



PARENTING IN THE AGE OF OVERINDULGENCE—TAKE AND TEACH LESSON

Using the Test of Four



PURPOSE

This take and teach lesson may be used in any teaching setting either as a companion to, or independently of, the University of Minnesota Extension online course, *Parenting in the Age of Overindulgence*. This lesson gives participants practice in using the Test of Four tool from that course. **Note:** Course designers strongly recommend that you teach the *Introducing the Test of Four* lesson before this one.

OBJECTIVES

After completing this lesson, participants will understand how to use the Test of Four to:

- Identify clues to (signs of) potential overindulgence in situations they encounter at home.
- Ask questions and analyze situations to determine whether they would result in overindulgence.
- Take action to prevent overindulgence in their family.

TIME

Allow a base time of 45 minutes for the lesson — 15 minutes for each of the three family scenarios. Allow about 3 minutes for the closing, which you may do once or three times if you present the family scenarios on different dates.

HANDOUT

- *Using the Test of Four* handout. Access at <https://drive.google.com/open?id=1nw7MyCuXjN-CpahF4iSpdYj1Zy-WjiH1>

RESOURCES

- Test of Four poster. Access at <https://drive.google.com/open?id=11KYNK7rdznsr34ktsrG7cNkOfIolJLMu>
- Test of Four visuals. Access at https://drive.google.com/open?id=12bY3_FV0Ssr6muqwVW98oEU_fq5Yel5n



MATERIALS

- Writing paper (2 sheets per participant)
- Pens or pencils (1 per participant)

PREPARATION

- Read through the lesson plan to become familiar with the contents.
- Download, print, and hang the Test of Four poster in a prominent area of your classroom as a reminder of the four questions to ask.
- Download and print enough copies of the Test of Four visuals to enable distribution of cards to all participants. Choose which card or cards you'd like to give participants and cut those out. Cards are sized to fit in a wallet and for display in various locations.

LESSON PLAN

Family Scenario 1: How much freedom for Jake?

(15 minutes)

Welcome participants and explain whether you will present three family scenarios today or just one today and two more on different dates.

Say: Alma is a single parent with a very low income. Eleven-year-old Jake comes home from an exciting weekend with his dad and shows off the new toys his dad gave him. Alma worries that Jake will like his father better than her, but she has no money for new toys! Jake is a very active boy, who's always looking for adventure. When Alma asks him to help with chores, Jake gives her a wounded look and says, "But Mom, the guys have big plans!" She says, "What plans?" He answers, "Stuff!" and runs out the door. She thinks, "I don't have money for toys, but at least I can let him have his freedom."

Activity 1

Hold up the *Using the Test of Four* handout.



Say: Use the Test of Four to determine whether the scenario just outlined might involve overindulgence. Consider each of the four parts of the test. Take a couple minutes to talk things over, and then we'll discuss as a group.

After about 2 minutes, invite participants to share their thoughts with the entire group for another 1-2 minutes.



Activity 2

Say: Consider how the Test of Four could help or empower Alma and share your thoughts with the group for the next 2 minutes.

Activity 3

Say: Think of at least three things Alma could do to apply what she has learned from the Test of Four in order to reassert some parental authority over Jake. Take a couple minutes to think things over, and then we'll discuss as a group.

Allow 2-3 minutes for discussion. If you will be presenting Family Scenario 2 on a different date, see the "Closing" section for more information.

Family Scenario 2: The birdhouse

(15 minutes)

Say: Nina's favorite Uncle Ben, a carpenter, is visiting for the weekend. Nina, age 5, tells him she wants to learn how to build a birdhouse. Ben, who loves the little girl dearly, stays up half the night and gives her a finished birdhouse in the morning.

Activity 1

Divide the large group into small groups of three or four people.

Say: In your small groups, use the Test of Four handout to determine whether Uncle Ben's actions amount to overindulgence. Take about 2 minutes for discussion.

Activity 2

Distribute paper and pens or pencils to all participants.

Say: List three possible reasons Uncle Ben did what he did. Then think about whether your response to the Test of Four would be different if Nina were older—say 10 or 14 years old. Briefly explain why or why not.

Give participants about 2 minutes to write down their observations. If time permits, ask a few participants to share their thoughts with the entire group.

Activity 3

Say: Share one thought about Nina after her uncle builds the birdhouse for her.

How might she feel about:

- The birdhouse?
- Her uncle?
- Herself?



Allow about 2 minutes for discussion. If you will be presenting Family Scenario 3 on a different date, see the "Closing" section for more information.

Family Scenario 3: The team project

(15 minutes)

Say: In an effort to promote students' ability to work in teams, the teacher has assigned a group project. Five students have three weeks to complete the project. Janet is happy because she likes the project. Fred is happy because he knows that Janet is a very good student and the group will get an A. He will show up most of the time but won't have to do any of the work.

Activity 1

Divide the large group into small groups of three or four people.

Say: Look at your *Using the Test of Four* handout to determine whether this situation involves overindulgence. How did the Test of Four help you sort out this situation?

Give each small group about 2 minutes for discussion.

Activity 2

Distribute paper and pens or pencils to all participants.

Say: List three or four things Fred may be learning or attitudes he may be developing.

Give participants about 2 minutes to write down their observations. If time permits, ask a few participants to share their thoughts with the entire group.

Activity 3

Divide the large group into small groups of two or three people (or stay in the small groups of three to four from Activity 1).

Say: In your small groups, take a few minutes to discuss one of the following questions:

- What are Janet's responsibilities?
- What are the teacher's responsibilities?
- What are Fred's responsibilities?
- Does school administration have a responsibility?
- Do Janet and Fred's parents have responsibilities?

After participants have discussed in small groups, ask for volunteers to share with the entire group.



CLOSING

(3 minutes)

Note: If you choose to present the family scenarios in separate sessions, you may wish to close with this discussion after each session. Otherwise, use the closing only after presenting Family Scenario 3. Also, distribute the Test of Four cards to participants for their personal use after presenting the third scenario.

Say: In your small groups, discuss how you might use the Test of Four to determine whether overindulgence is occurring in your family, and if so, what is one thing you could do instead?

If time permits, ask volunteers to share some thoughts with the entire group. Finally, close the session by thanking participants for their time.



These take and teach lessons were developed in collaboration with University of Arkansas Research & Extension.

