

TASK 1

How Spoiled Are Our Children? No Simple Answer

By Perri Klass, M.D.

A mother asked me last week whether I thought she was spoiling her child. In the weary, self-doubting voice of the recently postpartum, she wondered if it was right to pick up and feed her crying baby.

These days, a lot of parents are wondering about the spoiling question. A recent book review by Elizabeth Kolbert in *The New Yorker* compared American children unfavorably with the self-reliant and competent children of a tribe in the Peruvian Amazon; she discussed "the notion that we may be raising a generation of kids who can't, or at least won't, tie their own shoes."

A parenting column in *The New York Times* acknowledged that Ms. Kolbert's observations had struck home with many contemporary parents; more recently, an opinion piece advised parents to stop protecting their children from every disappointment.

We're clearly having another of those moments — and they do recur, across the generations — when parents worry that they're not doing their job and that the next generation is consequently in grave danger.

In the pediatric office today, parents often bring up spoiling, as that mother did last week, in reference to young babies, sleep and feeding. It's as if the questions about how to respond to a child's demands crystallize in those early months when the new baby cries and the parents worry. The official pediatric line — I said some version of this to that mother last week — is that you can't spoil babies by taking good care of them. But even that doesn't turn out to be simple.

"It's important to be there and to be responsive and responsible, but it also doesn't mean that you have to be totally at the whim of the baby," said Dr. Pamela High, a professor of pediatrics at Brown University.

"You're teaching them patterns and routine and regularity." Parents can meet a baby's needs while still allowing it a chance to learn to settle down and sleep without being held. In a study on babies with colic published this year by Dr. High's group, when parents got help with issues of feeding, sleep, routine and their own mental health, those colicky babies cried less and slept more.

As children get older, setting limits and establishing family routines and expectations gets more complicated. But it's still a question of balancing immediate gratification and larger life lessons. It's also an area where we feel comfortable and righteous blaming and judging other parents — and ourselves. Problematic childhood behaviors once attributed to incompetent or destructive parenting are now understood to be hard-wired, set by genetics, reflecting neurological differences. We don't blame bad parenting for autism now, but "spoiled" evokes traits and behaviors for which we're often quick to hold parents responsible.

Dr. Mark Bertin, a developmental behavioral pediatrician in Pleasantville, N.Y., sees a wide range of children with behavioral problems, tearing apart contributions of neurological wiring, temperament and family style. Though parenting style is hard to study, he points to a body of research that cumulatively suggests that children benefit from strategies that build self-control and emotional resilience. "We're talking about kids who aren't brought up with limits," he said. "We all want our kids to be happy, but there are some skills you learn from growing up with limits and the opportunity to experience frustration."

The saying-no and limit-setting challenges for parents of young children often revolve around food, sleep and media. According to Dr. High, "by setting limits, we're teaching them what our values are and the way we think they can lead a

happier, productive life". With older children, you get into the issue of stuff. "When I think of spoiling, you're talking about attention and you're talking about things. I don't think you can spoil with too much attention to what your kids are doing and thinking and suffering from, but you have to be careful about things."

You don't have to be rich to overindulge a child with stuff. And offering things that substitute for parental attention is particularly problematic. Is the child with a huge television in the bedroom overindulged — or neglected?

0. The anxious mother who asked the pediatrician had given birth very recently.
1. According to an opinion article children should be able to tackle disappointments.
2. Parents' concern about overindulging their kids occurred before.
3. Parents are uncertain as for the limits of overindulgence.
4. Only parents who obtain psychiatric support perform better with colicky children.
5. Parents tend to blame other parents for overindulging their children.
6. Troublesome children's behaviour is understood to be their parents' fault.
7. Disruptive behaviors in children are understood to be due to inner rather than external causes.
8. According to Dr. Bertin, certain parenting strategies help children become emotionally stronger.
9. Raising kids in continuous happiness should be their parents' duty.
10. Marking boundaries and saying 'no' are more important than values.
11. Wealthiness is directly related to spoiling.
12. Unrestrained access to different media may mean you are disregarding your children.

TASK 2

Read the following text and match paragraphs 0-7 with headings B-J. There are two headings that do not match any paragraph. CHOOSE the appropriate answer

Things your flight attendant won't tell you.

These secrets about air travel will make flying a happier, safer experience for all.

0. _____
So don't clip your toenails, snore with wild abandon, or do any type of personal business under a blanket!

1. _____
If you're travelling with a small child please check if it's your child fidgeting with the button.

2. _____
Just push the lavatory door, as easy as ABC.

3. _____
If you're diabetic, bring syringes. If you have high blood pressure, don't leave behind your medication.
That way, I'm not trying to make a diaper out of a sanitary pad and a pillowcase or asking over the intercom if someone has a spare inhaler.

4. _____
'Can you tell him to put his seat up?' 'She won't share the armrest.' What am I, a preschool teacher?

5. _____
While we're wrestling a 250-pound food cart down the aisle, can't you wait 90 seconds for us to pass before getting up to go to the toilet?

6. _____
We do so 300 times on every flight, and only about 40 people respond.

7. _____
Our rules really say we aren't allowed to lift your luggage into the overhead bin for you, though we can "assist."

TASK 3

Read the text below about taking food from supermarket bins. Decide which of the nine phrases below (letters B-J) should go in the gaps 0-7 in the text. There are two extra phrases that do not go into any of the gaps.

Can there be no such thing as a free lunch?

By Alice Hutton

NOT many people would relish eating dinner from a bin – but now (0) _____ by so-called freegans has been put under the spotlight by a legal expert from Anglia Ruskin University.

Dr Sean Thomas, (1) _____, published an article entitled “Do Freegans Commit Theft?” in top-ranked law journal *Legal Studies* this month. ‘Freeganism’ is a worldwide movement that involves taking goods that appear abandoned – usually in supermarkets’ bins – without paying, as a protest against waste.

Although the term has not yet made it into the Oxford English Dictionary, it is an old concept. Dr Thomas says: “Freeganism (2) _____, there have always been people who scavenge. But more recently it has been imbued with an alternative, radical philosophy and dissent at materialism.”

The lecturer claimed the issue hinged on whether the supermarkets had actually abandoned the food by putting it in a bin and whether the freegan was acting intentionally dishonestly. He added: “The idea of freeganism raises many seemingly disparate issues of property and criminal law and (3) _____ the extent of legal protection of radical ideologies of ownership.”

“Abandonment in English law is very murky. In order to commit theft you have to be dishonest and dishonesty does not cover a freegan situation in law – yet. But the people who do it often think that (4) _____, I haven’t ever done freeganism or knowingly met a freegan as they don’t usually advertise it, especially if they think it’s criminal.”

A spokesman for the organisation UK Freegans said the idea that it was possible to steal an abandoned item was ‘laughable’ but that he wouldn’t be surprised if it was made illegal. He said: “The idea that people who actively recycle in order to (5) _____, and to redistribute the existing wealth more fairly to those in need, are ‘stealing’, is quite laughable really. Britain has a huge problem concerning wasting food. Millions of tonnes of food items get discarded each year while millions of people are suffering from malnutrition. Thousands of people are fed through bin-raiding each week and so I think stopping them is definitely wrong.”

The environmental impact of mass consumerism is a growing concern in the UK and statistics from the Waste and Resources Action Programme estimate that Britain wastes 40 per cent of its food supplies every year, dumping 4.1 million tonnes of usable products into landfill sites. For instance, in 2009, households and supermarkets discarded 1,600 million apples, 1,030 million tomatoes, 2,570 million bread slices and 484 million yoghurt tubs (6) _____ and perfectly edible.