

Helicopter parents

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Jump to: [navigation](#), [search](#)



Helicopter parent is a colloquial term for a parent who pays extremely close attention to their child's or children's experiences and problems, particularly at educational institutions.

The term was originally coined by [Foster Cline](#) and [Jim Fay](#).^[1] Helicopter parents are so named because, like [helicopters](#), they hover overhead. It is also called "overparenting". It has also been reported that some such parents get involved with their children's salary negotiations.^[2]

Contents

[[hide](#)]

- [1 Origins](#)
- [2 Literature](#)
- [3 See also](#)
- [4 References](#)
- [5 External links](#)

[\[edit\]](#) Origins

The term “helicopter parents” is a pejorative expression for parents that has been widely used in the media. The metaphor appeared as early as 1969 in the bestselling book *Between Parent & Teenager* by Dr. [Haim Ginott](#), which mentions a teen who complains, “Mother hovers over me like a helicopter...”^[3] It gained wide currency when [American college administrators](#) began using it in the early 2000s as the [Millennial Generation](#) began reaching college age. Their [Baby Boomer](#)^[4] parents in turn earned notoriety for practices such as calling their children each morning to wake them up for class and complaining to their [professors](#) about grades the children had received. [Summer camp](#) officials have also reported similar behavior from parents.^[5]

The rise of the [cell phone](#) is often blamed for the explosion of helicopter parenting—[University of Georgia](#) professor Richard Mullendore called it “the world’s longest [umbilical cord](#)”.^[4] Some parents, for their part, point to rising college [tuitions](#), saying they are just protecting their [investment](#) or acting like any other [consumer](#).^[6]

[\[edit\]](#) Literature

[Madeline Levine](#) has written on helicopter parenting. [Judith Warner](#) recounts Levine’s descriptions of “parents who are physically hyper-present but somehow psychologically M. I. A.”^[7] [Katie Roiphe](#), commenting on Levine’s work in [Slate](#) elaborates on myths about helicopter parenting. “[I]t *is* about too much presence, but it’s also about the wrong kind of presence. In fact, it can be reasonably read by children as absence, as not caring about what is really going on with them... As Levine points out, it is the confusion of overinvolvement with stability.” Similarly, she reminds readers that helicopter parenting is not the product of “bad or pathetic people with deranged values... It is not necessarily a sign of parents who are ridiculous or unhappy or nastily controlling. It can be a product of good intentions gone awry, the play of culture on natural parental fears.”^[8]

[\[edit\]](#) See also

- [Battle Hymn of the Tiger Mother](#)
- [Harvard Girl](#)
- [Kyoiku mama](#) ("Education mother")

[\[edit\]](#) References

1. [^] Cline, Foster W.; Fay, Jim (1990). *Parenting with Love and Logic: Teaching Children Responsibility*. Pinon Press. pp. 23–25. ISBN 0-89109-311-7. <http://www.loveandlogic.com>
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3. [^] *Between Parent & Teenager*, p. 18
4. [^] ^a ^b Briggs, Sarah; *Confessions of a 'Helicopter Parent'* (.PDF.), retrieved May 1, 2006
5. [^] Kelley, Tina (2008-07-26). "Dear Parents: Please Relax, It's Just Camp". *The New York Times* (The New York Times Company). <http://www.nytimes.com/2008/07/26/nyregion/26camp.html>. Retrieved 2008-07-28.
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- August 2005 *Wall Street Journal* [article](#) on helicopter parents at colleges.
- *Roots, wings & helicopters* from *USA Today*
- *Overbearing Helicopter Parents Keep Tabs* from *The Minaret* (student newspaper)
- *Don't Be a Helicopter Parent!* from *Katu.com*