



Rifka Schönfeld STRATEGIES

THE NEWSLETTER FOR OPTIMUM SUCCESS

TIPS ON SOCIAL SKILLS FOR ADULTS & CHILDREN

Hold Your Baby. Spoil Your Baby.

Dear Readers,

This week's newsletter will discuss spoiling children...

Rifka Schönfeld
STRATEGIES

QUESTION:

I just had my first baby and my parents and grandparents keep telling me that I will spoil her if I hold her too much or don't let her cry. I definitely don't want to have a spoiled child, but is it possible to spoil a baby by holding her too much? Will she grow up to be a spoiled child?

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ANSWER:

Your parents' generation definitely believed that babies would become spoiled if they were held too much; however, research has shown that this is actually not the case. Many parents want children to develop independence, but rushing them into independence means they miss a crucial step: developing trust. Many scientific studies have shown that infants need a period of dependence so that they build trust in their caregivers. What's more, long-term studies show that children who receive high-touch and high-responsive style of parenting in their early years develop into more self-sufficient young adults. So, go ahead, hold your daughter as much as you would like!

That being said, it is possible to spoil an older child by giving into her every request. Below, I have listed some ways to avoid creating a situation in which your child is entitled:

- **Intrinsic vs. extrinsic motivation.** If you constantly reward your child for getting good grades or doing his chores, she will come to associate success with a physical reward. Therefore, if she will never learn to motivate herself with an intrinsic reward like pride.
- **Redefine "providing" for your children:** Ask yourself, "Am I providing for them emotionally?" You do not need to buy a gift for your child in order to create a bond. Instead, spend time together and share experiences. In the long run, your relationship will be much stronger.
- **Prepare them for disappointment.** You need not say "no" to every request that your child makes; however, at some point your child must be aware that the real world often does not conform to her demands. If she is able to recognize this as a

child, she will be better prepared to deal with this as an adult. Preparing your child for how the world really works is, after all, one of your primary jobs as a parent.

- **Help with goal setting.** If your child always gets whatever she wants whenever she wants it, she will not gain a very important skill: setting goals. With constant instant gratification, there is no reason to work towards a goal. Rather, your child will feel that others need to work towards the goal that they themselves would like to achieve.
- **Teach self-worth separate from “things”:** Avoiding spoiling your child will help your child gain a sense of worth divorced from material objects. She will not need the newest gadget or outfit in order to feel good about herself.

In answer to your original question: it is virtually impossible to spoil your baby by holding her too much. She will only develop trust and thereby independence in the future. Model your relationship with your child as she grows on the relationship you shared when she was a baby – share experiences and love – not things.





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