# **Overprotective parenting style**

**Source:** [www.canr.msu.edu](http://www.canr.msu.edu)

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The overprotective parent wants to protect their children from harm, hurt and pain, unhappiness, bad experiences and rejection, hurt feelings, failure and disappointments.

When the parent is fearful of many things, the child becomes overly scared as well.

The greatest drawback of the overprotective parenting style is underprepared children. Parents in this category are fearful of everything when it comes to their children and expect bad things to happen. According to leadership expert Tim Elmore, when we rescue too quickly and overindulge our children with “assistance,” we remove the need for them to navigate hardships and solve problems on their own. This prohibits them from becoming competent adults.

This parenting style involves:

* Comforting a child quickly after a simple fall that produces no distress.
* Strict rules that do not allow a child to get dirty or creative.
* Punishment that does not fit the crime. Discipline is overly harsh for minor offenses.
* Over-emphasis on being successful in school.
* Rely heavily on a system of rewards and punishments.

Parents are definitely not “bad” and they may love their children very much. They are fearful their child will grow up to be destructive or uncontrollable.

The negative side effects to this parenting style include the following:

* Overprotective parenting will frequently encourage a child to lie. When expectations are too high or unreasonable, a child will lie to avoid getting in trouble.
* When the parent is fearful of many things, the child becomes overly scared as well. Normal, healthy risk-taking is discouraged and children grow up to be teenagers who take risks that come with a much higher price than a bruised knee or ego if things go wrong.
* Kids experience a reward/punishment system for their behavior and can grow up to be adults who are materialistic and manipulative. They don’t do the right thing just because it is the right thing to do.
* Finally, and most importantly, parents may not be able to communicate with their children as they mature. Parents have demanded compliance, not communication, which again leads to more lying.

Michigan State University has the following recommendations for overprotective parents:

* Talk with parents whom you regard as successful and more relaxed in parenting styles.
* Have reasonable expectations about age-appropriate behavior.
* Calmly sit with your child and explain that playing with knives and wandering off is dangerous. Overreacting will not have better results.
* React within reason when a child stubs their toe or scrapes their knee. Help them develop coping skills by not swooping in to save them every time they are in distress.

For a better parenting option, learn more about the [authoritative type parenting style](http://www.msue.anr.msu.edu/news/authoritative_parenting_style) that allows children to be independent thinkers, self-regulate their emotions and are happy and successful. For more information on each parenting style, click on one of the styles below:

* [**The authoritarian parent**](http://www.msue.anr.msu.edu/news/authoritarian_parenting_style)**:** This is the "because I told you so" parent who is likely to degrade a child and ignore the child’s point of view.
* [**The authoritative parent**](http://www.msue.anr.msu.edu/news/authoritative_parenting_style)**:** This is a mom or dad who sets carefully defined limits for children, the one who is a good role model and praises children for their efforts.
* [**The permissive parent**](http://www.msue.anr.msu.edu/news/permissive_parenting_style)**:** This is the parent who is afraid to set limits on children or believes a child has to be true to his or her own nature.
* [**The overprotective parent**](http://www.msue.anr.msu.edu/news/overprotective_parenting_style)**:**This is the parent who wants to protect their children from harm, hurt and pain, unhappiness, bad experiences and rejection, hurt feelings, failure and disappointments.