

HYPER PARENTS **& CODDLED KIDS**

Airs Thursday February 4, 2010 at 9 pm
on CBC-TV's Doc Zone



Produced with the participation of the

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Fonds canadien de télévision

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CBC

***HYPER PARENTS & CODDLED KIDS* — A LOOK INSIDE THE FRENZIED WORLD OF PARENTS WHO OVER-PROTECT, OVER-INDULGE AND OVER-SCHEDULE THEIR CHILDREN**

- ONE-HOUR DOCUMENTARY PREMIERES THURS. FEB. 4 AT 9 P.M. ET/PT ON CBC-TV -

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Toronto. Jan. 11, 2010 – In North America, they are known as “helicopter parents,” parents who hover over their children and swoop down to solve all their problems. In Sweden, it’s “curling parents,” parents who frantically sweep the ice to clear obstacles for their kids. Parents have always wanted the best for their children, but in recent years, some have taken it to new extremes. Raising kids today has become more product development than child development. And as these children enter adulthood, many find themselves unprepared for the real world. Is all of this attention giving the next generation a competitive edge or creating new problems that will last a lifetime? Premiering Thurs. Feb. 4 at 9 p.m. ET/PT on CBC-TV’s Doc Zone, *Hyper Parents & Coddled Kids* sheds light on this question while exploring the cultural pressures that make hyper parenting almost impossible to resist.

“Hyper parenting is a social experiment in childrearing whose full results will not be known for years,” says Maria LeRose, co-director and producer. “But there are indications that the unprecedented amount of attention parents are giving their children may not have the outcome they had hoped for. In fact, in some cases, it may have the opposite effect.”

The one-hour documentary *Hyper Parenting & Coddled Kids* examines the intensely competitive hyper parenting phenomenon – and its effects on kids today. From exposing babies in the womb to prenatal education systems and enrolling them in gymnastics before they can walk to negotiating their grown kids’ job contracts and salaries, parents today work hard to make sure their children stay ahead of the pack. But as these kids reach adulthood, will it be to their advantage or will it backfire?

Several experts weigh in on the issue including Canadian-raised journalist Carl Honoré, author of *Under Pressure: Rescuing Childhood from the Culture of Hyper-Parenting*; clinical psychologist Madeline Levine who works with many privileged kids who suffer anxiety and depression as a result of hyper parenting; and Ron Alsop, former Wall Street Journal editor and reporter, and author of *The Trophy Kids Grow Up: How the Millennial Generation is Shaking Up the Workplace*.

Hyper Parents & Coddled Kids is co-directed by Sharon Bartlett and Maria LeRose. Producers are Sharon Bartlett, Maria LeRose and Sue Ridout for Dreamfilm Productions. Narrator is Ann-Marie MacDonald. Director of photography is John Collins, editor is Chris Holmes. Original music score by Lesley Sutherland and Kevin Hamilton. Dreamfilm Productions Ltd. produced the documentary in association with the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation. Michael Claydon is area executive producer and Linda Laughlin is senior producer for CBC Independent Documentaries. Mark Starowicz is executive director of Documentary Programming for CBC Television. Produced with the participation of the Canadian Television Fund, created by the Government of Canada and the Canadian cable industry, the Province of British Columbia Film Incentive BC, and the Canadian Film or Video Production Tax Credit Program.

DREAMFILM PRODUCTIONS is an award-winning documentary production company based in Vancouver. Dreamfilm's latest documentary "Peace Warrior," about Canadian soldier Capt. Trevor Greene, won the 2009 Gemini Award for Best Biography Documentary. Other award-winning Dreamfilm documentaries include "Desperately Seeking Doctors," "Embracing Bob's Killer," and "Depression: Fighting the Dragon." Upcoming Dreamfilm documentaries include "The Downside of High" (January 28, 2010 on CBC-TV's "The Nature of Things" with David Suzuki) and "Thoroughly Modern Marriage." For more information, please visit www.dreamfilm.ca.

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LOGLINE

Kids today are the most overprotected, overindulged, and overscheduled in history.

Is all of this attention giving the next generation a competitive edge, or creating new problems that will last a lifetime? *Hyper Parents & Coddled Kids* reports from the front line of the frenzied parenting trend.

SHORT SYNOPSIS Gone are the days when children spent hours playing outside on their own, aimlessly exploring the world. Today's precious offspring are rarely allowed out of the sight of their ever-vigilant parents. They are shuttled from yoga to music lessons, soccer to hockey games by parents obsessed with making sure their child stays ahead of the pack, in what can seem more like product development than childrearing. The new CBC documentary by Dreamfilm Productions, *Hyper Parents & Coddled Kids*, looks inside the world of hyper-parenting – a

trend that began in the early 80's and continues to spiral out of control worldwide.

BROADCAST DETAILS

Hyper Parents & Coddled Kids premieres Thursday February 4 at 9 p.m. ET/PT on CBC-TV's Doc Zone. It is repeated on Friday, February 5 at 10 pm ET/PT on the CBC News Network.

LONG SYNOPSIS Are today's well-meaning parents giving their children a leg up in life, or creating problems that will last their child's lifetime? The new CBC documentary *Hyper Parents & Coddled Kids* explores the cultural pressures on parents to be "hyper parents" and the impact it has on their children. In North America they're known as "helicopter parents" who hover and swoop down to solve problems. In Sweden, it's the "curling parent" who frantically sweeps the ice to clear away obstacles.

Hyper parenting is a trend that started in the early 1980's when baby boomers began having children. They had them later in life, and they had fewer. Baby on board signs in car windows proudly announced "precious cargo" inside.

Now, parents start their single-minded search for ways to create an über child even before their baby is born. There is no shortage of products to help them, including 'prenatal education systems' that claim to give Junior an intellectual, social, creative and emotional advantage. Once the baby arrives, the race to keep him or her ahead of the pack intensifies - with baby videos, baby ballet, gymnastics before they can walk, and parents' near-fanatic devotion to finding the *right* pre-school.

Parents are willing to overextend their budgets so they can maintain a program that will

lead to their child's success. And they will do everything in their power to protect their investment – coming to the rescue whenever their child encounters adversity.

Nowhere is this more obvious than in today's classrooms. Ask any teacher and they will tell you that the toughest aspect of their job is dealing with overbearing parents who fiercely intervene at the first sign of trouble. Failure is not an option, and parents will do everything they can to make sure their child graduates top of the class so they can attend a good university, which in theory leads to a good job which leads to a good life.

And you can say goodbye to saying goodbye. Reluctant to let go, moms and dads continue to hover even when their kids head to university. Many parents take it upon themselves to fill out application forms and write

the admissions essay on their child's behalf. Some even follow their pampered progeny right into the workplace – attending job interviews and even trying to negotiate salary and contracts.

Hyper parents have the best of intentions. They believe that the world is more dangerous and competitive than the carefree times of their own youth.

Obsessing about our kids' safety and success has become the norm, and the pressure to hyper parent is almost impossible to resist.

But there are indications that all of the attention parents bestow on their children may not have the outcome they had hoped for. In fact, it appears to be having the opposite effect. As the first batch of hyper-parented kids (Generation Y) emerges into adulthood, they do not seem to be quite ready for the real world. University psychologists report today's students experience

higher levels of anxiety than any generation before them. And employers are pulling their hair out as Gen Y employees show up at work with an unprecedented sense of entitlement – 'paying your dues' is not part of their vernacular. They require a lot of supervision and they challenge everything from dress code to office hierarchy.

Hyper Parents & Coddled Kids presents a snapshot of a great social experiment in parenting whose full results will not be known for years. Will the pendulum swing back? - resulting in the next generation of parents slowing down and letting children be children? Or will they up the ante and escalate hyper parenting to a point not yet imagined?



MARIA, DARREN &
ABIGAIL LOUIE

FEATURED SUBJECTS AND EXPERTS

SUBJECTS

MARIA AND DARREN LOUIE

Maria and Darren Louie live in Delta, BC with their one-year-old daughter Abigail. They began working on enhancing Abigail's IQ from day one — using a “prenatal education system” while she was still in the womb, quickly followed by “brain stimulating” DVDs once she was born. They want Abigail to experience as much as possible, as early as possible, in life. They currently have her enrolled in swimming and gymnastics classes — even though Abigail cannot yet walk on her own.

SANAZ ESFAHANI

Sanaz Esfahani lives in downtown Vancouver with her husband and two children. Sanaz tried unsuccessfully for two years to get her five-year-old daughter Leili into a private school. Determined to see that Leili has an enriched learning environment, each day Sanaz drives her to a French immersion

kindergarten in a more affluent neighborhood. Leili takes classes in gymnastics, ballet and piano, because, as Sanaz explains, “it’s all about providing the best for your kids.”

ADRIENNE COUSINS

Twenty-eight year old Adrienne Cousins is a classic Millennial. As a child, she excelled at dance, piano and sports. She was class president in high school. After graduating from university, she landed a good job with a good salary, but she couldn't quite fit into the corporate culture. Over the next six years, she changed jobs four times. She continually



SANAZ & LEILI ESFAHANI

offered unsolicited feedback to her bosses and challenged their authority. Eventually she quit a \$90,000 a year job, and borrowed money to retrain and start her own business, Affinities, that offers life and leadership coaching, massage and dance lessons. But the business has not worked out and Adrienne is deeply in debt, recently filing for bankruptcy. She sees it as a learning experience, not a failure. And she believes strongly in the potential of her generation to solve the problems of the world they have inherited.



ADRIENNE COUSINS



CARL HONORÉ

EXPERTS

CARL HONORÉ

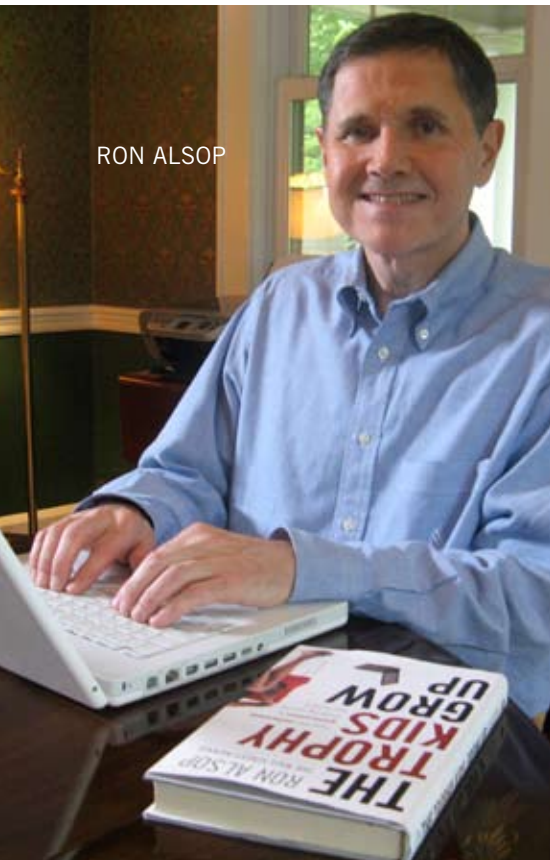
Carl Honoré was born in Scotland, but grew up in Edmonton. He graduated from Edinburgh University and has worked as a journalist since 1991. His most recent book, *Under Pressure: Rescuing Childhood From the Culture Of Hyper-Parenting*, explores how the pressure to give our children the best of everything and make them the best at everything is backfiring on kids, parents and society as a whole. *Under Pressure* has so far been translated into 16 languages. In 2008, it was short-listed for the biggest literary prize

for non-fiction in Canada, The Writer's Trust Non-Fiction prize. Honoré currently lives in London, England with his wife, who is also a writer, and their two children.

MADELINE LEVINE

Madeline Levine has been a practising clinical psychologist in Marin County, California, for the past twenty-five years. In her practice she has seen many privileged kids who project confidence and know how to make a good impression, but who lack the basic foundation of psychological development: an authentic sense of self. This is a result, she says, of society's

materialism, perfectionism and enormous pressure to achieve. A frequent lecturer on child and adolescent issues, Levine lives in California with her husband and three sons.



RON ALSOP

Ron Alsop, a longtime reporter and editor for The Wall Street Journal, is a freelance writer and consultant. He is the author of eight books, including his latest *The Trophy Kids Grow Up: How the Millennial*

Generation Is Shaking Up the Workplace. Also chronicles how the Millennial Generation – those children born between 1980 and 2001 – is stirring things up in today’s workplace. According to Alsop, employers are facing some of the biggest management challenges they’ve ever encountered as they try to integrate the most entitled, demanding and coddled generation in history into their workforce. Alsop speaks frequently at conferences and universities about corporate reputation and the millennial generation. He lives in Summit, New Jersey with his wife and son.

INTERESTING RESEARCH NEWBORN TO TODDLER

BRAIN-ENHANCING VIDEOS - Research from the University of Washington found that for every hour per day that infants watch baby DVDs and videos, they learn six to eight fewer vocabulary words than babies who

never watch the videos. They also found that these products had the strongest detrimental effect on babies 8 to 16 months old, the age at which language skills are starting to form.

SOURCE:

<http://www.time.com/time/health/article/0,8599,1650352,00.html#ixzz0adyFOJQK>

EARLY EXPOSURE TO

TELEVISION - Exposure to television between the ages of one to three years old is associated with attention problems at age seven.

SOURCE: *Pediatrics* 2004;113:708 – 713; ADHD, television, attention problems, prevention.

SCHOOL AGE

CHILDREN’S PLAY TIME -

Since the late 1970s, children have lost 12 hours a week of free time, including a 50% drop in outdoor free play.

SOURCE: *The Institute for Social Research at the University of Michigan*
www.isr.umich.edu/home

PRIVATE TUTORS - More than one million Canadian students now have tutors, even though 73% of parents who hire tutors say their kids were already earning A or B level marks. In addition, one in three Canadian parents now pay for private tutors.

SOURCE: [Canadian Council on Learning](#).

PREVALENCE OF ANXIETY DISORDERS IN CHILDREN & YOUTH - Anxiety disorders represent the most common form of psychological distress in today's children and youth. Research has consistently found high rates of anxiety disorders: at eight years old 25.7%, 12 years old 15.7%, 17 years old 21.4%.

SOURCE: http://www.cmha.ca/bins/content_page.asp?cid=3-94&lang=1

UNIVERSITY AGE

UNIVERSITY STUDENTS & MENTAL HEALTH – 17% of students surveyed had experienced depression; 12.2% had an anxiety disorder; 10.4% experienced seasonal affective disorder (SAD); 18% reported at least one of these three conditions as affecting their academic performance.

SOURCE: [Simon Fraser University](#)
<http://www.heretohelp.bc.ca/publications/visions/campuses/exp/1>

PARENTS INTERVENING ON BEHALF OF THEIR CHILDREN – 40% of first-year college and university students have had a parent or guardian intervene on their behalf to solve a problem at school.

SOURCE: [The National Survey of Student Engagement](#) (a survey of US colleges and Canadian universities).

ADULTHOOD

MILLENNIALS MOVING BACK HOME (US stats) – 10% of

adults under the age of 35 report that they have moved back in with their parents as a result of the recession.

The numbers are even more staggering for young people ages 18-25: 56% of men in this group live with their parents, and 48% of women are back at home.

SOURCE: [The Pew Research Center and the U.S. Census](#).



PRODUCTION BIOS

SHARON BARTLETT

Director/Producer

Sharon Bartlett, co-director and producer of *Hyper Parents & Coddled Kids*, is an acclaimed Vancouver-based documentary filmmaker with over 25 years' experience producing and directing television news and current affairs including live multi-camera broadcasts (elections and town halls), series, specials and documentaries. She was a producer for eight years with CBC Television's flagship current affairs program *The Journal*. Among her credits are *Who Owns My Life?*, the story of ALS sufferer Sue Rodriguez who fought unsuccessfully for the right to a doctor-assisted suicide; and *Second City: The First Family of Comedy*, a three-hour CBC documentary about the history of the improv troupe that launched the careers of many of North America's most famous comedians; and *Desperately*

Seeking Doctors, a CBC Doc Zone documentary that explores the forces at play in the current family doctor crisis. Sharon has received national and international recognition for her work including a Best Documentary Gemini Award for *At The Lodge* in 1990.

MARIA LeROSE

Director/Producer

Maria LeRose, co-director/producer of *Hyper Parents & Coddled Kids*, is an award-winning television producer and interviewer/host. With over 25 years' production experience to her credit, she has traveled the globe as an on-camera journalist, conducting interviews and telling people's stories. Her background in Psychology brings to her work a deep understanding of what makes people tick (Maria holds a BA in Psychology from UBC and is currently doing graduate work in Educational Psychology). Maria has hosted and contributed to

numerous regional and network television programs including CBC Network's series *MIDDAY*. Among the hundreds of people she has interviewed are some of the most recognizable faces of our times — from celebrities like Michael J. Fox and Charles Schultz (of Peanuts fame) to world leaders like Mikhail Gorbachev and the Dalai Lama.

SUE RIDOUT

Producer

Sue chose the life of an independent producer after twenty award-winning years in network news and current affairs at both CTV and CBC Television. From intimate biographies to science & health issues to the history of World War II, Sue has produced, written and directed documentaries for CBC, CTV, History, and Knowledge. Her most recent award is the 2009 Gemini for Best Biography Documentary for *Peace Warrior*, about the rehabilitation of Canadian soldier Trevor Greene.

Many of her documentaries have been sold internationally, and are often used extensively by universities and community organizations.

THE PRODUCTION COMPANY: DREAMFILM PRODUCTIONS

Executive producer Sue Ridout established Dreamfilm Productions in 2001 as a home for high-quality documentaries, the first of which was “Depression: Fighting the Dragon,” produced for CTV and winner of several awards. Since then, Dreamfilm has produced several acclaimed documentaries including “Embracing Bob’s Killer” (2007) and “Desperately Seeking Doctors” (2008), both for CBC’s Doc Zone series; and “Peace Warrior” (2008) for CTV, winner of the 2009 Gemini Award for Best Biography Documentary. 2010 is a busy year for Dreamfilm, with the premieres of both

“Kids”, and “The Downside of High” for CBC’s The Nature of Things (airs January 28, 2010). Dreamfilm is also preparing two documentaries for the 2010-2011 season: “X-Cars” for the Discovery Channel, and “Thoroughly Modern Marriage” for CBC-TV’s Doc Zone.

For more information, please visit www.dreamfilm.ca

