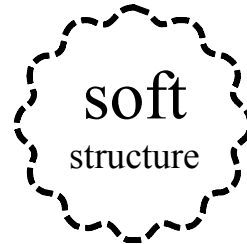


# Test of Four

## Clues to Overindulgence



A yes response to any of the four questions is a signal that overindulgence may be occurring.

### 1. Development?

Does it get in the way of the child learning a **developmental task**? If yes, which task?  
If the child is two or older, does it reinforce the early belief that the child is the center of the world?

### 2. Resources?

Does it use a disproportionate amount of the **family resources**: money, space, time, energy, focus, to meet the wants, not the needs, of one or more of the children?

### 3. Whose needs?

Is this more for the **parent** than for the child?  
Does it insist that the child focus on activities that the parent likes but that are counter to the child's interests and abilities?

### 4. Possible harm?

Does it deplete or in some way **harm** others, property, the environment, the community?

### Examples:

- *My five-year-old has toys in every room of the house, but he is always begging for new toys.*
- *My ten-year-old's clothes closet is bulging with garments, but she can't find anything to wear to school in the morning.*
- *My 13-year-old has a heavy after-school activity schedule every day and all day Saturday. We want to keep him occupied so he won't get into drugs.*
- *My 17-year-old loves the computer and video games. He spends all of his time looking at the screen. He isn't interested in sports, and it is a struggle to get him to exercise. I'm afraid he stays up half the night.*

