

Pampered Children and the Impact of Parenting Styles

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Abstract

Parents have pampered children for many years. Alfred Adler's Adlerian theory understands the significance of pampering children and the difficulties that arise later in life for these children. Overindulgence, overpermissive, overdomineering, overnurture, and overprotection describe five different categories of pampering. The definitions of the pampering categories vary and often overlap the categories of parenting styles. Parents intend to parent effectively but external and internal influences can influence them to pamper their children. The effects of these pampering styles inadequately prepare children to handle life situations. Authoritative parenting style combined with Adlerian influences creates effective parenting without pampering.

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Pampered Children and the Impact of Parenting Styles

Parents bring children into this world with the intention of providing them with the best life possible. Parents intend to raise loving, well adjusted, responsible, self-reliant children who will be positive contributing members of society. The truth of the matter is that it is easier said than done. Parenting with good intentions without the proper knowledge can lead to pampering.

Parents have pampered children throughout the world for many centuries. Freud, Socrates, and Alfred Adler have written about the challenges pampered children face in life and the struggles society faces in dealing with the attitudes and expectations of pampered children (Mamen, 2006). Adler has taken special interest in the lifestyle of the pampered child.

Adler, a social psychiatrist, developed the Adlerian Psychological Theory. He understood the significant role childhood experiences and perceptions play in shaping one's belief system. Adler helped clients understand how their childhood experiences contribute to their current problems in life. The lifestyle of the pampered child has a significant role in Adlerian psychology in problems cooperating with others and coping with life, two important tenets of the Adlerian theory (Kaplan, 1985).

Pampering children can result in improper training, eventually becoming problematic. It is necessary to understand pampering, the reasons why parent pamper, the resulting problems of pampering, and how to parent effectively without pampering to prevent future problems.

Definition of Pampering

What is pampering? Parents love and nurture their children but excessive love and nurturing can lead to pampering. Merriam-Webster dictionary (2011) defines pamper as “to treat with extreme or excessive care or attention”. This means to give more care or attention than is necessary or appropriate. Pampering can occur in any area where someone requires care or attention. This can include anything physical, emotional, developmental, and/or psychological.

Parents can provide extreme and excessive care or attention through many different methods. One approach provides care at a higher level than necessary. An example of higher level care might be when a child asks for help reading a specific word in a book and the parent responds by reading not only the one word but the rest of the book as well. Another approach provides care for longer than necessary which can occur when a parent carries a child even though the child has mastered walking long ago. The parent extends the physical service beyond what the child physically requires.

There are times when excessive attention is appropriate as in celebrating an achievement. Parents often celebrate when their children graduate from high school and go to great lengths to make the celebration special. The celebration gives excessive attention to the graduate to acknowledge her achievement. She gained this achievement through years of persistence, hard work, and dedication to education. Parents feel children earned this celebration and it is appropriate to give excessive attention to acknowledge an achievement.

Times of danger, illness, or emergencies necessitate excessive care because children depend upon parents for safety and protection. An example of necessary excessive care might be when a child falls and breaks his leg. His mother would respond with urgency and concern by transporting her child to an appropriate medical care facility. She would continue to provide any necessary care for his complete recovery. A broken leg requires an appropriate response and

care. A similar response would be inappropriate if the same fall resulted in a minor scrape on his leg. Some situations require parents to provide extreme and excessive care to their children that would not qualify as pampering.

Additional Terms for Pampering

Is pampered the same as spoiled? Merriam-Webster dictionary (2011) defines spoiled as “excessive pampering”. This means spoiled and pamper have identical definitions. In both cases someone provides an unnecessary amount of care or attention to someone else.

People often use the term spoiled to describe children: spoiled brats. Spoiled children display unacceptable behavior and they annoy other people the way they demand care or attention. Demanding care or attention reveals their expectation of pampering. Parents typically consider this spoiled behavior unacceptable and attempt to correct it (Clarke, Dawson, & Bredehoft, 2004).

Additional terms can describe relationships that provide excess care and attention. Many people refer to pampering as babying. A baby is a newborn or a very young child who depends upon others to have his/her needs met. Babying someone means to care for him/her as a baby, at a younger age or lower functioning level. Babying can also be referred to as infantilizing. Some people use the term coddle to describe pampering behavior. Merriam-Webster dictionary (2011) defines coddle as “to treat with extreme or excessive care or kindness: pamper”. Pamper, spoil, baby, infantilize, and coddle describe ways to provide unnecessary or inappropriate care and attention.

Who Pampers?

Pampering can occur in any relationship where someone cares for another person (Capron, 2004). The relationship could consist of one adult and one child, two children, or two

adults. Pampering occurs most often within the parent/child relationship but any adult who takes care of children or has a relationship with them can pamper them. This includes mothers, fathers, day care providers, grandparents, relatives, and friends. Often parents have different parenting styles such as when one pampers and the other does not. It only takes one relationship to provide the pampering for the child to experience effects; everyone in the child's life does not need to pamper the child.

Who Can be Pampered?

Is it possible to spoil an infant? Infants need attention, nurturing, and love for healthy development. Corwin (2010) stated that it is impossible to spoil an infant younger than six months of age. Research has shown that beliefs regarding spoiling infants vary. Cultural and personal beliefs influence the understanding of the development of infants. Some people believe that developmentally it is impossible to spoil an infant but parents' opinions differ regarding the exact age. Some mothers expressed concern about spoiling children at 6 months of age and others at one year. A concern about spoiling children often affects how mothers respond and interact with their young children (Burchinal, Skinner, & Reznick, 2010). The mothers in this study perceived spoiling as negative and intentionally tried to avoid it.

Overabundance of love and attention can result in pampering to both males and females and young and old. Pampering can occur to children from diverse families: single parent, two parents, divorced, separated, blended or intact. Pampering can occur within families of any level of education, income or social status. The pampered child can be an only child or one of many children and possess any birth order position: only, first born, middle, or youngest (Mamen, 2006).

Ordinal Birth Order Positions

Many people believe spoiled children more commonly hold specific birth order positions. Birth order positions have perceived roles and the youngest child in the family typically holds the spoiled role. Pulakos (1987) reported that with high frequency family members describes the youngest child in the family as spoiled. A review of 200 birth order studies supports the perception that the youngest child has the lifestyle characteristic “perceived as spoiled” (Eckstein, Aycock, Sperber, McDonald, Van Wiesner III, Watts, & Ginsburg, 2010, p. 417). Eckstein et al.’s study supports Adler’s opinion of the common characteristic of the youngest child as spoiled (Ansbacher & Ansbacher, 1956).

Nelson (2006) also states that the term “spoiled” commonly describes the youngest child and that many family members often spoil the youngest child. Family members may cling to the youngest child, pampering and overprotecting him, simply because he is what they commonly refer to as the baby of their family (Grunwald & McAbee, 1985).

Many people also consider the birth order position of the only child as one who often gets spoiled. Mancillas (2006) reported research has shown society maintains the negative stereotype of only children as spoiled despite attempts to disprove it. The only child holds a unique position in the family without siblings. Research has shown similar characteristics of the only child and his peers with siblings. This may reflect the only child’s access and exposure to typical experiences with other children. The position of the only child has similar characteristics to that of the oldest child rather than the youngest child (Eckstein et al., 2010). The reason for this similarity may reflect the fact that by definition the only child is also the first born child but ultimately lacks subsequent sibling births. Eckstein et al. reviewed 200 birth order studies of lifestyle characteristics of the only child and reports “perceived as spoiled” was not listed as a

common characteristic (p. 416). Spoiling can occur with an only child even though it is not a typical characteristic.

Psychological Birth Order Positions

Adler believed family constellation contributes to the development of personality characteristics. He believed children find a position in their family to develop a sense of their belonging. The ordinal position of birth order reveals the biological order of birth within families. Adlerians consider the presence of a psychological birth order (Grunwald & McAbee, 1999, Nelson, 2006). Psychologically children can assume a position in the family other than their ordinal position. Accepting a psychological position would cause them to assume the common characteristics of that position rather than the characteristics of their ordinal position. This reflects how they view themselves and their place in the family.

According to Nelson (2006) many variables can influence a psychological birth order. The number of years between siblings is one variable. Siblings born close together have more influence on each other compared to siblings born farther apart. More than four years spacing between children can cause a break in psychological birth order. For example, if a family has four children ages twelve, ten, four and two, the large gap between the second and the third child would likely cause two groups of siblings: the oldest two and the youngest two. The twelve year old holds the position of the oldest child and the ten year old could easily assume the position of the youngest child of two children. The four year old would possibly take on the position of the oldest child and the two year old holds the position of the youngest child of two rather than four children. The second and the third children in this family would likely assume a psychological birth order position different from their true ordinal position. Eckstein et al. (2010) reported that most studies limit their research to ordinal birth order positions rather than psychological positions which may contribute to limited birth order characteristic information.

Who Encourages Pampering?

Adler believed the attitude of either the caregiver or the child can encourage the pampering behavior (Manaster, 1996). Caregivers' attitude can actively participate in providing and encouraging the pampering behavior. Caregivers choose to pamper because they want to, they feel it is necessary, or for other reasons. They may provide the pampering when it is expected or times when it is not.

The attitude of children can also encourage pampering. Adler stated consistent pampering reinforces expectancy, which encourages children to adopt what he calls a "pampered life style" (Capron, 2004, p. 77). When children adopt this lifestyle they begin to expect others to pamper them. They expect it from the original pamperer and then extend their expectations to others as well. All children can adopt the pampered life style attitude, even if no evidence of previous pampering exists (Manaster, 1996).

Methods of Pampering

Pampering can occur and be defined in many different ways. Some similarities and overlap can occur within the styles of pampering. Pampering can occur using one, all or any combination of styles.

Overindulgence

Overindulgence describes one method of pampering (Capron, 2004). Capron defines overindulgence as fulfilling another's desires in a consistent and excessive way. The desires can often be fulfilled beyond what is expected, considered reasonable, necessary, or healthy. The recipient receives this treatment without any effort or expectation to provide anything in return.

Clarke et al. (2004) also used the term overindulgence and defined it as giving too much without an understanding of what would be enough. They considered overindulgence to include anything that costs money which includes toys, clothing, junk food, and entertainment.

Give Too Much and Too Often to the Child

“Give too much and too often to the child” defines Kaplan’s (1985, p. 561) first category of pampering. Kaplan suggested giving too much includes material objects and special privileges. He stated that parents frequently reward their children for good behavior. Giving too much and too often to children essentially describes the act of overindulgence.

Blindly Fulfilling Every Wish of the Child.

Adler described pampering as “...blindly fulfilling every wish of the child” (Ansbacher & Ansbacher, 1956, p. 374). Parents automatically fulfill their children’s requests through their actions, thoughts, words, and affection (Capron, 2004). The term blindly implies a lack of vision or awareness. This may reflect an unawareness of their actions or the long term consequences. Parents give children what they want simply because their children request it.

Giving children something they want does not necessarily overindulge them. It becomes a problem when overindulgence occurs frequently or becomes excessive (Clarke et al. 2004, Mamen, 2006). Corwin (2010) suggested celebrating a child’s birthday is a common way parents overindulge their children. A birthday party would be a consistent celebration once a year for many years, possibly for a life time. Some parents today go overboard by hosting big expensive parties with elaborate decorations, entertainment, and gifts. This is an elaborate way to reward children for existing rather than celebrating an accomplishment. Rewarding children for existing is a common way to overindulge them.

Overpermissiveness

Capron (2004) defined a second type of pampering as overpermissiveness.

Overpermissive parents give their children permission to do whatever they want. Permissive parents allow children to make their own choices without considering the consequences of their actions. These consequences can have negative affects on the children themselves or on others. Overpermissiveness can allow children to make adult decisions that children are not mature enough to make.

Soft Structure

Clarke et al. (2004) described another type of overindulgence as soft structure which suggests overpermissiveness. Parents allow their children freedom and flexibility in a soft structured environment. In this environment, parents refrain from monitoring their children's behavior establishing or enforcing few if any rules, boundaries, or guidelines. Children can manage themselves, which allows them to do things considered inappropriate for their developmental level, age or interest. A soft structured environment provides children with too much freedom and power.

Failure to Provide and/or Enforce Rules and Appropriate Consequences for Breaking Rules.

Overpermissiveness and soft structure are similar to Kaplan's category "Fail to provide and/or enforce rules and appropriate consequences for breaking rules" (1985, p. 562). He considers this a laissez-faire atmosphere. In this atmosphere, parents engage minimally with their children and fail to provide guidance, rules and discipline.

Children often want to do things they should not do. They lack the maturity, life experience, and mature physical development of their brain. Children need responsible, mature

adults to guide them. When parents do not provide this guidance, it puts the children in situations with which they are not capable of coping. An example could be when teenagers want to go to a party with their friends and stay out all night. In the teenagers' mind this sounds fun and harmless. Adults have more maturity and foresight to realize the multiple opportunities for these teenagers to participate in risky behavior that may have life long consequences. Children may want to do things that are not in their best interest and they need adult guidance for their own protection.

Overdomineering

Capron defined a third type of pampering as overdomineering (2004). Overdomineering individuals control others by making decisions for them. They do not allow people to make any of their own decisions.

Parents need to make some decisions for their children. Children lack the ability to make appropriate decisions for all the choices they face. Children can, however, make developmentally and age appropriate decisions. They could choose what to wear. Parents can display two or three outfits and allow children to pick one. Children could make their choice and be allowed to wear which ever option they choose. Overdomineering parents would decide exactly what their children wear without allowing their children to have any input in the decision.

Over Nurture

Clarke et al. (2004) defined another type of overindulgence as over nurture. Over nurturing provides children with too much care and attention. It includes doing things for children that they could and should do for themselves.

Do for the Child what S/he Could do for Him/herself.

“Do for the child what s/he could do for him/herself” is another pampering category of Kaplan’s (1985, p. 561). This describes parents over nurturing children by doing too much for them.

Parents fulfill their children’s responsibilities by doing things for them including their homework, chores, or anything else that requires work or effort. Kaplan stated that some parents discourage their children’s attempts to be responsible by stopping the children in the middle of a task and completing the task for them.

Adler agrees with Kaplan’s category “Do for the child what s/he could do for him/herself” and Clarke et al.’s category of over nurture as forms of pampering. Adler suggested this type of pampering includes decision making, responsibility, and work. He considers doing these things for children a form of pampering.

Overprotection

The fourth type of pampering Capron defined is overprotection (2004). Overprotective parents overestimate dangers and attempt to protect children from harm. Overestimating dangers includes anything in the physical environment. Overprotective parents do everything they can to avoid physical harm to their children and they also point out any possible danger to their children so the children can be careful to also avoid the danger. Pointing out dangers to children encourages them to continue the overprotection thoughts and behavior.

Parents are responsible for the safety of their children. It would be reasonable for parents to watch toddlers very closely so they do not wander into the road. Toddlers lack the maturity to comprehend danger. This situation represents a real physical danger and the parents need to be very protective to assure the safety of their toddlers. Some situations require parents to provide

appropriate protection to their children in dangerous situations which do not qualify as overprotective behavior.

Over-Supervise, Over-Watch, and Over-Evaluate

Overprotection is similar to Kaplan's category "Over-supervise, over-watch, and over-evaluate" the child (1985, p. 562). Kaplan described his category as hovering over children. Parents hover over their children overseeing everything they do and are available to step in the moment they feel children need help or correction. Manos (2009, p. 21) used the term "helicopter parents" to define the overprotective behavior. Kaplan's description of pampering is a covert way of being overdomineering.

Adler appears to refer to overprotection as a form of pampering (Capron, 2004). His definition of overprotection is broader than Capron's, and it includes protecting children from working or assuming any responsibility. Parents hover over children and assume their responsibilities for them, overprotecting children in everything they do.

Parenting Styles

Some methods of pampering overlap into categories of parenting styles. Adler did not specifically suggest overdomineering or overpermissive as methods of pampering, he considered these to be styles of parenting (Capron, 2004).

Authoritarian

The authoritarian parenting style is similar to the overdomineering type of pampering because they both exert dominance over children. The authoritarian parent possesses all of the power and is very firm, strict, and demanding (Clark et al., 2004; Nelson, 2006). Authoritarian parenting style exerts power in several distinctive ways: preference for power assertion, verbal hostility, arbitrary discipline, directive/conventional control and psychological control (Larzelere

& Baumrind, 2008). Authoritarian parents establish and enforce rules, limits, and boundaries and demand obedience. Discipline used is coercive, which is “peremptory, domineering, arbitrary, and concerned with retaining hierarchical family relationships” (Baumrind, Larzelere, & Owens, 2010, p. 158). Parents use psychological control which is covert, intimidating, intrusive, and manipulative. The authoritarian parent expresses minimal responsiveness to children. Responsiveness refers to emotional warmth, support, and sensitivity toward children and their needs (Baumrind et al., 2010). These parents give children minimal or no control, choices, or opportunities to compromise. An authoritarian parent may say to their children, “You do it because I said so” (Clarke et al., p.7). Autocratic is another term for the authoritarian parenting style.

Permissive

The permissive parenting style is similar to the overpermissive type of pampering because they both allow children to have the majority of the power in the relationship. Permissive parents are very warm, nurturing, and responsive to their children (Nelson, 2006). These parents are not demanding and do not establish or enforce rules or limits, allowing children to have excessive freedom and unlimited choices. Permissive parents avoid controlling or punishing their children. A permissive parent may say, “You can do anything you want”, to his/her child (Clark et al., 2004, p. 7).

Why Parents Pamper

Parents intend to raise their children to the best of their ability. They can easily end up pampering their children because of a variety of external or internal influences.

Changes in Society

The twentieth century brought about changes in society which began with the human and civil rights movements, granting everyone equal rights. When people deserve and expect equal rights it is no longer possible or effective for one person to be dominant over another. Equal rights made it difficult to continue to impose the traditional autocratic society which caused a shift to a more democratic society (Grunwald & McAbee, 1999). The demand for a more democratic society changed family dynamics because for centuries the autocratic parenting style was the common and acceptable way to parent (Schafer, 2009). The equal rights movement forced changes regarding child rearing, making the old authoritarian parenting style less popular and less effective.

The creation of human rights led to the attention to the rights of children. In 1989, the General Assembly of the United Nations adopted the Convention on the Rights of the Child which provides “recognition of the inherent dignity and of the equal and inalienable rights of all members of the human family” (Melton, 2008, p. 903). The convention on the rights of the child acknowledged that children deserve the same basic rights given to adults. Children’s rights include the right to life and the fulfillment of basic needs: protection, food, water, shelter, clothing, and education. The intention of the bill is to provide protection to all children from abuse, exploitation, cruelty, and inhumane conditions. Granting children these rights calls for more of a balance between children’s and parent’s rights with regard to autonomy, protection, and responsibility.

The convention of rights for children continued with additional rights which seem to address children who have their basic needs met. Some of these rights are clear and others are vague. The rights include the right to privacy, right to choose friends, right to have their

opinions taken seriously, and right to gain information from a variety of sources. The convention stated that parents need to protect children from harm, while also respecting the rights of their children. Parents can easily become confused about how to balance their children's rights while also imposing any necessary limits to protect their children (Mamen, 2006). The convention of rights for children changed how parents perceived the rights of their children.

Granting children rights made the old traditional authoritarian parenting style ineffective because children realized they too had rights. Children began to expect these rights and to be treated equally (Ungar, 2009). Parents had to consider adopting a new parenting style other than authoritarian that would allow them to effectively implement the rights of their children. The traditional authoritarian parenting style does not support the new rights of children.

Influenced by Society

Parents may choose a style of parenting by observing what society considers a common and acceptable way to parent. This observation can lead to overprotecting children because they feel overprotection represents typical parenting in middle-class western families (Ungar, 2009). Protecting children by keeping a close eye on them is common practice today and may reflect the values of society. Parents can adopt parenting practices that they consider to be typical which can contribute to why some parents pamper their children by overprotecting them.

Influenced by the Media

Parents may not have access to current formal research literature regarding effective parenting. Without this access, parents may rely on the general media for parental guidance. The general media may present information that may be confusing or inaccurately summarizing

current formal scientific research. Following the inaccurate advice from the general media can influence parents to parent ineffectively (McGillicuddy-De Lisi & De Lisi, 2007).

The media has contributed to overindulgence by creating confusion between wants and needs. Companies have realized their ability to profit from the confusion by targeting children in their advertisements (Mamen, 2006) even though the companies realize children do not have much purchasing power. Companies purposely take advantage of parents by attempting to convince children that they need or want their products. The children who desire these products request them from their parents and persist by nagging until their parents fulfill their requests. The “nag factor” (Bridges & Briesch, 2006, p.157) defines how children’s persistent behavior can influence and increase what and how much adults purchase. Parents respond to the nagging by buying things to ultimately get their children to stop nagging. The media indirectly influences parents to purchase things children do not need which can contribute to overindulgence.

The media may also influence parents to overprotect their children. The news bombards viewers with stories of violence and crime from around the world. The news coverage gives people the impression that the world is a more dangerous place than it ever has been. These stories can give parents the false perception that the area they live in is equally as dangerous as where the crime and violence occurred which can cause parents to fear the safety of their children and become overprotective (Ungar, 2009). The perception of danger could be an appropriate account for high risk areas but not for low risk areas. The media has the potential to influence parents to pamper their children by unnecessarily overprotecting them.

Changes in the Family

The twentieth century also experienced changes to the family. The family unit has expanded from a traditional one to include divorced, blended, and single parent families (Ungar,

2009). Children from non traditional families often experience pampering because their parents often pamper in an attempt to compensate for any pain or loss they have caused their children due to the breakup of their family. The pampering may also reflect the competition between the divorced parents to win the favor of their children over the other parent (Mamen, 2006).

One major change in the family is the family function. In the past it was common to farm and live off the land. Parents considered children an asset because of their ability to fulfill necessary jobs, such as gathering eggs or milking cows. Parents relied on children to contribute and cooperate in fulfilling family roles. With modern advances in industrial technology it is no longer necessary to live off the land and children have lost their traditional role in fulfilling family functions. Some families have not replaced the role for children to fulfill. Schafer (2009) agreed and stated “Modern society has generally stopped calling on kids to pitch in and share the family load” (p. 37). This change in the family function has contributed to parents no longer expecting their children to complete necessary chores at home.

Another change in the family today is that the majority of parents work outside the home and they hire other people to care for their children. These parents often feel guilt ridden because of their busy lives and lack of quality time spent with their children (Mamen, 2006; Schmitt, 2009). This sense of guilt contributes to pampering children as a way of making up for the lack of time spent together. It is also an attempt to make the time together as peaceful and pleasant as possible for both parents and children. Parents would likely avoid enforcing rules, boundaries, or depriving their children in any way. Guilt can contribute to a parents desire to pamper their children.

Living a fast paced life often means parents are in a hurry. Parents do not have time to wait for children who are often slow at learning and completing tasks correctly (Schafer, 2009).

Parents want things done quickly and correctly. It is more efficient for the parent to complete tasks themselves rather than take the extra time necessary to allow children to learn to complete tasks themselves (Mamen, 2006). This contributes to parents pampering their children by doing things for them that they are capable of doing for themselves.

Parental Gain

Often the intention of pampering is in an effort to meet the needs of the parents. The parents may claim or give the appearance that pampering is for the child's benefit (Grunwald & McAbee, 1999).

Parents may expect to achieve self-actualization through their children. Some parents seek to reach their full potential through the accomplishments of their children (Ungar, 2009). Parents with this expectation want their children to be successful because of the positive reflection it will have on the parent themselves. This parental goal may cause parents to pamper their children in an attempt to increase the parent's level of self worth and sense of accomplishment.

Parents pamper their children in an effort to prevent the parents from experiencing difficult or negative emotions. Parents are pampering themselves when they pamper their children (Grunwald & McAbee, 1999). Some parents have a low tolerance for frustration and they may not be able to tolerate seeing their children upset or deprived in anyway (Schmitt, 2009). This would cause the parents to suffer through their children's suffering. Parents avoid their own suffering by pampering their children.

Parents may worry about how society judges them and their children. Some parents worry about their own self worth and how other people judge them (Mills, Freeman, Clara, Elgar, Walling, & Mak, 2007). These parents want to be seen as worthy in the eyes of others and

avoid feeling a sense of shame and embarrassment. They overprotect their children in an attempt to have society judge them as highly as possible to increase their own sense of self worth.

Parents want to portray a positive status in society and they believe their possession of material things determines their status and ultimately their self worth. They focus on obtaining equal or greater material items in quantity and value than their peers and neighbors. They overindulge their children with material things to avoid feeling inferior to other people (Grunwald & McAbee, 1999). Parents may overindulge their children to reflect a status that is equal or superior to others.

Another pay off for the parents is to be highly regarded by their children. Some parents want their children to like them and consider them a great parent (Corwin, 2010; Grunwald & McAbee, 1999; Mamen, 2006). Some parents want their children to like them because it makes the parents feel special, valued and loved by their children. Another reason parents may want their children to like them is because it is easier to parent children when everybody likes each other and gets along well. Parents who want their children to like them may avoid any situation that may threaten their status in their children's eyes or cause conflict of any kind which would lead to pampering.

Parents are Influenced by Their Own Childhood

Pampering may be a result of the parent's attachment history or style. Psychologist Bowlby referred to this as compulsive care-giving (as cited in Cohen, 2004). Early childhood relational experiences affect psychological attachment. Parents may become compulsive care-givers toward their children as a result of the parent's attachment history.

Parents may be pampering their children because of their own beliefs about their own childhood. Walton (1998) created a technique called "The most memorable observation"

(p. 487). Walton discovered there is a time during the teenage years when adolescents analyze their lives and draw a general conclusion about what is important to them. Sometimes the conclusion is a positive conclusion about something the adolescent really liked or considered important. When the adolescents become parents, this belief system will create a goal to have this positive aspect present in their children's life. More often this conclusion is a negative conclusion about a specific aspect the adolescent considered bad. When adolescents become parents, they will create a goal to guard against having this negative aspect present in their children's lives. This conclusion creates the adolescent's belief system that will guide their parenting style in the future. Often parents overemphasize this aspect which causes the positive and negative aspects to ultimately have a negative affects on the children.

An example of a positive conclusion might be "my family life was very peaceful." The positive conclusion of having a peaceful family creates the belief system that places importance on creating a peaceful family atmosphere. Overemphasizing this creates the belief that family life must always be peaceful. The result of this expectation might lead to a parenting style that imposes no boundaries or restrictions on the children leading to confrontation and unhappiness. Confrontation and unhappiness would violate the goal of creating a peaceful family atmosphere. This positive conclusion of a peaceful life might result in pampering children.

A negative conclusion about one's childhood may reveal a feeling of being unloved, deprived, or treated unfairly (Mamen, 2006). An example of a negative conclusion might be "I did not have many toys." The negative conclusion of not having many toys creates the belief system that places importance on providing material possessions. Overemphasizing the negative memory of not having many toys creates the belief that children should have many toys with

which to play with. This negative conclusion would lead to a parenting style that overindulges children in an attempt to make sure their children would not feel deprived.

The most memorable observation reveals how the parents felt about their own childhood experiences. Over emphasizing both positive and negative conclusions can lead to pampering children.

To Benefit the Children

Children often compare themselves to other people in society. Children want to feel equal to others which can lead to a comparison of material objects. Children begin to desire material objects they observe other people possess. Desiring objects can cause the children to believe they need similar objects creating confusion between needs and wants. It is important for adults to recognize the difference between what children need and want (Clarke et al., 2004; Schmitt, 2009). Adults may provide children with material objects the children want because of an unclear distinction between the two which can quickly lead to overindulgence.

Parents believe children today require more care and attention. Ungar (2009) stated that parents are extending childhood because the parents believe children are not as evolved and require care and protection longer than children did in the past. Schafer (2009) agreed by stating "... we are guilty of infantilizing our children, keeping them in a dependent state as long as possible" (p. 35). Some parents may keep children dependent because they believe their children need care longer while other parents enjoy feeling needed by their children. These thoughts and feelings may encourage parents to extend care and protection for a much longer time than was once considered normal or necessary.

Parents want their children to have a good life. These parents often pamper because they want to protect their children from negative experiences (Grunwald & McAbee, 1999). Parents

believe negative experiences may result in the development of fears, feelings of inadequacy, or feeling unloved. They believe shielding their children from these experiences ultimately protects them from the negative effects. Parents believe they are protecting their children by pampering them.

Parents may also pamper their children to gain an immediate solution. They choose short-term solutions to keep their children from being unhappy (Schmitt, 2009). Sometimes parents choose short-term solutions because the solutions provide happiness and peace in the moment, rather than considering the long-term consequences the children will suffer because of the parent's actions (Grunwald & McAbee, 1999).

Parental goals may determine parental behavior. Some parents' goal is to help children develop high self esteem and happiness. Parents may believe living a happy and harmonious life develops self esteem (McGillicuddy-De Lisi & De Lisi, 2007). Other parents believe the amount of love they provide their child determines the child's happiness (Grunwald & McAbee, 1999). Creating an environment that is happy and harmonious for children would exclude any limitations, rules, or consequences. This would promote indulgent and permissive parenting.

Effects of Pampering

Nature vs. Nurture

To understand how pampering affects children it is necessary to consider the long debated concept of nature vs. nurture (Corwin, 2010). Nature consists of all biological and hereditary factors that contribute to the make up of an individual. Individuals have no control over these internal biological factors which include DNA, genetics, race, and gender. Nurture consists of everything in an individual's environment which includes family, friends, community, and any personal relationships and experiences. The environment externally

influences the individual. Nature (internal) and nurture (external) both have the ability to influence the individual.

The Creative Power of the Individual

Adler understands the importance of nature and nurture but believes the individual also plays an important role in determining influences. Adler considered the individual to possess a third force he calls “the creative power of the individual” (as cited in Manaster, 1996, p. 353). Individuals have the desire and ability to make sense out of experiences. The individuals observe biological (internal) and environmental (external) influences and creatively interpret these influences. This interpretation assigns meaning to each influence. The assigned meaning will determine the effects experienced. The uniqueness of this creative power means two individuals can interpret the same experience differently. An example of this could be two children with bright red hair. One child could conclude red hair makes him unique; the other child could conclude red hair makes him odd. One interpretation is positive and the other is negative. Adler suggested three forces have the potential to determine and influence effects: Nature, nurture, and the creative power of the individual

Pampering can lead to many possible effects but the presence of the creative power of the individual makes it impossible to accurately predict the effects for each individual. It is probable on a statistical basis to assume the typical responses to pampering behaviors (Manaster, 1996). The effects suggested represent the most common, typical effects most people will experience.

The Degree of Effects

The degree of negative effects vary greatly depending upon how often pampering occurred and the number of pampering styles experienced (Kaplan, 1985). Effects of pampering will reflect exposure to pampering; an increase in exposure increases potential results. The more

often parents pamper their children the greater effect it has on them. Exposure to more than one pampering style also increases the potential effects. The degree of negative effects reflects exposure to the pampering behavior.

The Pampered Lifestyle

Adler theorized pampering children leads to many negative effects as stated in Capron (2004). Pampering children causes negative effects when it becomes frequent or consistent (Clarke et al., 2004; Mamen, 2006; Schmitt, 2009). Behaviorists consider this a “continuous schedule of reinforcement” as stated by Kaplan (1985, p. 561). Adler believed negative results would be present after one or two years of pampering (Capron, 2004). This repeated exposure to pampering can result in children adopting the “pampered life style” (p.77). The pampered life style reflects an attitude of expecting special treatment. Fay & Billings (2005) referred to this as entitlement and define it as an attitude of expectation “to be given a right to demand or receive” (p. 8). Rights reflect rules about things freely given. Possessing this right implies a position of power with the ability to demand or receive benefits from the world or others. The entitlement attitude of the pampered child expects the world or people to fulfill all their expectations, demands, wants, and needs. Children expect this treatment from the original person who pampered them and then the children extend the expectation to other people in their lives.

Attitude of entitlement is increasingly present in college students (Greenberger, Lessard, Chen, & Farruggia, 2009). This study revealed college students experience anxiety over getting good grades. These students admitted to academic dishonesty to get desired grades. The goal of obtaining good grades was more important to the students than acquiring knowledge.

Entitled children have an attitude of superiority and believe their needs are more important than the needs of other people. These children are self centered and believe they

should always be the center of attention (Corwin, 2010; Mamen, 2006). These traits can cause the pampered child to be isolated, rejected, or excluded socially (Corwin, 2010; Mamen, 2006). Members of society may have difficulty liking, controlling, or tolerating the entitlement attitude of pampered children.

When children focus on themselves they fail to develop empathy toward others. Children who lack empathy can be insensitive toward other people's feelings and unable to sympathize with them during times of distress, unhappiness, grief, or loss (Corwin, 2010; Mamen, 2006).

Alfred Adler believed "Pampering and spoiling may be the most serious impediment to the child's normal development" (Grunwald & McAbee, 1999, p. 14). Clark et al. (2004) considered it a form of child neglect. Pampering children limits or denies them opportunities that are necessary to master developmental tasks and learn essential life lessons (Clark et al., 2004; Grunwald & McAbee 1999). Pampering is essentially doing things for children things they are capable of and should be doing for themselves. Children need to master developmental tasks for normal development. Adler believes pampering children fails to adequately prepare them for the challenges of life (Grunwald & McAbee, 1999).

Pampering hinders normal development in children because the children begin to expect other people to do things for them that the children are capable of doing for themselves. This makes children become dependent on other people to have their needs met (Capron, 2004; Grunwald & McAbee, 1999). When children depend on other people to have their needs met the children are unable to become self-confident, self-reliant and independent (Capron, 2004; Nelson, 2006). Clark et al. (2004) stated that teaching children to be dependent upon others essentially trains the children to be helpless.

Overindulgent

When parents overindulge their children they give their children too many things too often. Adler stated that things freely given without expecting the children to put forth any effort trains children to take without giving (Ansbacher & Ansbacher, 1956). Allowing children to take things without giving back deprives the children of learning how to earn or work for material items they want (Kaplan, 1985). Self satisfaction develops from learning how to earn and purchase items yourself. Children who believe they deserve to get everything they want often feel threatened when limits are placed on their desires (Mamen, 2006). The overindulged child can become manipulative and tyrannical towards those who resist them (Capron, 2004; Grunwald McAbee, 1999). Grunwald & McAbee stated overindulgence leads to exploitativeness, egotism and a sense of entitlement.

Overindulging children with material items can encourage them to become materialistic (Capron, 2004; Grunwald & McAbee, 1999). Focusing on material items can develop into the belief that material possessions reflect personal value and love. This belief relies upon an external factor for personal worth (Grunwald & McAbee, 1999). Corwin (2010) stated society encourages this belief by placing more importance on the things people possess rather than the person themselves. Focusing on possessions can lead to an accumulation of material items and a continuous desire to increase these items in quantity and quality. Expecting the quality of material possessions to reflect personal value would lead to purchasing stylish, name brand, or expensive brands which Mamen (2006) referred to as label lovers.

Overindulging children with material items fails to teach the children the concept of having enough of something or feeling satisfied with what the children already possess. Overindulgence ironically leaves children feeling deprived rather than satisfied. Possessing too

many things interferes with the cognitive developments of focus and perseverance (Clarke et al., 2004).

Overpermissive

Overpermissive parents fail to provide or enforce rules which allow children to be free to do what they want and leads the children to believe that they are “a law unto themselves” (Capron, 2004, p. 79). Children of overpermissive parents can become self centered and disrespect authority, social rules and the rights of others (Capron, 2004; Kaplan, 1985; Schmitt, 2009). When rules are not enforced children do not learn to be accountable for their actions (Kaplan, 1985). Children who do not learn to be accountable for their actions blame other people for any trouble or problems the children experience (Grunwald McAbee, 1999).

Baumrind et al. (2010) researched the effects of parenting styles on children. This study tested permissive parents and their preschool children, retesting the children during early adolescence to determine if there were any long term effects of the permissiveness. The study revealed permissive parenting resulted in children with lower competence and less autonomy. Lepper suggested “unconstrained freedom of choice may result in a sense of indeterminacy and groundlessness, rather than empowerment and self-sufficiency” (as cited in Baumrind et al., 2010, p. 184). This study concluded that permissive parents deny their children opportunities to learn how to handle challenges in life. These children fail to learn how to cooperate with others, share responsibilities, and live with structure or order.

College students of permissive parents rated their family relations as positive (McGillicuddy-De Lisi & De Lisi, 2007). This study concluded that this positive perception from children may be influencing some parents who desire to be highly regarded by their children to be permissive.

Overdomineering

Overdomineering parents control their children by making decisions for them. Making decisions for children sends the message that children are not competent enough to make decisions on their own (Capron, 2004). When parents do this they fail to provide their children with the opportunities to make their own choices and learn to experience failure, which denies children the opportunity to build self-confidence in their own decision making and judgments (Grunwald & McAbee, 1999; Kaplan, 1985). Without this confidence children will be unable to achieve things that require good decision making and judgment. Making choices for children also makes them dependent on others (Grunwald McAbee, 1999) and prevents children from developing problem solving skills (Kaplan, 1985). Controlled children often underachieve out of the fear of failure or making a mistake (Grunwald & McAbee, 1999).

Research studied how parental control affects children's mastery. Moorman (2008) studied four year old children and their controlling mothers for six months. Controlling behavior included directing, commanding, or taking over the task. Control measured how intrusive the mothers were while their children attempted to perform certain tasks. The results of this study supported previous research that revealed parental control decreases motivation in children. Control limits mastery, autonomy, and opportunities for the development of problem solving skills. This study stated "only minimal instances of control on parents' part are necessary to undermine children's sense of autonomy, leading to immediate interference with the development of children's mastery." (p. 737). Controlling children affects their mastery immediately and continued to dampen mastery six months later. It is important to note that the mothers continued to exhibit controlling behavior throughout the six month period. This study also revealed the reciprocal effect: when children displayed decrease motivation their mother

responded with an increase in controlling behavior. Moorman stated previous studies reported that decreased motivation negatively affects academic achievement.

The authoritarian style of parenting takes total control over children and teaches the children to obey authority figures at all times without question. This expectation makes children dependent on others for guidance and denies children the opportunity to develop decision making skills. Without these skills, it will be difficult for the children to be confident in knowing what to do when they have to rely on themselves for guidance or decision making (Schafer, 2009). Relying on others for guidance denies individuals from developing skills to become independent (Takeuchi & Takeuchi, 2008). There are times when children should not obey adults because not all adults have good intentions toward children such as child molesters and drug dealers.

Dominating or controlling puts one person in a position of superiority with power and the other in a position of inferiority without power. This may be effective temporarily, but, because nobody likes to be in a position of inferiority, it can cause children to eventually rebel. The children can rebel overtly and/or covertly (Grunwald & McAbee, 1999).

Baumrind et al. (2010) revealed that the authoritarian parenting style can adversely affect adolescents. Authoritarian parents limit opportunities for their children to learn how to handle challenging experiences. These parents limit children with their excessive control, rules and expectations which discourages initiative and autonomous behavior in their children. Children with authoritarian parents also have difficulty cooperating with others, have low self-esteem, and internalize problems. This study suggests these problems are likely the result of the power differential and the assertiveness with which the parents enforce power.

College students with authoritarian parents rated their family relations as significantly less positive compared to other students with parents from different parenting styles (McGillicuddy-De Lisi & De Lisi, 2007). This study also reported previous research concluded children from authoritarian parents had higher levels of hostility which seems to be associated with the children's view of having poor family relations.

The authoritarian parenting style asserts power in counterproductive methods (Larzelere & Baumrind, 2008). This study identified verbal hostility and psychological control as the most counter productive method to exert power. Verbal hostility resulted in children with lower levels of communal competence, individuation, self-efficacy and an increase in internalizing problems. Psychological control resulted in children with lower levels of self-efficacy and an increase in internalizing problems.

Over Nurture

Over nurturing is the same as over-functioning. Over nurturing parents continue to provide excess care and attention to their children than their children require. Over functioning for children causes children to under-function and the children fail to learn essential developmental tasks and coping skills. Doing too much for children teaches them helplessness and learned incompetence (Clarke et al., 2004; Grunwald & McAbee, 1999).

When parents over-supervise, hover over, and over evaluate their children, the parents keep their children from becoming self confident and self sufficient. This parental behavior sends the message that the parents do not trust their children to behave or perform on their own which can cause children to feel anxious, inferior, and frustrated (Kaplan, 1985). Parents who hover over their children are ready to help them at any time. When parents do help their children they are ultimately fulfilling the responsibilities for their children. Parents who fulfill their

children's responsibilities protect and prevent the children from being responsible (Capron, 2004).

Overprotection

When parents overprotect children they attempt to protect the children from physical harm. This can over sensitize children to possible external dangers and lead to their development of anxiety, selected perception of threats, and avoidance behavior. Parents send the message to their children that the parent is capable of making judgments regarding safety but the children lack this decision making ability (Capron, 2004; Grunwald & McAbee, 1999). This message discourages children from being responsible and encourages them to be dependent upon others (Grunwald & McAbee, 1999).

Overprotected children can end up limiting their own exposure to experiences and eventually isolating themselves because of their preoccupation with safety. Overprotected children would likely conclude that the world is a very dangerous place and they may live in constant fear (Capron, 2004). Overprotected children lack self confidence in managing themselves in what they perceive is a dangerous world (Grunwald & McAbee, 1999).

Overprotection can result in fearful responses to common situations. Raishevich, Kennedy, & Rapee's (2010) study revealed an association between three to five year old children and emotional over involvement of their mothers. Emotional over involved mothers displayed a greater degree of overprotective parenting behavior. The results of this study confirmed previous research that shows the behaviors of overprotective parents promote children who develop and maintain anxiety and inhibition. Behaviorally inhibited children responded to incidental situations with a shy and fearful response. This study suggests there may be a bidirectional

influence where parents respond to inhibited behavior of their children by being overprotective to which the children respond with increased inhibition and anxiety.

Overprotective parenting contributes to social anxiety. Overprotecting children can affect the cognitive development of their belief that external factors control the outcome of their experiences (Spokas & Heimburg, 2009). Their study explained that the cognitive belief may develop due to the control the parents exert over children which denies the children any opportunity to obtain appropriate social skills. The lack of these skills contributes to social anxiety when these skills are required. This research revealed that the perception of maternal overprotection predicted a significant increase in social anxiety compared to perceived paternal overprotection.

Toda, Kawai, Takeo, Rokutan, & Morimoto (2008) studied the effects of overprotective parenting and life style habits of college aged children. College students completed a self reported questionnaire regarding their perception of their parents' parenting style. This study revealed that perceived parental overprotection can lead to unhealthy lifestyle habits. Females reported unhealthier life style habits than the male students. The first unhealthy lifestyle discovered in the females was the lack of a nutritional diet. Previous studies have shown an unhealthy diet can lead to anorexia nervosa. The reason given for this result is a combination of an unhealthy diet and the fact that an overprotective mother often sends the message that she believes her daughter does not have the ability to handle herself independently or responsibly. This message encourages the daughter to lack confidence in herself, which, when combined with unhealthy eating habits, can lead to anorexia nervosa.

The second unhealthy lifestyle present in the female students was a lack of regular physical activity. Previous studies report that overprotective mothers may encourage their

daughters to portray lady like behavior which may contradict being physically active and contribute to their inactivity. These previous studies also revealed that a lack of physical activity often contributes to obesity.

The third unhealthy lifestyle assessed was delinquent behavior. The female students in this study admitted to smoking but not drinking. The absence of drinking may reflect the participants in this study and not the general population, because previous studies indicate an association between drinking and parental overprotection.

This study reported male students had higher levels of depression associated with perceived parental overprotection. The results of this study revealed that there are gender differences in health related life styles that result from perceived overprotective parenting.

Parenting influences how students adjust to the transition to college. Klein & Pierce (2009) studied how parental care and overprotection affected students and their ability to transition to an independent life as a college student. Overprotective parenting negatively affected college students' ability to adjust to college life. This supports previous studies which revealed overprotected children often feel inadequate, have low self esteem, and fail to develop a sense of independence. In this study significant negative effects were associated with paternal overprotection rather than maternal. A possible explanation given was that paternal overprotection may indicate an authoritarian father.

Manos agreed that parents are overly involved in their college student's lives today. He considered these parents "helicopter" parents and stated that they continue to oversee their children during college years (Manos, 2009, p. 21).

Many colleges recognize the prevalence of helicopter, over involved, and overprotective parents. Some colleges have instituted policies to control parental involvement. These policies

include educating parents and students about healthy college student development and the inappropriateness and ineffectiveness of over parental involvement. These policies put procedures in place to limit parental involvement in an attempt to improve student autonomy and responsibility (Klein & Pierce, 2009).

Capron (2004) studied college students to determine the link between several different types of pampering and narcissistic personality traits from the clinical criteria for Narcissistic Personality Disorder (NPD). Capron's research revealed pampering defined as overindulgence showed the strongest correlation to narcissism with men and women reporting equally high levels of entitlement and exhibitionism. Women reported higher in areas of exploitativeness and authority than men. Pampering through overdomineering revealed men reported minimal to moderate levels of entitlement, exhibitionism, and exploitativeness, where as women reported a negative correlation to entitlement and exploitativeness. This study suggested under domination (overpermissiveness) can lead to narcissism by exaggerating ones decision making abilities which can lead to entitlement, showing off, and manipulating or exploiting others. Pampering through overprotection revealed women reported a negative correlation with entitlement and vanity but men reported no significant correlations to any narcissistic traits. This research study concluded that overindulgent and overdomineering pampering styles showed the strongest correlation with narcissistic traits later in life which can lead to a diagnosis of Narcissistic Personality Disorder.

Capron's study supported previous research by Millon where Millon stated "narcissism is essentially the product of faulty child rearing" (as cited in Capron, 2004, p. 78). Capron and Millon support Adler's theory that pampering children significantly increases their chances to develop a psychopathological disorder. Adler concluded that symptoms of disorders reflect

unconscious feelings of insecurity and are safeguards from facing the realities of life.

(Ansbacher & Ansbacher, 1956; Manaster, 1996).

Mistaken Beliefs

Pampering can lead to the development of mistaken beliefs which are erroneous conclusions often made during childhood from a child's perspective. Dreikurs and Soltz indicated, "Children are expert observers but make many mistakes in interpreting what they observe. They often draw wrong conclusions and choose mistaken ways in which to find their place" (as cited in Dinkmeyer, Lingg, Kottman, 1991p. 256). The mistaken belief conclusions reflect the presence of the creative power of the individual.

Kaplan (1985) states that Adler concluded that children who adopt the pampered lifestyle are very likely to also adopt mistaken beliefs. Pampered children can easily conclude: I am superior to other people, I always deserve to get everything I want, I should not have to work for the things I want, or I will only cooperate with others if they give me what I want in return. Adopting mistaken beliefs often endorses feelings of superiority and arrogance.

If faulty conclusions lead to mistaken beliefs, it is important to determine if the message parents intend to send is consistent with the message children receive. Often children slightly misinterpret the intended message. Parent may send the message that they want their children to be happy and content. The children may hear the message and interpret it to imply that they should always be happy and content. This misinterpretation between the intended and received message can create mistaken beliefs which leads to the children's direction in life and their expectation of life. Adopting the mistaken belief of "I should always be happy and content" may result in the children feeling frustrated and disappointed when experiencing unhappiness or

discontentment (Mamen, 2006). Mistaken beliefs can lead to faulty conclusions and unrealistic expectations about life, which, ultimately can lead to disappointment and frustration.

Effective Parenting

The definitions of pampering all describe excessively caring for children. Parents do too much for their children either by being too strict or too lenient. A balance between authoritarian and permissive parenting leads to effective parenting.

Adler became interested in preventative education and taught parents how to relate to their children more effectively. Rudolf Dreikurs worked closely with Adler developing effective techniques to apply Adlerian theory to parent/child relationships. Dreikurs and Adler taught the authoritative parenting style with Adlerian techniques because they believed it was the most effective way to parent (Grunwald & McAbee, 1999). Democratic is another term for this style of parenting.

Authoritative Parenting

Authoritative parents consciously create a family environment that provides favorable conditions and opportunities for children experience life lessons necessary for them to learn valuable life skills. These parents focus on the positive long term results for their children to be independent and responsible contributing members of society.

Equality

The authoritative parenting style creates a family foundation based on equality. Equality refers to personal value (Nelson, 2006). All members of the family have value and treat each other with dignity and respect. Children thrive when treated with dignity and respect (Schafer, 2009). Equality does not mean equal in power. Families must develop an understanding of hierarchical authority where parents have more power than their children. Hierarchical authority

helps children develop a healthy sense of respect for authority (Mamen, 2006). Children do not have the same rights as adults because children lack maturity, knowledge, and life experience (Mamen, 2006; Nelson, 2006). However, the children and adults do have the same rights to mutual respect.

Responsiveness

Parents treat their children with dignity and respect through their interactions.

Authoritative parents are very responsive toward children. “Responsiveness refers to emotional support, warmth, and actions that intentionally foster individuality and are acquiescent to the child’s needs and demands” stated Baumrind et al. (2010, p. 161). Dreikurs referred to this simply as kindness and describes it as treating others as a friend (Nelson, 2006). Authoritative parents encourage their children to communicate their thoughts, feelings, and opinions and respond with understanding and validation. Differences in opinions are respectfully expressed. Parents show support to children by expressing faith and confidence in them (Nelson, 2006). This parental position supports and encourages autonomy in children (Sorkhabi, 2010).

Research has shown an association between parental warmth and positive emotional adjustment in adolescents based on their levels of depression, anxiety, and self-esteem (McKinney, Donnelly, & Renk, 2008). This study determined that parental warmth influenced adolescents’ positive perceptions of their parents. The presence of a positive perception of parental interaction toward the adolescent increased the adolescents’ emotional adjustment. The results also indicated that maternal parenting is significantly more influential than paternal parenting on adolescents’ positive emotional adjustment. Children have different relationships with their mothers and fathers. The differences in these relationships result in different

expectations from the parent/child relationship. The expectations may explain what determines the influence on adolescents.

Children with authoritative parents considered their family to have positive family relations as stated by McGillicuddy-De Lisi & De Lisi (2007). This study determined the presence of parental warmth to be a critical factor that attributed to the children's perception of positive family relations.

Demanding

Demanding parents expect mature and cooperative behavior from their children, monitor their children, and willingly confront children who fail to meet parental expectations (Baumrind et al., 2010). Dreikurs referred to this as firmness (Nelson, 2006). Authoritative parents establish reasonable expectations and encourage their children to cooperatively comply with the set expectations.

Authoritative parenting style implements the unique blend of responsiveness (kindness) and demandingness (firmness). Responsiveness and demandingness combine to create a balanced relationship that is respectful for the parents and children (Nelson, 2006). Permissive parents respond to their children without being demanding and parents who are demanding without being responsive are authoritarian (Baumrind et al., 2010; Nelson, 2006).

Values

It is important for parents to identify and clarify their values. Values vary in priority, some are negotiable and others are not. Identifying these values can help parents realize the specific values they intend to pass on to their children and the priority of each value (Mamen, 2006). Awareness of family values can strengthen parents faced with external influences that may oppose their values (Clarke et al., 2004).

Wants vs. Needs

Identification and awareness of values will also clarify the difference between wants and needs (Corwin, 2010). Parents must identify the difference between what their children want and need (Corwin, 2010; Fay & Billings, 2005; Schmitt, 2009), because children believe they need and deserve everything they want. Parents are responsible to provide their children with all their essential needs not essentially everything the children want (Fay & Billings, 2005).

Rules, Limits, and Boundaries

Values will give parents direction for creating family rules. Families need to establish and enforce rules, limits, and boundaries. “Children crave limits” stated Corwin (2010, p.61). Limits give children a sense of security by giving them guidelines of acceptable behavior and boundaries. These guidelines reduce anxiety in children because they allow children to predict the outcome of their behavior and the behavior of others. Mamen (2006) stated “Structure and clear expectations within a warm, nurturing environment have consistently been shown to correlate with healthy adjustment in children of all ages” (p. 89).

Parents should include all family members when establishing rules (Mamen, 2006; Nelson, 2006). Everyone should participate in the discussion and establishment of family rules, allowing equal expression of opinions and suggestions. This participation allows children the opportunity to experience cooperation, compromise, and problem solving. Children will have more respect for the rules and be more compliant if they help to establish them. Sorkhabi (2010) stated that past research has shown involving children with a participatory role in rule construction contributes to more harmony in the family. Participating in the establishment of rules has also shown improvement in academics, psychosocial, self-esteem, intrinsic motivation, and has reduced delinquency and deviance in children.

Parents need to make the rules clear and explain the reason behind the rules. Children will be able to comply and have more respect for rules if they clearly understand the rules and the reasons for the rules (Baumrind et al., 2010; Mamen, 2006). It would be better to tell a child “you need to be home at 6:00 because that is when we will eat supper” rather than “you need to be home at 6:00 because I said so.” Rules establish structure and peace in the home (Corwin, 2010).

Rules create structure and security only when they are consistently enforced; inconsistent rules are not effective (Mamen, 2006; Schafer, 2009). Rules can vary in importance where some are firm and others more flexible. If a family rule prohibits the use of foul language, then parents need to enforce this rule and potential consequences every time foul language is used. Prohibited means never allowed. Flexibility is often necessary in enforcing some rules. Special occasions occur and so do changes in schedules. Parents need to clearly explain to children the reasons for the exceptions to the rules (Grunwald & McAbee, 1999). For example, children’s bedtime could be different depending upon the day. Weekends and special occasions could allow some flexibility where as school days remain consistent. Justifying reasons for flexibility assures children that rules are consistent. Inconsistent rules do not have a reliable or reasonable pattern.

Chores

Some parents avoid assigning chores to children because they believe chores burden children. These parents may not realize the benefits chores provide. Authoritative parents expect children to participate in household chores (Baumrind et al., 2010; Corwin, 2010). Participating in household chores teaches children life skills, responsibility and cooperative living (Mamen, 2006). Children feel valued and needed when they are contributing members of their family (Clarke et al., 2004; Fay & Billings, 2005). Expecting children to contribute to

household chores can prevent children from feeling entitled to have others in their service. Parents need to consider age and development of children when assigning household chores. For example, chores can be simple for young children where a preschooler could put toys in a toy box. As children mature they can complete more difficult chores such as: cleaning the bathroom.

Advice vs. Commands

Parents need to be clear about their communication with children. Some times parents give children advice and other times they command children to do something. Advice is information freely given as a suggestion with no expectation or consequences attached, such as: “you should go to bed.” Parents could say this as a suggestion to a child who is tired before his expected bedtime. A command is a direct instruction with the expectation of obedience (Mamen, 2006), such as: “it is time for you to go to bed.” Children need to clearly understand the difference between advice and commands so they can accurately predict their behavior. For clear communication parents need to say exactly what they mean, and mean what they say, and follow through with consequences (Mamen, 2006; Schafer, 2009).

Praise vs. Encouragement

Parents attempt to increase their child’s self esteem through communication. Some parents use praise, which, focuses on the person, the accomplishment, and reflects the affirmations and judgments of others. An example of praise would be “You are such a good kid” or “I am so proud of you for getting first place.” Praise makes children feel good in the moment of the affirmation but creates a dependence on the approval of others (Nelson, 2006; Schafer, 2009) and focuses on performance outcomes (Grunwald & McAbee, 1999). Praise does not increase self esteem (Fay & Billings, 2005).

Other parents use encouragement which focuses on the effort or action, and emphasizes self reflection and self evaluation. An example of encouragement would be “You must be proud of yourself for being so brave” or “you tried really hard today”. Encouragement increases a sense of self worth without the approval of others (Nelson, 2006; Schafer, 2009) and accepts any outcome (Grunwald & McAbee, 1999). Dreikurs and Adler believed encouragement is an essential element for change. Dreikurs declared the importance of encouragement by stating, “the child needs encouragement like a plant needs water” (Grunwald & McAbee, 1999, p. 122).

Parental Control

The goal of an authoritative parent is to encourage children to initiate appropriate independent behavior. Authoritative parents intend to use their control, in a cooperative and friendly manner, to guide and direct their children only when necessary. Parents respond to children’s behavior with either approval or disapproval. A directive (correction) toward appropriate behavior follows disapproval. When children demonstrate appropriate behavior their authoritative parents’ need for correction reduces. This increases children’s spontaneous initiation of appropriate, self guided independent behavior and leads to proper socialization. Past research has shown that the authoritative parenting style regarding parental control increases moral behavior, self-esteem, self-control, and academic achievement in children (Takeuchi & Takeuchi, 2008). Schafer (2009) stated that families that transfer power to all members of the family experience more harmony in their homes.

Transferring power to children provides them with freedom. Responsibility must come with freedom. Children need to accept the responsibility that goes along with freedom, otherwise they will lose their freedom (Schafer, 2009). An example of this could be when parents allow their teenager to use the family car to go to a movie. If the teenager proves to be

irresponsible with the car, his authoritative parents would deny him the freedom to drive again with the opportunity to redeem himself at a later date.

Authoritative parents encourage independence and autonomy in their children. Dreikurs often stated “Don’t do anything for a child that a child can do for herself” (as cited in Nelson, 2006). To encourage independence and autonomy parents need to be aware of their children’s developmental abilities and provide them with the opportunities and encouragement to develop their skills (Clarke et al., 2004; Nelson, 2006; Schafer, 2009). Very young children can begin to learn how to dress themselves. Parents can begin by teaching the children easy skills such as putting on socks. Children can gradually master more difficult skills. Parents need to be patient and encouraging through the learning process. Children may experience discomfort, frustration, and failure. These experiences can be a source of motivation to persevere and become resilient to challenges and obstacles in life (Fay & Billings, 2005; Nelson, 2006). Parents should continue to encourage the child’s efforts and express their faith in the child’s ability to succeed. Training children for independence will develop their belief that they are capable of becoming independent and self-reliant (Nelson, 2006; Schafer, 2009).

Power Assertion

Baumrind et al. (2010) stated that authoritative parents assert their power rationally. Authoritative parents express power in a reasonable and logical manner with consideration of the age and developmental level of the child. Rational power is coherent, predictable, and clearly communicated to the children. Takeuchi & Takeucki (2008) stated that authoritative parents intend to exert power only as necessary and transfer power over time. These parents intend to appropriately influence children until the children can manage sufficiently without parental influence. Parents transfer power from parent to child when it is developmentally appropriate.

Encouraging children to initiate independent behavior provides them with a sense of personal control. Fulton & Turner (2008) indicated that the perception of control positively correlates with higher academic achievement for males and females. This result confirms previous research findings.

Larzelere & Baumrind (2008) studied parental power assertion. Authoritative parents assert power through confrontive discipline. Confrontive discipline positively affects children with higher levels of cognitive competence, individuation, self-efficacy and lower levels of externalizing problems. It is important to note that confrontive discipline is effective when it is not combined with counterproductive types of power assertion: preference for power assertion, verbal hostility, arbitrary discipline, directive/conventional control, and psychological control (these types of control are typically not associated with the authoritative parenting style).

Authoritative parents use behavioral control which is clear, direct, and confrontive (Baumrind et al., 2010). Behavioral control focuses on changing the child's behavior. An effective way to change behavior is to experience the consequence of the behavior (Schafer, 2009).

Natural and Logical Consequences

Dreikurs developed a behavioral strategy of implementing natural and logical consequences (Grunwald & McAbee, 1999). Natural and logical consequences are a very effective way to change behavior (Fay & Billings, 2005; Mamen, 2006). A natural consequence occurs as an automatic result of an action; a natural order of sequences (Fay & Billings, 2005; Mamen, 2006; Nelson, 2006). For a natural consequence to occur there cannot be any outside intervention. Therefore, a natural consequence does not require participation from the parent. Parents do have to refrain from the temptation of stopping the natural consequence from

occurring. An example of a natural consequence would be when a child plays with a balloon outdoors and a gust of wind blows the balloon away. His mom should allow him to experience feeling upset over the loss of the balloon. His mom may want to immediately purchase another balloon to replace the lost one but that would deny him the opportunity to learn from this experience. Mom could talk to her son and together they could problem solve ways to avoid this experience in the future for example: play with the balloon indoors or tie the balloon string on to something secure outdoors. This child experienced a realistic life experience of sadness and loss, which can help him learn to make a different choice in the future.

This is a great example of a natural consequence because the child was the only person affected by his actions. Parents need to use common sense when allowing natural consequences to occur. It would be negligent for a parent to allow a small child to play with matches. The natural consequence of getting burned or burning the house down is extreme and not an appropriate learning experience. Parents need to consider the child's age, development, and safety before allowing the natural consequence to occur.

When natural consequences do not occur or are inappropriate a logical consequence needs to be implemented. Logical consequences do not happen naturally, they need intervention from an outside source (Fay & Billings, 2005; Mamen, 2006; Nelson, 2006). Some logical consequences are obvious: if you break it you need to fix it or replace it; if you make a mess, you have to clean it up. Other logical consequences require creativity to determine an appropriate consequence for a particular situation. An example would be when a child stands on a chair. The natural consequence could result in injury if the child fell off the chair. A logical consequence could be that the child loses the privilege of using the chair. Dad would give the

child the option of either sitting down in the chair or getting off the chair. Both of these choices resolve the problem and get the preferred result for the parent.

For a logical consequence to be effective the consequence must directly relate to the behavior, be respectful, reasonable, and revealed in advance (Nelson, 2006). This example meets the requirements of the four R's for a logical consequence to be effective. Losing the privilege of using the chair directly relates to the child's improper use of the chair. This consequence is respectful and reasonable in this situation. The parent in this example also clearly communicated the two options available before imposing any consequences. Logical consequences empower children because the children choose their behavior and ultimately choose their consequence (Schafer, 2009). Teaching children that they chose their consequence relieves the parent from being responsible for imposing the consequence. Allowing children choices gives them a sense of having an internal locus of control over their lives.

Parents must become confident in allowing natural and logical consequences to occur in order to teach children valuable lessons. Protecting children from experiencing consequences teaches children to rely on their parents to rescue them from experiencing unpleasant consequences (Mamen, 2006). Natural and logical consequences can teach effective valuable lessons but parents must allow the consequences to occur in order for children to learn the lessons.

Rewards

Some parents believe the best way to change behavior is by offering their children a reward to encourage preferred behavior. Rewarding children is a tool that can be effective short term but is ineffective long term because children eventually believe that they deserve to always receive a reward for their behavior (Corwin, 2010; Schafer, 2009). Children begin to use

rewards as a bargaining tool. Children do this by placing demands for a reward they prefer. Rewarding children for behavior is an external measure of control and deprives children of self-motivation (Corwin, 2010; Schafer 2009). Research has shown that the removal of the reward causes a cease in the desired behavior (Schafer, 2009).

Punishment

Natural and logical consequences are not the same as punishment. A punishment encourages resentment, revenge, rebellion, and reduction of self esteem. Parents use punishment to show their control and power over children by making the children suffer for their behavior (Nelson, 2006). Some parents believe the most effective way to change behavior is to punish children by causing them pain or discomfort. These parents hurt their children verbally, physically, or by diminishing the child's self worth by saying things such as "You should be ashamed of yourself!" Punishment is ineffective because a humiliated, embarrassed, or hurting child will be more interested in retaliating rather than cooperating. "Children who feel good, do good; children who feel bad, do bad." (Schafer, 2009, p. 142). Punishments intend to penalize children for their behavior where as natural and logical consequences encourage children to take responsibility and learn from their behavior (Nelson, 2006).

Goals of Misbehavior

Adlerian theory is based on the premise that all behavior has a purpose (Grunwald & McAbee, 1999). Rather than respond to behavior, parents need to look beyond it and attempt to identify the purpose of the behavior. "The primary goal of all human beings is to feel a sense of belonging and significance." (Nelson, 2006, p. 70). Misbehavior reveals a child's mistaken attempt to achieve this goal. Dreikurs stated, "A misbehaving child is a discouraged child" (as cited in Nelson, 2006, p. 69).

Dreikurs developed the concept of the mistaken goals of misbehavior. This is possibly Dreikurs' most significant contribution to Adlerian theory (Grunwald & McAbee, 1999). Dreikurs created four distinct categories of misbehavior: undue attention, power, revenge, and assumed inadequacy (Grunwald & McAbee, 1999; Nelson, 2006; Schafer, 2009). He discovered a hidden message behind each behavior. Betty Lou Bettner clarified the hidden messages by creating what she labeled "The Four Crucial C's", which are essential for every individual: connect, capable, count, and courage. Children often ineffectively strive to meet these needs. Parents can effectively redirect children's behavior to fulfill their essential needs (Schafer, 2009, p. 31). Bettner stated "Misbehavior is the symptom. Discouragement is the disease. Encouragement is the cure" (as cited in Schafer, 2009, p. 191).

The goal of undue attention reveals a child's belief that he must always be the center of attention. The hidden message behind this behavior is that the child needs to connect. A sense of connection makes people feel accepted and loved. Everyone needs some attention but undue attention is excessive. Children often strive for undue attention in ways that annoy others (Nelson, 2006; Schafer, 2009). An example of undue attention would be a child who interrupts his mother while she is talking to someone else. Mother would likely interrupt her conversation with her friend and ask her child to be quiet. This mother would reinforce her child's demands for attention and meet the child's needs. The child's behavior would likely stop temporarily and then resume again. Negative attention is better than no attention. It would be better for the mother to connect with her child in a way that would be acceptable rather than disruptive. A great way to connect would be to give her child a job to do while mother is busy. She could instruct her child to prepare a board game and for the two of them to play. Mother would need to

explain to her child that she will play the game after she visits with her friend. This example would meet the child's need for connection in an acceptable manner and at an acceptable time.

The goal of power reveals a child's belief that he must always be in control. The hidden message behind power driven behavior is the need to feel capable. Feeling capable comes from developing abilities and having the ability to make choices. Children may attempt to control others in a way that makes other people feel challenged (Nelson, 2006; Schafer, 2009). An example of power could be when a child refuses to put on a coat. The parent may respond by trying to force the child to wear the coat by putting it on the child. The child would likely intensify his refusal of wearing the coat. A power struggle would ensue between the parent and the child. The parent should disengage from the power struggle by offering her child the power to choose between two different coats. Offering a child choice reflects the parents' confidence that the child is capable of making appropriate choices.

The goal of revenge reveals a child's attempt to retaliate. The hidden message behind revenge is the need to feel counted. Counting for something reflects a sense of feeling valued. Children may seek revenge in a way that makes other people feel hurt (Nelson, 2006; Schafer, 2009). An example of revenge could be when a child causes physical pain to a parent by hitting him. Parents may respond with retaliation by putting the child in a time out. The child would also respond by retaliating with hurtful words. The best response would be an acknowledgement that the child feels hurt and a conversation to identify the source of the hurtful feelings. Validating the child's feelings would make him feel as if he counts.

The goal of assumed inadequacy represents a child who has decided to give up. The hidden message behind assumed inadequacy is the need for courage. When a person has courage it reflects a faith in himself and the ability to handle the challenges in life. A child will display

assumed inadequacy in a manner that makes others also feel inadequate (Nelson, 2006; Schafer, 2009). An example of assumed inadequacy could be a child failing at school. The parent could respond by reviewing homework assignments with the child and explaining everything in great detail. The child could respond by making no attempt to participate or complete the assignments. The best thing the parent could do is to point out the child's strengths and express faith in the child. The encouragement could give the child the courage he lacks in himself.

The four C's: Connected, capable, counted, and courageous are the four hidden messages in misbehavior. Children who have these needs met are psychologically well adjusted, happy, confident, and capable of having fulfilling relationships with others (Nelson, 2006; Schafer, 2009). Fulfilling the essential needs would eliminate a child's purpose to misbehave.

Family Meetings

A family atmosphere that encourages frequent communication can benefit from weekly family meetings. Family meetings encourage all family members to attend. The purpose of family meetings is to provide an open forum for everyone to speak about issues that concern them, positive and negative. Families can make decisions, solve problems, clarify schedules, and provide support for each other during family meetings. Most importantly, family meetings provide all family members consistent opportunities to connect with each other which create a sense of belonging and significance (Grunwald & McAbee, 1999; Nelson, 2006; Schafer, 2009).

Social Interest

An important concept in Adlerian theory is "social interest" (Nelson, 2006, p. 36). Adler created the term social interest and believed psychological well-being reflected the level of interest in others (Ansbacher & Ansbacher, 1956). Interest in other people should reflect a genuine concern for others and an interest in making a positive and meaningful contribution to

society (Nelson, 2006). Social interest is for the benefit of others not a personal gain. People can express social interest in many ways; it could be to help someone in need or to volunteer for a local charity. Pampered children lack social interest because they focus on themselves and how they can personally benefit from others (Ansbacher & Ansbacher, 1956; Grunwald & McAbee, 1999). Children need to learn how to be socially responsible and cooperating members of society. Being a cooperating member of society means to strive to cooperate with others. Through this striving for cooperation, children learn to solve social problems and be a positive contributing member of society (Nelson, 2006).

Conclusion

Parents have pampered children throughout the world for centuries (Mamen, 2006). Adler took special interest in the lifestyle of the pampered child. He understood how pampering had long term effects had on children's ability to cope with the realities of life. Adler considered pampering and spoiling to be a serious impediment to children's normal development (Grunwald & McAbee, 1999, p. 14). He stated that pampering children improperly trained them for life.

Parents who pamper are often well intentioned parents and intend to do everything they can to create a life that is happy and comfortable for their children. These parents are devoted and really care about their children. Their parent philosophies are child centered and meant to raise children with high self esteem. Some parents resist imposing behavior restrictions on their children and allow the children to make their own decisions. Endless money, time, and effort are provided to their children. Permissive parents do not impose authority; they avoid making their children feel embarrassed, or guilty, and often have difficulty saying no to their children. They attempt to create a life of happiness and contentment for their children because their child's mental well-being is their utmost concern. Some parents pamper their children with the best

intentions without having any awareness of the harmful and negative effects it has on the children (Mamen, 2006). These parents approach parenting through acts of overindulgence, overpermissiveness, overdomineering, overprotection, and over nurturing.

Research shows children do not benefit from overindulgence, overpermissiveness, overdomineering, overprotection, or over nurturing. These children experience difficulty cognitively, behaviorally, socially, and psychologically. Pampered children have trouble coping with life and cooperating with others (Kaplan, 1985).

Preventing pampering is ideal. Parents who parent effectively from the beginning can avoid pampering altogether. Most parents do not realize they pamper their children until they experience negative effects from pampering (Mamen, 2006). Once parents become aware of pampering they can adopt the authoritative parenting style and transition from ineffective to effective parenting (Grunwald & McAbee, 1999).

The authoritative parenting style offers the most effective form of parenting by nurturing children without pampering them. Authoritative parents create an environment where children develop valuable life skills to live independently and responsibly as contributing members of society.

Authoritative parenting combined with Adlerian techniques can fulfill the primary goal of all human beings: to feel a sense of belonging and significance (Nelson, 2006). Children will feel a sense of belonging and significance when they feel confident they are connected, capable, counted, and courageous (Schafer, 2009).

Research consistently supports the association of authoritative parenting style and optimum outcomes (Larzelere & Baumrind, 2008), cognitively and socially in children of all social classes and ethnic groups (McGillicuddy-De Lisi & De Lisi, 2007).

Suggestions for Future Research

For nearly forty years professional research consistently confirms the authoritative parenting style is the most effective method of parenting, yet adults continue to parent with less effective styles (McGillicuddy-De Lisi, 2007). McGilliduddy-De Lisi stated the most common style of parenting is permissive where almost half of parents identified themselves as permissive parents. Future research could help to determine reasons why parents continue to pamper children and parent in parenting styles less effective than the authoritative style.

Other future research could focus on effective methods to educate parents about the value of the authoritative parenting style. It is necessary identify the most effective methods to transition parents from ineffective parenting to authoritative parenting.

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