

Tips on how to avoid raising entitled kids

By **GREGORY RAMEY**

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My family never had much money when I was young. I never quite realized how poor we were until I entered a Catholic high school with a dress code that required us to wear a suit coat and tie every day to school.

My mom bought me one suit coat and said it would have to last the entire year. After a few weeks, I complained that other kids wore different coats throughout the week. Why was I stuck with wearing the same one all year?

"What others have is not the standard for what you deserve . . . you get what you earn," she said. There was no further discussion.

I have repeated my mom's advice frequently throughout the years, particularly given the epidemic of entitled youngsters.

You know these kids because you are raising them. They are self-absorbed, whiny and materialistic. They feel the world should respond to what they want whenever they want it.

When kids used to complain about their parents being unfair, it was typically related to discipline and family rules. Now, kids feel it is somehow unfair if they don't have the latest iPhone or video game.

These young people are making their way into our workforce, ill prepared for its realities. They expect praise and rewards for performing routine tasks.

One colleague recently remarked that these young people expect "a trophy for simply showing up."

Here's how to avoid raising entitled kids.

Begin chores at an early age, typically at school age. Household tasks should be a normal expectation for being a member of the family.

Don't overwhelm your kids with things. Just because you can afford to buy something for your child doesn't mean that you should.

Resist the culture. Talk about your values and family rules. Explain why you think that endless hours playing video games or sending hundreds of text messages per day may not be good for your child.

Teach a work ethic. Provide an opportunity for your child to get extra things by earning money. Help your children learn the connection between efforts and rewards.

Materialistic parents produce entitled kids. Be a good role model for your youngsters by avoiding going into debt simply because you want something. Tell them that even though you really want a flat-screen television, you are going to save money for the purchase rather than borrowing money.

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