

# WHY YOU SHOULDN'T OVERINDULGE YOUR CHILD

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It can be fun to buy children gifts. And it can feel good to give them the things that you weren't able to have as a child. Over-the-top birthday parties, lavish vacations, piles of electronics, and constant entertainment sounds like a great childhood on the surface.

But giving children too many possessions, too many privileges, and too many opportunities can actually be bad for them. In fact, in some cases, overindulging children actually constitutes neglect and it can have lifelong consequences for many children.



## Why Overindulging Children Isn't Healthy

**Your child needs to learn she can live without most things.** When children receive everything they want, they begin to think they can't live without the latest gadget or that they can't survive without new sneakers. It's important to teach your children the difference between wants and needs.

**Your child may think happiness stems from material goods.** It's easy for kids to start thinking that having more stuff will help them lead a more satisfying life.

**You may send a message that there's a link between net worth and self-worth.** Material possessions can become a status symbol for children who think that it's important to show off how much they have.

**Your child may not value anything.** When children have a lot of electronics, clothing, and toys, they aren't able to take care of them. A child may not care when things are broken and may not notice when objects are lost. Therefore, your child won't learn to be responsible.

**A lack of discipline teaches children they don't have to follow the rules.** When rules aren't enforced, children begin to believe the rules don't apply to them. They think they're above the rules and they begin to believe they're more special than everyone else.

**Research shows overindulged children struggle with lifelong problems.** Adults who were overindulged as children report chronic feelings of discontent. Many of them report overeating and overspending. Additionally, many of them report chronic unhappiness and trouble coping with reality.

## Types of Overindulgence

**Living too much.** Whether it's too many toys, too many activities, or too many electronics, giving a child too much can be harmful. Children need downtime and they also need opportunities to learn how to entertain themselves.

**Over-nurturing.** Parents who do too much for their children prevent them from learning the skills they need to gain independence. Doing a child's homework for him or rescuing her from all uncomfortable emotions can interfere with healthy development.

**Soft structure.** Not giving children enough discipline or healthy limits can prevent them from becoming self-disciplined adults. This may include not giving a child chores or giving in every time she throws a temper tantrum.

