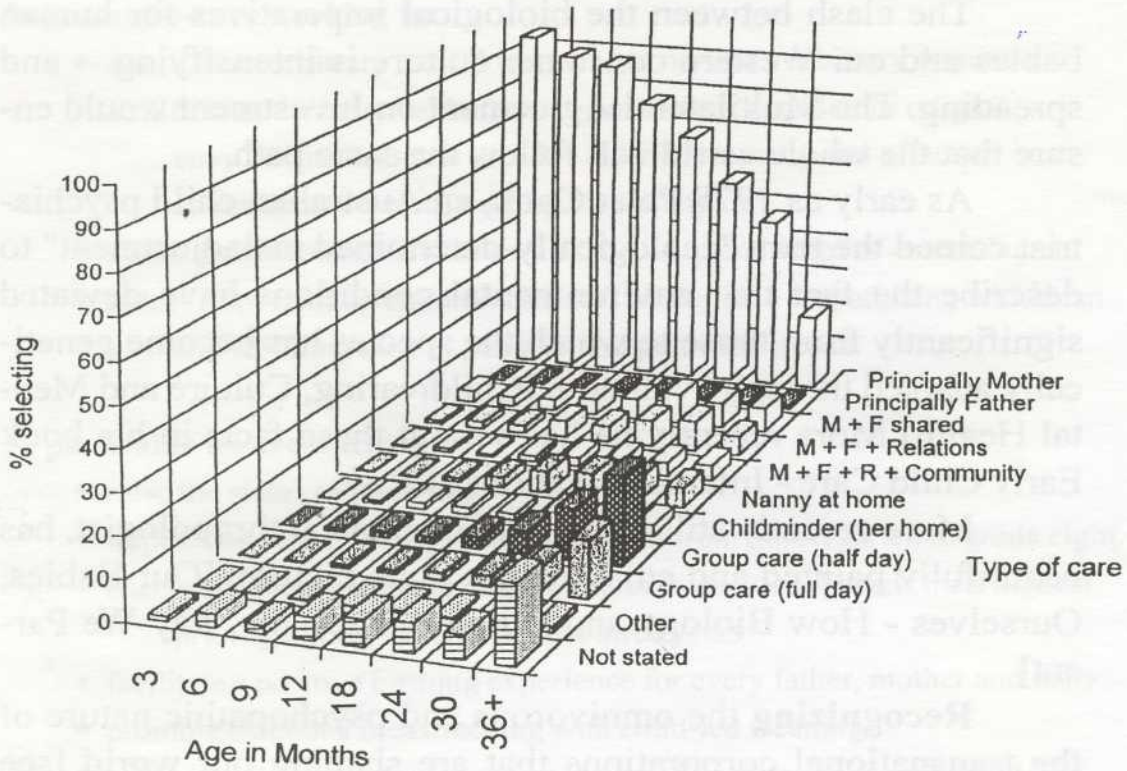




# EMPATHIC PARENTING

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

Volume 21 Issue 3 Summer 1998 \$3.00



## Look Carefully!

What Many Infant Mental Health Professionals  
**PRIVATELY** think is the Best Care for Children Up to  
 Age Three

see page 16 for details

# EMPATHIC PARENTING

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

Volume 21

Issue 3

Summer 1998

## A FATAL CLASH?

The clash between the biological imperatives for human babies and our Western consumer culture is intensifying -- and spreading. The Multilateral Agreement on Investment would ensure that the whole world will follow the same path.

As early as 1978 Peter Cook, an Australian child psychiatrist coined the term "ecologically-determined maladjustment" to describe the fact that environmental conditions have deviated significantly from those to which the species has become genetically adapted through evolution. [Childrearing, Culture and Mental Health] More recently he has set out these facts in his book *Early Child Care - Infants & Nations at Risk*.

More recently still Meredith Small, an anthropologist, has beautifully painted and enlarged the same picture. [Our Babies, Ourselves - How Biology and Culture Shape the Way We Parent]

**Recognizing** the omnivorous and psychopathic nature of the transnational corporations that are shaping our world [see *One Fundamental Problem* - page 2] gives the possibility of altering the collision course we are now on.

ETB

### 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.

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**EMPATHIC PARENTING**

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Many articles from past issues of Empathic Parenting are now available on the Internet and may be freely downloaded by anyone. There are four sites:

**Empathic Parenting:** [http://cnet.unb.ca/orgs/prevention\\_cruelty/](http://cnet.unb.ca/orgs/prevention_cruelty/)

**Crime Prevention:** [http://www.bconnex.net/~cspcc/crime\\_prevention/](http://www.bconnex.net/~cspcc/crime_prevention/)

**Daycare is for Parents Not Infants and Toddlers:** <http://www.bconnex.net/~cspcc/daycare/>

**Psychopathy and Consumerism: Two Illnesses that Need and Feed Each Other:** <http://www.bconnex.net/~cspcc/psychopathy/>

# One Fundamental Problem

*Peter Montague*

**The transnational corporation is the principle institution of our era... This institution is as important today as the Christian church was in Europe during the 15th century, determining and shaping most of reality for most people.**

## *The nature of the large publicly-traded corporation*

In the U.S., corporations were initially created as artificial, subordinate entities, chartered by state legislatures, with no rights of their own. Up until 1886 corporations could only serve the public purposes that they were specifically established to serve: build a canal, manage a toll road, finance and construct a bridge, and so forth. Their capitalization was fixed by law; they could not own other corporations; often their board of directors were required to live in the state where they were incorporated, to make them locally accountable. In these early years, a corporation's lifetime was finite, often 20 years.

For example, the Pennsylvania legislature declared in 1834: "A corporation in law is just what the incorporation act makes it. It is the creature of the law and may be moulded to any shape or for any purpose that the Legislature may deem most conducive for the common good." [1]

The constitution of the state of California in 1879 contained this clause (Arti-

cle XII, section 8): "The exercise of the right of eminent domain shall never be so abridged or construed as to prevent the Legislature from taking the property and franchises of incorporated companies and subjecting them to public use the same as the property of individuals, and the exercise of the police power of the State shall never be so abridged or construed as to permit corporations to conduct their business in such manner as to infringe the rights of individuals or the general well-being of the State." [1]

After 1886 the situation changed. In an 1886 decision by the U.S. Supreme Court, corporations were given the status of "persons" under the U.S. Constitution, protected by the Bill of Rights. After that, corporations could do anything that any other "person" could do, so long as it was legal. Armed with the Constitutional protections of individuals, but having none of the limitations of individuals, corporations soon ceased to be subordinate entities. Today many corporations are larger than countries. For example, Mitsubishi is larger than Indonesia. General Motors is larger than Denmark. Ford Motor is larger than

Excerpted from RACHEL'S ENVIRONMENT & HEALTH WEEKLY #582 January 22, 1998.

Peter Montague is Editor of REHW, published by Environmental Research Foundation P.O. Box 5036, Annapolis, MD 21403 Fax (410) 263-8944; Internet: erf@rachel.clark.net To subscribe: send E-mail to rachel-weekly-request@world.std.com with the single word SUBSCRIBE in the message. It's free. Back issues available by E-mail; To get instructions, send E-mail to INFO@rachel.clark.net with the single word HELP in the message; Back issues available from <http://www.monitor.net/rachel/>

South Africa and larger than Saudi Arabia. Toyota Motor is larger than Portugal. Wal-Mart Stores is larger than Israel, larger than Greece.[2]

For the most part, corporations are staffed by intelligent, well-meaning people. But the personal motivations of those individuals are not what motivate the corporation. A large publicly-traded corporation is driven by its own internal logic.

A corporation has an internal drive that is comparable to a human's "will to live." Once a corporation is publicly traded, it

- a) Must return a profit to investors;
- b) Must grow;
- c) Must externalize costs to the extent feasible.

These are essential characteristics of the corporate form. If a corporation fails to provide a decent return for investors, those investors can (and do) sue for breach of fiduciary trust.

This requirement -- **to turn a profit** -- narrowly limits what corporations can do. In general, what is unprofitable cannot be pursued. This means that individuals must sometimes put aside their consciences when they make decisions for a corporation. The most well-meaning people in the world are not free to act on their personal philosophies when they are acting on behalf of a publicly-held corporation. They must do what is profitable, which is not necessarily what is right.

**Corporations must grow** for a variety of reasons. In general, larger size

brings stability. It also tends to bring greater market share. It also brings a measure of political power, which allows corporate managers to manipulate the political environment within which the corporation must operate. Size also brings with it the power to create and control the demand for goods and services, through mass-market advertising. A corporation that stops growing is thought to be in trouble, and may therefore lose investors.

**Corporations must externalize their costs to the extent feasible.**

Faced with a sick worker, a corporation will tend to let the public health apparatus pay the costs of bringing the worker back to health, rather than burden the corporation with the worker's medical bills. Faced with the option of treating hazardous waste at \$100 per ton, or dumping it free into

a river, the corporation will tend to dump wastes into the river. Of course this externalizing behavior is not absolute -- it varies from situation to situation -- but in general, corporations have a powerful drive to externalize their costs to the extent feasible.

***Corporations have other traits that are important:***

\*\* They are hierarchical and authoritarian in the extreme. Workers at the bottom take orders from bosses above them, and workers (and middle managers) can be fired at any time for any reason. Corporations are simply not democratic. In-

For the most part, corporations are staffed by intelligent, well-meaning people. But the personal motivations of those individuals are not what motivate the corporation.



**Among the world's 100 largest economies in 1995-96,  
51 were corporations and only 49 were countries.**

deed, many corporations are not only UNdemocratic, they are also aggressively ANTI-democratic, seeking to undermine efforts to expand democratic decision-making within the U.S. and in many countries overseas.

\*\* Corporations have proven to be marvelously efficient at consolidating wealth and power into the hands of a few people, to the detriment of democratic decision-making in the larger society.

\*\* Corporations tend to be patriarchal (in general). They tend to reinforce and maintain a male chauvinist tradition.

\*\* A modern corporation has unlimited lifetime (quite unlike a person). This gives a corporation the capacity to grow without limit, whereas the growth of an individual's wealth and power are strictly limited by the grave.

\*\* As a result of unlimited longevity, among the world's 100 largest economies in 1995-96, 51 were corporations and only 49 were countries.[2]

\*\* After they grow large, corporations cannot feel pain. For example, the Exxon Corporation was fined \$5 billion for the Exxon Valdez oil spill. On the day that enormous fine was announced, Exxon's stock price rose because inves-

tors realized that Exxon was invincible. No matter how odious its behavior, human institutions have no capacity to curb the excesses of a large transnational. Similarly, the day the government of India imposed an \$800 million fine on Union Carbide for its role of negligence in the Bhopal disaster, Carbide's stock rose.

\*\* Investors and directors (and often managers as well) are shielded from liability, and therefore corporations tend toward antisocial behavior. Indeed, limiting liability was the reason the corporate form was invented in the first place. This -- and the inability to feel pain -- are crucial points. Pain is very important as we humans grow up from infancy. Pain serves to limit and guide our behavior. As infants, if we try to crawl through a solid door, we hit our forehead and are brought up short by painful reality. As toddlers, if we strike another person, we may be struck in return; thus we learn that violence is not necessarily the best policy. Eventually, external pain becomes internalized into a conscience and we become civilized adults. Under law, corporations are formally denied this civilizing impetus. As a result, corporations tend to behave like sociopaths. Widespread contamination and destruction of the natural environment provide evidence of this fact.

\*\* In the U.S., fewer than two dozen of these extraordinary creatures own and

**Mitsubishi is larger than Indonesia. General Motors is larger than Denmark. Ford Motor is larger than South Africa. Toyota Motor is larger than Portugal. Wal-Mart Stores is larger than Israel.**

operate 90% of the mass media —controlling almost all books, magazines, records, videos, TV and radio stations, newspapers, wire services, and photo agencies.[3] Thus the number of people who set the terms of public discussion in the U.S. would easily fit into one small room. To the extent that they are visible at all, corporations use the mass media artfully to give themselves the appearance of benevolence. Think of Joe Camel.

In sum, the publicly-traded transnational corporation is a colossus, larger than most national governments, a smiling giant that must grow, cannot die, cannot feel pain, cannot take responsibility (liability) for its actions, must deposit its excreta in public places to the extent feasible (externalizing its costs), is unable to act upon the conscience and sense of morality its managers and directors personally have, is unable to care about place or community, is politically privileged by its size and wealth, and owns or controls all the relevant mass media, as needed.

This tends to be a sociopathic and politically-unstoppable creature indeed.

This is the creature that we are asking to curb its appetites on behalf of the "general welfare" (a phrase from the preamble to the U.S. Constitution). Unfortunately, this is not an entity with a con-

science or a sense of social purpose (it is, after all, a paper invention and is not human). This entity is incapable of caring about the general welfare or unborn generations -- no matter how good-hearted and well-meaning its employees, managers and directors may be.

If society wants these entities to be-

have differently, society will have to build different incentives and requirements into the legal foundations of the corporation by modifying the corporate charter -- the piece of paper issued by state legislatures giving corporations the privilege of being.

In addition, in the U.S., corporations could be denied the privileges of personhood under the Constitution. Our rule of thumb could be, If it

doesn't breathe, it isn't a person and therefore isn't protected by the Bill of Rights. Thus publicly-traded transnational corporations could be brought back to the subordinate status that our grandparents and great-grandparents clearly envisioned for these dangerous, unruly inventions.

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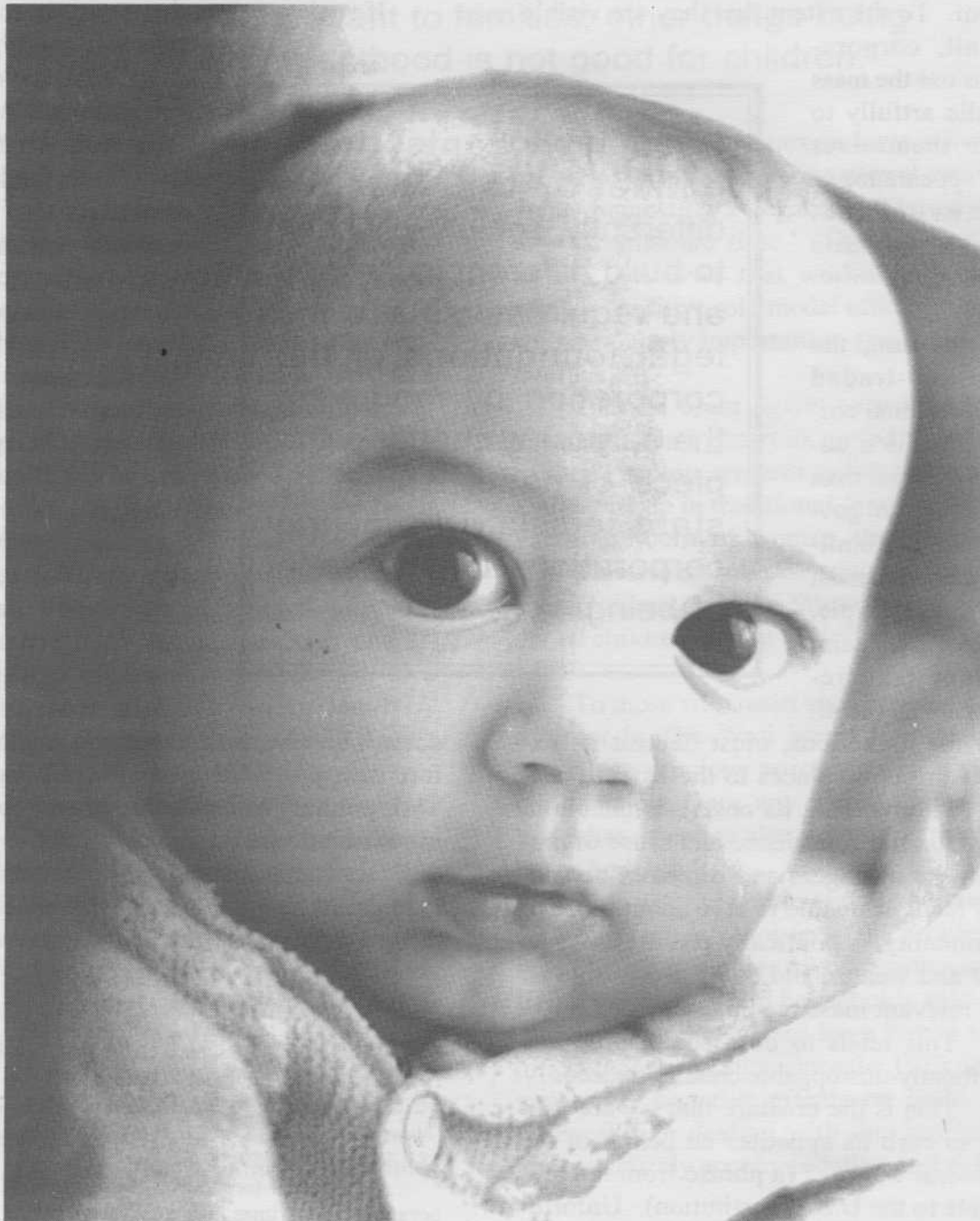
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(New York: The Bootstrap Press, 1997), pg. 51. ISBN 0-942850-38-6. Morehouse attributes the data to these sources: corporation data from "Fortune's Global 500, The World's Largest Corporations," FORTUNE magazine August 7, 1995. Country information from: THE WORLD DEVELOPMENT REPORT (Washington, D.C.: World Bank,

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See also: David C. Korten, WHEN CORPORATIONS RULE THE WORLD (San Francisco: Berret-Koehler Publishers, 1995). ISBN 1-887208-00-3. Also see REHW #296. ●





## Lots of Love Good for Child's Brain

*Robert Lee Hotz*

**Parental care makes such a lasting impression on an infant that maternal separation or neglect can profoundly affect the brain's biochemistry, with lifelong consequences for growth and mental ability...**

Children raised without being regularly hugged, caressed or stroked -- deprived of the physical reassurance of normal family attention -- have abnormally high levels of stress hormones new research on Romanian orphans raised in state-run wards shows.

Moreover, new animal research reveals that without the attention of a loving caregiver early in life, some of an infant's brain cells may simply commit suicide.

While the growing brain naturally prunes cells during development -- losing up to half by adulthood -- the neurons in the neglected animals died at twice the rate as those animals kept with their mothers.

"What we found shocked us," said psychologist Mark Smith at the Du Pont Merck Research Labs in Wilmington, Delaware, who analyzed the effects of maternal deprivation in laboratory animals. "Maternal separation caused these cells in the brain to die."

The effects of maternal deprivation may be much more profound than we had imagined," he said. "Does this have implications for humans? Frankly, I hope not,

but I suspect there may be."

Scientists have known for decades that maternal deprivation in infancy can mark children for life with serious behavioural problems, leaving them withdrawn, apathetic, slow to learn and prone to chronic illness.

But a range of new research, presented at a meeting of the Society for Neuroscience in New Orleans, revealed for the first time the biochemical consequences of emotional neglect on the developing brain.

"It has been known for a long time that early experience is able to shape the brain and behaviour," said Ron de Kloet, an expert on stress and the endocrine system at the University of Leiden in the Netherlands.

"Only recently have we been able to go into the brain and measure what is actually happening in early experience."

It is the relationship between parental care, the neurobiology of touch and the chemistry of stress that lies at the heart of the new insights in how a newborn brain takes shape.

Researchers said that neglect can

Excerpted from an article which appeared in both the Los Angeles Times and the Toronto Star © 1997 Times Mirror Company. Robert Lee Hotz is the Times Science writer.

warp the brain's developing neural circuits so that they produce too much or too little of the hormones that control responses to stress, causing permanent changes in the way an organism behaves and responds to the world around it.

In infants, high levels of stress can impair growth and development of the brain and the body.

In animal studies, "the presence of the mother ensures these stress hormones remain at a nice low level," said Michael Meaney at the Douglas Hospital Research Centre in Montreal.

New laboratory research by Meaney and other neuroscientists highlights the long-range biochemical consequences of neglect and the effect of maternal care on the development of brain regions that control responses to stress.

Studies with laboratory animals show that the simple act of a mother licking her pup triggers a surprisingly subtle chain of biochemical events inside the infant's brain. As the mother physically comforts her newborn, it stimulates the production of key biochemicals that inhibit production of a master stress hormone called corticotropin-releasing hormone, or CRH.

An infant's budding nervous system is so attuned to the reassurance of a gentle, stroking touch that researchers were easily able to protect newborn mice from the most destructive biochemical effects of the stress of maternal deprivation. They simply whisked them softly with a moist paintbrush for less than a minute three times a day, de Kloet reported Monday.

"The results demonstrated that one of the critical aspects of maternal behav-

our is the tactile contact between mother and infants," de Kloet said. "Stroking was able to almost completely reverse the endocrine and brain changes that are seen following maternal deprivation."

To determine whether these new laboratory insights also apply to human child-rearing, researchers are now assessing the changing brain chemistry of children and the attention they receive from their primary caregiver, be it mother, father or day-care worker.

Harvard University researchers who studied Romanian infants raised in orphanages reported that when lacking the attention and stimulation typical of family life, the 2- to 3-year-old children developed abnormally high and lasting levels of the stress hormone, cortisol, which can have serious long-range effects on learning and memory.

Mary Carlson, the Harvard Medical School scientist who studied the children, also discovered that youngsters whose families kept them in poor-quality day-care centres on work days had abnormal levels of stress hormones on weekdays but not on the weekend when the children were home.

The children who had the highest levels of cortisol also had the lowest scores on tests of mental and motor ability. Abnormal levels of cortisol can cause changes in the hippocampus, a structure in the brain involved in learning and memory.

"Our findings support clinical research showing that infants cared for in institutions grow slowly and have behavioural retardation," Carlson said. ☺

## TEN PRINCIPLES OF MOTHER-INFANT BONDING TO CHANGE THE WORLD\*

James W. Prescott, Ph.D.  
Institute of Humanistic Science

- I. Every pregnancy is a wanted pregnancy. Every child is a wanted child.
- II. Every pregnancy has proper prenatal care -- medical and psychological.
- III. Natural Birthing -- no unnecessary obstetrical medications, forceps, induced labor or episiotomy/circumcision.
- IV. No newborn-mother separation; mother-infant co-sleeping is encouraged for "two years of age or beyond".
- V. Newborn/infant breastfeeds on demand and for "two years of age or beyond"\*\*\*
- VI. Every newborn/infant is carried continuously on the body of the mother for the first year. Mother-infant body contact should be maximized.
- VII. No infant/child is permitted to cry without immediate comforting.
- VIII. No infant/child is physically hit or punished for any reason.
- IX. No infant/child is humiliated, emotionally abused or neglected.
- X. No child should be subjected to institutional day care before five years of age. Mother-infant/child development centers must replace day care.

\* (Abridged version)

\*\*\*Recommendation of the World Health Organization (WHO) and UNICEF

# The Time Bomb of Day Care

*Andrew Peyton Thomas*

Child development expert Edward Zigler of Yale University has gone so far as to call day care "psychological thalidomide."

Few political, cultural or religious leaders have spoken out against the growing practice of abandoning infants to paid strangers. Yet recent research, not to mention common sense, tells us that this quiet over-haul of families is a profound tragedy whose bitter fruit will be reaped for decades to come. It is one thing for both parents to work outside the home when their kids are older. But for both parents in a majority of families to be employed before their children can even walk is startling.

Social science confirms that babies raised in day-care centres and similar institutions are often emotionally maladjusted. Child development expert Edward Zigler of Yale University has gone so far as to call day care "psychological thalidomide." Research beginning in the early 1970s has found that such children are more likely to be violent, antisocial and resistant to basic discipline. A 1974 study in the journal *Developmental Psychology* reported that children who entered day care before their first birthday were "significantly more aggressive" and more physically and verbally abusive of adults than other children.

A 1985 study by Ron Haskins in *Child Development*, another scholarly journal, compared two groups of daycare children and found that those who had spent more time in day care suffered from pro-

portionally greater ill effects, regardless of the quality of care. Teachers were more likely to rate these early-care children as "having aggressiveness as a serious deficit of social behaviour."

Other studies have concluded that lengthy stays in daycare centres impair children's mental ability. In 1995, the U.S. National Institute of Mental Health published a joint U.S.-Israeli study that found that children raised in Israeli communes (*kibbutzim*) who received 24-hour day care were at significantly greater risk of developing schizophrenia and other serious mental disorders. Last April the U.S. National Institute of Child Health and Human Development released a long-term study of 1,364 children from 10 states. The study, which examined children from diverse ethnic and socioeconomic backgrounds reported that a child's placement in day care provided a "significant prediction" of poorer mother-child interaction and reduced cognitive and linguistic development.

These are remarkable findings, especially given that social scientists, in the main, hold no brief for traditional family values. But if you are a parent skeptical of this social science, ask yourself this straightforward question: Do you truly believe that a stranger can care for your child as well as you can.

Defenders of day care often say it is

Excerpted from an article in the *The Wall Street Journal*. Andrew Thomas is an attorney in Phoenix, Arizona.

Often it is fathers who are the biggest fans of day care: They like the extra income their wives can bring in by depositing children in institutions during the day.

essential for women's equality in the work force. This simplistic notion ignores the experiences of real men and women. Often it is fathers who are the biggest fans of day care: They like the extra income their wives can bring in by depositing children in institutions during the day. It is mothers who usually feel the sting of guilt, that despised but just gadfly of conscience.

The justifications offered for day care are surprisingly thin. The most common excuse is that young couples need the extra money. But per-capita disposable income, adjusted for inflation, is more than twice as high today in the United States as it was in 1950, and three times as high as in 1930... ☺

It is mothers who usually feel the sting of guilt...

### **Early Child Care: Infants & Nations at Risk**

by Peter S. Cook M.B., Ch.B. (NZ), F.R.A.N.Z.C.P., M.R.C. Psych. (Lond.), D.C.H.

*"The presentation of such a wide cross section of recent research is extremely valuable. He [Dr. Cook] makes no claims that he does not justify. This book should be required reading for all involved in planning for the care of infants, particularly politicians, prospective parents and child care workers. It is easy to read and could be read with benefit by anyone."*

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# In Support of the Two-Parent Family

*William Thorsell*

**“Family structure matters, and two parents are preferable to one for successful child-raising... Fathers *are* important to families; other things being equal, single parenthood is not good for children.”**

John Richards this week joined a growing murmur of brave candour arguing for the superiority of two parent families, the virtue of mothers raising their children at home when they are young, and the particular merits that fathers bring to child-rearing, especially boys. The candour is brave because it rudely provokes the liberal establishment and will surely lead to an outbreak of violent rhetoric in the press. But it's for a good cause: more wisdom in raising children.

Mr. Richards, a former NDP member of the Saskatchewan legislature, is associate professor of business administration at Simon Fraser University and includes his critique of child-rearing in a bracing new book, *Retooling the Welfare State*, published by the C.D. Howe Institute. Among his notable statements:

- “Family structure matters, and two parents are preferable to one for successful child-raising. ... Fathers *are* important to families; other things being equal, single parenthood is not good for children.”

- “The effect on children's outcomes of their mother's working (as opposed to staying at home) is not necessarily positive. In carefully guarded prose, Haveman and Wolfe [American academics] conclude from a survey of studies that ‘growing up in a family in which the mother

chooses to work appears to have a modest adverse effect on educational attainment, suggesting a negative effect of the loss of childcare time.’ (They are quick to add, however, that working mothers provide ‘positive role-model effects, which are particularly important in single-parent families).”

-“To be blunt again, easy marriage dissolution and generous untied transfers to single parents are poor policy responses to the decline in traditional family values. Far from liberating women, they have allowed men to dissolve marriages with less social stigma over the fate of their abandoned children, and at far lower economic cost.”

To those who resist such conclusions, a writer in *The Wall Street Journal* last week [see previous article] posed a simple question: Does any parent really believe that someone else is better at raising his or her child?...

This unfashionable view gains some credibility when we observe the problems faced by many single-parent families now living in poverty, and households split by divorce. Both categories have grown significantly in proportion since the 1950, with apparently negative effects on children. Our reflex in dealing with this has been almost entirely accommodating and mate-

Excerpted from an article in the *Globe and Mail* - ‘Canada's National Newspaper’. William Thorsell is Editor-in-chief of the *Globe and Mail*.



**“To be blunt again, easy marriage dissolution and generous untied transfers to single parents are poor policy responses to the decline in traditional family values.**

rialistic: We see single-parenthood and divorce as reasonable expressions of individual rights, and we respond to resulting child poverty or dysfunction with more financial support of single-parent incomes, subsidized day care and social services.

There is no practical or ethical alternative to such support, although its level is always a matter of debate. With that understood, Prof. Richards argues that we should discriminate more in favour of the superior model, that “social policy should unambiguously provide a fiscal advantage to child-rearing in the context of the traditional family.

In this package he includes “preferential treatment for heterosexual spouses in the design of public pensions” -- treatment that currently exists and which the Supreme Court of Canada has upheld as a reasonable preference in comparison with gay couples without children

He argues that it makes sense to discriminate *fiscally* against divorce by making parents both actual and prospective aware that a breakup will entail aggressive intervention that limits the fiscal discretion of the non-custodial parent until the children are fully grown.” (Of course, the same must apply to never-married fathers.)

We might also consider expanded

child-care tax credits for a parent in a two parent family who stays home with children. Labour law might be altered to protect the jobs of parents who decide to stay at home with babies for up to three years. There may be other preferential policy supports for nuclear families and parental child care.

Can we also change the social consensus and informal incentives that shape individual behaviour to discourage single parent-hood and divorce? This is the purpose of popular men’s movements in the United States, African-American and religious, which seek to raise the status of fidelity, responsibility and commitment to family.

It is a matter of record that the social consensus shifted radically after 1960 to tolerance of adult behaviour that is not in the immediate interest of children, and it shifted for some humane and progressive reasons. But if it shifted too far; it can obviously shift back to more emphasis on keeping the commitments to children that motherhood and fatherhood explicitly create.

A child constitutes a dependent “other” that, ethically, restricts the right of parents to many of the personal freedoms that adults without children enjoy and provides many rewards that adults without children will never know. ●

**Far from liberating women, they have allowed men to dissolve marriages with less social stigma over the fate of their abandoned children, and at far lower economic cost.”**

# Fathers Are an Essential Part of the Human Environment

*Patrick Gallagher*

I always knew I'd be a father. I don't know how I knew, but as far back as I can recall, I knew that I would grow up and have children...

I remember the day that my wife told me that she was definitely pregnant. We were sitting outside on a hot August day. I remember the green grass, the leaves on the bushes, the breeze, and the agitation in my body. I remember sitting back -- this I remember best of all -- and feeling that the axis of the universe had shifted; I was almost dizzy from it.

From that moment on nothing was the same. I was a new man. The concerns of the old man were irrelevant -- important in their day, but that day was done. Everything I would do I would now do as a father, as a man responsible for bringing a new world to birth. I felt a powerful need for some kind of purification ritual, something that symbolized the end of the old universe and the beginning of the new. But there is no such ritual. Being a father, being a parent, is considered a private act.

It's almost eleven years since then, and I am now a father three times. I was right that day. The universe did shift on its axis, everything was new, the old world was gone, and a new one born.

My experiences are what most fathers experience: the unparalleled joy of holding your new child; the terrible certainty that you will make mistakes; the longing to protect; the regret of missed opportunities; the shameful pain of admit-

ting to failure -- again; the desperate fear that your sick child might die; the wonder of realizing that your bond with your wife will not only last as long as you both live, but beyond.

Being a father has been the greatest, most challenging, most exciting experience of my life. It has transformed me and made me. I can think of no other calling that could be as deeply satisfying to a man.

But I fear for the generation growing up. I feel anxious for my own two sons. What will fatherhood mean to them? What messages are they hearing about being a father? Will they want to be fathers?

The answers are not reassuring, because fatherhood, indeed parenthood, is in crisis. Although most fathers, like me, are struggling to do their best in a society in which human connections and solidarity are increasingly tenuous and frayed, the public face of fatherhood has become sadly disfigured.

When was the last time that you read or heard of fathering discussed as a noble or valuable task? If you are a father, can you recall the last time that what you do was presented or talked about in a way that made you feel supported rather than undermined? Our only recent champion is Dan Quayle, a foolish and ignorant man who has managed to say only one thing of value in all of his public life, but because it comes from him, it is either ignored or mocked.

Excerpted from an article in Catholic New Times. Patrick Gallagher is editorial director for the publishing company Maxwell Macmillan (Canada).

There seem to be two images of fathers today. The first is of a bumbling fool, a man less mature than his children, patronized by his wife, incompetent in anything that matters. This caricature can be found on television, in movies, on radio and in advertising. The epitome of this father is Ed Bundy, from *Married With Children*, although his imitators are legion.

The second image is that of an indifferent, irresponsible, selfish brute, a virtual psychopath seeking with low cunning for the opportunity to abuse his wife and children. These are the fathers portrayed in countless newspaper and magazine articles, in popular movie-of-the-week television shows, in novels and films.

I know that some fathers abuse or abandon their wives and children; I know that some fathers are not mature or very responsible. But these are examples of fatherhood gone wrong. They reveal the pathology of fatherhood, not its nature. Yet the pathology is, I fear, fast becoming the norm in the public mind. Social policy debates either exclude fathers -- mothers are not treated much better -- or consider them a harmful influence. Women now seriously contemplate having a child without the child having a father, as though the only effect of this will be a slightly heavier burden of childcare and domestic maintenance.

Humans live in families like fish live in water. It is the environment that surrounds and nourishes them. Acid rain, untreated sewage, human carelessness and indifference all pollute lakes and rivers and make them unfit for fish to live in. Yet no one would suggest that we should breed fish that can live in garbage or that we should remove fish from water and treat them as though they were mammals.

In the last half of the 20th century families have also become polluted; from the untreated sewage of a social and political system that treats people callously and cruelly; from the acid rain of cynicism and despair; and from human indifference and carelessness. Why do we then undermine and degrade further the world we are born into and must we live in if we are to thrive? Why do we not support this primary social nexus as it attempts its necessary task against overpowering odds?

Ironically, we seem to have awakened to the mysteriousness and fragility of the living habitats of animal species -- except for one. Fathers are an essential part of the human environment. Without the charism of fathering in our lives, all of us -- men, women, and children are diminished. We will be incomplete.

Yet, I remain, if not optimistic, at least hopeful. Social forces are powerful, but not quite as powerful as a loving individual. I look around and see lots of men attempting sometimes successfully, sometimes not, sometimes with ease, sometimes with difficulty, to be good fathers. They are, for the most part, invisible, their efforts validated only by the response of their children, to whom the future belong. ☺



Of 902 listed members of the World Association for Infant Psychiatry and Allied Disciplines, 450 in 56 countries responded. They were asked “to imagine that all the kinds of care we specified were of excellent quality by their community’s standards, and equally available and affordable to all”. They were asked to say “on the basis of their experience of normal infants, what kinds of care, in sequence from birth to three and a half years would be likely to be best from the child’s point of view.”

Reporting the results of the research at the Anna Freud Centenary Lecture, Dr. Leach said: “Taking infants’ viewpoint, these respondents do not think more day care is a priority, and they certainly do not support demands for more places for babies because however excellent that day care might be, they think it’s best if they are cared for by their mothers.

“Asked for how long, if at all, they considered it ‘very important’ for infants to have their mothers available to them ‘through most of each 24 hours’, most said more than a year (the mean is 15 months). Asked whether there is a further period during which it is ‘ideal’ for infants to be cared for ‘principally by mothers’, most said more than 2 years (the mean is 27 months).”

Dr. Leach asks, in the published article describing the details of the research, [Early Development and Parenting, Vol. 6 (2), 47-58 (1997)]:

**“Are we making child care policy and developing its practices without listening to concerned professionals? Or are professionals unable or unwilling to make themselves heard?”**

‘Affordable, universally available, good-quality, easily accessible childcare’ (to use the popular mantra) is a chimera, unrealisable in the real world. Affordable care is low-quality care. Universally available high-quality care is achievable nowhere on earth. Our society must abandon the fictive goal of universal, affordable, high quality child care for very young children, and do whatever is needed to help parents provide high quality mothering and fathering...

from: Who Needs Parents: The Effects of Childcare and Early Education on Children in Britain and the USA by Dr Patricia Morgan

# **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 mothers.





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.