

Why Parents Overindulge

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

Take the following true-false quiz and guess which reasons were reported in the overindulgence research. Circle T if you believe the reason was true or F if you believe the reason was not reported.

- 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 – to be popular - for needs of seducer
- 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 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, be captain
- 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 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



All of the reasons were reported in research done by Jean Illsley Clarke and Dr. David Bredehoft.

Quiz from *Growing Up Again* by Jean Illsley Clarke & Connie Dawson, Center City, MN: Hazelden, 1998.