

Grounding the Helicopters: Helping or Rescuing?



Raising Likeable, Responsible, Respectful Children in the Age of Overindulgence

You can learn how.



Infants need and deserve a great deal of care and direct help. But, as children grow, it is important for adults to “do less” and “allow” children to learn more. They need to *let-go*.

Adults provide opportunities for children to learn by providing tools, teaching skills, setting standards, and offering encouragement.

Sometimes it is difficult to know whether we are helping children solve their own problems and become more self-sufficient, or if we are over-nurturing, hovering, and becoming **Helicopter Parents** by taking care of children in a way that undercuts their competence and encourages them to be dependent. Therefore, it is important to know what is developmentally appropriate for a child to learn.

That's OK, I'll do it for you.



If you have a question about whether you are helping or if you are rescuing in a way that invites dependence around a particular problem or skill, ask yourself the following questions:

Problem or skill:

	NO	PROBABLY	YES
1. Is this a reasonable thing for a child this age to do for himself/herself?			
2. Am I willing to let or help the child do this even though it might take less time for me to do it?			
3. Did the child ask me for help?			
4. Does the child already have the skill to do this?			
5. Did the child work at least as hard at finding a solution as I did?			
6. Did the child say “Thank you” or express appreciation in some other way?			
7. Did I feel comfortable (not resentful) about giving help?			
8. Was there a cut-off date on the aid—a time when the child would assume full responsibility for this problem?			

If the answer to #1 is “yes” and the answer to two or more of the other questions is “no,” then it may be time to refocus on creating a situation where children can learn to solve their own problems.