



# EMPATHIC PARENTING

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

Volume 8

Issue 1

Winter '84<sup>5</sup>

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An honest interest in fostering  
Communion...is basic to any organization of  
people, whether it be family, school, com-  
munity, factory or office - in any society.

William Line  
See pages 8 - 9



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## We Need Better Words

As a physician and psychiatrist I have been taught detailed criteria for classifying all that can go wrong with human beings.

As a person what I need is to be better able to describe what it is like when everything is going right within and between human beings.

An incomplete and imprecise list would go something like this:

1. A capacity for trust (a confident reliance on the integrity, honesty, or justice of another).
2. A capacity for empathy (reacting emotionally because one perceives that another is experiencing an emotion).
3. A capacity for affectionate relationships (not just loving someone because of what they can give to us in real or reflected ways).
4. Self confidence (to move into new circles for example and be confident of acceptance).
5. Self esteem (the value we place on ourselves).
6. A capacity for touching and being touched.
7. A capacity to be comfortably alone without external stimuli (like radio or T.V.).
8. A capacity to delay gratification.

I would be most grateful if readers would pass on to this Journal more detailed descriptions of these and other positive qualities with which they are familiar.

With the greater clarity possible through more accurate description and classification, we should be able to keep these qualities more easily in mind.

More importantly, since so many of these qualities are determined by the care infants and toddlers receive, we can more easily decide on the priority we give to that care.

Elliott Barker

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

- The basic premise of the 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 relatively easily inflicted 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 (as yet) 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 girls and boys, prior to the age when conception is a possibility, should appreciate:
  - the permanent emotional damage that can result if the emotional needs of a child are not met during infancy,
  - the amount of time and energy required to care for an infant empathically,
  - that remaining childless may be the most sensible option, given one's interests and priorities,
  - 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 they have been unable to get from the adult world, fulfilling a need to dominate and control,
  - the radical ways in which caring for an infant empathically alters the lives of the parents,
  - the hazards of poor nutrition, poor health, inadequate medical care, and substance abuse during pregnancy,
  - all about obstetrical practices which facilitate attachment, bonding and engrossment of babies, mothers and fathers,
  - the basic facts of infant development,
  - why babies who are not breastfed are disadvantaged,
  - the reasons why babies arriving too soon and too often make it more difficult to adequately meet their emotional needs.

**They should know 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.**

**They should know the subtle and damaging ramifications of our tradition of arbitrary male dominance, and the reasons why it will continue to be difficult to adequately nurture children until males become aware of, and change their irrational ways of relating to women.**

Increasing the number of members in the Society and the readership of its journal **EMPATHIC PARENTING** are at present the principal means by which the CSPCC is working to unite those who share a concern for the importance of the Society's objectives.

CSPCC, BOX 700, 246 KING STREET, MIDLAND, ONTARIO, L4R 4P4

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**Letters****CLOSELY SPACED CHILDREN**

Dear Elliott:

I enclose a cheque for \$300 to help with  
your vital work. I am delighted to hear of the  
corporate contributions you are so  
generously receiving too. I hope this money  
will help reach more people with your  
message of how important parental love is.May I make a suggestion as to how your  
message might get through clearer? Please  
don't water it down by getting distracted in  
controversial side issues. For example,  
spacing of children. Burton White was  
quoted in your pamphlet My Friend as say-  
ing "As for the advantages of having sibi-  
lings, I can think of none if the spacing is  
narrow (less than 2½ or 3 years)".Dr. White ought to come to our home and  
see how happy our two children are, spaced  
two years apart. Many of our friends have  
some very happy children spaced even  
closer. If both parents are dedicated, it is  
quite possible to have large as well as hap-  
py families. So please spare us the idle  
speculation that distracts from your vital  
main message.Sincerely,  
Tom Wonnacott  
London, Ontario**A SAMPLING OF OUR  
CORPORATE MAIL**

Dear Dr. Barker:

In response to your letter of October 19th,  
we have pleasure in enclosing our cheque  
in the sum of \$250.00.Your editions of Empathic Parenting are  
read with great interest; they are infor-  
mative and very enlightening.Manville Canada Inc.  
Etobicoke, Ont.

# Letters

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## ONE WOMAN'S EXPERIENCE

Dear Dr. Barker:

To experience childbirth has always been an unforgettable and joyful event in my life. The birth of my third child was even more so, since my husband and I had a chance to participate more actively than before. We experienced childbirth in what we call a "family room".

During one of my monthly visits to my doctor, he started to tell us of this new room at the hospital, where a family can participate more fully in the experience of birth. It is believed that a family, including brothers and sisters, who participate in childbirth, have stronger family bonding. This room also creates an atmosphere of confidence which helps to make new parents feel secure.

This new attitude toward childbirth was exactly what my husband and I wished for our new baby. We wanted to fully live the birth of our child.

The day finally came. The nurses at the hospital greeted us in the "family room". The soft music and the dimmed lights helped us to relax and enjoy each phase of the delivery. It felt like home. The bed was very special, due to the fact that the positions could be varied to one's wishes, since it was controlled by a very modern electrical system. There was also a rocking chair and a sofa, and the wallpaper and the pictures around were soft and meaningful.

During the labour, the nurses often came to make sure that everything was going well and to offer us food and drinks. It felt nice to know that we were not alone.

As we approached the final phase of the delivery, the foot of the bed was removed, making it more like a delivery table. The nurses and doctors acted as if it was very normal to have a child, and it is. The doctor was relaxed and very calm. This helped me to stay calm and to concentrate on the last phase.

When the baby's head was finally freed, the doctor turned its shoulders so that this new human being could face its mother. At this point, I asked my husband to pull out the baby and to give it to me. I know that usually the mother does that, but for some unknown reason, I wanted my husband to be the first to touch the new member of the family.

I was now able to touch and see my new baby girl. As I caressed and massaged the little body of my child, my husband, guided by the doctor, cut the umbilical cord. The next two hours were spent holding and loving our new child. If it had not been so late, my oldest son would have joined her at that moment.

How can you not love a being that you have seen at birth, and to whom you have helped give the first breath of life. My daughter is very special to us.

Ann Bard  
Gatineau, Quebec

*We get a steady stream of welcome requests from Canadian High School Students. How about this for precocity and initiative!*

Dear Miss/Sir:

Our fourth grade class is studying child abuse. Could you send us some free materials.

Sincerely,  
Brian Boling  
Johnson City, Tennessee

**IMAGINE THE BENEFIT  
TO TOMORROW'S CHILDREN  
IF SOMEONE IN EVERY COMMUNITY  
THOUGHT LIKE THIS**

*Dear Sir:*

*Enclosed is my annual supporting membership fee for \$25. (I'm not sure if it's due or not.)*

*I was interested in reading about Playcentres, and wondered if there could be more information re this in your next journal, eg. what sort of places are used for the centres, what type of speaker or program seems most helpful, are the parents required to stay with the children (or else it would become a babysitting service), etc.*

*My children are older now but I would be interested in helping start a Playcentre if I knew more about how to do it and could find enough interested people. It is something that perhaps a Church group might want to get involved in.*

*Looking forward to hearing more about this.*

*Sincerely,  
Ruth Hart  
Mississauga, Ont.*

Playcentres are an exciting new solution to the problems resulting from a long overdue emancipation of women, social values too heavily weighted towards consumerism and materialism and the low priority given to the real needs of infants.

*Without These, Growing Up is Very Hard  
and Sometimes May Be Impossible...*

# HOW ELSE?

The child who has experienced safety, warmth, and comfort in its mother's arms carries with it a sense of personal worth and of trust in human relationships that makes tolerable the tasks and difficulties that must be faced later in life. The child whose mother has succeeded in giving it a sense of being valued as a unique individual, entirely for itself, without regard for the accidents of beauty or brains or special talent, is prepared as a person to meet the challenges of living. We do not know — man has never known — **how else to give a human being a sense of selfhood and identity, a sense of the worth of the world, and an abiding trust in human relationships.** Without these, growing up is very hard, and sometimes may be impossible.

...Wherever it has been customary for a mother to suckle her own infant, the child has been assured a continuing relationship with one human being who has satisfied its hunger and given it a sense of safety and trust. In the past, when the mother went any distance away from home, she had to carry her nursing infant with her, and when the child became too heavy to carry, she had to hurry home from the garden to feed it. Another woman might give it a little milk, or someone might feed it a soft mash of bananas or rice or taro. But the mother and the child could not be separated for long. Where people were poor or careless, so that children were left hungry and their needs were disregarded, these children in turn became grudging mothers who left their children hungry and comfortless for hours at a time and grudging husbands who disregarded the needs of their wives. For girls learn first at their mothers' breasts how to be mothers. And boys also learn from their mothers' care of them how they,

as husbands, should care for their wives who are pregnant or feeding newborn children.

One effect of modern civilization has been to interrupt this ancient tie of early intimacy between a mother and her baby. For the mother now has a choice. In the past, birth — the physical separation of the child from the mother's body — meant the establishment of a new relationship between the mother and the child in her arms, the intensity of which was broken only with weaning to another kind of food. But today birth itself has become a form of weaning, as the modern mother chooses between distance and closeness to her child.

The feeding bottle opened the way to choice. Feeding her child from a bottle, a mother could modify the close interdependence of the nursing couple in the months during which the infant, carried in darkness as a stranger, discovered the nature of its welcome in the world. The feeding bottle made possible the establish-

*Reprinted from FAMILY by Margaret Mead and Ken Heyman, published in 1965 by the Macmillan Company, New York.*

*Special thanks to Ruth Faux for drawing this excerpt to the attention of the editor.*

## Mixing a formula neither alters her figure nor strains her body. Pushing a high-wheeled baby carriage does not strain the muscles of her back and arms.

ment of total impersonality from the time of birth, and so an infancy without tenderness and warmth. But with the feeding bottle a mother also could keep alive the child who would not have thrived on her milk, and so it made possible warmth and tenderness between a mother and an infant who would otherwise have died.

With the feeding bottle came the carriage. The one made it possible for the mother to leave the baby; the other made it possible for her to take the baby with her. From the day when the baby carrier could be hung from the saddle of a horse down to the present, when the baby carrier can be strapped into the station wagon, inventions that have permitted the mother to journey abroad accompanied by her child have competed with inventions that have permitted her to leave it behind. Both kinds of invention have lessened her immediate physical contribution to her child's upbringing. Mixing a formula neither alters her figure nor strains her body. Pushing a high-wheeled baby carriage does not strain the muscles of her back and arms. But both increase the distance between the mother and the child, each of whom loses in part the continual reinforcement of bodily contact, the mutual adaptation, and the slowly growing realization that each of them is a separate entity. By introducing greater flexibility, both kinds of invention have opened the way to wider choice. Both have made choice a necessity.

The process of civilization, while it has lightened the woman's physical load, has in many ways made motherhood a harder rather than an easier task. A woman can choose whether or not she will marry and whether or not she will bear a child, two choices that were not open to her primitive

forebears. A woman who lacks the capacity to breast-feed her infant, or who chooses not to do so, still can give it adequate nourishment. She can keep her child warm and safe without cradling it against her body. Where her own knowledge is deficient, she can turn to others — not the old women who were the carriers of tradition, but scientifically trained specialists in the care of children — who can help her to interpret the needs of each small, unique human being. All these things lighten the burden of motherhood and open the way to greater security for more children.

But society also can construct situations that introduce new hazards. Social arrangements may exist in which illegitimate children are born whom no one is prepared to care for and cherish. A style of marriage may become fashionable in which parenthood begins very early and children follow one another in close succession. In a marriage of this kind the young mother may become so frantic and destructive that she may turn against her young children whom she cannot love and care for as she knows she should. Or a very young mother may be left alone to rear her child with only an impersonal clinic and a welfare worker to help her create a safe and human setting and to keep alive some link of communication with the world. Or a mother may be forced to put her child into strangers' hands while she goes out to work. Modern civilization has made it possible for almost every baby to live and almost every mother to care for her child, but it also has created new dilemmas. Modern women are freed from the terrors of the unknown, the dangers of giving birth in the dark and the cold, the anxieties of meeting an infant's need for food — the worst difficulties that haunted the imagina-

But both increase the distance between the mother and the child, each of whom loses in part the continual reinforcement of bodily contact, the mutual adaptation, and the slowly growing realization that each of them is a separate entity.



## It is this absolute, unconditional acceptance that every child needs.

tion of primitive women. But civilization confronts us with difficulties of our own making and sets new conditions for motherhood.

Yet the modern mother still is asked to love her child unconditionally, and the child now, as in the past, is dependent on her unconditional love. The child who has experienced safety, warmth, and comfort in its mother's arms carries with it a sense of personal worth and of trust in human relationships that makes tolerable the tasks and difficulties that must be faced later in life. The child whose mother has succeeded in giving it a sense of being valued as a unique individual, entirely for itself, without regard for the accidents of beauty or brains or special talent, is prepared as a person to meet the challenges of living. We do not know — man has never known — how else to give a human being a sense of selfhood and identity, a sense of the worth of the world, and an abiding trust in human relationships. Without these, growing up is very hard, and sometimes may be impossible.

As we find ways of supplementing the mother's single, often frail and insufficient body, and of making more flexible the bonds between mother and child, we are also making the discovery that there is no substitute for the mothering relationship. For this reason, in spite of all the changes that have been introduced by modern inventions, the model for motherhood remains what it has always been — the relationship between the mother's body and the body of her child. The womb, the gates of life, the child's first breath and gasping cry, the first moment at the breast, the warmth of the mother's cradling arms, the rhythms of feeding and holding, sleeping, waking, reaching out, and slipping into quiet, in which mother and child are partners — all these are part of mothering. And the central image of the mother's physical care and love for a small human being who has been and continues to be wholly dependent on

her for its life and health carries with it the proviso of the mother's absolute acceptance of her child. Faced by a child who cannot thrive on her love, a mother is helpless. But the love and care a child evokes in its mother does not depend on whether it is beautiful or homely, plump or thin, fretful or content; as long as it lives — and, hopefully, thrives — it is hers to care for. It is this absolute, unconditional acceptance that every child needs. Lacking it, a human being never ceases to seek it.

During the long months of infancy, while the child's tie to the mother is a bodily one, the child learns through its own body what the world is like and what it is to be a person. As the mother feeds the child when it is hungry, the child learns that the world can be trusted to provide the things it needs. As the mother senses her child's sleepiness and lulls it to sleep, the child learns to fit together feeling and action and is given a first sense of appropriateness. As the mother smiles when her child smiles, pouts when it pouts, and smacks her lips or clucks in response to its first playful babbling, the child learns that the world is a place in which people can reciprocate moods and meaning.

Each new learning is a new delight for the mother whose attention is focused so closely on the child that its slightest gain is manifest and significant of its lively growth and awareness. As a mother learns to respond to the restless rootling of her hungry baby, to its breaking smile or puckered frown, to its look of recognition, and to its first puzzled attempt to put sound and meaning together, she reinvokes her own infancy, when she could elicit a quick responsiveness at her mother's breast. As she was once the child who reached toward a mother who was only dimly perceived and understood, now she can be, at the same time, mother and child. For a woman, motherhood rounds the circle in which her own childhood is given back to her in all its satisfying delight...□

## Lacking it, a human being never ceases to seek it.

## **A Sense of Communion**

by William Line

By "Sense of Communion" is meant essentially the feeling of ease, comfort and at-homeness with other people. It implies all that is comprised by the time-honoured term "empathy" in its positive aspects, without any taint or stress, anxiety or tension communicated from one person to another. It is interpersonal in its reference, and reflects the joy and satisfaction of "shared-experience", thus making "development" possible.

Many of the words and phrases which reflect the core-values of society and of culture are in reality based upon true communion, words like "family", "home", "hearth" for example. The French word "foyer" is artistic in this regard, and therefore untranslatable. It means more than a mere sense of belonging, since "belonging" may be experienced as "being accepted" - for reasons of social obligation only, paternalism or custom. It means more than "being acceptable" - for reasons that imply acceptability to an established group, with the further implication that while we might **not** have met the standards of that group, somehow or other we **have**. And so on.

It is more than communication in the sense that without communion, true communication is impossible. "Communication" has come to mean someone **telling** (ordering, affirming) something to another, who **accepts** the telling. Communication thus interpreted is a one-way process, usually from the "prestige" or authoritarian person (or "rebel") to the "subservient".

Communion is a felt partnership, despite all social symbols of prestige, such as age, professional or other status, or "authority". It is a TWO-WAY, MUTUAL process; rather than an "order", an "instruction", a "reprimand" or a shrug-of-the-shoulder approval. In Communion there is true fellowship; and in fellowship there is value. Communion is reflected in, and basic to, the "art of conversation". "Conversation" is a much under-rated, ignored, or misinterpreted basic aspect of **being** human. It includes empathic silence, the experience of mutuality in the appreciation of the sunset or any work of art.

Communion is a term perhaps made most explicit as the central basis of our Judaestic heritage. Being primordially human, its meaning has fundamental place in all "cultures"; but our Jewish forefathers were convinced that whatever

Jehovah's ultimate purpose was, knowable or otherwise, the shared experiences of "communion" could not be something outside of that purpose.

Evidence from the thoughtful study of infants shows the importance of communion (as between mother and child, for example) from the earliest moments after birth, and prior to as well as accompanying the growth or existence of self-consciousness. Communion is made possible and necessary by the birth-event wherein two individuals (mother and child) still enjoy and appreciate a oneness despite difference. Every action (experience), as far as the infant is concerned, is a mutual (non-differentiated) action. The infant is fed, tendered, "cared-for", in a warm (or otherwise) social situation. Where communion is broken - as by the impatience or anxiety of the mother, for example, the infant senses this fact. (This is where Harry Stack Sullivan (Interpersonal Theory of Psychiatry) places the meaning of "empathy", namely in anxiety - an anxious mother communicates anxiety to the infant. And so the infant "warms to" or shares the experience of communion, or is threatened by those events, incidents and circumstances that challenge or threaten it. Personally, I regard this as one of the most sensitively artistic facts of human nature, of the Being that is Human.

The principle of communion is basic, without reference to any age, racial or other differential.

Think about the degree, now, of an individual's sensitivity to communion, and of the degree to which any social situation (such as your work arrangements), takes this important aspect of society into consideration.

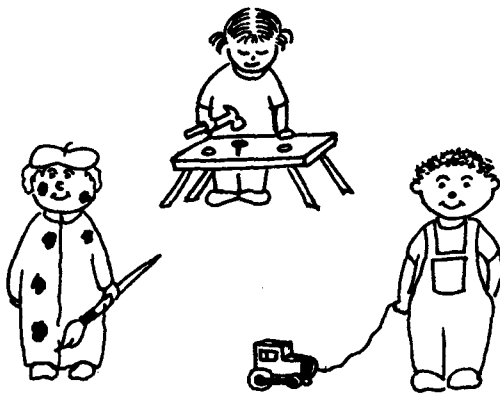
In terms of the development of human beings, according to their own needs as persons, I would put this first-stated need as first. Without a sensitivity to communion, the human being is not.

Various members of your entourage will show differing degrees of interest in communion. You must expect this. An honest interest in fostering Communion, as first requisite of decent progressive human relationships, is basic to any organization of people, whether it be family, school, community, factory or office; in any society. □

*William Line, who died in 1964, was a professor of Psychology and member of the Senate of the University of Toronto. He was founder and later consultant to the International Institute of Child Study established by UNESCO, and a member of the founding commission and later President of the World Federation of Mental Health.*

# PLAYGROUP

## START YOUR OWN!



*Parents and children everywhere are now creating programs that are meeting the needs of both infants and parents happily and together, and turning the preschool years into a stimulating time emotionally and intellectually for both.*

# What is a Playgroup?

A playgroup exists to give children a chance to play together, and Mother a place to share and relate happily with other children and other adults. It gives each child a chance to experiment endlessly with messy activities that many could not have at home: paint, sand, water, dough, clay. It provides dressing up clothes to inspire imaginative play, jigsaws and building toys for concentrated effort, boxes and trestles for climbing on and picture books as a happy introduction to the world of literature. Playgroups meet in halls, Churches, Community Centres, houses, a great variety of ingeniously used premises. They serve children aged 0 - 5 years old whose parents stay with them. No two playgroups are alike as each shapes itself to suit its community.

A playgroup can provide more companionship and play opportunities than are possible in most homes. This enlarges the child's experience, stimulates more ideas and, through playing in a skilfully supervised group, develops self reliance and the ability to share. Parents make friends and gain new skills as they share the responsibility for the children and their environment. Many become aware of aspects of the community, which offer fresh interests and opportunities, to follow when their pre-school children move on to school. Most playgroups are managed, equipped and financed by the parents.

## An Example of a Local Playgroup

In our area we are very lucky to have our playgroup organized through our local community centre. This provides us with an excellent space in which to meet, and assistance in the funding of the programme. Each child pays a \$2.00 registration fee for each four months.

The group meets from 9:30 to 11:00 each Tuesday and Thursday morning. The ages of the children range from 6 mos. to four years, the majority of the children being around 2.

We have a schedule with two mothers 'on' each morning. They are responsible for arriving slightly early to set up the equipment, provide the snack and juice and plan a programme if they feel they want to. All mothers (fathers) stay with their children for the entire time, sometimes playing with the children, sometimes talking, but always responsible for disciplining their own children, supervising painting sessions, etc.

We have a fairly large room available to us, so we are able to set up as follows: at the far end of the room there is a climbing

apparatus with a slide set up on tumbling mats, in the centre is a place for playing with toys (trucks, a garage, a doll house, etc.) and at the other end is a quiet area with the child-size table and chairs. The activity at this area changes each day — sometimes puzzles and reading, sometimes crafts, or painting. There is space around the edges for riding and push toys to be used. The children are free to wander into whatever area they wish, which is the way that we cope with the range in ages, each being able to find that activity which suits best.

There is free play until 10:30. Then the children all sit around the table for their snack or juice. While the children are seated the parents tidy up, so that by the time snack is finished the space is clear for 'circle time'. This is the only structured time we have and we try to do two or three different singing games each day, often the same three for at least a week or two (eg. Ring-around-a-rosie, London Bridge, Hokey Pokey).

# Playgroups: How to Start One

The basic ingredients are very simple; one needs to know a little about the activities that preschoolers like, how to supervise play and the characteristics of the typical preschool age child. There are as many different organizational patterns and orientations as there are different situations. So plunge in. This booklet is designed to give you some tips.

## FINDING PEOPLE

To find mothers and children interested in a playgroup experience start close to home and look in a wider area if necessary. In a rural community or a small community within the urban area ask your friends and their friends. If you can't think of anyone else post a simple notice in the community centre, local paper or shopping centre. Give out time, date and place for the 1st **parent** meeting and see who shows up.

## THE FOUNDING MEETING

The purpose of this meeting is to establish "How". A basic philosophy should be established, ie. "Why do you want to join a playgroup?" The basic philosophy should be discussed and agreed upon by everyone before specific planning takes place. Some mothers will express a need for structured activities while others will want a free play situation. If a compromise can't be reached perhaps the group could split up and set up two different playgroups. Other things to discuss are:

### 1) Who will be there?

The age groupings of the children will affect the types of activities that are possible. It is important to have a clear sense of the age spread when planning the format of the playgroup you are establishing.

The size of the group is also significant. The main factor determining the upward limit on size will be the amount of space available. Generally, it is best to start with not more than 20 children as close in age as possible in one group. If there are many more than this, it might be advisable to set up two groups, possibly sharing toy and space resources on alternate days.

### 2) A Place to Meet

If possible, a space other than a private home is best. A community centre, church hall or any other free or inexpensive space relieves the pressure on any one parent, and may provide ample space and parking as well. Choose an area with easily accessible bathrooms and water supply, storage, outside play space if possible and centrally located for the majority of families.

Check with the "owner" of the meeting place regarding what liability and fire insurance is carried and what may be required.

### 3) Organization

Some form of simple organization is essential. Specific duties should be assigned and rotated amongst the group. Three **basic** positions are important:

i) Co-ordinator: This parent will call meetings, answer inquiries, act as registrar, speak to new mothers and all other managerial jobs.

ii) Money Handler: This parent looks after the collection of fees, maintains a record of expenses paid and plans fund-raising events if any.

iii) Secretary: This parent keeps records of meetings and distributes information regarding decisions to all parents.

After these three positions are filled the remainder of parents can be divided into

- a) Programme Committee - plans activities
- b) Clean-up Committee - as it sounds
- c) Purchaser
- d) Duty Rotation
- e) Playdough maker, etc.

Try to give everyone a job. Everyone should be involved.

#### 4) Fees

Set a small fee, but one that will cover the cost of rent if any and other basic expenses such as juice, art supplies, special events, etc. It is usually easier to ask for \$2.00/term rather than 25c/day.

#### 5) Supplies

Try to have good (safe) toys and equipment donated if possible.

Save all possible 'art' materials at home, eg. egg cartons, cans, cardboard packaging, etc. Make your own equipment at "work bees".

A more detailed list of basic equipment and toys follows later in this booklet.

#### 6) Setting a Time

Once or twice a week is usually adequate for a playgroup to meet. If most of the children still nap have your group in the morning at a reasonable hour for mothers to get organized, eg. 9:30 or 10:00. Two hours duration is usually plenty of time for a good programme.

#### 7) Starting Out

Have the children meet several times and pay close attention to the group. Discuss the trouble spots, make changes as you go. Within a month of start-up have a parents' meeting to straighten out any problems and redefine the "rules". Be sure that they are written down and distributed as a "welcome sheet".

Parents meetings should become a regularly scheduled event, ie. once every two months, to plan ahead, solve problems and to socialize. Make it fun! Have a potluck supper, meet in a pub, work on a craft project!

*Reprinted from the 23 page booklet Playgroups - Start Your Own! - available from Outreach Services, Parent Preschool Resource Centre, 63 Evelyn Avenue, Ottawa, Ont. K1S 0C6, (613) 238-7595.*

## **Parent and Child Groups in Canada...**

During the past few years in Canada there has been a marked increase in opportunities for parents and infants to find companionship and activities together within their community. YMCA and public library programs "Mom and Me" activities, drop-in centres, Playcentres, Playgroups, and Playschools are all welcoming **parents and preschoolers** with programs especially designed to meet the needs of both groups — together.

In May 1982 a national forum for those involved with and concerned about family support was held in Ottawa. Jointly sponsored by the Parent Preschool Resource Centre (1) and the School of Social Work, Carlton University, Connections '82 was successful in gathering over 100 delegates from across Canada. They represented a great variety of parent and child groups, from a pilot mobile project serving rural P.E.I. to an established community centre

called "Family Place" serving urban Vancouver.

This conference ended with a unanimous call for continued development of resources for parents and playcentres, and increased public awareness of the assistance and value of such programs.

The delegates expressed a strong desire to continue the exchange of ideas and experiences begun at the Conference by connecting regionally and locally as well as by beginning some type of broad national idea-sharing. As a result of this expressed need for increased interaction and the numerous requests for information received by the Parent Preschool Resource Centre (PPRC) from across the country, PPRC decided to undertake a study of Parent-child groups in Canada. (2)

The two groups in Halifax are talking of forming an Atlantic region network. The Centre Quebecois de Ressources a la Petite



THE  
CANADIAN SOCIETY  
FOR THE  
PREVENTION OF CRUELTY  
TO  
CHILDREN

CSPCC CREDO

- 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,

We Believe That:

- I. 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.
- II. 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.
- III. 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:

- I. Re-evaluate all our institutions, traditions and beliefs from this perspective.
- II. Oppose and weaken all forces which undermine the desire or ability of parents to successfully carry out a task which ultimately affects us all.
- III. 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.

**“Some day, maybe there will exist a well considered and yet fervent public conviction that the most deadly of all possible sins is the mutilation of a child’s spirit...”**

**Erik H. Erikson**



# 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.

I

**JOIN THE CSPCC TO:** Learn more about the Prevention of Emotional Damage. Better preparation for parenthood, greater concern for proper care during pregnancy, obstetrical practices which facilitate bonding, a higher priority for the empathic care of infants, higher status for homemakers, and stronger community support for parents with young children and examples of such preventive measures.

**JOIN THE CSPCC TO:** Keep in touch with others who share these concerns by receiving the Society's journal **EMPATHIC PARENTING** regularly.

Child battering and other forms of bodily assault have this enormous advantage:

The attacker and the victim both know who is doing what to whom. The results are observable at the time the crime is committed, and the damage can therefore be treated.

In contrast to this kind of identifiability, the brutalizing of innocent minds often appears as **virtue** to the assaulter, as **care** to the victim, and as a strong sense of **duty** to any witnesses. No one sees a crime; the consequences appear years later as murder, rape, theft, alcoholism, chronic failure, or most often, plain and costly unhappiness.

A public bewildered by the social cost of these problems looks around for someone to blame, and can find only a victim who has long since forgotten how he was crippled.

Heart disease, alcoholism and smoking are now well known as social problems. Being known, and being visible, they are a small threat in comparison with the systematic mental crippling of children. Surely, also, the sum of human misery arising from disease can be no more than the frustration, self defeat and sadness passed on by one blinded generation of children to the next.

Morality has nothing to do with the urgent need to prevent psychological abuse. In a world menaced by its own need for self destruction, it is a matter of survival.

# SOME THINGS YOU CAN DO TO HELP

## 1. Become Better Informed about PREVENTION:

- **Read important books:** For example, "Who Cares" by Penelope Leach, "Every Child's Birthright" by Selma Fraiberg, "A Baby in the Family" by James and Joyce Robertson, "The First Three Years of Life" by Burton L. White.
- **Preview the best films:** For example, "We Were Just Too Young", "John", "Emotional Development: Aggression", "Rock-a-bye Baby", "Amazing Newborn", "Victims", "Child's Play", "Child Abuse - Cradle of Violence", "A Chain to be Broken", "Newborn - Birthright".

## 2. Learn what already exists in your community to PREVENT child abuse:

- What parenting education is given in your schools?
- Is there a Family Planning Centre or Clinic in your community?
- What proportion of parents of all births in your community have been offered pre-natal classes?
- What birthing practices are followed in your hospital?
- Is there a La Leche League Leader or Group in your community to provide breast feeding information?
- Is there a Childbirth Education Association in your community?
- Are there Parent & Child Groups (See CSPCC Journal Sept. 82) available within walking distance of all pre-school children?
- What parenting materials — books and films does your public library have?

## 3. Volunteer your Services:

Ask if there are things that you can do as a volunteer to help your Public Health Nurses or Children's Aid Society with their Child Abuse Prevention programs. For example: distributing literature to doctors' offices, visiting shut-in mothers.

## 4. Some Activities:

- Let your School Board know you support parenting education programs.
- Distribute books and literature to expecting parents.
- Organize the showing of some of the important films (above) in your community or on your cable T.V. or make them available to teachers who might like to use them.
- Initiate the development of Family Planning Information Centres, Pre-natal classes, and Parent and Child groups in your community if they do not exist.

## 5. Support the CSPCC:

- Let the secondary school teachers in your area who are responsible for parenting education know about the CSPCC Journal, Student Reprints and Films available from the CSPCC.
- Distribute the information pamphlet "About the CSPCC" in your community.
- Let your local television station know you appreciate their use of the CSPCC Public Service Announcement.
- Make the CSPCC-Rotary video tape "The Greatest Cruelty" available to your secondary school or public service groups.
- Organize fundraising activities on behalf of the CSPCC.

## 6. In General:

- Support activities that enhance Trust and Affection amongst adults.
- Speak up for the empathic care of infants whenever the opportunity arises: with friends, at meetings, on committees, at coffee break — wherever it's appropriate. You won't be believed, and others will carry the day, win the argument, pass the motion, make you feel old fashioned and out of it, but speak your mind — and heart — anyway: quietly, even haltingly and uncertainly on behalf of those who can't speak for themselves.

## How Can a Man be a Good Father To His Children?

**Some fathers make very good mothers.**

For many years mothers traditionally answered the question, "What do you do?" by saying, "I am only a housewife." It is my hope that soon they will be answering, "I am a mother and proud of it."

It is my hope that they will increasingly opt for the career for which they are most prepared biologically, that of mothering. Day Care Centres are filled with the children of mothers, who have no choice financially, they seemingly must work. Infant Centres are bulging with children who have been torn from mothers who are struggling under the pressure of one-parent families. Child development staff members are sickened by the early appearance of behaviour and learning problems in those children as compared with the nursery school child who has competence and freedom to learn and to develop. That competence has been built on the availability of a mother during the first three, vital nurturing years of the child prior to nursery school placement.

Mothers often have the choice of staying home, of practicing the vocation of motherhood. Inadvertently they are often seduced into the job market by well-meaning husbands who do not want to stand in the way of their wives who seek self-fulfillment in the currently accepted manner. It is time for husbands to use the knowledge of child development to say to their wives, "You are our child's mother. Stay home and take care of our child. Give him the most important experience of his life. Mother him."

Years ago Father Hesburgh, President of Notre Dame, was asked how a man could be a good father to his children. He answered, "By being a good husband to their mother." His remark encapsulates what we are learning increasingly, that mothers are more important to children than we have ever realized. Within their rela-

tionship to their children is woven the child's future.

Most fathers have the freedom to settle for a second vocation, that of being a father, they can develop the skills of fathering as a buttress to the contribution of their wives as mothers. Most fathers have the salaries which, given limited constraints, will permit a one-salary budget. For the most part they can make the time for mutual parenting, in which one parent offers supports and responses different from and supplementary to nurture by the other. There is nothing in child development experience that negates the biological wisdom of maternal nurture and paternal support and guidance. Some fathers make very good mothers, but biologically they are always at a disadvantage. It is time we returned to biological wisdom rather than pretending that men and women are capable of the same input into a child's life.

Agencies have the responsibility to challenge young parents to glory in the vocation of mothering. We must see as a challenge the educational guidance of prospective parents so that they will set priorities within biological wisdom rather than making parental decisions on the basis of personal development.

Schools have the opportunity to teach parenting as part of curriculum. If sex education is important, so also is education for parenting. We must teach children enough about child development so that they can make responsible decisions about their children. If they know the facts of infant care, if we teach them what we know about infant development, they will make the decision to return to their biological responsibilities rather than opting for self-development alone. In the process they will learn that the joys of parenting are often the opportunity to find the child in oneself. □

**But biologically they are always at a disadvantage.**

*Special thanks to Dr. Mary Giffen, Medical-Executive Director of the Irene Joselyn Clinic in Northfield Illinois.*

*It is easy to misinterpret Dr. Giffen's comment that she hopes women will "return to their biological responsibilities rather than opting for self development alone" as a call for a return to the oppressive traditional role of wife and mother. The very important distinction between biological difference and inequality is set out with great clarity by Alice Rossi in the article "The Biosocial Side of Parenthood" which appeared in the June 1978 issue of Human Nature. An excerpt of this article was printed in the CSPCC Journal, Volume 7, Issue 1, Winter, 1984. (Reprints available.) Dr. Rossi is author of The Feminist Papers: from Adams to de Beauvoir.*

# **Consumerism Arbitrary Male Dominance and Daycare**

There are two powerful and dangerous social forces underlying the need for daycare: consumerism, and arbitrary male dominance. The former lures parents into believing that they need to be making more money rather than caring for their children. The latter drives women away from nurturing their children to gain emancipation via the marketplace.

The problem is that the shared, discontinuous, and changing caretakers almost inevitable in substitute arrangements for the nurturing of infants and toddlers puts at risk development of their capacities for trust, empathy, and affection.

No one sees these deficits because they don't show up clearly until adulthood, and even then they are not measurable like an intelligence quotient is. What is worse, their absence can actually be an asset in a consumer society which often rewards the opposite values.

But the capacities for trust, empathy, and affection are in fact the central core of what it means to be human, and are indispensable for adults to be able to form lasting, mutually satisfying co-operative relationships with others. In a world of decreasing size and increasing numbers of weapons of mass destruction it is dangerous for these qualities to become deficient.

What is needed is greater understanding of the pragmatic nature of the values of trust, empathy, and affection; a means of measuring the degree of their presence or absence in adults; more rapid progress in the elimination of arbitrary male dominance; and closer examination of the destructive aspects of consumerism. □

*Printed above is the abstract of a paper presented by Dr. Barker at the Fifth International Congress on Child Abuse and Neglect in Montreal, September 18th, 1984. The largest section of this paper sets out the reasons why infant daycare risks producing partial psychopaths. The paper will be appearing in the next issue of Canadian Children: Journal of the Canadian Association for Young Children. Copies are also available directly from the CSPCC office.*

# **Big Brother Couldn't Forsee The Big C — Consumerism**

**by Jay Scott**

In a way, everything George Orwell predicted in the novel *Nineteen Eighty-Four* has come true. In a way, nothing he predicted has come true.

("Doublethink," he wrote, "means the power of holding two contradictory beliefs in one's mind simultaneously, and accepting both of them." The power to doublethink has come triumphantly true.)

When Orwell predicted that Big Brother would have technology to watch us, he was right. He was the Jules Verne of sociology. But he was wrong. He did not predict that citizens would be keeping tabs on Big Brother. He did not predict — how could he? Who would have believed him? — that two reporters would watch a U.S. President so closely he would be forced to resign, that a woman comedian would call a U.S. Secretary of the Interior an "idiot" on nationwide television and refuse to apologize ("Oh, grow up, America!"), or that Big Brother would watch other Big Brothers — that politicians would live in mortal fear of having their secrets discovered by other politicians, the press, the people. Orwell predicted the equivalent of government dossiers, FBI files, CIA snooping. He did not predict *That's Incredible*, *People Magazine* or the *National Enquirer*.

Orwell was a pessimist, a dystopian suspicious of Marxism's promise of Eden on earth, and he was able to imagine all too well a society in which everything was sacrificed to the state, a society in which every move was monitored and engineered to echo every other move, a society in which individualism was extinct. For Orwell, the

future could be found in what Mao's China was at one time thought to be, a vast panorama of — to use the term that became popular in the Fifties, the decade Orwell did not quite live to see — conformism. "If you want a picture of the future," he wrote in *Nineteen Eighty-four*, "imagine a boot stamping on a human face — forever."

Maybe. But what about Pac-Man? Orwell reckoned without capitalism's confounding capacity to avoid confrontation by merchandising it. Capitalism, like Pac-Man, can munch up anything. Control and conformism, the two Orwellian bugaboos, reckoned without behavioral psychology, which teaches that the most efficient form of control is achieved by rewarding the organism, not by punishing it. Capitalism understands behaviorism as totalitarianism does not. In totalitarian countries, there are coups and revolutions and liberation movements. In capitalist countries, there are sales.

Consumer capitalism hopes to attract consumers to things that make them feel good, to things that, in the language of behaviorism, are "reinforcing". (The dark side of the system is that the search for profits leads capitalists to market things that look good but aren't good — cigarettes, the Corvair, militarism — and to resist discarding them as long as somebody is making a buck from them.)

Consumer capitalism stands ready to push ideas, ideologies and revolutionary strategies with the same acumen it brings to marketing perfume and defence contracts; in street lingo, consumer capitalism

*This article is reprinted with kind permission from The Globe and Mail, Toronto.*

is an equal-opportunity whore. If it makes consumers feel good to avoid Big Brother, if it makes them feel good to think they are fighting against the system, the system will sell them that feeling.

Hollywood makes movies that call into question the morality of the corporations that own Hollywood, rock singers sing against the corruption of the record companies that record them, TV talk shows talk about TV as a menace. (Try to imagine it: each morning as the characters in Nineteen Eighty-Four get up, Big Brother announces over the loudspeaker, "Beware, Big Brother".) The law Orwell never took into account when foreseeing the future was this: if somebody wants it, somebody will sell it. And the corollary: if somebody sells it, somebody will buy it.

Orwell himself is marketed: Newspeak, doublethink and the adjective Orwellian are part of the culture. Individuality is accorded prime importance in the West, in the belief that individuality is the thing the West has that the East wants, the thing that spells the secret of its unprecedented ability to market life with such demographic exactitude that it is called a style. Lifestyle. The system has institutionalized the diversity Orwell feared would die out. The system is devoted to the proliferation of variety — to superficial variety (are those buns by Calvin Klein or Valente?) perhaps, but to variety

nonetheless.

The desires of minorities generate marketing strategies — Jet and Ebony magazines for blacks, Blueboy and Numbers for gays. Within limits, the outsider is honoured and occasionally revered, especially if his jacket is black and made of leather and especially if he dies young and in it, with his Frye boots on.

Orwell's novel is a cautionary fable about a land in which everybody in the same class had the same things, did the same things, a land that exterminated any variation from the norm. (The Outer Party members lived by strict rules; the Inner Party members had rules slightly less strict; and the proles, the uneducated lower class, lived by few rules except that they were exterminated, if they showed signs of intelligence or of causing trouble.)

The sequel he never lived to write could have been about a land where nobody was the same. In this non-Orwellian strange new world, there would be one law, and it would not be to revere Big Brother, and there would be one measure of success, and it would not be the ability to conform. Success and its measure would be found in one slogan, a slogan that would be found for a time on T-shirts sold only at the chicest of boutiques in the chicest of burgs: "Whoever has the most things when he dies, wins." □

...Finally, we must consider our economy, increasingly gambling its success or failure on consumption by the installment plan. Has anyone since Veblen asked what would happen to such an economy if the masked neurotic ingredients in human nature were by sudden magic to be eliminated? What would happen to the fashion cults, the beauty cults, the food and drink and tobacco cults with their exploitation of orality, the excretory cult, the cleanliness cults, the size cults, the height cults, the strip-tease cults? Consider the exploitation of hypochondriasis through the drug houses and even our more elite publishing houses. Take also the endless whetting of consumer craving, the exploitation of the "gimmies" of childhood by transmuting them into the "gimmies" of adult life. Consider the ministering to neurotic needs through size and power: the knight of old replaced by Casper Milquetoast in General Motors armor, complete with chromium, unneeded size, unused seating capacity, and a pointless, illegal, and unusable capacity for speed. Or consider the search for happiness anywhere else than where one is, whether it is an adolescent with his hot-rod, or the travel industry selling vacations on the installment plan.

To repeat, what would happen to our economy if we were to get well?

Lawrence Kubie

# Primary Prevention: Society's Longterm Solution for Child Abuse

"There is only one dire threat to mankind today, and that is from man himself. The readiness of human beings to be hostile to each other is by far the greatest problem of mankind — a fatal danger to our species for the imaginable future. The child, as it matures and goes through life, is more in danger from other persons than from any other source...

"Hostility should be made universally known for what it is: a neurotic symptom, a symptom of weakness and frustration, a once invaluable primitive animal method of defence in the wild, which now has become mankind's principal enemy and threatens to destroy it. We should know that a Hitler and a Nero are made, not born, that evil and violence have their main genesis in the mishandling of the emotions of small children and are therefore preventable perversions."

Dr. Leon Saul wrote this passage and it is used by the C.S.P.C.C. in their introductory pamphlet. In the author's view, it represents where the problem of child abuse is really to be found. This is the maltreatment of children when they are young so that they grow without the assurance of having been loved. Once the abuse has occurred it is extremely difficult to treat the damage it causes to a human spirit. In this way it makes clear that prevention is the only way to end the abuse syndrome. Some people believe that child abuse cannot be prevented because abusive tendencies are a part of human characteristics and that every person has the potential to be a child abuser if exposed to extreme conditions.

This view must be corrected — child abuse is not part of human nature. A child who dies from a laceration of the liver and a hemorrhage as a result of being beaten is

not abused by the everyday parent who infrequently spans his child. The child abuser does not have the ability to empathize. Why doesn't he? Because the emotional nurturing which was needed when he or she was a child was absent.

The solution for child abuse has to be through longterm prevention. Otherwise children will continue to be born into an environment of wars, racial conflicts and seething violence, where without love and caring they will adopt the behaviour around them — that is, they will repeat the hatred that they are exposed to.

Now, children are being socialized into a highly competitive and violent society. Our society encourages this violence by permitting it to be exploited through the media. Does it not make more sense that we should be sowing the seeds of trust and love into the personalities of children so

that they grow with a nature which promotes stability — a nature which automatically assumes values which reject violence?

If society becomes depressed by the state of the world now and predicts that worse things are to come and leave it at that, then tomorrow's abused child will not be saved. They will be born into an environment where they are either raised to feel inadequate and fearful, with a certainty that they can never love or be loved. Or they may be born into an environment where they are thrown around the room and suffer the tortures of deprived minds. Whatever the case may be, they will come out the same; wounded emotionally in ways which will recur throughout their lifetime if help is not available. They will become people who are haunted by feelings of despair, self-loathing, loneliness, isolation, fear, or horror of the fact that they believe they will never fit into society.

Primary prevention methods are longterm because they are aimed at teaching new ways of approaching child care and at spreading the importance of early attachment to the parents-to-be. If a new cycle can be started then the unborn have a much better prospect for good lives. If the

children-to-be are raised with the qualities fundamental to their mental health then the horrors listed above may one day decline. Primary prevention will indeed be a revolutionary change. In the longterm it could help to prevent the sufferings of many.

It is not a dream: primary prevention ideas and practices are available to everyone to learn and use. You, the reader, can be one of the catalysts to save tomorrow's battered child.

Think about it. After you look at the pictures that follow this essay don't just sit back and forget about them. Whether primary prevention takes the form of joining a prevention society, teaching in a school, speaking to a friend about the ways to nurture children or just being a good parent, they are all actions for the prevention of future child abuse. More than this, they are helping to initiate the changes in social attitude towards living by our values instead of ignoring them. The unborn children who primary prevention techniques are fighting to save are the ones who will shape the future.

The opportunity to become an agent for the primary prevention of child abuse rests with every member of society. How will we respond? □

So far nothing has been able to alter society's priorities, some of those being success, high intellectual achievement and high income. This has the appearance of an epidemic decline of our morals. Everyone is capable of changing their priorities and helping to work for better conditions for our children. However, few people make the changes in their own behaviour because they do not believe that by changing themselves they could possibly help anyone else — and so "why bother?" One person's change is important because it is by our united efforts to change our social priorities which is significant to the final outcome.

Simone Hayhurst

*Reprinted here is the last section of a 30-page essay written by Simone Hayhurst for a grade 13 Family Studies assignment. Considering the amount of bad publicity our high schools have been receiving for the quality of recent graduates, it came as a very pleasant surprise to see an essay written with such thoroughness and clarity of thought. In my opinion it shows the amount of work and degree of perceptiveness one expects to find at the graduate level in University. When I passed these comments on to the author when requesting reprint permission, it was an even greater pleasure to hear the genuineness with which she attributed the success of the assignment to the inspiration of her teacher — Mrs. Legate of Don Mills Collegiate Institute in Toronto.*



*Our Character Forming Method Has Made  
a Great Success of Material Things...*

## THE UNFREE CHILD

The economic freedom that makes an American electric kitchen does not lead to any greater happiness or wisdom; all it does is to allow more comfort, and this soon becomes accepted automatically and loses its emotional value.

The economic solution alone will never free the world from its hate and misery, its crime and scandal, its neurosis and diseases.

His NAME is Legion. He lives in every corner of the world. He lives in our town, round the first corner; he sits at a dull desk in a million barrack schools, and later at a duller desk in office and shop. He is docile, prone to obedience to authority, fearful of criticism and almost fanatical in his desire to be normal, conventional, correct. He accepts what he has been taught, and he hands all his complexes and fears and frustrations on to his children. I recently said to an ex-pupil of one of our most famous Public Schools: "How many boys from your school later come to challenge the whole system?" Without pausing to think he answered: "I should guess about 3%."

Psychologists have contended that most of the psychic damage to a child has been done in the first five years of its life. It is possibly nearer the truth to say that the first five months, or weeks or perhaps minutes can do damage that will last a lifetime. Unfreedom begins with birth...nay,

it begins long before birth. If a repressed woman with a rigid body bears a child, who can say what effect the maternal rigidity has on the new-born baby? Reich and his fellow-workers are at present studying this aspect, and their final report should be of the greatest value to all those who deal with children. It may be no exaggeration to say that all children in our civilization are born in a life-disapproving atmosphere. A woman complained because my daughter bathed in the sea naked. Zoe was then one year old. This question of bathing sums up tersely the whole anti-life attitude of society. We all know the irritation arising from trying to undress on the beach without exposing our so-called private parts. No child can feel himself a free person when the great function of sex is made something shameful, to be hidden by law. Parents of self-regulated children know the difficulty of explaining to a child of three or four why he or she must wear a bathing costume in a public place.

One feels platitudinous today when one

*This Chapter of A.S. Neill's 1953 book THE FREE CHILD (London, Herbert Jenkins) is reprinted with some apology because it is thirty years old, and because it has so many specifically British words and phrases in it. On the other hand, I have never seen so clear a statement of the societal-wide problems with which the CSPCC is concerned. A.S. Neill founded the well known school Summerhill and is the author of many books on education, among them Summerhill (1960) and Freedom - Not License! (1966) published by Hart Publishing Company, New York City.*

**It may be no exaggeration to say that all children in our civilization are born in a life-disapproving atmosphere.**

says that the sex taboo is the root evil in the suppression of children; it has been said so often, said too often without being believed. I do not narrow the word sex down to genital sex, it is likely that the child at the breast feels unhappy if his mother disapproves of any or every part of her own body. We should use the word Pleasure instead of the word Sex. The baby time-table-feeding advocates are basically anti-pleasure; they want the child to be disciplined in feeding because non-time-table-feeding suggests orgasmic pleasure at the breast. The nutriment argument is usually a rationalisation; the deep motive is to mould the child into a disciplined realist who will put duty before pleasure.

But to get away from theorising, let us consider the life of an imaginary Grammar School boy, John Smith, lower middle class. His parents are Church of England who go to church about once a year, but send their family to Sunday School. The parents had married quite rightly because of mutual sex attraction; they had to marry because in their milieu one could not live sexually unless respectable, that is married. As so often happens the sex attraction was not enough, and differences of temperament made the home a strained place, with occasional loud-voiced arguments between the parents. There were many tender moments too, but little John took them for granted, whereas the loud quarrels hit him in the region of the solar plexus, and he cried and got spanked for crying for nothing. From the first he was conditioned. Time-table feeding gave him much frustration when he was hungry and the clock said his feeding time was still an hour away. He was wrapped up in too many clothes, too tightly; he found that he could not kick out as freely as he wanted to do. He

found that he was limited in certain directions. Frustration in feeding naturally made him suck his thumb, but the family doctor said that he must not be allowed to form bad habits, and mamma was ordered to tie up his arms in paste-board sleeves. His natural functions were left alone during the nappy period, but when he began to crawl and perform on the floor, words like Naughty and Dirty began to float about the house, and a grim beginning was made in teaching him to be house clean. Before this his hand had been taken away every time it touched his genitals, and he soon came to associate the genital Verbot with the anal-faeces acquired disgust, and thus, years later when he became a commercial traveller, his story repertoire consisted of a balanced number of sex and water-closet jokes.

Much of his training was conditioned by relatives and neighbours. Mother and father were most anxious to be correct, to do the proper thing, so that when relatives or next-door neighbours came, John had to show himself as a well-trained child. He had to say "Thank You" when Auntie gave him a chocolate; he had to be most careful about his table manners, and especially he had to refrain from speaking when adults were speaking. His abominable Sunday Clothes were a concession to neighbours. With this training in the acceptance of respectability went an involved system of lying, begun early in his life. He was told that God does not love naughty boys who say Damn, that the policeman would fetch him if he wandered along the train corridor when he was three. All his curiosity about the origins of life were met with clumsy lies, lies so effective that his conscious curiosity about life and birth disappeared. The lies about life became combined with fears when at

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## John never had enough play in his life...Hence he never developed his imagination, his phantasy.

the age of five his mother found him having genital play with his sister of four and the girl from next door. The severe spanking that followed (father added to it when he came home from work) conveyed to John for ever the lesson that sex is filthy and sinful, something one must not even think of. Poor John had to bottle up his interest in sex until he came to puberty and could guffaw in the local cinema when a woman character said she was three months gone. When he was fifteen he fell in love with Mary Brown and they sat in the cinema holding surreptitious hands...until the headmaster called them into his sanctum and told them sternly that if he found them going to the cinema together again...

Intellectually John's career was normal. He learned easily, and thus escaped the sneers and punishment a stupid teacher might have given him. He left school with a smattering of mostly useless knowledge and a culture that was easily satisfied with the cheap picture press, the trite Hollywood film, the mechanical crime library. The name Milton to John was associated with a mouth wash, and Beethoven and Bach were intrusive guys who got in the way when you were tuning in to Sambo Wambo and His Bix Beiderbecke Band. I hasten to say that it does not matter to one's happiness and creation in life whether one loves Beethoven or Hot Jazz. Schools would have more success if they included jazz in the curriculum and left out Beethoven. In my own school three boys, inspired by jazz bands, took up instruments; two bought clarinets, one a trumpet. On leaving school they all went to study at the Royal Academy

of Music, and today they are all playing in bands or orchestras which play classical music only.

John never had enough play in his life. The school playground was a concrete square, far too small for games, and his "breaks" from lessons were never nearly long enough. His home lessons and his running family messages limited his play at home. Hence he never developed his imagination, his phantasy. True he was given woodwork lessons in his school, and made quite good dovetail joints, but he was never allowed to make what his play instinct would have impelled him to make, so that when he left school he never touched a plane or a chisel again. Recently, visiting a big school in the North, I watched boys making wood joints and hammering copper trays and bowls. I asked the teacher: "How many of these boys will keep this up as a hobby later on?" He sighed and answered; "Not one, no not one." The reason being that children do not work; they play, and there is no play in a mitred joint. Because of this lack of play in his life John Smith later in his life had to play by proxy. He stood and shouted at professional football matches, at cricket matches (but more politely); he found it difficult to be alone, and therefore he had to have company in the local, the darts club, the political party. He never was really creative, nor even constructive; creativeness demands play, and this is probably what Barrie had in mind when he said that genius is the power of being a boy again at will.

John Smith's remote cousin Reginald Smith-Smythe went to a Public School, but

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**Both are staunch supporters of the patriarchal state, even if neither ever heard of the term.**

his development in essentials was that of poor John. He had the same acceptance of the second-rate in life, the same negation of love and joy. Reginald, owing to the fact that his parents used parental substitutes — tutors, nurses, governesses — may have escaped some of the more stupid Verbots and taboos, but the acceptance of the *status quo* in life along with its concomitant fear of anything new put Reggie in the same boat with John.

Are these pictures of John and Reginald one-sided caricatures or not? Not exactly caricatures, but I have not given the complete picture. I have left out the warm humanity of both, a humanity that survives the most evil character-moulding. The Smiths and the Smythes of life are in the main decent, friendly folk, full at the same time of childish faiths and superstitions and childlike trust and loyalties. They and their fellows make up the body of John Citizen who make laws and demand humaneness; they are the people who decree that animals must be killed humanely, that pets must be properly cared for, but they break down when they come to vermin, and they allow, and use without conscience, cruel poisons that burn rats' guts out. And they break down when it comes to man's inhumanity to man; they accept a cruel, unChristian criminal code without a thought, and they accept the killing of other men in war as a natural phenomenon.

John and his rich cousin agree that love and marriage laws should be stupid and unkind and hateful. They agree that there must be one law for men and another for women so far as love is concerned. Both demand that the girls they marry should be virgins, and when asked if they are virgins, they frown and say: "A man's different." Both are staunch supporters of the patriar-

chal state, even if neither ever heard of the term. They have been fashioned into a product the patriarchal state finds necessary for its continued existence. Their emotions tend to be more crowd emotions than individual ones. Long after leaving a school which they hated as schoolboys, they will exclaim: "I was beaten at my school, sir, and it did me a lot of good," and they pack off their sons to the same or a similar school. In psychological terms they accept the father without rebellion against him, assimilate the old Oedipus into their systems, and so carry on the father-authority tradition generation after generation.

I hear my old friend Colonel Blimp snort and thunder: "Damme, sir, and why not? Civilization would be all right if you interfering discontents did not stir up innocent youth against its betters, the men who made the Empire, who invented and traded and uplifted the heathen parts of the world." And to some extent he is right. Our character-forming method has made a great success of material things; it has given us a high standard of living. True it has given miserable inequalities between rich and poor, but these are gradually breaking down or rather levelling up (or down?). Many will say with the Communists that when the economic question is settled, life will be full and satisfying and free. For myself I cannot believe this. The little we have seen of economic freedom has not been encouraging. The aristocracy of England for generations were economically free, but their products were not of great merit. The Communist argument that this was because they felt themselves guilty of exploitation of the workers seems to me a feeble one. The economic freedom that makes an American

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electric kitchen does not lead to any greater happiness or wisdom; all it does is to allow more comfort, and this soon becomes accepted automatically and loses its emotional value. The economic solution alone will never free the world from its hate and misery, its crime and scandal, its neurosis and diseases.

I seem to have been painting a black picture of the result of John Smith's forced education, but who can call the world picture white or even grey? Not many will sit down and question established things. In school questioning was not allowed to anyone except the teacher; at home children were seen and not heard. If we feel like questioning today we can postulate a few awkward questions. Why does man seem to have many more diseases than animals have? Why does man hate and kill in war when animals do not? Why does cancer increase and why are millions spent on the mechanistic cancer cure research? Why so many suicides? So many insane sex crimes? Why the projected hate that is in anti-Semitism? Why negro hating and lynching? Why gossip and back-biting and jealousy and envy and spite? Why the continuance of religions that have long ago lost their love and hope and charity? Why is sex an obscene leering joke? Why is being a bastard a social disgrace? Why, a thousand whys about our vaunted state of civilized eminence?

I ask these questions because I am by profession a dominie, that is one who deals with the young. I ask them because the questions so often asked by teachers are the unimportant ones, the ones about school subjects. I ask what earthly good can come out of discussions about Maths

or French or History or what not, when these subjects don't matter a jot in the larger question of life's natural fulfilment? I lecture to a body of teachers. I commence by saying that I am not going to speak about school subjects or discipline or classes. For an hour I am listened to in rapt silence, and after the sincere applause my chairman announces that I am ready to answer questions. At least three-quarters of the questions deal with subjects and teaching, I do not tell this in any sneering or superior way; I tell it sadly to show how the classroom walls and the prison-like buildings narrow the teacher's outlook, and prevent him from seeing the fundamental essentials of education. His work deals with the part of children that is above the neck, and perforce the emotional, vital part of the children is foreign territory to him. He cannot help his environment, only I wish I could see a bigger movement of rebellion among our younger teachers. Higher education and university degrees do not make a scrap of difference to the evils of society. A learned neurotic is similar to an unlearned neurotic. In all countries, Capitalist, Socialist, Communist, elaborate schools are built to educate the young; and all their wonderful labs and workshops and potteries do nothing to help John or Per or Ivan to surmount the kind of home and social environment I have been trying to describe.

To complete the portrait of John Smith I ought to give a short sketch of the life of his sister Mary, short because, by and large, the environment in its repressive aspect is that of her brother. She has, however, handicaps that John does not have. In a patriarchal society she is a definite inferior, and she is trained to know it. She has to do

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house chores when her brother reads or plays; she soon learns that when she gets a job she will get less pay than a man gets. If she stems from the Smith-Smythe branch of the family she has to accept the law of inheritance that gives her younger brother the title and lands and fortune. At a dance Mary has to wait until some youth asks her to dance. Her Swedish sister must not drink her wine at table until some man nods to her and raises his glass, but then the Swedish father is too often a terrifying person. Among the many Swedish pupils I have had in my time, only one or two were not afraid of their fathers; the girl pupils were completely under their stern fathers' thumbs.

Mary does not as a rule rebel against her inferior status in a man-made society. Man sees that she has compensations, tawdry as they mostly are. She is the focus of good manners, she is treated with deference; man will stand in her presence if she is not seated, and in Britain many men will give up their tuppenny seat in a tram to a standing woman, but not their first-class train seat to a woman standing in the corridor. We ask a woman's permission to smoke; we ask her if she will graciously marry us; we subtly teach her that one of her chief functions is to look as lovely as possible, so that many more millions are spent on dress and cosmetics than on books and schools.

In the sex sphere Mary is as ignorant, as repressed as her brother. In a patriarchal society the menfolk have decreed that their women must be pure, virginal, innocent, and it is not Mary's fault that she has grown up in the sincere belief that women have purer minds than men. In some almost mystical way her menfolk have made her think and feel that her function in life is reproduction, and that sexual pleasure is man's province. Some men actually believe that, and I requote the incident in which the

father of a family expressed surprise in a pub that the Almighty hadn't given women the gift of having orgasms. Mary's grandmother, and probably her mother, too, were not supposed to have any sex until the right man came along and aroused the sleeping beauty. Mary has got away from that phase, but not so far away as we want to believe. Her love life is ruled by fear of pregnancy, for she realises that an illegitimate child will very likely spoil her chance of getting a man, or rather being possessed and kept by a man. The invention of contraceptives must in the long run lead to a new sex morality, seeing that fear of consequences was the strongest factor in sex morality. The number of young people today who have a love life before marriage could not possibly have done so in my young days. Love to be free must feel itself safe, but here I must take up the vexed question of "free love".

"Free love" has a sinister meaning because it describes sex that is neurotic; it means promiscuous sex which is always unhappy and shameful. It is the direct result of repression, and in a free people would not exist. When our Summerhill girls go bathing at the seaside there is sometimes a bevy of adolescent youths lying in the grass, Peeping Toms all agog to see the girls undress, whereas our own boys wouldn't turn a head to see a girl undress. Repressed sex will attach itself to any likely object...a glove, a handkerchief, undies, bodies — any female bodies, and thus "free love" is promiscuous because it is only a lust element without tenderness or warmth or love. Promiscuous sex is masturbation on promotion. The youth masturbates with a phantasy of some pretty woman, and that phantasy changes again and again. Promiscuous sex is masturbation with the changing phantasy maiden translated into the changing actual sex ob-

She has to do house chores when her brother reads or plays; she soon learns that when she gets a job she will get less pay than a man gets.

Our John will probably never become a sex criminal but the taboos and fears that fashioned his character are those that produce the perverts who rape and strangle small girls in parks, the perverts who torture Jews or Negroes.

ject.

Neither John nor his sister have any facilities for loving in the true sense. Parents will not allow sons or daughters to live in sin, as they call it, in the house, so that love has to seek damp woods or parks or even stone closes in cities. Thus everything is loaded heavily against our young folk. Circumstances compel them to convert what should be lovely and joyful into something sinister and sinful, into smut, leers, shameful laughter. Our John will probably never become a sex criminal but the taboos and fears that fashioned his character are those that produce the perverts who rape and strangle small girls in parks, the perverts who torture Jews or Negroes. If I remember rightly, Malinowski found no rape nor sex crime in the Trobriand Islands where sex was not repressed and evil.

One of the big tasks of today and tomorrow is the investigation of repressed sexual energy and its relation to human sickness. Our John Smith may die of kidney trouble and Mary may die of cancer, and neither will wonder whether their narrow, tied emotional lives have any connection with their illnesses. So far as I know the only people

working on this line of enquiry are the Wilhelm Reich Foundation, Maine, U.S.A. The Foundation's own literature should be read by those who are interested in studying, not psychology, not the body, but the whole personality, psyche and soma. Not being a scientist and not being an active worker in this field, I can only throw out the suggestion that one day humanity may be compelled to trace all its miseries, its hates, its diseases to a form of civilization that is essentially anti-life. If, as Reich has shown, rigid character training makes rigid human bodies, cramped and confined instead of being alive, pulsating, it seems logical to conclude that the same rigid deadness will prohibit the pulsation necessary to life in every human organ.

To sum up, my contention is that unfree education results in life that cannot be lived fully. Such an education ignores almost entirely the emotions of life, and because these emotions are dynamic and unkillable, their lack of opportunity for expression must and does result in cheapness and ugliness and hatefulness. Only the head is educated, but if the emotions are free, the intellect will look after itself. □

There are thousands of psychotherapists in private practices treating, for the most part, people who can afford the time and the money. If every therapist in the world were to do nothing but educate parents about child psychology, telling them primarily what not to do with their children, there would be little need for adult therapy of any kind. How many psychoanalysts have said: "Patching up adults isn't good enough. I'll devote my life to prophylaxis, and I'll begin with mothers and babies."

A.S. Neill

# PARENTS SENSIBLES

Journal de la Société Canadienne  
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## NOUS AVONS BESOIN DE PRECISER NOS IDEES

Dans mon rôle de médecin et de psychiatre j'ai appris les règles complexes de la classification de toutes les maladies humaines.

Dans mon rôle privé j'ai besoin d'apprendre des règles pour décrire l'état de santé où tout va bien en dedans et entre les êtres humains.

Voici une liste tentative de critères pour la santé émotionnelle.

1. De l'aptitude à se fier à autrui — compter sur la probité et la justice d'autrui.
2. De l'aptitude à sentir pour autrui — réagir avec les émotions parce qu'on s'aperçoit des émotions d'autrui.
3. De l'aptitude à maintenir des rapports affectueux qui ne sont pas fondés uniquement sur l'utilité qu'a pour nous le personnage aimé.
4. De la confiance en soi-même qui permet de passer parmi des étrangers et de s'attendre à être accueilli.
5. De l'amour-propre — la valeur que nous mettons sur nous-même.
6. De l'aptitude à toucher et être touché.
7. De l'aptitude à la solitude paisible — sans la télé.
9. De l'aptitude à attendre pour avoir du plaisir.

Je serais très reconnaissant si le lecteur envoyait à ce Journal des descriptions plus détaillées de ces qualités, et si il ajoutait d'autres qualités dont il a connaissance.

Une description et une classification plus précise nous permettrait de tenir ces idées plus facilement en vue.

De plus, puisque tant de ces qualités sont influées par la qualité des soins que reçoit le bébé et le petit enfant, leur éclaircissement nous influera dans la question des soins que nous choisissons.

Elliott Barker

*(French courtesy M.B. May,  
Erikson Institute, Advanced Study  
in Child Development, Chicago)*

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Recognizing that the capacity to give and receive trust, affection and empathy is fundamental to being human.

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

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

# CREDO



## WE BELIEVE THAT:

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

## THERE IS AN URGENCY THEREFORE TO:

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