

Parenting Teens Just Got Easier:  
**Are we overly indulging our children?**

Parenting Teens Just Got Easier  
Is a free monthly eZine  
For parents of pre-teens and teens  
From Saso Seminars by  
Patt and Steve Saso

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**December 2006 Issue**

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**This month's parenting tip:**

We live in a time of affluence. Commercialism convinces us that we are not good enough if we don't have this or that. Marketing is a multibillion dollar industry. And it works.

How do we protect ourselves this holiday season and not get caught up in the frenzy of buying and continue to raise responsible children?

**Announcements:**

Saso High School Prep:  
One-day HSPT Prep (w/ optional two-day).  
There are still openings in each class.

<http://www.sasoseminars.com/hspt.html>

**NEW** – 8<sup>th</sup> grade English Writing Skills Workshop:  
Writing workshop for the Private High School Application Essay  
Four spots left.

Parents – Are you prepared for the teen years? Resources

<http://www.sasoseminars.com/tools.html>

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**Are we overly indulging our children?**  
**Patt & Steve Saso**

When our son got his driver's license we were happy not to have to drive him all over the valley anymore. But we needed another car.

A family friend was selling his 1987 Honda CRX. We bought that car for a thousand bucks. It was in great shape...a bargain.

**What is going on?**

My parents never bought me a car. I would have loved this one, but our son complained that he

had the worse car in the whole school! His friend was given a convertible Mustang for his birthday.

I am not proud to admit this, but if we were able we might have gotten him a new Mustang too.

As parents, we have to ask ourselves, “How much is enough and how much is too much? When does it become overindulgence?” It’s not always easy to figure out.

A while back our neighbor’s son received three tickets from the local police. He drove a nice car. When I was speaking with the mother she mentioned they were buying another car for their son. “Why?” I asked. “His car is practically new.”

“Yeah, but the police have Andrew’s car marked. They don’t like his attitude and keep giving him tickets.”

Andrew had more than an attitude problem. His parents continually rescued and pampered him and he became more irresponsible. He spent a short time in the county jail. Andrew’s parents wanted to give him what they did not get growing up. They were worked hard and long and at times felt guilty. But they had nice things.

To date, Andrew is a fine young man, but I believe those years could have turned out differently had his parents not spoiled him.

Like our neighbor, many overly indulged youth are slower to learn life-skills, such as perseverance, coping with failure, and getting along with others. Many develop a false sense of entitlement and are unrealistic in evaluating their own strengths and weaknesses.

### **What is over-indulgence?**

In simplest terms, it is giving kids too much and expecting too little from them. One way parents over-indulge is when they give in to their child’s whining and badgering demands.

### **Three categories**

**Material over-indulgence:** Most common form. Giving child whatever material possessions s/he wants and desires.

**Structural over-indulgence:** Failure to set appropriate limits or put into practice those that are established, lack of effective discipline, and not requiring the child to contribute to the family.

**Emotional over-indulgence:** Parents who step in to protect their children from any negative emotions, such as sadness, disappointments and frustrations. People need to learn to regulate their emotions, not avoid them.

### **The costs of excess**

Pampering, coddling, spoiling and making a fuss over our children may create anxious, unhappy and self-centered kids.

Dr. Dan Kindlon, Harvard professor and author of “Too Much of Good Thing,” tells us that over-indulged kids are more likely to get involved in drugs and alcohol.

In a survey of 1,000 parents and more than 600 students, Kindlon found that about sixty percent of

advantaged teens, from families with incomes of \$100,000 plus, were active drug users. Girls were three times more likely to have driven drunk and males were at higher risk for drunk driving, lying, cheating and skipping school.

Families with little structure and short on discipline methods put teens at high risk for eating disorders, underachievement, permissive attitudes about sex, and meanness.

### **Four Steps Parents Can Take To Avoid The Negative Costs of material, structural and emotional Over-Indulgence:**

1. **Pause and reflect.** Don't go on automatic pilot when your child asks for something. Some parents think that love means giving kids the stuff they want. Just because they ask doesn't mean you have to get. Ask yourself what impact your buying might have on teaching your child the adult ability to delay gratification.
2. **Self evaluate.** When you have the urge to pamper and rescue, remember that responsibility is learned when one is allowed to accept the consequences of their choices. When your child forgets his lunch, you might let him deal with the end result of hunger. Next time he might remember better.
3. **Emotion coach.** Become aware of your child's emotions and help identify and label them. Kids who learn emotional awareness early are better able to motivate themselves, control impulses, and cope with life's ups and downs.
4. **Help those in need.** Strive to teach children the importance of giving as well as receiving. This holiday season adopt a family in need, volunteer at a local shelter or visit an elder.

During the month of December as we are bombarded with advertisements about commercialism, recall some of the negative costs of over-indulgence. Model for your children the ability to make a consciously informed and responsible decision.

**\*Let's face it. All of us reach a crisis situation - or two - at some point in our parenting careers.** And that is why we have developed these resources for you.

<http://www.sasoseminars.com/tools.html>

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### **Saso High School Prep**

Program for current 8th graders interested in the HSPT  
One-day Prep (w/ optional two-day)

**Increase your student's chances of getting into  
the Catholic high school of his or her choice.**

Saso High School Placement Test Prep Course  
is a proven program designed to enable students to:

- Strengthen test-taking skills,
- Practice HSPT exams,

- Master time management strategies,
- Improve skills and knowledge in Math and English, and
- Increase self-confidence in taking the HSPT exam.

Four Saturdays left:  
December 2, 9, 16, or Jan. 6, 2007

For registration or more info go to:

<http://www.sasoseminars.com/hspt.html>

\*The HSPT is given in January and is used for high school admissions, grade placement, and scholarship awards predominantly by Catholic high schools.

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### **NEW –Writing Workshop for the Private High School Application Essay**

**Many students get over-whelmed** with the task of completing their private high school application essays. Too many procrastinate with the essay questions **and end up not doing their best work.**

**The application essay is one criterion that private high schools use to evaluate students for admission.** These essays help admission offices assess where students are in their writing skills and what they will bring to the high school.

**This new program is designed for students to take the pain out of planning and writing** their private high school application essay questions and response statements.

Each student will produce one (or more) final draft of application essay question to be imported into their high school application.

Class sizes are limited to 15 students with two instructors.  
4 spots left.

To learn more go to:

<http://www.sasoseminars.com/hspt.html>

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### **HSPT Testimonies from past students**

Mr. Saso not only prepared me for the HSPT, but provided me with a sense of confidence. I highly recommend this course. -- Christina Jones, student

It would have been impossible to know what to expect and prepare for on the test without Mr. Saso's class. It made me feel a lot more prepared and confident. -- Daniel Braunstein, student

This was an extremely great preparation for the test. The placement was a breeze especially through taking the practice tests Mr. Saso gives. -- Kevin Kim, student

HSPT registration information:

<http://www.sasoseminars.com/hspt.html>

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Happy Holidays! Expect our next newsletter in January.

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