshop leader

Overindulgence – A cultural problem

First, a look at overindulgence as a cultural phenomenon. A problem with the magnitude of overindulgence doesn't emerge like Athena, full-grown, from Zeus's forehead. It grows. Currently, the topic of overindulgence is on the media's mind as evidenced by a plethora of stories about helicopter parents, over scheduling, over-the-top birthday parties, etc. But the topic has appeared, with or without being named, in many areas of discourse. Here are some samples from psychological, political, and historical perspectives. Some authors use the word overindulgence, others do not, but all are responding to the overindulgence syndrome.

The Frenchman, Alexis de Tocqueville, (1835) touring the United States in the late 1830's, noted the "feverish ardor" of its citizens' obsession to accumulate. *Democracy in America*.

In 1952, Reinhold Nieber observed that Americans seek a solution for practically every problem of life in quantitative terms, certain that more is better.

In *The High Price of Materialism*, psychologist Tim Kasser (2002) gathers numerous research studies that conclude that successfully pursuing materialistic goals fails to increase one's happiness, and contributes to depression, insecurity and problems with intimacy. Kasser reports research that indicates that, between the 1960s and the 1980s, the percentage of students who believe it is important to "...develop a meaningful philosophy of life" dropped from 80 percent to 40 percent while the desire to "...be very well off financially" rose from 40 percent to over 70 percent. (p. 104)

Kasser's dim psychological view is echoed in a historical/political way by Andrew J. Bacevich from his experience in the army, in politics, and in academia as a professor of history and international relations. In *The Limits of Power: The End of American Exceptionalism*, Bacevich (2008) discusses at length how Americans have turned freedom into material acquisition. Bacevich reports that in the late 1970s:

The first protracted economic downturn since World War II confronted Americans with a fundamental choice. They could curb their appetites and learn to live within their means or deploy dwindling reserves of U.S. power in hopes of obliging others to accommodate their penchant for conspicuous consumption. (p. 30)

In 1979 President Carter killed any chance he had for reelection with his speech saying that the real danger to American democracy lay within, "...too many of us now tend to worship self-indulgence and consumption. Human identity is no longer defined by what one does, but by what own owns." Carter goes on to say that "...owning things and consuming things does not satisfy our longing for meaning." Presidential candidate, Reagan, Bacevich says, understood what makes Americans tick. "They wanted self-gratification, not self-denial. ...Reagan mainly indulged American self-indulgence" (p. 40).

In *The Clash of Civilizations and the Remaking of World Order*, political scientist Samuel Huntington (1996) asserts that problems of moral decline are more significant than economics and demography in America's challenge to stop and reverse its internal process of decay. In his

listing of five manifestations of moral decline, number 4 is a “general weakening of the ‘work ethic’ and rise of a cult of personal indulgence” (p. 304).

Books that address overindulgence

If these pictures of the culture are true, then it is time to look at parenting, as culture starts in the home. For some time authors have been writing trade books encouraging parents to look at overindulging behaviors. Many of these books are helpful if they happen to target the areas in which parents are vulnerable. The Overindulgence Research Studies tell us that overindulgence is done in three ways, Too Much, Over-Nurture, and Soft Structure. The following are examples of books that address each of those ways. Participants in Studies 1 and 2 who were indulged in any of the three ways told researchers they got too much too soon. 71 percent of participants said a major problem in adult life is not knowing what is enough. See *Kids Who Have Too Much*, by Minear and Proctor (1989), and *When Is Enough, Enough*, by Ashner and Meyerson (1996).

Graham Blaine (1966), psychiatrist, in *Youth and the Hazards of Affluence*, looked fearlessly at the hazards facing young people who have every want easily satisfied and must find new ways of testing their physical and mental stamina. Sharon Lamb and Lyn Mikel Brown (2006) are encouraging girls to focus on consumption in *Packaging Girlhood: Rescuing Our Daughters from Marketers' Schemes*.

David Elkind (1981) urged us to think about hurrying children in his book *The Hurried Child: Growing Up Too Fast Too Soon*, followed by *All Grown Up & No Place to Go* (1984). Now marketers use a principle called CGOF, children growing older faster, to design marketing strategies. Diane Levin and Jean Kilbourne (2008) expand that theme in *So Sexy So Soon: The New Sexualized Children and What Parents Can Do to Protect Their Kids*.

Bruce Baldwin (1988), psychologist, wrote *Beyond the Cornucopia Kids*, a terse prescriptive collection of suggestions about giving too much and what to do instead.

Clarke and Dawson (1989), parent educators, in *Growing Up Again*, presented overindulgence as a “shoulder” on the parenting highway, not a part of the good parenting center-of-the-road.

Some participants in the Overindulgence Research Studies reported, “They gave me stuff, but I wanted them.” Diane Ehrensaft’s (1997) book, *Spoiling Childhood*, addresses this issue.

Some participants resented being over scheduled. They said they didn’t have time for themselves. See *The Over-Scheduled Child* by Alvin Rosenfeld and Nicole Wise (2000).

Other authors addressed some aspects of Over-Nurture. See *When Parents Love Too Much* by Laurie Ashner and Mitch Meyerson (1990).

Helpful examples of the books that respond to the six billion spent yearly by marketers targeting 18 months to 8 year-olds are: *Born to Buy*, by Juliet Schor (2004), *I Want it Now*, by Donna Bee-Gates (2006), *Buy, Buy Baby*, by Susan Thomas (2007). *Consuming Kids*, by Susan Linn (2004), has a particularly helpful section on organizing to change the culture. *Prodigal Sons & Material*

Girls, by Nathan Dungan (2003), offers a helpful Share, Save, Spend formula for helping children resist marketing, manage money, and learn empathy. In *Too Much of a Good Thing*, Dan Kindlon (2001) reports on his survey asking parents about spoiling. Two out of three said their children were at least “somewhat spoiled” (p. 175)

No rules, no chores, and being allowed to run the family were Soft Structure complaints of research participants. Look at these titles: *Children Who Do Too Little*, by Patricia Sprinkle (1993/1996), *Boundaries with Kids*, by Henry Cloud and John Townsend (1998), *Who’s in Charge Anyway?*, by Kathy Lynn (2003), and *No*, by David Walsh (2007).

There are even books advising wealthy parents about ways to set limits: *The Golden Ghetto*, by Jessie O’Neill (1997), is an amazing report by a therapist to adults caught in wealth and overindulgence. Also see *Silver Spoon Kids*, by Eileen and Jon Gallo (2002).

REFERENCES

- Ashner, L. & Meyerson, M. (1990). *When parents love too much: What happens when parents won’t let go*. New York, NY: William Morrow and Company.
- Bacevich, A. J. (2008). *The limits of power: The end of American exceptionalism*. New York, NY: Metropolitan Books.
- Baldwin, B. A. (1988). *Beyond the cornucopia kids*. Wilmington, NC: Direction Dynamics.
- Bee-Gates, D. (2006). *I want it now: Navigating childhood in a materialistic world*. New York, NY: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Blaine, G. B., Jr. (1966). *Youth and the hazards of affluence: The high school and college years*. New York, NY: Harper & Row Publishers.
- Bredehoft, D. J., Mennicke, S. A., Potter, A. M., & Clarke, J. I. (1998). Perceptions attributed by adults to parental over-indulgence during childhood. *Journal of Marriage and Family Consumer Sciences Education*, 16, 3-17. Study 1—Available at <http://www.overindulgence.info/AboutOurResearch.htm>.
- Bredehoft, D. J., & Leach, M. (2006). Influence of childhood overindulgence on young adult dispositions: Executive Summary. Study 2— Available at <http://www.overindulgence.info/AboutOurResearch.htm>.
- Bredehoft, D. J. (2006). Becoming a parent after growing up overindulged: Executive Summary. Study 3— Available at <http://www.overindulgence.info/AboutOurResearch.htm>.
- Bredehoft, D. J., & Armao, C. K. (2007). Adult relationships after growing up overindulged: Executive Summary. Study 5— Available at <http://www.overindulgence.info/AboutOurResearch.htm>.
- Bredehoft, D. J., Hulme-Lowe, C., & Armao, C. K. (2007). The relationship between childhood overindulgence and life goals—a preliminary report: Research Poster. Study 6— Available at <http://www.overindulgence.info/AboutOurResearch.htm>.
- Bredehoft, D. J. (2007). A study of test-retest reliability and validity of OVERINDULGED: Indicators of overindulgence scale: Research Abstract. Study 7— Available at <http://www.overindulgence.info/AboutOurResearch.htm>.
- Carter, J. (July 15, 1979). Jimmy Carter’s televised “Crisis of Confidence” speech.
- Clarke, J. I. (2008). *How much is enough? leader’s guide*. Seattle, WA: Parenting Press.

- Clarke, J. I., Dawson, C., & Bredehoft, D. J. (2004). *How much is enough? Everything you need to know to steer clear of overindulgence and raise likable, responsible, respectful children*. New York: Da Capo Press.
- Clarke, J. I., & Dawson, C. (1989). *Growing up again: Parenting ourselves, parenting our children* (1st ed.). Central City, MN: Hazelden.
- Cloud, H., & Townsend, J. (1998). *Boundaries with kids: When to say yes, when to say no, to help your children gain control of their lives*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan.
- de Tocqueville, A. (1835). *Democracy in America*. New York: New Rochelle.
- Dungan, N. (2003). *Prodigal sons and material girls: How not to be your child's ATM*. Hoboken, NJ: John Wiley & Sons.
- Ehrensaft, D. (1997). *Spoiling childhood: How well-meaning parents are giving children too much—but not what they need*. New York, NY: The Guilford Press.
- Elkind, D. (1981). *The hurried child: Growing up too fast too soon*. Reading, MA: Addison-Wesley Publishing Company.
- Elkind, D. (1984). *All grown up & no place to go: Teenagers in crisis*. Reading, MA: Addison-Wesley Publishing Company.
- Gallo, E. & Gallo, J. (2002). *Silver spoon kids: How successful parents raise responsible children*. New York, NY: Contemporary Books.
- Huntington, S. P. (1996). *The clash of civilizations and the remaking of world order*. New York, NY: A Touchstone Book.
- Kasser, T. (2002). *The high price of materialism*. Cambridge: MIT Press.
- Kindlon, D. (2001). *Too much of a good thing: Raising children of character in an indulgent age*. New York, NY: Talk Miramax Books.
- Lamb, S., & Brown, L. M. (2006). *Packaging girlhood: Rescuing our daughters from marketers' schemes*. New York: St. Martin's Griffin.
- Levin, D. E., & Kilbourne, J. (2008). *So sexy so soon: The new sexualized childhood and what parents can do to protect their kids*. New York, Ballantine Books.
- Linn, S. (2004). *Consuming kids: The hostile takeover of childhood*. New York, NY: The New Press.
- Lynn, K. (2003). *Who's in charge anyway? How parents can teach children to do the right thing*. North Vancouver, British Columbia: Whitecap Books.
- Miner, R. E. & Proctor, W. (1989). *Kids who have too much*. Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson Publishers.
- Niebuhr, R. (1952). *The irony of American history*. Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, p. 91.
- O'Neill, J. H. (1997). *The golden ghetto: The psychology of affluence*. Center City, MN: Hazelden.
- Rosenfeld, A. & Wise, N. (2000). *The over-scheduled child: Avoiding the hyper-parenting trap*. New York, NY: St. Martin's Griffin.
- Schor, J. B. (2004). *Born to buy: The commercialized child and the new consumer culture*. NY: Scribner.
- Sprinkle, P. H. (1993/1996). *Children who do too little: Why your kids need to work around the house (and how to get them to do it)*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House.
- Thomas, S. G. (2007). *Buy, buy baby: How consumer culture manipulates parents and harms young minds*. Boston, MA: Houghton Mifflin Company.

Walcheski, J., Bredehoft, D. J., & Leach, M. (2007). Overindulgence, parenting styles, and parent sense of competence: Executive Summary. Study 4— Available at <http://www.overindulgence.info/AboutOurResearch.htm>

Walsh, D. (2007). *No: Why kids—of all ages—need to hear it and ways parents can say it*. New York, NY: Free Press.