

Are Children “Little People”?

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Last Friday night my husband and I were out on a date night. We went for drinks at a nearby bar after dinner. It was a nice evening, until we encountered a child – a little girl, in the lounge at the bar, with her dad. Given, it was only 8pm, but still, a toddler at a classy bar that does not serve food on a Friday night?

And this was no saintly child. She was running around blowing out all the candles (quite a metaphor for killing the romance), collecting seat cushions, climbing bar stools, pouring water into the candle holders, and then drinking from them. One of the bartenders ran to clean up her new mess every few minutes. “A terror,” I heard the bartender mumble to the other bartender.

The terror’s dad watched. The few times he tried to stop her she would kick and scream.

After observing this nonsense for 15 minutes I went over to ask the dad how old she was because she seemed so unmanageable (I said this in as nice a tone as possible). She’ll be three in April, he said. Then he admitted with a guilty look, yes, she is unmanageable and this isn’t even her at her worst. She’s bossy and demanding all the time.

Then this father said one of the strangest things I’ve ever heard: “She’s probably so independent because I didn’t want to baby her when she was little. I try to let her figure things out for herself. I believe that children are little people.”



I didn’t contradict him, it wouldn’t be polite and I didn’t want to seem like a [judgmental mom](#). But in my mind I thought, “Are you kidding me?!?” Aren’t we supposed to baby babies? And, children are *not* little adults. They don’t have the awareness or emotional control needed for self-discipline. That’s why we as parents have to discipline our kids and give them choices with consequences, as in, if you hit someone at the playground you will have a time out, and if you hit again, we leave. Eventually the child learns self-discipline: he decides not to hit because he wants to go on the slide another dozen times.

I kept my opinion to myself, but I do wonder, perhaps there are different and valid ways to raise kids. But, is the “children are little people philosophy” a good one? Should we really [take children to bars](#)?

What do you think about the idea that children are little people? And, what do you think about kids at bars?

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