Let's expand the definition of child abuse

Well, not exactly, but close. I am an ardent defender of children's rights. It sickens me to hear of children being abused or neglected, yet, when one looks at current stats, one cannot but be convinced that our society is suffering in this regard. In addition to the statistics on child abuse, there are other abuses that occur below the radar. I'll expose a few of these here.

Smoking in proximity to children - they can make responsible decisions with useful input from you.

Feeding children diets high in sugar and high fructose corn syrup. Unfortunately, the shelves of processors are full of processed foods. Pick up practically any box or bag and see for yourself. When did food become so "concretely"? The shift from natural to processed foods is driven by larger profits. These foods are not nearly as nutritious as basic foods—such as fruits, vegetables, grains, and unprocessed meats. Too many foods have unnecessary sugars (in a variety of forms) added to them. These sugars are "sweet" to the palate, however, their inclusion makes the processed foods have a high glycemic index, which means that they digest quickly and cause blood sugars to spike. It is especially bad for diabetics but it isn't good for anyone. Keep dieting with kids and provide them with as much unprocessed food as you can. If you do, you will ultimately thank you when they are old enough to realize how important good nutrition is for a growing body and mind.

Putting a TV in a child's room. According to a recent study, perhaps as many as 70% of 3rd graders have a television in their bedroom. This may not seem like a problem until one looks at the research that points to an association between such children and lower test scores, sleep disorders, being overweight, and beginning smoking. Besides all these horrible connections, some kids probably having a TV in their bedroom apparently increases their viewing by 9 hours a week, for 4 to 7 year olds. So time that they could otherwise be using to socialize in productive ways, tackle a book or puzzle, or go outside is lost. Additionally, the advertisers on TV love to attract "naggers"—to get parents to buy their products—as recent exposés have shown. So, in short, save yourself the aggravation and the money and keep the television out of children's bedrooms.

In young teens offers U.S. teenagers about sex and sexual relations. Since our schools have dropped the ball in this mission, it is imperative to give children age-appropriate information about sex. Is the alternative? Should you be letting some older child pressure your unformed daughter or son to partake in some sexual activity? What if you are simply not knowledgeable about sex? If some of these suggestions may strike folk as "over the top," I don't offer them for comic relief. I firmly believe that these activities are detrimental to our young people and think it is time for an open discussion of these matters to occur. What do you think?