



# EMPATHIC PARENTING

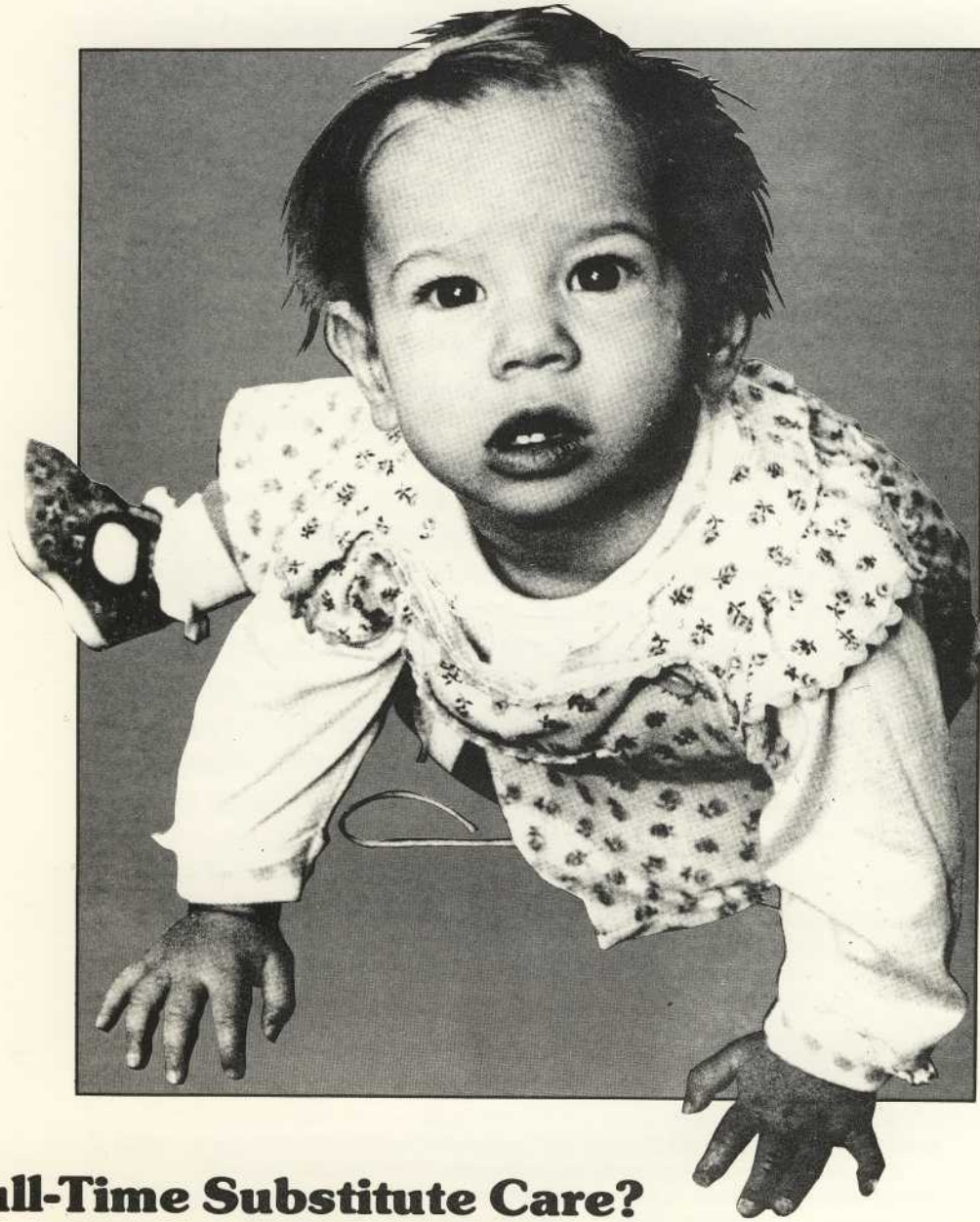
Journal of the Canadian Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children

Volume 11

Issue 4

Autumn 1988

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**Full-Time Substitute Care?  
What's in it for me?**

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## Another Warning

. . . In western industrial cultures the needs of infants are competing less and less successfully with other claims on mothers. There is little appreciation for the value of consistent nurturing in our society. The fact that day-care workers are usually paid minimum wage means that mothers and children are devalued by our culture. Mothers are unlikely to feel good about themselves, and the psychological need for self-esteem may be one pressure pushing women into the work force.

Materialism is another malignant force in our society. Many people feel a social pressure to conform to the lifestyle of the two-income family. Money is often a higher priority than caring for babies, even when need is not an issue. Children are more and more being seen as material possessions. They are part of a lifestyle, but they are not always important enough to cause a change in lifestyle. As a clinician I have seen many families who are very unhappy because of the assumption that nothing has to change after a child is born. . .

Paul F. Klein, Ph.D., C. Psych.

(Excerpted from: **Against Daycare:  
The Parent-Child Relationship in Context,**  
**Alberta Psychology** Vol. 17 No. 4,  
July/August, 1988)

### **EMPATHIC PARENTING:**

**Being willing and able to** 'put yourself in your child's shoes' in order to correctly identify his/her feelings, and

**Being willing and able to** behave toward your child in ways which take those feelings into account.

**Empathic parenting** takes an enormous amount of time and energy and fully involves both parents in a co-operative, sharing way.

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## EMPATHIC PARENTING

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EMPATHIC PARENTING

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**Corrections:** In the last issue, page two, second column, a line was inadvertently left out with the unfortunate result that the meaning was reversed. It should read: "The answer (as Aristotle would no doubt recommend) is probably somewhere in the middle between these two extremes, but I find myself more disturbed by those who have knowledge to share and withhold that knowledge, than I am by those who "call a spade a spade".

In the article on page four, "A Baby Speaks Out", reference is made to a certain number of minutes of crying (twenty). The author states "I hope readers do not conclude that crying for less than twenty minutes might be harmless; I firmly believe that a baby should never be left to cry for any length of time."

# Letters

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## WANTING TO GIVE BIRTH: NOT WANTING TO NURTURE

Dear Dr. Barker

... A friend of mine has lived in Sweden for almost four years. He tells me that there they have universal day-care and that it is the norm for mothers to leave their children, at the tender age of six months, from 8 a.m. until 6 p.m. everyday of the week, in the care of others. He believes - and is apparently expressing the opinions most prevalent in Sweden - that it is not 'natural' for a woman to assume the nurturing needs of her children and that it is better for her to give her children over to child-care-givers in day-care centres than to stay home under protest. That it is better for the child to be with friendly strangers than a hostile mother. The assumption is, I guess, that mothers **will** become hostile, rather than adjust and work through the uncomfortable days with support and find ultimately unexpected pleasures and rewards from looking after their own children. I suspect, having talked to a lot of working mothers in this area, that the rewards of working all day and then coming home to a family in need of dinner and mothering aren't all that they're cracked up to be either, giving a woman even more reason for hostility and stress.

I asked if the child care workers in Sweden were female and male and he said that they were all female. These women don't mind that their work is unnatural, as long as they get paid to do it. As well, these child care workers are as under paid and under qualified as they are here.

The idea that it is natural to want to give birth but not natural to want to

nurture and mother your own children is seeping into the minds of Canadian mothers as well. I wonder how and why these ideas have come to be so commonplace, so accepted? My readings on the subject help a little but do not explain the speed with which these ideas have been absorbed. Our governments are willing to pour money into universal day-care without any real investigation into the emotional costs for our children, without examining the alternative option of paying women to stay home with their children for the first three or four years of their lives in order to ensure their mental well-being. I find these changes frightening and I worry that they won't be reversed in time to help the coming generations.

I questioned my friend on the rate of suicide, drug abuse and violence in Sweden and he said that it was not as great as in North America, although, he said that alcohol consumption was very high. That violence was heavily censored from movies, but that **anything sexual** goes. That even child pornography is considered acceptable. Do you have any facts or knowledge of Sweden and the success or failure of its daycare system and/or a profile of the citizens in terms of psychopathic/criminal behaviour? If so I would be very interested in learning about this country's record considering the NDP are always pointing with admiration and respect to Sweden as a model for Canadians to imitate, especially in terms of their social programs and what is generally considered more progressive legislation and attitudes regarding censorship and sexual mores...

Yours sincerely,  
Connie Martin Roberts  
Toronto, Ontario

# Letters

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## CONVENIENCE UNQUESTIONED

Dear Dr. Barker:

. . . Today one of the young women I work with raised the question of having a child and continuing her job. She is unmarried but at 19, is considering motherhood. We had a rather interesting exchange, especially since she claimed many friends and acquaintances had children from a year or so in daycare centres and who were perfectly "normal and average", and whose parents had **time** to spend with them at night.

I had a strong feeling little could be done to open other insights since this person seemed unreceptive. I can see why, based on the level of interest I've seen in the general public, such a cause takes time. No one seems to question a situation that is convenient for them. And it is much easier to dispel feelings of guilt regarding children if we dispose of ideas. Challenging this well-accepted convenience.

This girl today said I was "maternal".

That I suppose being the reason I opted to care for my own kids. I haven't lost or given up anything. I've only been working full time for a little over 5 years. I'm paid as much as many who have worked for 15 or more.

My boss' wife, works when her kids are at school. Her youngest is 3, she nurses him while she typesets and he runs around her feet when she talks to clients. Some of them feel this is unprofessional and a few are downright rude, criticizing this approach. But both of them are so kind and human with everyone, no one in his right mind could be satisfied elsewhere.

It's two worlds everyday. Two faces of one society - the microcosm of individuals amplified by numbers to become the two faces of our society - the dilemma persists. It seems at this time the odds are against the "maternal" people. Why do I feel we won?

Louise  
Trois Rivieres, Quebec

No one seems to question a situation that is convenient for them.

And it is much easier to dispel feelings of guilt regarding children if we dispose of ideas challenging this well-accepted convenience.

## ELLEN GOODMAN

Boston Globe

Casco Bay, Maine — The tide has come in and filled up the cove. A fat, fuzzy bee has worked the last rose-hip flower in front of the cottage. I have been sitting on the porch all morning, sitting and watching.

It has taken me days to come down to this speed, to this morning of utter inefficiency. Only now am I finally, truly, totally unproductive. Able to just sit and watch.

This has been a rushed, high-priority overnight express, FAX-it sort of summer. It has been as scheduled as the airline timetable I carried in my pocket-book. By the time I left the city and office, I had reached a peak of impatience: The money machine at the bank seemed tortuously slow. The traffic was impossible. The long-distance number that I had to re-dial was annoying. Too many digits.

Without actually knowing it, I had upped the quota on my own production schedule. It had begun to seem important to do two things at once. To return calls while unloading the dishwasher. To ask for the check with coffee. To read a magazine in the checkout line. To use rather than waste time. The pace of work had taken over the rest of my life.

Now I look at newspaper photographs of Michael Dukakis speed-walking with reporters at his side, accomplishing two tasks at once — aerobic interviews — and I am amused. Somewhere, surely, there is a commuter learning Japanese on the way to work. A child is being car-pooled from one lesson to another by a parent worried

about being late for gymnastics.

Sitting here, idle at last, I am finally conscious of the gap between being productive and simply being. At the wonderful, sensual luxury of being useless. And its rareness. Do we need vacations now to learn how to do nothing, rather than something?

In front of me, the sides of an orchid-like wildflower open and close in the breeze like some cartoon mouth from a Disney character. I am amazed at the orange freckles that line its yellow throat. It is a wonderfully complex creation. I remember the line that accompanied that lush exhibit of Georgia O'Keeffe's paintings last winter. She wrote once: "Still — in a way — nobody sees a flower — really it is so small — we haven't time — and to see takes time, like to have a friend takes time."

Time. It is the priority and the missing element in our world of one-minute managers and stress clinics. But the artist knew it wasn't possible to sandwich in an appointment for awareness (from two to three this afternoon I will pay attention to the poppies) or to make friendship more efficient. They usually lose in the race of workaday life.

Not long ago, I read a report from Pittsburgh about how much time Americans waste in their lives. The average married couple spends only four minutes a day in meaningful conversation. If only our tasks could be accomplished more quickly, the researchers suggested, we would have more hours for the things and people we loved.

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Perhaps. But I am not convinced that inefficiency is our problem. Instead, it may be the passion for efficiency. The solution to the time crunch is not to move at a higher speed. It is too hard to shift out of that list-making, speed-thinking, full-throttle life into idle, the gear of human beings. The faster we try to move, the farther we get from the rhythms of friendship and flowers.

When we rush through errands to clear a small block of free time for ourselves or families, we may end up rushing through that "leisure" time as

well.

The great myth of our work-intense era is "quality time." We believe that we can make up for the loss of days, or hours, especially with each other, by concentrated minutes. But ultimately there is no way to do one-minute mothering. There is no way to pay attention in a hurry. Seeing, as Georgia O'Keeffe said, takes time. Friendship takes time. So does family. So does arriving at a sense of well-being.

This is what I have learned on my summer vacation. □



*To see takes time, like to have a friend takes time.*

## Taxes for day care force Swedish mom to work

STOCKHOLM (Reuter) — In Sweden, where conservation is a prime national concern, voices are being raised to save a species that looks doomed to extinction — the Swedish housewife.

Simmering resentment has arisen from what critics call "the parental state," which virtually forces women to return to work soon after childbirth.

A recent survey indicated that 83 per cent of all Swedes felt children should stay at home until age three. More than 40 per cent felt the same about children between four and six.

"Parents know best. It is up to them, not the politicians, to decide how they want to raise their children," said opposition Liberal Party leader Bengt Westerberg.

One such couple is Karin and Per Edberg. Like tens of thousands of fellow Swedes, they both work, leaving their two small children at a public day-care centre, and picking them up on the way home.

"I think I would have liked staying at home with the kids, at least for a few years. But there was no point considering it, because we couldn't afford it anyway," said Karin.

The decline in the number of small children looked after at home was a quiet, uncontested revolution inspired by the women's liberation movement in the 1960's and supported by tax laws and heavily subsidized public child-care.

The number of employed Swedish women with pre-school children has

risen from 27 to 85 per cent since 1965, the highest figure in the world.

"We haven't forced this on people. There has been tremendous pressure for us to provide support," said Deputy Social Minister Bengt Lindqvist, whose Social Democrats have been the driving force behind the change.

But there are problems.

Swedish men were supposed to support their liberated partners by sharing the housework. It hasn't happened.

According to a recent government study, Swedish men spent an average of eight hours a week on domestic duties, compared to 35 hours for women. Few men took advantage of Sweden's generous parental leave provisions. "I am disappointed," Lindqvist said recently.

"It is not fair that working women also do most of the housework. The men must start pulling their weight," he said.

The minister believed the figures might explain why more than half of all Swedish marriages end in divorce.

"She gets sick and tired of double work and realizes she would get on just as well without him," he said.

Taxes are the strongest pressure pushing women back to work.

"The basic principles of the Swedish socialist tax system is that no person should be dependent on anybody else and that all children should be cared for by the state," said Katarina Runsk, chairman of the Family Campaign Foundation of Sweden, which lobbies for the traditional family unit.

*Special thanks to Brenda Ringdahl of KIDS FIRST for drawing this article, from the Kitchener-Waterloo Record, to the attention of the editor.*





*“All children should be cared for by  
the State”*

The average Swede pays about 45 per cent of his income in direct tax, regardless of whether he or she is single or the family bread-winner. Separate taxation of spouses was introduced in the 1970's to encourage women to become financially independent.

The equivalent of about \$3.7 billion Cdn a year, a substantial portion of tax revenue, is plowed into heavily subsidized state day-care services.

“Studies show that day-care centres promote equality. Children from underprivileged homes develop their linguistic skills and self-esteem, thus reducing their social handicap,” said Lindqvist.

During the recent election campaign, the centre-right opposition proposed

that parents be given an allowance of the equivalent of about \$3,000 Cdn a year for every child between the age of one and seven, when school starts.

Opposition Liberal Party leader Bengt Westerberg said the allowance, to be financed partly by higher public day-care fees, would increase freedom of choice by making it easier for one parent to stay at home.

The Social Democrats, who swept back into power Sept. 18, say the proposal would promote privatization of day care and threaten their own promise to offer all Swedish children state day-care by 1991.

“It is a housewife trap, a reform which turns back the clock,” said Maj Britt Theorin, a leading Social Democrat. □

## **Ed Needham Phone-in show, July 14th, 1988**

**Mr. Needham:**

I want to start off with a little chat with Dr. Elliott Barker - he is a psychiatrist, and he is at the Oak Ridge Mental Health Centre, and he meets the worst in his business. He meets those people that nobody wants, that nobody likes, those people who have failed in the business of living.

I first read about him in an article by Christie Blatchford in The Toronto Sun, and after having read that, I thought to myself, "Gee, maybe we could get hold of this fellow", and we did, and he is here.

Welcome Dr. Barker to the show. I guess the way to begin is to give you an open ended question about daycare, because that is the angle that I thought we would start with. What do you think of it?

**Dr. Barker:** Well, in talking about the danger of daycare, we're talking about daycare under the age of three primarily. There is an enormous perceived need for daycare in this country, the U.S.A. and Europe, and until the last few years, it has been my experience that it hasn't been possible to have much rational discussion about potential dangers of separating infants from their parents in the early years and giving them changing caregivers. It is still seen as an attack on women to do that, and there is such an important need for women to achieve equality in society that it is seen as an attempt to undermine that. So the dangers can't easily be looked at, I think, with the seriousness that they ought to be.

**Mr. Needham:** One thing that interests me is the business of bonding. I regard that as a valid human function -

something that really happens to people. Is that important in your opinion?

**Dr. Barker:** Yes. The terms bonding and attachment tend to be used interchangeably, and I don't think they are a specifically human phenomenon.

The thing that concerns me is that the fundamental human capacities for trust - trust in one's self, and trust in others - and affection, both giving and receiving affection, and the capacity for empathy - these qualities are developed, I think, early on in life, primarily before the age of three, and they are developed through a prototype relationship with a single caregiver over time, with close attachment. I call the absence of those capacities - capacity for trust, empathy, and affection - psychopathy, because those are the core deficits I see missing in the psychopaths I examine, and I think the absence of those core qualities underlies the characteristics by which we usually define the psychopath.

**Mr. Needham:** People who have this affliction are psychopaths?

**Dr. Barker:** Well, that is the way I have come to look at psychopathy. The definition of psychopathy has varied over the years, but the core qualities that I've always felt were deficient in the psychopaths that I've examined at Penetang and in the community, were those capacities for trust, affection, and empathy. There are a whole bunch of other symptoms of psychopathy - superficial charm, unreliability, inability to learn from experience, insincerity, untruthfulness, lack of remorse and shame - there are a lot of descriptive terms for psychopaths, but the core capacities that seem deficient

*Edited transcript of a 2½ hour talk show on radio station CFRB (ranked as the most listened to radio station in Canada), with an estimated audience of 260,000 for this show.*

are those three capacities and those capacities develop in the very early years, and they develop through a consistent loving relationship with a single caregiver. And I believe that the changing caregivers that are unavoidable in institutional care of children - even the best daycare - jeopardizes that.

**Mr. Needham:** When you say institutionalized daycare, do you mean a place where there are four or five children being attended by one person. What do you mean by institutionalized daycare?

**Dr. Barker:** I mean where you're running an institution. Perhaps that has a bad connotation, the word institution, but somewhere where you have paid staff looking after infants and toddlers as opposed to a live-in person to care for your children in your home. I'm talking about a centre where there are paid staff who have to have vacation, sick time, a 40-hour work week, leave for educational purposes, or promotion, and the right to quit, and who therefore necessarily change over time. If you're running any institution, you have to give the staff those opportunities. You cannot run an institution where you have the same person caring for the same child for two or three years. So you have changing caregivers. A recent study in Britain showed that the average number of new caretakers introduced to six month old babies over a three month period was fifteen. Add to that the daily separations from the parent. And all of that is on top of the fact that you're dealing with, at best, a ratio of something like three children to one caregiver.

If your wife were to have triplets, she would be seen as a person having a job which required a great deal of help. Even you as a male chauvinist, would probably decide to re-arrange some things in your life to support your wife in caring for those three children, because the care of triplets is properly

seen as an enormous task. Yet the best we can offer in institutional care of children is that 3 to 1 ratio - for economic reasons, and we call that "high quality care"! Coupled with changing caregivers, to say nothing about losing the advantage of extended breastfeeding, I think that institutional care for infants and toddlers is stretching things very thin indeed, for the child. Given the enormous importance of the human qualities that we're talking about being in jeopardy - the capacity for trust, the capacity for affection, and the capacity for empathy, is institutional care of infants and toddlers worth the risk?

**Mr. Needham:** You know that what you are saying can be interpreted as that if your child is at a daycare centre, you have a better chance of raising a psychopath than if your child is being raised by one individual who is there all the time - a parent. Do you think Dr. Barker is right? Do you think there is an increasing number of people out there that you meet that don't have those qualities of which he speaks, which he says are qualities that don't get a chance to develop when you don't have a single person taking care of a baby? Do you think this is reflected in our society today or not?

**Caller:** Hi. I have worked in a daycare centre for five years, and I supervise my own daycare centre now. It is a fully licensed centre and I disagree completely with the Doctor. I don't



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**Psychopaths are very good at faking what normal people are spontaneously compelled to feel for others.**

think that these children are going to grow up to be psychopaths. I think that in the long run they may be more empathetic to other people because they are in a situation where they've got several other people that they have to be concerned about all the time. Now I can't speak for every daycare centre, but in the five years that I've worked, I've worked in four centres, and the children are very much loved, and very well taken care of. All their needs are being met, and I think in some cases they are getting more stimulation than they would if they were at home.

**Dr. Barker:** Well, you certainly are in the majority. What I'm saying is clearly, as you know, a dissident opinion against a background of generally favourable opinion about daycare not being harmful. And I hope you're right. It does concern me that we don't have very accurate ways of measuring capacities for trust, affection and empathy. Moreover, I think those qualities don't really show up until adulthood. We don't make the diagnosis of psychopathy before the age of 18. I'm not suggesting that daycare turns out full blown psychopaths. My concern is with what might be called partial psychopaths, meaning by that a relative deficiency in the capacity for trust, the capacity for affection, and the capacity for empathy.

It is difficult for us to do reliable and valid studies of these deficits because in the first place we don't have very accurate ways of measuring those qualities, and secondly, there is a long delay before those deficits show up. If we were to measure those capacities at

the age of eighteen accurately, and compare securely attached home-reared children with daycare reared children - that would be the relevant study.

**Caller:** Can I ask you a question? I have one child in my centre who will be three in December, and any time he does something, if he accidentally bumps you, or if he drops something that he's not supposed to drop, whatever the case, when he does something he knows hurts your feelings or he knows isn't right, he generally gives you a hug and tells you that he is very sorry that he didn't mean to do it. You can see that he genuinely feels bad, and he understands with empathy, and he understands that he has hurt somebody, and that he makes them feel better by giving them that hug and telling them he is sorry.

**Mr. Needham:** Is he the only one like that?

**Caller:** Oh, no.

**Mr. Needham:** I was wondering why you said, "I have one child in my centre" instead of the children act that way.

**Caller:** This little boy in particular is very sensitive, but they all seem to have more empathy.

**Dr. Barker:** I know what you mean, and it is nice to see little kids being thoughtful and perceptive of other people's feelings. But as I look at the research on empathy, what you are referring to is more properly called role taking behaviour. I think that is a different thing than I've come to understand about empathy in relation to psychopaths. The empathy I am talking about is not learned behaviour in the sense of learning what the other person is feeling and what action is appropriate to respond with.

The type of empathy I am referring to is different. For example, when one sees a horrible thing, one is spontaneously

compelled to react inside oneself with revulsion or with sadness. Psychopaths are very good at faking what normal people are spontaneously compelled to feel for others, and they learn very easily how to role play the appropriate behaviour. It is a serious matter when that fundamental capacity for empathy as I've defined it isn't developed, and it would appear that that capacity develops from solid attachment to at least one or very few caregivers who are consistently with the child during the earliest years.

There are a great number of people in our society who can rightfully be called "partial psychopaths", who really deep down are not affected by other peoples' misfortune. We don't notice it easily because we live in a society which tends to reward that kind of callousness, and of course it is usually covered over with a slick veneer of learned appropriate responses.

It is sometimes said that daycare children are more affectionate because they'll come to other people more quickly and that's given as an indication of their capacity for affection. I think generally the opposite is the case. Unattached children will go to anyone indiscriminately.

**Mr. Needham:** Thanks for your call madam. You're on the air.

**Caller:** In the centre we're in, we don't accept anyone until they're at least eighteen months, and I agree with that on a personal level. I am myself pregnant and am going to have a child, and I don't think that I would put my child into any kind of care, other than family and friends until they were of an age of understanding. What I am trying to say is by the time the child is two, I intend to go back to work. Then I would consider daycare, but before that time I don't think I would, because I don't think the child is ready for it, myself, and as I said we don't take them at our daycare centre until eighteen

The longer the child is in some very high quality daycare centres, the excuses the parents have for picking up the child later and later are flimsier and flimsier.

months which is fine with me on a personal level, because at that point there is enough communication and understanding that I find the child can become used to the daycare and I find that all the children in our centre have a very good relationship with their parents, and most of them do not stay long. I know of some daycare centres where they stay eleven or twelve hours. Most of them do not stay that long at our centre. Most of them are on a seven or eight hour shift.

**Dr. Barker:** I like the sound of what you're operating, and I like your expression 'when the child understands why they are being left'. I don't know if that is at eighteen months or three years or older. It sounds like what's happening at your centre is not what Burton White has talked about - that the longer the child is in some very high quality daycare centres, the staff notice that the excuses the parents have for picking up the child later and later are flimsier and flimsier, indicating the kind of progressive detachment from the child that can occur. It sounds like you're not into that. I'm glad to hear that.

**Mr. Needham:** Thank you for that call. We will continue with Dr. Barker who is a psychiatrist who is concerned about daycare. He is concerned that daycare may create some children who grow up without the capacities for trust, for affection, and for empathy. There are some people who agree with him, and some who do not.

**Caller:** Hi, I'm a mother, and I stay home with my kids, and I do daycare in

my home, and I think I do a pretty good job, but I would never put my own children in that situation, because I can see how hard it is to deal with other people's children's behaviour because I don't have the bond with them, and I don't love them the way I do my own kids.

**Dr. Barker:** Well, I think you're kind of courageous for saying that, and I think that that is the experience of a lot of people. It is a sad thing that there are such pressures in our society - primarily from the unfair deal that women have always gotten, and continue to get, and from our consumer addictions - pressures that drive most parents to feel they have to get out of the home to get some independence and money rather than nurture their own children under the age of three. Thanks.

**Caller:** It's really good to hear you say that!

**Mr. Needham:** Thanks for the call.

**Caller:** Yes, I have to agree with Dr. Barker. He is 100% right. I can't go any higher than that. They become manipulators in our society, and they become con-artists as well. They are emotionally detached. They are all looking for affection, and they will use any device to get it.

**Mr. Needham:** How do you know that?

**Caller:** I have read so many books. Did you ever read the story about Ted Bundy and all those mass killers? Everyone, without exception was rejected by his mother. Everyone, without exception.

**Dr. Barker:** An interesting book has recently been published by a psychologist, Dr. Ken Magid, called HIGH RISK: Children Without A Conscience", which lays out all the evidence about attachment and failure of attachment. He calls these people "Trust Bandits". He is really talking about partial psychopaths, and he is hitting

the nail right on the head, I think.

But my concern is not with the Bundy's and the high profile serial killers and serious sexual psychopaths that I have dealt with personally. I don't think that that is the biggest risk to society. I think the biggest risk is the partial psychopaths that succeed in business and politics and infect and affect the lives of everyone much more than a few high profile killers.

**Mr. Needham:** I wonder what their background was.

**Dr. Barker:** Well, in my experience, you can't always find, if you're looking for a history of multiple separations, you can't always find it. Psychopathy is not always caused by separations in the critical period before the age of three. There certainly can be organic factors, not always in my experience identifiable with neurological testing. There can also be a hereditary predisposition. There can be other factors implicated as causes of psychopathy.

**Caller:** Dr. Barker, you'd be interested in this. The Soviets have had 87 years of farming their kids out, and they have just come out with a statement about ten months ago to say they committed a major blunder by making the state primarily responsible for children. The head of the newly created Soviet Children's Foundation said yesterday, "the family has been destroyed". I am deeply convinced that children must be one of the highest priorities in the life of our society. High divorce rates, young mothers

I think the biggest risk is the partial psychopaths that succeed in business and politics and infect and affect the lives of everyone much more than a few high profile killers.

abandoning their infants and the long standing practice of giving higher priority to work than the home has led to children being horribly neglected.” This was in The Toronto Star, August 14th.

**Mr. Needham:** Thank you ma'am. Hello, you are on the air.

**Caller:** Hello, I would like to express an opinion as well as ask Dr. Barker a question. I have been in and out of child care for about 40 years. I have been in daycare as well as nursery school, as well as raising my own family, and one of the things I have advocated over all the years is that I really don't believe any child should be in daycare before the age of two. Now my reasons are probably not the same as Dr. Barker's, as I feel that there is so much happening in a child's life from birth to two, and the parents, if the child is in daycare, obviously miss it. They just can't see things happen because children develop when they are ready, not just when the parent is around to be able to see it. I think they miss so much of that. Now whether that sort of relates to what you're saying or not, I don't know.

**Dr. Barker:** Well, the broader issue is I think that nurturing of children has been devalued in our society and is seen as a kind of scut job. I often wonder what would happen if we used the great skill of our marketing industry to promote the nurturing of children and the value to the parent himself or herself of participating in the growth of a new human being under the age of two or three, the remarkable and marvelous changes occurring as a human being develops so quickly in the earliest years.

**Caller:** Incredible, and so much is missed when they are not with them every waking moment.

**Dr. Barker:** We know how to sell Lysol Spray and Coke and beer, things which can't hold a candle to the kinds of

**What would happen if we used the great skill of our marketing industry to promote the nurturing of children?**

things that are involving and happening with the magical unfolding of one's own child, and yet that has come to be seen as a horrible, second, third, fourth, fifth priority job - "Oh, you're just at home with the kids."

**Caller:** The question I would like to ask you Dr. Barker is, have you made any studies with the people you are dealing with, partial psychopaths, to note whether they have been in daycare at an early age?

**Dr. Barker:** No, but that is the study that must be done. I can't say that strongly enough. All other studies dealing with the effects of daycare are really irrelevant in comparison to answering the question you have asked.

Psychologists, who primarily do that kind of research, need to develop more accurate instruments or ways of measuring the capacity for trust, the capacity for affection, and the kind of empathy we are talking about. Then a study of adults who have been in daycare under the age of three could be made. That's exactly the study we need to allay the kind of concern that I am talking about. In the meantime, it seems to me there is more than enough presumptive evidence for a prudent person to be very very worried about the effects of institutional care on the development of capacities for trust, empathy, and affection.

**Caller:** I am really nervous here. Dr. Barker, I have to back you in this. It is very important that parents, mother or father, stay home with the child within the first five years, because they have

Psychopathic adults see loving, lasting, relationships between others and they are puzzled about them.

such an influence on the child's life.

**Dr. Barker:** Well, one hears that often that you don't want the values of the daycare centre or someone else being inflicted on your child. That is I think a valid point and I think it would be a concern for some parents, but its not the concern I am trying to articulate tonight. I am concerned about the effects that changing shared caregivers and multiple separations have on attachment. I think the effect has to be viewed as potentially ominous when we know what very serious disruptions in attachment can do. Ten different foster homes in the first three years of life can produce a serious psychopath - we know that. By extrapolation, I think, we have to be more concerned about the enormous number of less total separations and the changing shared caregivers that are part and parcel of institutional care.

**Caller:** I back you 100% because these children have to be taken care of.

**Mr. Needham:** Can I ask you a question, Dr. Barker. How do we know that? You said that we know that very serious disruptions in attachment can produce psychopaths?

**Dr. Barker:** That evidence is not in dispute by either side in the debate about daycare. It is summarized very well by Professor Paul Steinhauer, a child psychiatrist with the Hospital for Sick Children in Toronto in a paper entitled "How to Succeed in the Business of Creating Psychopaths Without Even Trying". The evidence is that

children who are taken from their natural parents and put in a series of foster homes under the age of three, end up with a severe incapacity for trust, empathy, and affection. They are psychopathic. I don't think that is in dispute. And by extrapolation, I am simply saying, we have to be concerned that the repeated smaller doses of that experience which occur when you put infants and toddlers in institutional daycare are likely to produce damage in the direction of the pathology we see in the cases of a few very serious disruptions.

**Mr. Needham:** There is a more insidious effect of this that worries me too. When a child is growing at that young age and as you say the wonderful illuminations take place on the part of the child when those certain precious moments occur in the life of a child . . .

**Dr. Barker:** And illuminations on the part of the parent. I think that is undervalued.

**Mr. Needham:** That's coming - right of course, and then that is shared of course by the parents and you can't schedule that during that so-called "quality" time between 5:00 and 7:00 after you park your Volvo. And so here is a child who grows up and when it has that precious moment, the parent doesn't share it, the child grows up, has another child, and it doesn't share that precious moment with its child, and these individuals don't even know through experience that those precious moments exist. That worries me a lot.

**Dr. Barker:** Yes, I think it should. I think it's true that unattached adults in a sense don't know what they are missing. Psychopathic adults see loving lasting relationships between others and they are kind of puzzled about them. They don't experience that themselves and see those who do either as suckers or putting on some kind of act. Psychopaths don't have much capacity to



nurture their own children. Yes, I think that is one of the most worrisome things for me about the trend to institutional care of infants and toddlers.

My concern is that - if it is true that we are producing a generation of partial psychopaths - what will happen in subsequent generations. Will those qualities of trust, empathy, and affection become extinct, or because they are rare, be defined as a perversion or a sickness? Will partial psychopathy be defined as normality? Can human beings live together in a society when the majority don't have those qualities?

**Mr. Needham:** Dr. Barker's point of view is a perspective with which we are not often faced in today's media, and so I thought we could explore this on the show tonight. Hello, you're on the air.

**Caller:** This is a perspective I think I really appreciate you bringing up tonight. I do believe that the problem is multiple caregivers and the domino effect that Ed mentioned a few callers ago. Children of children who have been neglected and then as adults not being able to be considerate or have anything for their children, because they just don't know what it is.

**Dr. Barker:** You put it better than I do.

**Caller:** I think that it hits both ends of the social spectrum, the wealthy and the not-so-wealthy. It hits hardest on single parents or the very young who are not established and have produced children. I was married to a man who came from a very wealthy family and lost his father during the second world war. He had many different caregivers or places he was placed and was in a boarding school. I really reflect on this after a 25-year marriage. It was really hard and it didn't matter how much love and affection he was given, or how many gifts from people, he never acknowledged them or appreciated them, and constantly felt sorry for himself.

**Dr. Barker:** I think that's the story of psychiatry, that we can look back at the

They want to believe it because it justifies what they are doing, partially abandoning their children, in many many cases for the good life rather than for the medium life, that so many settled for earlier on.

enormously damaging things that occur in childhood and see their pervasive nature - how long they last and how severely they affect all relationships - business, personal and otherwise - throughout the person's life. There has been some attempt to debunk that and say it really doesn't matter a great deal what happens to very young children, they're so resilient. Not a great deal is set in cement early on. But I think that's part of the revisionism that is occurring around known facts. The expressions "quality time" and "quality daycare" are euphemisms to soothe what has to be anxious areas of our life. Areas we feel guilty about. And I find it hard to believe some professionals who are interpreted as saying that those early years really don't matter that much and things will fix themselves at a later age. It doesn't make sense to me. Maybe it's right, but it doesn't make sense to me.

**Mr. Needham:** Thanks for the call. It doesn't make sense to me either. I think that people who believe that kind of thing want to believe it so that they can rationalize their actions when they take their children and put them somewhere else. They want to believe it because it justifies what they are doing, partially abandoning their children, in many many cases for the good life rather than for the medium life, that so many settled for earlier on.

**Dr. Barker:** Well, you tend to blame people more than I.

**Mr. Needham:** You psychiatrists

never blame anybody.

**Dr. Barker:** But we're all victims of our culture. We are inundated with media people like you and your ads from the time we are born. We get addicted to this consumer nonsense so that it's not really a choice of a parent to say "Well, I can lower the standard of living I am used to, so that I can nurture my child for the first three years."

**Mr. Needham:** They don't know any better.

**Dr. Barker:** We are all immersed in this, and I keep asking myself where the voice of sanity is going to come from to indict a level of consumption that is so destructive. We keep racing to consume more so we can feel better about ourselves. And the rich set the styles that make the poor feel poor, even though they might be very well off in any global perspective. Consumerism is the real culprit, along with our destructive tradition of male chauvinism - arbitrary male dominance - not individuals who are victims of those norms looking for daycare for their kids. But where is the voice that is comparable in strength to the paid advertising for consumables? Where is that force going to come from to remind us of a more sensible way of life than consumer addiction?

**Mr. Needham:** It's not going to come from the mass media and I'll tell you why. Forget your optimism in this area. It's not going to come because the minute a voice begins to speak that is effective and changes this attitude of mass consumerism in the mass media, which are dedicated to moving merchandise, that voice is going to be stifled. The voice will be stifled because advertisers and business people are going to crack down on that voice because that voice goes counter to what their lives and their businesses and their philosophies are all about. If you have anything to say today at the moment, you can't say it in the mass media. So

it's not going to come from the mass media. It cannot. It is programmed against it. You think you are hearing controversy. You think you are hearing it. You go on the air and try to talk about something and really talk about it, and you won't be on the air in a month.

**Dr. Barker:** Well, that's been the position for anyone critical of daycare for the last ten years, but I think that is beginning to change. Perhaps the women's movement itself is beginning to acknowledge that women who want to nurture their own babies are not second class women and deserve the support that women who wanted to work in the workplace have been getting for the last twenty years. When the day comes when all women are equal in every way with men, I think there will not only be no push for daycare, and no push for women to follow a male script in their liberation, but a far greater emphasis in society on nurturing infants and toddlers.

**Mr. Needham:** Let's take a break.

**Caller:** I am in social services and I have a few comments to make. I partly agree and partly disagree with what has been said so far. No. 1, I believe that one of the critical factors is what the home life is like, how secure the child is with the parents in terms of the love that is shown, and how constant that love is versus the five hours or six hours during the day that the child is with a transient caregiver. In other words, what's more important is when the child returns home, how the parents relate to that child so that there is a significant relationship at home. No. 2, I would like to say that I have gone into a considerable number of homes where I have been appalled at the conditions, where parents are taking care of their children at home. I don't really want to say what population group I deal with, because I don't want to incriminate any certain population, but a lot of individuals feel that if certain parents

can't take care of their children and the job can be done better by a daycare worker, these children are often better off than being taken care of by their own parents.

**Dr. Barker:** I am glad you have raised that. I am sorry we haven't had a chance to acknowledge that earlier. We have been talking as though daycare produces problems under the age of three, and that home care is always better. Obviously, that is not always so. There are many homes where there are serious problems and the child is not successfully attached at home or the child is being outright abused. I think Burton White says that in 10% of the population what goes on in the home is so inferior that daycare, even with its hazards, is superior. But I think we have gone about it the wrong way around in trying to correct that situation. We are building up a whole industry, a whole substitute child care system at great, great expense, not just economically, but I believe to the children, rather than aiming our efforts at that 10% of the population that really need an enormous amount of help.

The problem is that most of us prefer to play at "work" for status and toys rather than engage in the constant giving necessary in nurturing young children. Men have always done that and now women are following their script. We hire someone with less power to care for our children and we get away with it because infants and toddlers are the least powerful members of society. And, of course being clever and capable of guilt, we rationalize the whole process as being either necessary, or for the child's own good, or both.

**Mr. Needham:** Should we go for a tax break for women at home?

**Dr. Barker:** Well, there are a lot of things that could be done, if the Government wanted to. Not just the Government, but if the population at large wanted it. We could raise the status of



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parenting, and make the working conditions at home far better for nurturing children. And I think it could be done for less money than the billions needed to run a whole new child care industry. Tax breaks, pensions for homemakers, there are an enormous number of things that could be done if the thrust were to improve the quality of nurturing and improve the quality of life for parents while they are nurturing their children in those critical early years. Just about half of Penelope Leach's Penguin book WHO CARES? is spent detailing immediate and long term ways that families could be assisted in nurturing their children.

It could, for example, be seen as a time in your life just like a period at college, it could have that status - the time at home nurturing your children, at least under three. We don't think badly about people staying out of the work force to go to college. We think of it as an investment in their future and the future of the country to get a better education. We don't presently think that way about taking three of four years off to nurture a child when it needs it most, but we could.

**Mr. Needham:** Thanks for your call. CFRB, you're on the air.

**Caller:** Hello, Thanks very much for your show. It's quite interesting. At our Church, we have a daycare centre that we operate and drop-in centre four times throughout the week. I really admire the girls that work there. I really do. I feel they are getting the blame for

kids not turning out good, but they really do a wonderful job and I feel sorry that they are not encouraged more. My kids aren't in daycare. I'm a stay-at-home mom.

**Dr. Barker:** Your point is well taken, and I hope that my comments are not taken as an indictment of the people who work and try very hard with the kids that they have in daycare centres. My concern is that the structure they are working within is inherently flawed, and as good as they are, and as caring as they are, and as loving as they are, and as much energy as they put out for the low monetary rewards they get, the process is potentially destructive through no fault of their own for the reasons we have commented on.

**Mr. Needham:** I have been talking to the good doctor trying to get some free treatment during the commercials here, and I have laid a guilt trip on him and he is going to stay until 9:00. So I am very very glad of that. So, we are going to push on and talk about this and its ramifications until 9:00, and if you want to call you certainly may. The number is 872-1010. He is Dr. Elliott Barker. He is a psychiatrist, talking about daycare and caring for children. He has had an awful lot of experience with people who have had extreme troubles in our society - psychopaths as they are called. And he is worried that some partial psychopaths may be being created by daycare under the age of three.

**Caller:** I'd like to thank you Ed for bringing us this side of the daycare issue because we have been so bombarded with progaganda on the other side. I have had a personal experience with a 2-year old son. He was in daycare 11 hours a day, 5 days a week. He is now 3. He is now more agresive, bold, doesn't concentrate as well on things. He easily becomes frustrated and one of the things that none of the other callers mentioned is the health consideration.

My son was never sick at home and since being in daycare he has had 15 or 20 major infections, ear infections, and various colds and has had to be treated with medicine. He just had a bout with chicken pox. I realize kids do get childhood diseases, but the fact that he is in a room with 18 other children all day long for 11 hours a day - there is just that much more chance of viruses.

**Mr. Needham:** Why do you leave him there?

**Caller:** I am afraid I don't have much choice. My wife and I are separated, and I don't have him all the time.

**Mr. Needham:** You put him there when you go to work, is that it?

**Caller:** The child lives with his mother.

**Mr. Needham:** Does she live alone?

**Caller:** Yes.

**Mr. Needham:** So when she goes to work, she puts the child into a daycare centre.

**Caller:** Yes, at 5:30 in the morning.

**Mr. Needham:** Wow.

**Caller:** He is there 11 or 12 hours a day.

**Mr. Needham:** Dr., what could you say to this man.

**Dr. Barker:** Well, we are looking at the tail end of a sad situation. When you come upon a situation like this caller has described, it is hard to see what the alternatives are. If one backed up further and further, without wishing to be harsh, one wonders about all the forces that lead to marriage breakdown in our society. One wonders about the capacity to give and receive affection, the capacity to trust, the capacity for empathy, whether they are there in their fullest extent in each of the marriage partners to permit a couple to form a lasting mutually satisfying relationship together. Whether there is some failure of parenting of the parents that have contributed to this marriage breakdown and now further problems with the care

of the child.

**Mr. Needham:** And you call me tough on callers!

**Dr. Barker:** I think parents who are in that situation recognize that they are not perfect. And hopefully, that kind of recognition can be one of the driving forces for greater concern about parenting education and greater preparation for parenting. The course and development of a new baby is pretty much set about six months before conception. That's when these difficult situations are doomed to happen or not happen. It seems to me that if things aren't right then, the priorities right, the relationship right, and understanding of the job, then one is set on a track even then that will likely end up with sad situations down the line.

**Mr. Needham:** I only have a minute left before the news, caller. What do you think about what the doctor just said?

**Caller:** I am very concerned.

**Mr. Needham:** No, but what about his comments that he just made concerning your life.

**Caller:** What, that they have an effect as well?

**Mr. Needham:** Yeah, that you and your wife could be partially part of the responsibility for the situation that you now find yourself, or your child now finds itself.

**Caller:** I agree. But at the same time, with this situation, I am willing to look after the child for a couple of days a week but I still have to work out some time etc. that I can look after him.

**Mr. Needham:** I am sorry, I am out of time before the news. The doctor is going to stay until 9:00, so 872-1010 is the number. Dial quickly, I have opened up a couple more lines. They will be filled quickly on the Ed Needham show, CFRB 1010 on your dial in Toronto.

Paid staff have to have vacation, sick time, a 40-hour work week, leave for educational purposes, or promotion, and the right to quit, and therefore necessarily change over time.

**Mr. Needham:** Welcome back to the Ed Needham show. I read a column by Christie Blatchford in the Sun. As a matter of fact, two columns. And in this comes the name of Elliott Barker, a psychiatrist who spent 20 years in Penetanguishene talking to psychopaths, to murderers, sex offenders, and the like. So, in the course of reading about the Doctor, I found he had some feelings that perhaps partial psychopaths are created as a result of children being raised in daycare, and not developing in the way that they should or at least some of them, the human qualities of empathy, and affection and trust. So I thought we would have him in.

Before I take the next call, I want to ask you a question, if I could, Dr. It's a little off to the side, but I want to ask you because I don't know how you will answer. I think I know, but I don't know for sure. When you have to sit down in a room with someone who has done something horrific, I won't get melodramatic, but someone who has done something repulsive to almost everyone, and you sit there opposite this individual and you have to interview them and write reports, etc. - how do you feel? I have the feeling that if it were me, I'd say, I have to talk to this lump, but I really, how do you feel? Do you dislike them? Are you neutral? Are you flat? How do you do it?

**Dr. Barker:** I think it's helpful not to read press accounts of the crime before you meet the person. I think it's

possible to look at another human being who is the perpetrator of something terribly sad or savage as a victim themselves. And I think it's possible to sort of detach one's value system while you are doing it.

The most difficult thing in my experience is to listen to a very cold psychopath describe the intimate details of a hands on killing in words that are like describing yesterday's weather. You sense the total absence of appropriate feeling or empathy for the victim. Good psychopaths learn to cover that deficit very quickly, but often with younger ones, and especially if you are the first psychiatrist to examine them, you see it clearly and it's very chilling. I think that my experience over the years with psychopaths in hospital, and following many of them informally after they left Penetang, has created in me a greater sensitivity than most to the deficits of psychopathy. These inabilities to trust or be trusting, to be empathic, to give or receive affection - I really am very concerned about these qualities being deficient in so called normal human beings, more than their total absence in seriously psychopathic killers. That's really why I get very concerned, because I believe the evidence supports my belief that those human qualities of trust, empathy, and affection are developed or not developed in the early years, and the experience world wide is that you can't put them in later by treatment.

The first 6 or 7 years that I was at Penetang was spent developing very intensive treatment programs, and it's my personal experience as well as the experience world wide, that with psychopaths treatment prospects are very bleak indeed. You can't put those qualities back in with any one of a whole range of strategies therapists have tried. So the emphasis has to be on prevention of this disorder rather than treatment.

**Caller:** Good evening. I more or less agree with what you are saying about

early nurturing, but this is not a perfect world and being as it is not a perfect world, people do have to eat, do have to put shelter over their heads, hence they have to go to work and they have to find alternate care for children. What are the best alternatives. You just say don't do it, don't put children into alternative care. The mother should be there. But maybe the mother can't be there. So what is the next best thing?

**Dr. Barker:** Well, there are lots of people who are proponents of the next best thing. I am not one of them. I must say that I stay locked on to what I think is the best thing. That is, preventing a situation where parents either feel they have or actually have higher priorities than nurturing their children during the first three years. Many people have rank ordered types of substitute care from least risky to most risky - generally from a live-in nanny to commercial daycare. There are lots of people who will list that for you.

What I'm saying is that we haven't begun to look seriously at the kinds of changes that need to occur and could occur such as raising the status of women in general and parents in particular, lowering the status of consumerism, better preparation for the job of parenting and better working conditions for doing the job during the first three years of a child's life. The priorities of the parents in two-salary lifestyle are more influenced by unseen or denied consumer addictions than the emotional needs of their infants and toddlers.

**Caller:** I'm sorry, all right, in some cases that is true. But that's not the truth in all cases. In that case, what you are saying is that all those people who cannot afford to have children, should not have children, so therefore we have to have some kind of a system that says no, you can't afford them. If you can't stay home and look after the child, therefore you can't have a child.

**Dr. Barker:** Well, I am really questioning how we define “afford” in our society, and all the things that are implicit in that. Things that we have learned from a very young age are “necessary”. If you look globally, what does one have to be able to afford to nurture a child you choose to bring into the world?

**Caller:** Well, one has to be able to afford a roof over one’s head, and one has to be able to afford to put food on the table. Those are the primary conditions of existing, I don’t care what part of the world that you are in. And the different levels of course in a society like we have, there are different levels. But that does not mean to say that the lower level of people that have to work, have to have two salaries. We are assuming that everybody is an executive and bring in the kind of money that father can bring, \$40,000, \$50,000, or \$60,000, or \$100,000, and therefore can allow mother to stay home. That I am sorry is just not true. There are people who do not have the intellectual capability of holding jobs that can do that, so therefore they both have to work just to exist, and unfortunately a lot of people who have children don’t put any thought to it. They are accidents and you have to deal with the accidents. You are being very inflexible, Doctor, I am sorry.

**Mr. Needham:** No, he is not being inflexible at all. What he is doing is adopting a position which says this problem is monumental and I have seen it from both ends, and there aren’t any simplistic solutions and when you ask a question like “what’s the alternative”, that’s a simplistic question when you consider the scope of the problem.

It’s like saying, I always come back to this on shows, to use this same incident, but I had a fellow who called me one time on a show on bicycles and he said “you know, the trouble is, you’re riding on the street and there is a bus on your



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left and there is the curb on your right and there is broken glass ahead, and I say to him, “what are you doing between the bus and the curb stone headed for the broken glass?”

What the doctor is suggesting is not a way to solve the immediate problem of somebody who is out there looking for alternative childcare, what he is saying is, it requires the complete looking in another way at our society - at conspicuous consumption. At people who think they have to have so many things, and really do not, and that all of the extras which so many people who have children in daycare spend their money on, could be foregone, so that the child could be raised with one parent in the house all of the time and that in itself would help improve the nature of society for everyone. I think that is what he is suggesting. How do you get out from between the bus and the curb. You don’t. You ride over the broken glass is what you do.

**Caller:** Okay, but you are assuming that a large percentage of people who have children in daycare are only doing it for frivolous extras.

**Mr. Needham:** You are quite right.

**Caller:** But, I don’t think that is always the case. I don’t think it is the high percentage that you think it is.

**Mr. Needham:** What high percentage did I say.

**Caller:** You said, the vast majority of people. This is what is coming across. You haven’t given a percentage.

**Mr. Needham:** Of course not.

**Caller:** No, you won't commit yourself that way.

**Mr. Needham:** I'll bet you a fat man that more than 50%, now I am winging this, okay, you understand, this is only my opinion, that more than 50% of the children who are in daycare today belong to parents who could have food, clothing, and shelter, and a terrific home life if they would cut down on some of the things they consider to be necessary which are not necessary. I am 100% in the doctor's favour on this.

**Dr. Barker:** The commonest rationalization for daycare is "we're providing it for the poor". Someone has suggested that the push for a universal daycare scheme comes from the need of the rich to assuage their guilt for abandoning their babies. Well, to widen it further, I think the whole business of nurturing children has been seen as a woman's problem, and that's part of our tradition of arbitrary male dominance, of male chauvinism. Child care has to be re-defined, so that it isn't seen just as a woman's problem. Men have always abdicated child care responsibilities. The whole way of viewing the nurturing of our new citizens has to change, and getting substitute arrangements that are potentially risky, I don't think is change in the right direction. If we were as dedicated to the values related to nurturing: trust, empathy and affection, as we are to the values of consumerism: envy, selfishness, and greed, we would make the changes. We could easily afford to financially support the parents in economic need so they could nurture the children they choose to have.

**Mr. Needham:** Thank you very much for being on the show. I have to take a break. I am fascinated with the program, we are getting a variety of opinions on daycare and I think tonight we are getting more light than heat.

**Dr. Barker:** It is refreshing and I wonder if that isn't a stage we have evolved to where a discussion which

raises questions about the downside of daycare can have more light than heat. It has not been my experience in the past ten years. It wasn't possible. And that's a very encouraging thing.

**Mr. Needham:** CFRB, you are on the air.

**Caller:** Hello, I have a little suggestion that perhaps instead of spending so much money on daycare, they would give loans to young couples and you could pay it back later when they are both earning, when the child is a little older.

**Dr. Barker:** I think there are loads of good suggestions like that one, if we would only look at them seriously. Suggestions for programs that would not potentially jeopardize the children and would be more cost effective as well.

**Caller:** Yes, because most mothers want to stay with their children. Very few of them really want to go out to work, and if they were given a chance to stay home, and pay back the money. I know when my daughter was little, I did the same thing. I worked night shift in a different type of job, so that I could be home during the day and her dad came home and looked after her in the evening. And that worked well for the child, but the couple then has to get together some time, but we were able to do that and lots of people can't. And to me it's very important for the mother to be with the child.

**Dr. Barker:** I am glad you raised that as one of the kinds of strategies that could be looked at to help resolve the dilemma that young parents find themselves in, with some solution other than separating the child and the mother.

**Mr. Needham:** I am going to move the ball back into the scientific court for a moment, into the professional arena. I still think, I think your idea is a good one, I am not quarreling with your ideas, but they require statesmanship



and imagination of which we have neither. I think that the only way that you could get these ideas to actually take place is to produce information, and the only people that can produce the kind of information that will be trusted are people like you, psychologists, psychiatrists, and so on, because they are the ones folks tend to believe. You must prove to people - to these statistic and figure oriented bureaucrats we have running the country - that indeed the effects of daycare are deleterious in a lot of instances. If you could convince them of that, then the parents - do you know what I am saying?

**Dr. Barker:** Well, I don't agree with you. I think it's a political issue and whichever side is politically stronger simply uses the research that supports their side and ignores the other. And I don't say that with any nasty connotation but politicians simply reflect the most vocal segment of our society. In the case of the daycare issue, the most vocal segment is now saying that its priorities lie other than staying at home to nurture children. In that climate, even the very best studies will be overlooked. The real problems as I see it are unbridled consumerism, and the inequities forced on women by men. I think you and I as consumer addicts and male chauvinists are the real problems forcing many women out of nurturing and into the work place.

**Mr. Needham:** I don't buy the male guilt routine.

**Dr. Barker:** Well, I do.

**Mr. Needham:** You're on the air.

**Caller:** Hi, I am a stay-at-home Mom, and I have been for eight years and before that I worked, and I heartily agree with what both of you are saying tonight. I think the thing that bothers me a lot is that people aren't willing to sacrifice any more. They have lost their perspective about what is really important. Children don't ask to be born and I

The thing that bothers me a lot is that people aren't willing to sacrifice any more. They have lost their perspective about what is really important.

think a lot more consideration should go into planning families. If an accident happens, people should be prepared to sacrifice a little bit instead of wanting the two cars and the vacations and that sort of thing.

**Mr. Needham:** They aren't though, they are not prepared for that.

**Caller:** No, they are not.

**Mr. Needham:** You know, the doctor is right too. The media helps keep them unprepared.

**Caller:** I know but the reality of life as far as I am concerned is that nothing is more important than your children. That's the way I feel anyway. Our whole life changed when we had kids. They are the focus of our lives. They are our priority, and we consider them when we make all our plans. We didn't have a vacation for years because we couldn't afford one. We live in a small house, not one of these monstrous homes with enormous mortgages. We drove a dreadful car for the longest time. It kept falling apart, but we just didn't have the money, and I found that once I had my kids - in fact the oldest one is eight, and the longer I stayed home, the harder it becomes to think of leaving them, even though they are older now and more independent. There doesn't seem to me to be a good time. You were talking about beyond the age of three. But to me they seem to need talking to even more now than they did when were little because they were running into problems, peer pressure and all of that

I think this generation of kids that are being raised in daycare are going to have the same lack of consideration for us when we are old that we had for them when they were young.

they need help with. Not at 7:00 p.m. when you are tired after you have put in a full day. They want it when they come home from school. And I don't think that my neighbour down the street or the person at a daycare centre has the time or the interest in my child that I do. Nobody cares about my child the way I do.

**Mr. Needham:** The blood. There is nothing like the blood.

**Caller:** I'll be honest with you. I love my children and I put 24 hours a day into raising my kids, but I wouldn't do that for just any kid. If I looked after someone else's child, I would look after them but not with the same overall interest and caring. My child is so important to me and I don't understand how people can just shuffle them off at 5:30 in the morning or 6:00 and pick them up at 6:00 at night, and have this quality time. This really annoys me. It drives me to distraction. As far as I am concerned, all the time you spend with your child is quality time, from the day they are born. There is no such thing as quality time if you are a parent. I hate daycare because I don't think it's a good alternative to raising children. And my final thing that I wanted to say is that I think this generation of kids that are being raised in daycare are going to have the same lack of consideration for us when we are old that we had for them when they were young.

**Mr. Needham:** I heard that somewhere before this evening.

**Caller:** It's a sad commentary on what

we are doing. They are going to be very careless about us because we were careless about them when they were young. It's very sad, because they will be running the country. Well, it bothers me and I really appreciate hearing someone come on and talk about this, because it is important, and I really do agree with what he has to say. Kids can't be bounced around from one to another, strangers most of the time, without it having an effect on them.

**Mr. Needham:** I think it's important as well, and the doctor pointed this out earlier, but I think it bears repeating, because all you hear are the people who are involved in daycare, and I don't blame them. I would be doing the same thing they are doing, saying "Oh, he is so loving, he comes to you, and so forth". These qualities which don't develop in many of these children as the doctor believes, the lack of development of these qualities does not manifest itself until far far down the line when they have a chance to show how little they care about their fellow human beings. We all know the boss, or the individual or friend who really doesn't care about you or your problems - goodbye. Those qualities you can't recognize until later and then it's too late. Just because a child is fun, runs around and has his arm around everybody - what does that mean?

**Caller:** It doesn't mean anything. The other thing you know, this talk about children needing more stimulation than you can provide in a normal home. I don't agree. If you are a good mother - I don't know what is meant by a good mother. But I just know with my two children, that I don't have 5 for them to play with, I have 2, a boy and a girl, they play together. And I can provide plenty of stimulation for my children. They didn't go to nursery school. They went to school when school started. Because I found it hard to part with my kids even at kindergarten. I felt that they were young, and I would have been happy to

hang on to them for another year or two.

**Mr. Needham:** You are depriving your children of their fair share of germs and bacteria.

**Caller:** Well, you know the amount of time that you actually have your kids all to yourself is so short, I am not willing to give any of it up. Why else do people have children. I question that sometimes. If they want to have them, they go back after 17 weeks. Why do they have them in the first place. And what sort of - the other lady that was saying should people not have them if they can't afford - they should really put more thought and consideration into why they are having them if they can't afford them and can't provide for them.

**Dr. Barker:** One of the nicest things that has happened in the last 15 or 20 years is that not having a child is much more of an option for a woman. Childless by choice - that is becoming more of an option in our culture and I think it has saved a lot of grief for a lot of kids. Before, (and there still is) enormous pressure from family - when are you going to have a baby? - with the implications you're gay, or selfish if you don't, and then you have one and there is pressure to have a second and third. Some people don't have children because they don't want to put their priorities into a child. That's an option that should be equally available.

**Mr. Needham:** I'd like to thank you for the compliment, because I don't have any children. People keep hammering me about it, and I get hammered on this program, "do you have any children". When I say no, they say "well how can you possibly know anything if you don't have any children".

**Caller:** It's like saying you don't know anything about other things but you know that's silly, its ridiculous. But there is nothing wrong with people

They all want to breastfeed, of course, because that's in and trendy and they think they can turn off the spigot when they feel like it and go back to work.

waiting and becoming better established before having kids. I mean we waited and prepared ourselves, and didn't rush into it. We made sure we had a home, and saved and scrimped and did all sorts of things. We didn't just "have a baby" because we were married. I think people should think about that and put more planning into their lives and really think about what they are doing.

**Dr. Barker:** There are parenting education programs springing up all over, but one that I was really pleased to discover is in Quaker schools in Philadelphia and it begins in Kindergarten and goes to grade 8. The notion is that kids, before they are physically able to conceive children, should be as well prepared as possible. They have woven parenting education into the curriculum from Kindergarten through to grade 8. That kind of move would do a lot toward better preparation for parenting, preventing situations that have only catastrophic solutions. As Ed says, having to drive over the glass.

**Mr. Needham:** Hey, thanks for the call Mom.

**Caller:** Well thank you, because I really appreciate having the opportunity to speak.

**Mr. Needham:** Hello, you are on the air.

**Caller:** Hello, Ed. I am enjoying your program very much. I thought that all the time I was raising my children I was a voice in the wind because I chose to stay at home, even though I had what was considered to be a very good

It's a full time job caring for children at home and there is not a lot of time and energy to organize politically and push for the kind of nurturing you are describing and programs to support it.

education and a well paying job 20 years ago. My first child I had when I was working, then my mother looked after my child which is the best secondary caregiver you can have, I suppose. But even with that, there were many nights that I cried myself to sleep because I felt I was depriving my child. I was missing my child, and I felt that my child was missing something he couldn't get, not even from my mother. Everybody said I would grow out of it, get used to it, that it was the thing to do. But I never did. And I had two more children and stayed at home to raise them, for the most part, up until the age of 3, and I still believe that I was right, that my gut feeling was right. And that my child did need me. And that I have plenty of time later on to go back to my career, pick up whatever it was I was contributing to society, that I had a job to do to have a baby and I felt I was not doing my job if I gave it to someone else to raise.

**Dr. Barker:** There are, I think, a lot of people that we are now hearing from, saying exactly what you are saying, coming out of the woodwork, so to speak, perhaps in response to the push for universal daycare in the last few years. There is an organization in Calgary called KIDS FIRST which is trying to unite the voices of people like yourself, and The Canadian Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children has been publishing a journal entitled EMPATHIC PARENTING saying the same things. But your voice and mine have been very much in a minority and

not organized at all. It's a full time job caring for children at home and there is not a lot of time and energy to organize politically and push for the kind of nurturing you are describing and programs to support it.

**Caller:** That's right, and the other thing I would like to agree with is the stay-at-home mom who spoke so well only a few calls ago. I too am in the work place now, not really by choice but because my husband brought the business home when I refused to go out and get a full time job. And I am meeting so many young moms, moms-to-be, age 27, 28, and 30, so-called professionals, who have a degree, big deal, who happily tell me that they are expecting their first baby and the next thing they go on to talk about is who's going to look after it when they go back to work. It's totally appalling, absolutely appalling. They all want to breast-feed, of course, because that's in and trendy and they think they can turn off the spigot when they feel like it and go back to work.

**Dr. Barker:** You do read more and more reports where women have been quite successful in the work force, had a child and then left those successful careers and jobs with a real orientation to the values of nurturing, and all that's implicit in that. Abandoning all the "good stuff" that everyone is scrambling for. Whether that is going to have any kind of political effect, whether that will become a movement to begin to reverse the push to get out and get "goddies", I don't know, but it's potentially a hopeful sign.

**Caller:** I don't know how we are going to convince others who think as you and I, because I am not hopeful. My husband and my eldest son who is 20 both think I am nuts.

**Mr. Needham:** Well you are not, and you are succeeding because you are thinking this way and you are holding

your ground. And I'll tell you something else about women in the work place. Here is another opinion, and that's all it is. We have to face the fact that if someone is seeking a corporate career in a classic way, by running an organization and working their way upward, if they are going to have periods where that career is interrupted, the chances are very good that they are not going to get as far as those who don't interrupt their careers. So the argument may go that if I stay home and have my children, I am going to be losing out on my career. Well, ladies, you are going to lose out anyway, whether you have children or whether you don't have children. Because when you go out in that work place, the prejudice is so strong against females advancing. I give you the articles in the media of the wonderful women who succeeded here and there, and power to them. But tell me about the ladies in the big law firms who are actually partners. . .

**Dr. Barker:** That's exactly the problem. We have to re-conceive the business of raising children in the most important and critical years in a way that doesn't penalize women vis-a-vis men. Either we de-value the things that are valueless that everyone is scrambling for, or in some way reconstrue it so that women aren't one down for the process of nurturing young children. . .

**Caller:** And make it important again. I don't see how it can be. I just keep battling away and trying to convince moms and when they ask what daycare did you use, and I say I didn't use any, and I didn't use pampers either, I just keep telling that three years is not a long time, not in your life, but it's a very long time in your baby's life. And your baby is never going to get those years back again.

**Mr. Needham:** Thank you for the call. We'll take a break now.

Three years is not a long time, not in your life, but it's a very long time in your baby's life.

**Caller:** Yes, hello, great show, great idea - I am a medical doctor here in Toronto who encourages people to a variety of natural ways, and what I find curious about this subject is that a lot of people spend thousands of dollars and a lot of time doing very unnatural things to get pregnant such as in vitro fertilization and things related to that, and are very unhappy if that doesn't happen, but when it does happen, then a few months later they rush out and put the child away and spend very little time with the child.

**Mr. Needham:** Amen.

**Caller:** My own opinion is that I think what has happened is that there has been a disintegration of the nuclear family, especially the large nuclear family, which I think is the natural way. My father came from a group of 5 brothers and they had a marvelous family together. I think the larger family is the way to go, and that's the direction I am trying to go in my own family. The question I have for the doctor is, I suspect that even after the age of three that contact with children and keeping them out of institutions is an important thing, and I was wondering if there is any evidence to support this fact even after the age of three?

**Dr. Barker:** I think that goes without saying. I think that if you make a commitment and get attached to children during the first three years, it is very difficult to send them very far away for very long.

I think from the point of view of the

The rich set the styles that make the poor feel poor, even though they might be very well-off in any global perspective.

development of these fundamental human qualities of trusting, and empathic relationships with other human beings, and the capacity for affection, that the damage is done before the age of three. After the age of three, one develops more neurotic problems which make individuals more unhappy in themselves. But the partial psychopath is not particularly unhappy with himself. He makes other people unhappy, and that's a more sinister thing for society. That's why I focus on that age of three, not because I don't think it's important for the child to have a lot of contact with parents after that age.

I think we should be asking ourselves what is the best sort of care for our children that will produce the kind of adults we most want and need. And that's not the question ever asked in relation to daycare.

We really have to question the values implicit in the substitute care model and the re-definition of the family model and where they are leading us down the road.

**Caller:** Well, you are a brave man to say that. I think that's great. Do you think larger families are generally healthier?

**Dr. Barker:** Well, if you define healthier family members as those with a greater capacity for trust, empathy, and affection, I suppose the answer is we don't have very good measures of those qualities, so it's hard to say. Closely spaced children do have a more difficult time. When you have a child of

one and a new one comes on the scene - the short spacing is very tough psychologically on the older one, unless there is an enormous amount of good enough parenting that can shelter him from that situation.

**Caller:** What's the best spacing to do?

**Dr. Barker:** Well, I follow Burton White, whose reasons are very explicit. For the child's benefit, not the parents, spacing three, four, or five years is ideal. Older children can accept a younger child with less difficulty because their own horizons are much wider at age 3, 4, or 5 and they are more secure in their relationships and can understand the situation better.

There is an interesting analogy of a husband bringing home a younger, more attractive woman, and telling his wife that this new woman will be living with them but he doesn't want her to feel jealous or upset at all. It's hard to imagine a two year old that has no hostile feelings for a one year old sibling. And it's hard to believe that a one year old benefits from such hostility, whether it is overt or covert.

**Mr. Needham:** We are out of time.

We have to first say thanks to Dr. Elliott Barker for coming by and for your insights, your compassion, and your (as the doctor caller said) courage in stating what you believe. You have been very, very nice to the callers. You have spoiled them for me. □



**Full-Time Substitute Care?  
What's in it for me?**

# PARENTS SENSIBLES

Journal de la Société Canadienne  
pour la Prévention de la Cruauté envers les Enfants

Tome 11

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Automne 1988

## Une autre mise en garde

. . . Dans les cultures industrialisées, les besoins des nouveaux-nés font compétition de moins en moins bien avec les autres exigences qui s'imposent aux mères. Il y a peu d'appréciation de la valeur des soins maternels. Par le fait même que les employés de garderies sont payés le salaire minimum, il est évident que les mères et les enfants ont peu de valeur dans notre société. Les mères auront de la difficulté à se sentir valorisées, et le besoin psychologique d'amour-propre est un facteur de plus, poussant les femmes sur le marché du travail.

Une autre force maligne de notre société est le matérialisme. Beaucoup ressentent cette pression sociale les poussant à se conformer au style de vie d'une famille à deux revenus. L'argent est souvent une plus grande priorité que le soin des bébés, même lorsque le besoin n'est pas un facteur. Les enfants sont perçus de plus en plus comme des possessions. Faisant partie de notre style de vie, ils sont néanmoins trop peu important pour en effectuer un changement. Comme thérapeute j'ai vu de nombreuses familles, malheureuses dû à la présomption que rien n'a à changer suite à la naissance d'un enfant.

Paul F. Klein, Ph.D., C. Psych.

(Extrait de: **Against Daycare:  
The Parent-Child Relationship in context,**  
*Alberta Psychology* Vol. 17 No. 4,  
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Recognizing that the capacity to give and receive trust, affection and empathy is fundamental to being human.

Knowing that all of us suffer the consequences when children are raised in a way that makes them affectionless and violent, and;

Realizing that for the first time in History we have definite knowledge that these qualities are determined by the way a child is cared for in the very early years.

# CREDO



## WE BELIEVE THAT:

- The necessity that every new human being develop the capacity for trust, affection and empathy dictates that potential parents re-order their priorities with this in mind.
- Most parents are willing and able to provide their children with the necessary loving empathic care, given support from others, appropriate understanding of the task and the conviction of its absolute importance.
- It is unutterably cruel to permanently maim a human being by failing to provide this quality of care during the first three years of life.

## THERE IS AN URGENCY THEREFORE TO:

- Re-evaluate all our institutions, traditions and beliefs from this perspective.
- Oppose and weaken all forces which undermine the desire or ability of parents to successfully carry out a task which ultimately affects us all.
- Support and strengthen all aspects of family and community life which assist parents to meet their obligation to each new member of the human race.