

Parenting Gone Wrong: The Best Friend Syndrome

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There's perfectionist mothers, unpredictable mothers, "me first" mothers and "complete" mothers but family experts say the fastest growing group of mothers is the "best-friend mother" -- and it can only end badly.

Clinical psychologist Stephan Poulter, who works with family relationships, has come up with five categories that he finds fit most mothers. He finds the group that is on the rise is mothers who want to be best friends with their children.

But he said going partying with your children, wearing the same clothes as them, trying to keep up with their youth with breast implants and surgery, erodes all boundaries -- and leaves the children without a mother who can guide them.

"You see this all over the media with a lot of the actresses in Hollywood -- their mothers are their friends," said Los Angeles-based Poulter in a telephone interview.

"One tragic one is Lindsay Lohan. Her mother is out drinking with her. Now she's been in and out of rehab and arrested twice. What kind of role model is she getting? Look at Paris Hilton too. Same story."

He said Anna Nicole Smith, the former Playboy model, was another prime example. She died of an accidental prescription drug overdose in Florida in February 2007 -- just five months after her 20-year-old son Daniel died of a drug overdose.

Poulter, who has just released a book called "The Mother Factor," said this style of mothering had been on the rise for about 15 years but now accounted for 30-40 percent of mothers. http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2008/04/14/parenting-gone-wrong-the_n_96644.html.