



# EMPATHIC PARENTING

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

Volume 19

Issue 2

Spring 1996



## The Third National Parenting Conference

Community Collaboration to Improve Parenting and  
Reduce Child Abuse and Violent Crime

See page 2

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## Normative Abuse

...I loved Karen Walant's term "normative abuse"\* when the attachment needs of the child are sacrificed for the cultural norms of separation and individuation. I see this over and over as children's needs are ignored because the parents are convinced that the child needs to "grow up" or needs to learn this or that at a prescribed time. There is so little trust, so little belief in the goodness of children, in their inherent desire to learn, to be social, to grow up at their own time and in their own way. I see parents be so incredibly controlling of their children, probably in large part because they were so controlled by their own parents as children, and partly because their own lives are so unhappy, they are trying to live their lives through their children...

Meri Davis

*\*Karen B. Walant, author of *Creating the Capacity for Attachment*, Jason Aronson Inc., 1995*

### WHAT IS 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.

**EMPATHIC PARENTING**

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

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EMPATHIC PARENTING

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**Notice**

Empathic Parenting is now available on the Internet and articles may be freely downloaded by anyone.

No decision has yet been made, but it is possible that beginning with the Winter 1996 issue (Volume 20 Issue 1), financial constraints may make it necessary to cease publishing Empathic Parenting in this printed (hard-copy) form.

# Letters

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Dear Elliott,

I sure liked your issue on partial psychopaths, i.e. politicians and Corporate Executive Officers.

Enclosed is our brochure for the third National Parenting Conference, and you will be pleased not to be invited again. [Speaking at conferences has never been my thing. ETB] I invited Janet Reno because the McVeigh-Nichols trial will be in Denver later in the summer. Who knows if she will favour us with a visit, but our sheriff sat next to her at a luncheon in Washington recently and said she seemed decent. I like the way she has been surviving the slings and arrows of her job...

...Also enclosed are my dues and best wishes for continued strength in your efforts. As you know I have tried to convince people that better child rearing will bring economic advantages to all who indulge. I decided speaking to people's pocketbooks might work better than speaking to their hearts and minds. Who knows...

Robert McFarland  
Boulder, Colorado

The National Parenting Conference benefits those who share with us a common desire to improve the life of all children and their families. Parents, teachers, social workers, law enforcement personnel, judges, mental health workers, and children's advocates and activists are encouraged to attend.

The National Parenting Conference, held each year in Boulder, Colorado, is a three-day symposium drawing speakers from a wide variety of fields and covering topics essential to communities seeking creative strategies to improve family life.

If you believe that individual people helping individual parents is the most cost effective form of community development, please join us June 13, 14, and 15, 1996. Bring home ideas that work.

The National Parenting Community, 2300 Kalmia Avenue, Boulder, Colorado 80304  
(303) 443-8585

Dear Dr. Barker:

I read the materials you sent me with great interest. Much appreciated. And deeply respected. I agree that there appear to be many similarities between your career and mine, albeit that my path has been considerably more checkered. Enclosed is a short-form resumé and a motley collection of articles and "profiles" (with apologies in advance for any journalistic hyperbole you may detect in the latter).

I'm not in "primary prevention" for three basic reasons: (1) it is outside my area of expertise; (2) my (distinctly non-governmental) position disenfranchises me from participation at such a level; and (3) my forte appears to be more combat than conciliation.

That being said, however, there's no question but that primary prevention is the viable way to proceed. I'll continue to chop away at my end in the hope that someday we meet around the middle.

And I do hope we can meet personally well before that occurs.

Keep your strength,  
Andrew Vachss  
New York, NY

[see pages 5-7 for his article]

# Letters

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Dear CSPCC,

I feel very strongly towards the message you represent. I feel your work is truly humanitarian in nature and is very accurate in content. I would like to affiliate myself with your organization as I have been making similar conclusions for the past year now. Please allow me to become a CSPCC member -- it is what I believe in and feel is the only way to help the world, which is my ultimate goal.

Sincerely  
Share Johnson  
Brantford, Ontario

Dear Elliott Barker,

I can't tell you how much I love this issue of Empathic Parenting.

...I have many strong passions including home birth, home schooling, not circumcising babies/children, etc., but by far, my biggest passion is empathic, attachment style parenting. I wanted so much to sign up for the telephone company who gives part of your phone bill to support attachment style parenting,, but when I finally wrote to them, I never heard back from them. Do they still exist? [They sure do. Attachment Parenting International, 1508 Clairmont Place, Nashville, Tennessee 37215. Phone/Fax (615)298-4334. To find out how to support them with your long distance phone bill at no cost to you call 1 (800) 895-9518]

I found it sadly ironic when reading on page 38 (Vol 18, Iss 2,3,4) all the ways a parent/caregiver can display "aloof" or "unapproachable" positions. Ironic because now, almost every single parent I see when out in public carries

their infant in some sort of plastic bucket. There is no better way to be unapproachable than to plop an infant in some bucket, strap it in, and avoid all human contact whatsoever. I have seen parents walk away from these crying, screaming infants, they are so totally disconnected to their offspring. It makes me so sad, feel so helpless, and feel such an ache to run over and cuddle that poor, abandoned baby. I know the parents were just as ignored themselves as babies, more than likely. But this knowledge does little to relieve my rage and horror at living in a society which condones such parenting as "normal"...

...I heard about a woman who adopted a child a few months ago. The little boy is now 9 months old and the mother seemed quite disgruntled that he was not sleeping through the night, and was disturbing their sleep. The baby does not sleep in their bed, or even their room, so of course she has need of human comfort, as well as food, during the night. The adoptive mom made no effort to establish a breastfeeding relationship, nor makes any attempts to offer her breast as comfort, from what I can tell. Instead, she turns her support to the corporations, to consumerism. She buys the crib, decorates the nursery, and now she's determined to pump her baby full of formula and cereal out of a plastic bottle, hoping to keep her asleep. Where is tenderness, concern for this little one who isn't even "supposed" to sleep through the night yet? What about the needs of this darling little baby who would love so much to be cuddled throughout the night and fed whenever she's hungry, or at least given a comforting, if empty, breast to

# Letters

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suck on. But no, she gets her own room in a big expensive house. The parents are upset that she is not eating much yet, still wanting most nourishment from her bottle. And how very quickly will they deny her the bottle and wean her onto some stuffed animal, or recording of human voices? It upsets me so to hear such things. I have to accept their choices and do my best to keep my distance unless I think they have any willingness to hear my story.

On a different note, the only exception I take with what you say is that I don't think it goes far enough. Often I read that children need their parents with them for the first three years. All well and good, but I don't think most 3 or 4 year

olds are able to cope well with being left without their parents for the 8-10 hours most parents are gone while working. Also, all children are so different. My son is almost 8 and although he is comfortable being left with trusted friends for a few hours occasionally, there is no way he would thrive if I worked full time. I am blessed to be able to be at home with him as a homeschooling mother, enjoying each and every day with this wonderful child. What a joy he is. Surely if every mother poured all her love into her child/children, they would repay her many times over. Love multiplies astronomically...

Meri Davis

Maple Valley, WA

[see page 22 for Meri's article]

Many of the best articles from past issues of Empathic Parenting are now available on the World Wide Web at:

[http://cnet.unb.ca/corg/ca/e/pages/prevention\\_cruelty/](http://cnet.unb.ca/corg/ca/e/pages/prevention_cruelty/)

Also available are the CSPCC's two most requested print publications: **Attachment Parenting** and **SPANKING -- a shortcut to nowhere...**

For those who are not familiar with the Internet, you can download articles into your own computer and then read them on your screen or print them out at your leisure.

If you don't have a computer, it's not much of an imposition to ask a friend who has access to the Web to show you what's available there. To find our site use the address above or enter "**Empathic Parenting**" in any of the Web search tools.

All back issues of our journal, which began publication in 1978, are available on microform from Micromedia Ltd. Phone 1 (800) 387-2689

## Another chance to get it right

*Children of the World.* Future flowers, now seeds.  
Some hand-raised, nourished in love-richened  
ground. Others tossed carelessly on the coldest  
concrete, struggling beneath Darwin's  
dispassionate sunlight.

Each unique, snowflake -- individualized. And  
all the same.

Our race. The human race.

One colour -- many shades.

Treasures to some, toys to others.

They will reach the stars and stalk the shadows.

What children are, more than anything else, is  
this: another chance for our flawed species.  
Another chance to get it right.

The article on the following two pages is from the book **Another Chance to Get it Right** by Andrew Vachss © 1992 Andrew Vachss, published by Dark Horse Comics, Inc. Reprinted with kind permission of the author. **Another Chance to Get It Right** is "a children's book for adults" presenting the possibilities and perils of childhood. Vachss seeks to educate people about child abuse, to teach the world that **child molesters** or "monsters" are **made by our society**; therefore, we have the power to stop their production and, ultimately, their crimes.

# Child Molesters are Made by our Society

*Andrew Vachss*

*What's going to happen?"* she asked, holding my hand, looking up. We were in an empty courtroom, escorted inside by a burly court officer who knew what I was up to.

The little girl was a beauty: dark, luminous eyes dominating her delicate face. She had been her mother's pride and joy. A brilliant student, joyous and happy, a prodigy at the piano.

Then the nightmares started. And the music stopped.

A wonderful therapist worked with the child. Carefully, gently. And uncovered the truth. The little girl had been sexually abused.

The perpetrator was held to answer for his crimes. And denied them all.

There was no medical evidence of his evil. Only the child's testimony could bring justice.

I took her into the courtroom to prepare her for the ordeal. To familiarize her with the trappings of The Law: the high bench where the judge would sit in his black robes, the counsel tables where the warring attorneys would lie in wait. And the witness chair from which she would testify.

Her therapist told me what was inside the child: Fear. Guilt. Shame. Horror.

"What does she want?" I asked.

"She wants it to stop. She wants to be safe."

The little girl's knuckles were white from her death-grip on my hand.

I had her sit in the witness chair. Explained how everyone would be listening to her, how important she was.

"Will he be here?"

I knew who "he" was. A predatory paedophile, hiding his foulness behind a bland sociopath's mask. He was entitled to be there. Our laws give terrorists the right to "confront" their victims in courtrooms.

"Yes, he'll be there. But he'll never hurt you again."

"What if he does?" A child's voice, the trust raped from her psyche.

"He won't come near you," I promised. "He won't even get out of his chair."

"Really?"

"Yes. And this man, it's his job to make sure."

The child's eyes turned to my friend, the court officer. He nodded reassuringly, his face stern. "He won't do anything," the officer told her, his voice hard and cold, one hand absently patting the butt of his pistol.

I went through the process for her. Slowly. Explaining what everyone would do, how they would do it. But something was missing. I talked with her, patient, reaching for that key that would set her free.

I felt her terror. I told her that when the perpetrator's attorney raised his voice or pounded on the counsel table (all of which I knew he would do at some point), it meant he was scared.

"Scared?" she asked, skeptical.

"Sure," I told her. "Bad people are always afraid of the truth. It's hard work to make up lies and try to stick to them. But the truth, that's easy. All you have to do is tell the truth."

"I told you the truth."

"I know you did. I believe you. And soon, everyone will believe you. Then it



will all stop. Forever.”

“You swear?”

“Yes.”

“You swear you’ll make me safe?”

Wanting a display of that mystical, cosmic control of reality children believe adults possess.

I knelt next to her, her little face inches from mine. Knowing how the beast had abused her trust. Broken his promises as he tried to steal her soul. “Listen to me, now,” I whispered. “You’ll make yourself safe, child. The truth will shine out of you. It will shine on that man like a bright light. And he’ll be afraid, then. Not you, him. That’s what the truth does.”

The trial started. I called the child as the first witness, knowing the anxiety in her, the pain of waiting. She took her seat, dressed like an angel. The court officer winked at her. A brother officer stood directly behind the accused. His attorney objected strenuously. The officer stepped back about six inches, reluctantly, snarling under his breath, continuing to hover. I touched the child’s hand, whispered “He’s scared already.”

She told the truth. Sometimes she cried, sometimes she held her little face in her hands. But it all came out. The man’s attorney questioned her vigorously. She saw his fear, felt her own flee.

I was inside her mind as she responded, trying to will strength into her answers. As close to praying as I get.

She left the witness stand. And the gloves came off. Courtroom combat over the body of a child. Nobody gambles for higher stakes. It should not be the gamble that it is.

More witnesses followed. Evidence. Arguments.

She wasn’t there when the verdict came down.

Guilty.

His guilt. Her innocence.

I walked down the courthouse corridors to where she waited, secure in a guarded room. One of the defence attorneys passed me in the hall. Said “Nice job,” and walked on. A professional, shrugging off this result, ready for the next one.

I was there when they told her. Social workers explaining, her mother trembling.

She came over to me. “No more?” she asked.

“No more,” I told her.

She hugged me so tightly it must have hurt.

No other way to account for the tears in my eyes. ☹

*Andrew Vachss has been a field investigator for the United States Public Health Service in Ohio, a social case-work supervisor in New York City, and has directed programs for urban migrants in Chicago, a re-entry centre for ex-convicts in Boston, and a maximum security prison for youth in Massachusetts. He has also worked as a community organizer, a criminal justice planner, a designer of institutions and programs, and for the relief effort in Biafra. Now an attorney, his private practice is exclusively devoted to representation of children and youth. Mr. Vachss is the author of *The Life-Style Violent Juvenile* and numerous articles and essays on the inextricably intertwined subjects of child abuse and juvenile violence as well as the Burke series of novels, including *Flood, Strega, Blue Belle, Hard Candy, Blossom, and Sacrifice*, which have been translated into more than a dozen languages. His work also includes short stories, theatrical productions, and screenplays ... all on the same themes. The graphic novel series, *Hard Looks*, is published bimonthly by Dark Horse Comics. In addition to courtroom work, Mr. Vachss maintains a full schedule of consulting, lecturing, and training in his areas of expertise.*

# Consequences of Insensitive Parenting

*Judge Gail Roy Fraites*

**The assaults against women, the child molestation, the violence everywhere is unbelievable.**

Being a criminal lawyer, with the sort of life I've led and the sort of things I've seen, has impelled me to consider the significance of NAPSAC\* goals and principles in the light of the events of my own life...

...This is from the point of view of a man (me) who has spent his professional life isolating dangerous people from society. I have sent over 200 men and women to lengthy prison terms, and that is a fact that I have to live with. I want you to understand from the vantage point of the dark streets that I walk in my professional life, the importance of what you are doing in learning to be appropriate parents, and in learning to have your babies in safety and in comfort. It is terribly apparent to anybody who makes his living the way I do that the dissolution of family, and the breakdown of morality and personal integrity in this country are extremely dangerous phenomena. The assaults against women, the child molestation, the violence everywhere is unbelievable. I live in a city that has less than 300,000 people in it, and we have a murder a week. Now, that's the latest statistic from our homicide bureau. Alaska has the highest incidence of rape per capita in the United States. And

child molestation is endemic. We have over a hundred cases in our sensitive crime unit, right at the moment, that are still under investigation and are still in the process of being prosecuted.

The sociopathic personality is something that I deal with constantly in my work. Those of you with training in psychiatry know a sociopath is a person with no conscience as we know it; no empathy for other human beings. They hurt people that are close to them. They have no remorse whatsoever.

There are different sorts of sociopaths, and they occur at all stages of human development and in all areas of human effort. Unfortunately, the ones from deprived backgrounds, the ignorant ones, the poor ones, turn to crime for their satisfactions. And I'm not knocking those professions when I say that an accomplished sociopath in the military can become a general; an accomplished sociopath in industry can get on a board of directors, because the lack of conscience, the absolute drive to manipulate and utilize other human being for their own ends can have a definite advantage in such endeavours. I'm not pretending for a moment, having been a businessman myself,

**\*NAPSAC: the National Association of Parents and Professionals for Safe Alternatives in Childbirth**

*This article was excerpted from a talk given by Judge Fraites at the 1986 NAPSAC Conference and is reprinted with kind permission from the napsac news vol. 14, no 2, summer 1989. The video of Judge Fraites' talk is available from NAPSAC for \$40.95(US) ppd. NAPSAC, Inc. is non-profit and tax exempt organization. Mailing Address: Rt. 1, Box 646 Marble Hill, MO 63764 USA Phone (314) 238-4273*

An accomplished sociopath in industry can get on a board of directors, because the lack of conscience, the absolute drive to manipulate and utilize other human being for their own ends can have a definite advantage in such endeavors.

that such is the case with everyone. I'm just saying that the sociopaths that I meet have turned to the dark side. And I meet a lot of them.

Consider three or four of the cases that I've tried just in the last year. Two 19-year-old boys were invited to dinner by an older man, a gentle older person who had homosexual overtones, although he had not made any advances toward these two. He just liked to invite homeless people to his own place, and cook them a dinner and give them some money, give them some food. I suppose sometimes he would make an advance, but not in this case. These boys were cruising gay bars to find such a victim. He made a chicken dinner for them, with rice and all the fixings. And as he sat at his dinner table one of them walked up behind him with a burl from a diamond willow tree (the victim collected wood because he was a carpenter) and smashed him over the skull with all his force. And these two children (we got a confidential informant who was wired for sound to talk to them) were talking about all the fun they'd had and how funny it was. And both of them went to prison for 99 years.

I don't take any pleasure in sending

19-year-old children to prison for 99 years. These people will not see a parole board for 33 years. I suggest to you that what you are doing in childbirth and parenting to produce people who are not sociopaths is very important to me, because I'd just as soon not have to do that kind of work.

Consider the case of an 18-year-old girl who conspired with a new boyfriend to murder her 19-year-old husband, a soldier at Ft. Rich. She had married this youngster at the age of 17, and they had come to Alaska. She had become enamoured with this other kid and left her husband. They were only children. All of them were only children. But the crime was suggested to her in the midst of her new life, because she quickly became involved in the drug scene and she was on cocaine, and she was drinking a lot, and the rest of it, and she got a job as a go-go dancer in a local strip joint. And pretty soon she had a stage name, Star.

She was with this young man, who convinced her that if they were to kill her husband that she would be able to collect the \$30,000 of G.I. insurance, and they could live happily ever after on this pittance. So it was arranged with a third party who was 20 years old and fancied

Does this suggest to you that it makes a lot of sense for people to be learning how to develop normal children to enter our society?

**The abusive behaviour toward the children, of those children toward their children, of men toward women, and the violence, and the violence, and the violence.**

himself some sort of a Ninja knight fighting type, that the young husband, who was estranged from his wife, would be invited over to see her dance in some new costume that she had designed, and that there was perhaps a chance of a reconciliation. On his way there he was strangled. These are human beings that we're dealing with here. This girl wanted to hear all the details of how he died. And again there was the laughter and the amusement of the true sociopath in the presence of the death of someone who had loved her and cherished her.

13- and 14-year-olds, two of them shooting a Quick-Stop owner who was a friend of theirs, begging for his life. They shot him to death. They didn't want to be identified. They bought a pizza with the proceeds.

A 15-year-old girl went to a house where three older people were, with her 19-year-old boyfriend. She shot two old ladies to death upstairs, and came down and shot the husband of the third one. Again. Didn't want to be identified. Been watching the movies. Does this suggest to you that it makes a lot of sense for people to be learning how to develop normal children to enter our society?

Or a father that I tried who had been invited to marry a lady who already had three little girls of her own, plus two daughters of his. And he turned this family of five trusting little girls into a private harem and had incestuous relationships with all five daughters and literally de-

stroyed everybody in the family. The last girl reported him just in time for us to indict him under the statute of limitations. The other four came in and testified against him, as did the last daughter.

Now that's what happens, you see, when we develop sociopaths instead of normal children. The abusive behaviour toward the children, of those children toward their children, of men toward women, and the violence, and the violence, and the violence. And the sociopaths everywhere, from such families...

...What about when you're dealing with future citizens of this country? What about the people that are going to hunt you down like an animal and kill you if they can because they have been raised differently than you raised the human beings that your children will become?...

...Now I'm in a profession where I'm exposed to death and disfigurement and betrayal constantly, and the only thing that I have to comfort me on the lonely nights when I see the faces before me of the hundreds of people that I've sent to prison, including the children that are sent to prison, is the thought that I never meet the people that I save. All the people out there that haven't been raped and mutilated and killed because of the people that I've sent where they can't hurt anybody any more...

...But I suggest to you that everywhere in the United States and across the face of the world today, there are babies and people that are being normal, that are being safe, that are being healthy, that are

# Listen to the Babies

*Karen Fletcher*

Like all newborn mammals, human babies have no way to protect themselves. They must rely on adults to protect them.

We tell ourselves that we protect the babies of our country, and our public policies do strive to shield them from hunger and cold. But our public policies are designed to protect businesses, not to protect babies. They don't protect babies' physical health by promoting breast-feeding, or their mental health by encouraging a close attachment to a loving caregiver.

We have not designed our public policies to protect baby humans. It hasn't occurred to us to do so.

Our society is at best unfriendly to babies - and often downright cruel to them. Our public policies reflect our general attitude, which is a pretty amazing disregard for the needs of our littlest and most helpless citizens.

Instead of doing everything we can to protect babies, we have pretended that babies don't really need much protection, that there is no urgency to babies, that it doesn't much matter if no one loves a baby with all his or her heart.

Instead of protecting babies by encouraging breast-feeding and attachment, we have belittled the needs that babies have for the perfect infant food and for sustained human contact. We have belittled mothers and fathers who meet these needs. We have actually come to believe that it's weirder to nurse an 18-month than it is to place her in day care all day long.

Even our language encourages us to be indifferent to the needs of babies. We call ecological breast-feeding "demand feeding". This allows us to pretend that babies don't really need to be fed (they're just "demanding" it), and that mothers who meet their babies' needs are weak women who "give in" to their little ones' "demands".

People who wanted to help babies and

their mothers would not discourage breast-feeding nor encourage mothers to leave their little ones. But that is what we do in America.

It's not that we believe babies aren't important. Americans aren't hard-headed so much as we're uncomfortable with the intimacy of a healthy breast-feeding relationship. We don't want to be reminded that we're mammals, so our social and economic policies overlook this basic part of human nature.

Motherhood is compatible with most jobs, so long as a woman doesn't get too caught up in it. And yet, babies need someone to be caught up in them! It's not necessary for lower life forms, but it is for young mammals.

Our public policies correctly recognize that one doesn't have to be a mother to give babies the unconditional love they need. But they have not protected babies from being separated from both parents eight to 12 hours a day, or from the serious harm that occurs when no reliable caregiver can be found or afforded.

Instead of working with nature to keep mothers and babies together, our public policies have sought more efficient ways of separating them. It is surely more economical to work with nature than it is to try to pretend we're not part of the natural world.

Meeting the needs of babies has been done by many societies in many ways. In places where the needs of babies are met, adults listen to the babies around them.

Surely we can all listen to babies. We haven't been encouraged to, but we could be. Babies are universally loved. We may be callous in our social policies, but nearly everyone warms to a baby's smile.

Perhaps we could agree to protect babies. We might find that when our world is safer for babies, it will be a better place for all of us. ☺

*Reprinted from The TENNESSEAN. Karen Fletcher is on the local Board of Attachment Parenting International. Phone/Fax (615) 298-4334.*

# The Importance of Secure Bonding Between Children and Parents: Personal and Social Implications

*Mark L. Genuis, Ph.D., C.Psych.*

The suicide rate for children between the ages of 10 and 14 years of age has risen 1101% (2-34) since 1955. This is after factoring in population increase.

The federal government is pursuing an arrangement with the provincial governments in order to implement a national childcare policy that would subsidize regular separation of children from both of their parents. Furthermore, this effort will be funded at a cost to taxpayers of \$2.55 billion per year. The federal government is currently spending approximately \$1.1 billion per year and is planning to increase that amount by \$1.44 billion. In this climate of political and financial incentives aimed at encouraging the use of regular nonparental care, we must examine what children actually do require in order to grow into happy, healthy and productive adults. Mr. Axworthy has noted that his plans for increasing alternatives to parental care are an effort to supply for and help children. His concern for children is commendable, but will his plans prove fruitful? Will separating, on a regular basis, children who have not yet reached their fifth birthday from their parents, and providing them with some form of nonparental care supply for and aid their development? Is there any difference in the security of attachment (bonds) in the children of families who utilize regular nonparental care and those who do not? And if there is, does it have significant personal and social ramifications?

Much has been written and discussed about the importance of our early years, and many decisions have been made affirming one view or another. Not enough attention, however, has been given to the findings of research, that is, an examination of the subject in a clear and systematic way. Good research provides us with objective and reliable information about what has and what has not worked. When we apply research to the rearing of children, we are then able to discuss what has transpired in fact, rather than what we hold in opinion, even if that opinion is truly heartfelt. Research enables us to learn and thereby elevates mere opinion to the level of knowledge.

In the social sciences we have been fortunate in the past twenty years to have made considerable progress in our research methods. We can now combine and review studies from an objective standpoint rather than conducting narrative reviews and reading our biases into them. This technique is called meta-analysis. This is a particularly important development as we are all familiar with the arguments made by people on either side of an issue, each armed with supporting studies. A meta-analysis moves us beyond this point in that it combines all of the research in a particular area of study and examines it

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The suicide rate for children between the ages of 10-14 years of age has risen 1101% (2-34) since 1955. This is after factoring in population increase.

objectively. The results are therefore more conclusive and powerful than any individual or group of studies, and provides a clear understanding of the current state of our knowledge in a particular area of study. Some groundbreaking work using this technique has been conducted in the area of nonparental care and the development of attachment as well as the social and behavioural development of children.

Before presenting the findings from the research, it is appropriate to place the importance of this area of investigation into context. We have a number of trends in our society that we must become aware of and must attend to. Following are some recently released trends in Canada.

- The suicide rate for children between the ages of 10 and 14 years of age has risen 1101% (2-34) since 1955. This is after factoring in population increase.<sup>1</sup>

- The suicide rate for youth between the ages of 15 and 19 years of age has risen 600% (21-249) since 1955. This is after factoring in population increase.<sup>2</sup>

- The number of youths charged with violent crimes rose by 116% between 1986-87 and 1993-94. That is twice the rate of increase for adult violent crime.<sup>3</sup>

- Drug related crime in Canada rose 34% in the period between 1992-93 and 1993-94.<sup>4</sup>

- The rate of clinical levels of emotional illness in our adolescent and young adult populations is approximately 20%. That is, one in five of adolescents today have at least one identifiable clinical level of emotional difficulty.<sup>5</sup>

- Canadian business now spends approximately \$12 billion per year on personal and stress leave.<sup>6</sup>

To cap this off, I recently met with a chief Psychologist at one of Canada's federal penitentiaries and he informed me that "We (Corrections Canada) are the only growth industry within the Government."

We have consistent trends in many areas and are now trying to find out what causes these types of situations (problems). Furthermore, we must use this information to prevent as much of these problems as possible, for our track record for rehabilitation, regardless of whether it is for criminal or emotional difficulties, leaves much to be desired. What have we learned? I will first present the findings on nonparental care and then information on attachment.

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**Nonparental care for more than 20 hours per week has an unmistakably negative effect in three of the four areas outlined.**

A meta-analysis on nonparental care was conducted and presented at the 55th annual convention of the Canadian Psychological Association in 1994. This work combined all of the studies published in the English language on nonparental care since 1957. The researchers examined nonparental care for any influence it might have on childhood bonding with parents, social-emotional development, behavioural adjustment, and cognitive development. Numerous variables indicating quality of day care, age of entry into nonparental care, family structure, and socioeconomic status were analyzed for their influence on the factors outlined. The results from this work demonstrated that nonparental care for more than 20 hours per week has an unmistakably negative effect in three of the four areas outlined (social-emotional development, behavioural adjustment, and bonding). A minor negative influence was found in the cognitive area. None of the mediating indicators of day care quality, family structure, age of entry into nonparental care, and socioeconomic status had a noticeable effect on the outcomes of social-emotional development, behavioural adjustment, bonding, and cognitive development. The findings implicated the regular separation from parents prior to

five years of age as the main concern.

The findings are clear and we would make a serious mistake to ignore them. The experiences of tens of thousands of people worldwide tell us very clearly that there is an important difference between parental and nonparental care and the results point to the separation from parents as the main factor. Even so-called high quality nonparental care cannot adequately make up for the lack of availability of a full-time parent.

This all makes very good sense of course, when we consider the way in which emotional bonds develop. As children, we retreat to our primary caregiver in times of distress and are consoled and reassured when that caregiver is present and attentive. It is through our experiences with our parents that we develop internal working models of them and ourselves in relation to them. If caregiving is consistent and available, these models develop securely. If caregiving is inconsistent or unavailable, these models develop less securely. Furthermore, prior to the age of five years, children are incapable of holding these models for long periods of time. This explains why parents often note that their two and three year old children will be off playing, return to mother for a hug,

**None of the mediating indicators of day care quality, family structure, age of entry into nonparental care, and socioeconomic status had a noticeable effect on the outcomes of social-emotional development, behavioural adjustment, bonding, and cognitive development.**



## The findings implicated the regular separation from parents prior to five years of age as the main concern.

for no apparent reason, and then be off playing again. These children are returning to their base of support to make contact and reassure themselves that their world is organized and reliable. With this assurance they are free to explore the world. The bottom line of this information is that children need their parents when children need their parents, not when it is convenient for the parent.

The element of bonding (attachment) was one of the four main areas examined within the meta-analysis. Further research by the National Foundation for Family Research and Education (NFFRE) has been conducted examining the long-term consequences of secure and insecure bonding to parents. This work has informed us that secure bonding to parents is a direct cause of emotional and behavioural health, productivity and happiness in adolescence. On the other hand, insecure attachment to parents is a direct cause of clinical levels of emotional and behavioural difficulties in adolescence, including youth crime.<sup>8</sup>

This research builds on a base of study on bonding spanning forty years and encompassing numerous cultures. The results demonstrate that this emotional bond children develop is a central factor that directs and gives shape to their behaviour both in childhood and at least into adolescence. Clearly, as parents, we have a wonderful opportunity to influence our children in positive and healthy directions. It

is also our responsibility, inasmuch as not providing direct care for our children has an important and measurable effect in a negative direction. Each of the difficulties noted in the trends addressed earlier were found directly related to insecure attachment, which teaches us that the secure attachment of children to parents builds in a positive direction and, at the same time, prevents many of the difficulties we are so concerned with today. A variety of childhood experiences influencing the development of secure attachment were examined and for the purposes of this discussion, regular nonparental care prior to the age of 5 years was one substantial predictor of insecure attachment. Thus the results of this work were clearly supportive of the findings from the meta-analysis. The deciding factor influencing the security of bonding to parents was the regular separation from those parents, not the place or type of care once the separation occurred.

It is particularly relevant to discuss the issue of nonparental care and attachment at the present time as the Government of Canada is considering spending \$1.44 billion on a national nonparental care program that would increase the number of government funded spaces by 150 000. Based on the most recent, comprehensive research available, it is clear that a societal trend of increased nonparental care is not in the best interests of either our chil-

Even so-called high quality nonparental care cannot adequately make up for the lack of availability of a full-time parent.

## Children need their parents when children need their parents, not when it is convenient for the parent.

dren or society. While it is true that not all parents provide the best they can for their children, the majority do, and by simply separating children from their inadequate parents for parts of the day is a short sighted solution that may well complicate the issue further and cost the people of Canada an enormous amount of money to deal with when problems do arise. Rather, we should invest our time, talent, and energy in helping people be better parents.

NFFRE is a charitable organization and we present this information for educational purposes. We encourage people to use it in the best interests of their children and their families. One possible solution to the issue of parental or nonparental care is the provision of tax credits to families with children. If all families with children of certain ages received tax credits, they would have more money left over which they could use to cover the reduced finances as a result of one parent staying at home to care for and manage the family. They could also use this money to pay directly for nonparental care if they so chose this direction. Another option is that of income splitting between spouses where one parent is primarily focused on the care and management of the family. This direction would be a clear signal of the government that the position of stay-at-home parents is respected as making an important, and, in fact, central contribution to society. The information is clear and compelling. We now must decide whether we will learn from the experiences of people who have opened their lives to us through research,

or whether we will defer to our own private agendas and personal assumptions. The question is this: will we learn from the information before us, which demonstrates that young children need their parents? Or, will we ignore the factual evidence? The future of our children and indeed, of our society itself, hangs in the balance.

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## Judge Allows Mom to Keep Baby at Work

“It’s child abuse as far as I’m concerned,” said the city’s health director.

SPRINGFIELD, Mass. (AP) - A judge decided Friday to let a working mother reopen her restaurant, which had been closed by health officials who said she created a health hazard by keeping her young son with her on the job.

Hampden Superior Court Judge William H. Welch said Jennifer Crafts’ restaurant in Chicopee may stay open for now, as long as her 19-month-old son is kept in the front of the restaurant where customers eat, not in food-preparation areas.

Crafts said she would accept those terms at least until Chicopee health officials hold a hearing Wednesday, but was uncertain when she would reopen.

Health officials this week declared a health emergency and ordered the restaurant closed. “Crafts sued to demand her 11 month-old restaurant be kept open -- at least until health officials granted her a hearing.

Crafts said of Welch’s ruling: “I’m very pleased that he found there was no emergency in my restaurant.”

ROBERT ZAICHIK health commissioner in the western Massachusetts city of 65,000, called the judge’s conditions ‘workable’ and in keeping with health regulations.

“I wouldn’t have considered it a victory to put a lady out of business, but I will not tolerate her going back to her old habits, her old defiance,” he said.

At Friday’s hearing, Crafts’ lawyer contended Chicopee officials declared a phony health emergency to shut down her restaurant.

“What is the emergency?” asked her attorney William St. James. “There is no difference from 11 months ago when she started it. There are no complaints from customers.”

But William O’Grady, who represented the city, asked Welch to dismiss all socioeconomic arguments and media hype.” He said Chicopee officials were simply meeting their responsibility to enforce state health rules, which bar “unnecessary persons” from food-preparation and dish-washing areas inside restaurants.

CHICOPEE OFFICIALS declared the health emergency Wednesday and closed down the breakfast-lunch spot called A.J.’s Place; named after her son, Andrew John.

Health officials say the toddler’s presence violated the state’s health code, which says a restaurant cannot operate in any room used as someone’s living or sleeping quarters.

“It’s child abuse as far as I’m concerned,” said the city’s health director, Richard Kendra.

Crafts, 29, has refused to seek alternative day care for Andrew, even though health officials say his dirty diapers pose a sanitary problem in a restaurant. They also say he could get hurt at the grill or other kitchen equipment. ☹



**The Infant-Parent Institute, Inc.**  
328 NORTH NEIL STREET  
CHAMPAIGN, IL 61820  
TEL: 217-352-4060

Jennifer Craft  
A.J.'s Place  
Chicopee, MA 01020

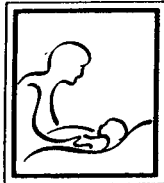
Dear Ms. Craft,

The enclosed article appeared in our local newspaper, here in the Midwest! I thought you would be interested to know that your ridiculous circumstance is, at least, being noticed and discussed--probably all over the country.

I am the director of a training institute in infant psychiatry, and both a researcher and clinician specializing in the psychological needs of infants and their families. I work with abusive parents every day, as well as with older children and adults whose early experience in life left them with serious problems.

While I know nothing whatsoever about you, your motives or your parenting, my inclination is to believe that you are struggling to do the common-sense thing: to love your baby and keep him near you while making a living. Evidently you have organized your life so that you actually can accomplish all of those goals (by having your own restaurant), and you might actually have a shot at it if the government had not decided to get in the way. You have my congratulations--and, on behalf of Andrew John, a big thank-you for being a mom with guts, determination, and enough empathy for your baby to know that he is better off with you than in a daycare center.

Mothers and fathers are increasingly making a different decision than the one you have made, and are putting their babies and toddlers--by the hundreds of thousands--into daycare centers. Sometimes they do so because they feel they have no choice, sometimes they do so because they really don't know what such places can do to babies or because they don't know their babies need and want to be with them, and sometimes they do it because they just



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don't want to go to the trouble (and it's a good deal of trouble, isn't it?!) to integrate their babies fully into their lives. You seem to be standing for something better for Andrew (and for yourself?).

What the government seems to have lost sight of (again) is that regulations are made not just to give them something to do, but to help us all be safe. Above all, they must make sense, both in content and in enforcement. Mr. Zaichik seems not to be encumbered with too much common sense, and appears to be eager mostly to exert his authority and teaching an uppity woman a lesson.

Please know that many, many people are behind you, we find absolutely preposterous (as well as incredibly revealing) Mr. Kendra's suggestion that your behavior constitutes child abuse, and we thank you for being a mother who asks for nothing more than the right to love your baby and make a living-- with neither help from the government, nor interference from them.

Enclosed is a little publication from the Canadian Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children that I thought might be of support to you, as well as a check to help a bit with lost restaurant trade due to the closure. If I ever am near Chicopee, you can count on an order for the biggest meal you make.

Very truly yours,



Michael Trout, Director

cc: William St. James, Attorney at Law  
Elliott T. Barker, M.D., President, Canadian Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children

**“Thou shalt be on the child's side”**

**--Homer Lane**

# It's Not Easy Being Different

by Meri Davis

There are so many days that I want to move to Summerhill\*, or any reasonably sane place. It gets so difficult dealing with all the parenting criticism, even though much of it is unspoken and somewhat subtle.

I am unschooling my 7-1/2 year old son, in every sense of the word. We do nothing that resembles school. Mostly we just have fun going about our day, trying to get together with friends, feeding our many animals, running errands, cooking, cleaning, reading, talking, cuddling, doing crafts and experiments, going on field trips, and enjoying each other.

*I don't know where it comes from but I have always totally trusted my son, and all children, to learn to do everything they're interested in, when they're ready.* Of course they need lots of love, and someone to answer their questions, and places and things to explore, but they certainly don't need to be taught or schooled or coerced in any way. They may well choose to take classes at some point, or apprentice with a fascinating adult, but they will all learn to read or write or add, just as they learned to walk and talk, with no one "teaching" them.

Anyway, along with not ever sitting down for any sort of formal, mom-directed, teaching, I also allow my son as many choices as I possibly can. He decides on his clothing, his hair cut (uncut for seven months), his bathing (rarely except for hot tubbing and obvious dirt), he decides how to spend his time at home (usually Legos or dinosaurs or videos or tetherball or hot tubbing). Whenever he asks a question, I try to answer or help him find the answer. We use our encyclopedias and the library

constantly. He asks the meaning of words and phrases and expressions throughout the day. He asks for help counting and sorting his money. He loves to read, to wrestle, to catch the escaped roosters, to coo over new baby kittens as we watched them enter the world, to champion all wild-life and make sure I don't break any spider webs when picking string beans. He dearly loves his friends and forms very close attachments. He is agile and coordinated and loves to swing and climb and use his body. He expresses all his emotions strongly, getting very angry or sad or excited until the feeling has been fully released. He is strong and healthy, but quite small for his age. We have many, many deep philosophical discussions about how he wishes I had birthed him at home (so do I), how he wishes I hadn't had surgery on his cleft lip and palate (so do I), how he wishes that people could accept differences, how we are all different and that is okay, how important it is to listen to yourself and ignore the comments and criticisms of others, how valuable and interconnected all of nature is and how the earth needs our help in protecting and restoring her. He tells me that people should never kill or eat meat unless it is for survival. Whenever I am stressed or confused or upset, there is no one I know who is as wise or helpful and calming as he is. I looked up the word prophet the other day and it fit him perfectly: interpreter of God's will.

However, all these wonderful qualities don't mean anything in a world where bigger is better, academic learning is crucial, competition is everything, and all of life is a race. I have an incredibly loving,

\*Summerhill School was founded 75 years ago in England by A.S. Neill. Any of the many books by and about Neill and Summerhill convey his remarkable pro-child point of view. Reprinted from *A Voice for Children* Vol. 2, No. 3 Winter 1996. Available from 7 Casa del Oro Court, Santa Fe, NM 87505. Phone (505) 466-1021.

healthy, happy, wise and caring son. But he is not big for his age, not very skilled at math, not able to read, not interested in writing, not adept at most academic skills. I hear spoken and unspoken comments quite often, such as, "My neighbour doesn't teach her kids math; they'll never get by in the real world." "My friend home teaches her children and they're all smart as whips. They'll fit right in-when they go to school." Silence when I tell relatives of my son's interest in taking craft classes (because they're not academic). "Doesn't your mother ever sit down with you and make you write your name?" Talk of setting up a college fund from relatives. I earned a BA and MSW with no college fund, no savings, and no help from my parents. Where there's a will, there's a way. And besides, I put so little value on college. It's fine if you go just for the joy of learning (and can find a college that doesn't use grades and requirements to take all the fun out of it), or if you go to learn a skill or earn a degree that will help you get the job you want. But education is so highly overrated in our society. I would much rather live in an illiterate society where people were concerned about each other and all of nature.

Just recently I read a book about bubbles by Bernie Zubrowski. He made a statement that made me very sad but which I knew to be true. He said, "People often say that play may be fun but it is a waste of time." How sad but true. In fact, our Puritanical society often believes that if it feels/tastes/seems good, it must be bad for you. I have been reading so many comic strips lately about how much children hate going back to school. But no one is concerned with their dislike or abhorrence. If anything, it is considered comical and normal. Only if children enjoyed each and every day, would adults become concerned that they "weren't learning enough or working hard enough."

My son and I have fun together. He spends most of his time "playing". So, many see me as a failure as a mother, as a

home-schooling mother, and as a teacher. They do not value the love, respect, acceptance, and freedom I give my son. They do not value his many abilities and great wisdom. They see only that he does not live up to their standards. They see a long haired boy full of affection, joy and playfulness, who has no interest in reading or writing or going to school. *They see a mother who doesn't make her son cut his hair, or have more surgery, or "do his lessons" She doesn't even make him say "thank you" or "I'm sorry" knowing that he will grow up polite and respectful because that is the way he has always been treated.* They see a mother who lets her son play all day and never makes him "tow the line, buckle down, crack the books, learn what's important, compete in sports, be first, get ahead, win the race." They see a mother who treats her son the way they (and she) wanted to be treated as children. They wanted to run and jump and play for as long as they wanted, to learn when they were ready and interested, to eat when hungry and sleep when tired. They wanted a mother who was available almost 24 hours a day for questions, comfort, affection, hugs, love, acceptance and respect. They most likely want to give their children that which they wanted, but they don't dare. What an outcast? What if their children never learn? What if they don't get into college? What about the criticism they would face as parents, from friends, relatives, neighbours and strangers.

I don't have any answers for them. It is HARD. I do cringe. I do cry. I do feel criticized and ostracized and outcast at times. I do long for others like me. I know a few, not enough, but a few. Maybe we few need to stick together more. Maybe we need to move to Summerhill for comfort and sanity. Maybe we can be strong enough to do it for the sake of ourselves, our children and the world. ☹



# Not Orphanages or Prisons, but Responsible Fathers

*David Blankenhorn*

The proposal to build more orphanages is similar to our current strategy of building more prisons. Both ideas assume that more brick-and-mortar structures, staffed by public or quasi-public employees, can fill the vacuum in our society created by the growing collapse of parental capacity and the disintegration of the married-couple child-raising unit. Both, in short, are strategies for rescue and quarantine. Both are aimed largely at the growing ranks of fatherless children in our society.

Liberals, in my view, have no right to profess outrage at the idea of orphanages, as if current living conditions for millions of our children constituted anything other than unconscionable cruelty. Nor do conservatives have any business discussing this proposal as part of a triumphant, in-your-face political rhetoric, as if reopening orphanages in the United States at the close of this century constituted anything other than an admission of failure.

Moreover, before we decide simply to accept the trend of family fragmentation, while concerning ourselves only with warehousing some of its consequences, we would do well to consider the recent experience of the Hennepin County, Minn., Board of Commissioners. Earlier this year, the board drafted a "vision statement" to identify priorities for the future. The document called for a community "where healthy family structure is nurtured and fewer children are born out of wedlock." This goal produced what the Minneapolis Star Tribune termed "a big ruckus." A reporter from the newspaper summed up what many local leaders were saying about the commissioners and their idea: "Exclusionary. Judgmental. Intolerant. Offensive. Stigmatizing. Degrading. Archaic." An assistant parks commissioner was outraged: "Why is this statement here? Why are you pointing fingers?" The county's community health director argued that "we

have a lot of single parents who work here. A lot of them feel it was shaming to them as single parents."

A lesbian leader chastised the commissioners for "discounting" gay and lesbian parents. A pastor said that the real issue was jobs, not marriage. A United Way leader said that the real issue was how to "nurture" children, not "how people choose to configure themselves." A state fiscal analyst told the commissioners that "there are a lot of good single-parent families and there are a lot of bad two-parent families, and you're not going to change that."

In the midst of this firestorm, the commissioners, or at least some of them, insisted that the county's escalating rate of unwed child-bearing -- about 27% in 1992 was causing or aggravating problems from child poverty to infant mortality, thus lowering the quality of life for everyone in the county. Their message was simple: We need to change our minds on this issue. Moreover, the commissioners hoped that the new goal would help them refocus policy priorities. The traditional goal had been to ameliorate consequences of trend. Now there was an additional goal: to reverse the trend.

Two points: First, if you want to say something controversial, say that every child deserves a father and that unwed child-bearing is wrong. Second, the Hennepin County vision statement ignited and gave shape to a serious local debate about the possibility of recovering the fatherhood idea. That possibility concerns not just the politics of Hennepin County, but the future of the nation. It is time for all of us to consider this. Perhaps we can even agree that, as a national strategy for reversing the decline of child wellbeing, the fatherhood idea is far more consistent with the better angels of our nature than either the prison idea or the orphanage idea.

*Reprinted from the Los Angeles Times. David Blankenhorn is the author of "Fatherless America" published by Basic Books.*

# The Canadian Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children

The basic premise of CSPCC is that the worst of all possible cruelties is to inflict permanent emotional damage on another human being.

Given the evidence that such permanent emotional damage can be inflicted relatively easily during the very early years of life, our concern is with ignorance of, or indifference to, the emotional needs of very young children.

By permanent emotional damage we do not mean only the psychological illnesses of adults which are recognized as having their roots in early childhood. More importantly we mean the less recognizable and measurable deficient capacities for trust, empathy, and affection.

To prevent such permanent emotional damage, the CSPCC is working toward higher status for parenting, greater support for parents with young children, increased emphasis on trust, empathy and affection in the adult world, and vastly improved preparation for parenthood.

By preparation for parenthood we mean that, prior to the age when conception is a possibility, both girls and boys should understand and appreciate:

- The permanent emotional damage that can result if the emotional needs of a young child are not met,
- The ways in which our appetite for consumer goods and services can become so insatiable by the time children are conceived, that satisfaction of consumer cravings and status and careerism based on these are easily rationalized as having a higher priority than nurturing one's children,
- That remaining childless may be the most sensible option, given one's interests and priorities,
- That any parent who feels inadequate or inferior is handicapped in providing optimal child nurture; thus, prevailing patterns of arbitrary male dominance threaten the well-being of children, while mutual support and respect between parents enhance their child-rearing abilities,
- The meaning and significance of empathic parenting, namely: being willing and able to "put oneself into one's child's shoes" in order to correctly identify the child's feelings, and being willing and able to behave toward the child in ways which take those feelings into account,
- That empathic parenting takes an enormous amount of time and energy and fully involves both parents in a co-operative, sharing way,
- The importance of a father who is able to relate to his wife and child in a non-arbitrary, co-operative, empathic way,
- The wrong reasons for having children: proving one's masculinity or femininity, making or patching up a marriage or relationship, having a son and heir, having a weapon to use against the other parent, obtaining the love and affection one has been unable to get from the adult world, fulfilling a need to dominate and control,
- The permanent damage to the child that can result from poor nutrition, poor health, inadequate medical care, and substance abuse during pregnancy,
- The birthing practices which facilitate attachment, bonding and engrossment of babies, mothers and fathers,
- Up to date knowledge of early human development to the greatest extent possible for their age,
- The importance of breast-feeding and child-led weaning,
- The potential dangers inherent in the care of infants and toddlers by changing, shared, hired substitutes,
- The greatly increased difficulty in meeting the emotional needs of infants and toddlers that are closely spaced,
- The need for a network of relatives, friends and organizations such as playgroups, which enable parents to share with other mothers and fathers the stresses, the hard work and the joys that are an inevitable part of the empathic care of infants and toddlers.

## If Our Credo Makes Sense to You...

**Join the CSPCC to:** Strengthen an organization that is dedicated to a renewed emphasis on the values of Trust, Empathy and Affection.

**Join the CSPCC to:** Learn more about the prevention of emotional damage: better preparation for parenthood, greater concern for proper care during pregnancy, birthing practices which facilitate bonding, attachment and engrossment, a higher priority for the empathic care of infants and toddlers, higher status for mothering and breast-feeding, greater awareness of the potential difficulties of closely spaced children and stronger community support for parents with young children.

**Join the CSPCC to:** Keep in touch with others who share these concerns by receiving the Society's quarterly journal **EMPATHIC PARENTING.**

### Snug Like Alcoholics in a Brewery

Physical violence against little children is easy. A small skull crushes like a cardboard box.

Psychological violence, the perversion of small minds, is easier still and much safer for the criminal. The damage is not seen until years later, when the victim cannot remember what hit him, even if he knew in the first place.

A perverted mind, either in a child or an adult, does not mean a peculiar mind. Perverted means what most of us become. Perverted means lacking in trust, empathy and affection.

We daily suffer and inflict commonplace inhumanities, most importantly upon our children.

For the first time in history, we have certain knowledge of the means whereby the capacity for trust, empathy and affection can be shattered in the first three years of life.

This knowledge is timely because the means to destroy each other is at hand as never before. Quite apart from the question of whether or not trust, empathy and affection are better than mistrust, indifference and hate, the world will not survive many more generations of suspicious, hardened, affectionless individuals. If we are not to die, we are to change. Our survival depends upon the care of our children. They will drop the bombs, release the germs, use the poisons or not.

Nothing can be more urgent. It cannot be postponed.

Even if this means abandoning most of the institutions, habits and beliefs we now cherish, snug like alcoholics in a brewery.

Michael Mason  
Founding Member of the CSPCC  
April 1975

# **The Canadian Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children**

The CSPCC is working to change those things in Canadian society that are making it difficult for parents to give their children the care they need to grow into healthy, confident, non-violent, loving adults.

## **In general we are working for:**

- ◆ a shift from arbitrary male dominance to no-one's arbitrary dominance
- ◆ a shift from the essential beliefs of our society's consumer religion -- envy, selfishness and greed -- to trust, empathy and affection in a community-centred, sustainable society
- ◆ a shift from violence and sexism as the warp and woof of entertainment
- ◆ a shift from treating children as sinful or stupid to empathizing with them and fulfilling their expanding and particular needs

## **In particular we are working to:**

- ◆ raise the status of parenting
- ◆ implement universal parenting education from kindergarten to grade eight
- ◆ encourage parents to make their children's emotional needs their highest priority during the critical first three years
- ◆ facilitate a positive birthing experience for every father, mother and baby
- ◆ promote extended breastfeeding with child-led weaning
- ◆ make it easier for parents to meet the emotional needs of each child by encouraging a minimum three year spacing between siblings
- ◆ increase awareness of the potential long term hazards of separations between children under three and their principal caregivers



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**



- 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:

- e 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.