



# EMPATHIC PARENTING

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

Volume 20

Issue 2

Spring 1997



Infant Carrying: Optional or Necessary to  
Develop the Capacity for Love?

pages 2-11

# EMPATHIC PARENTING

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

Volume 20

Issue 2

Spring 1997

## Current Multiple-Caretaker Systems

“...Whereas today children beginning in the opening days, weeks and months of life are likely to find themselves in the care of people who only days, weeks and months ago were perfect strangers to their parents, and who they will lose contact with in a few months if not weeks, such people were certainly not those with whom ancestral or aboriginal parents shared their rearing responsibilities. They relied upon relatives and kinsmen with whom they had enduring relationships and with whom the child would have long-lasting relations. Thus, it is simply misleading to contend as so many have that the normative human condition is for parents to share rearing responsibilities without simultaneously acknowledging how different current multiple-caretaker systems are from this historical practice...”

Jay Belsky  
page 13

### WHAT IS EMPATHIC PARENTING?

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

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

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

**EMPATHIC PARENTING**

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

Volume 20 Issue 2 Spring 1997  
(Date of Issue -- May 1997)

Editor: E.T.Barker M.D., D.Psych., F.R.C.P.(C)  
Editorial Assistant: Jan Hunt M.Sc.  
Printed by Midland Printers, Midland, Ontario  
on recycled paper

With Vol. 7, Issue 3, Summer '84, EMPATHIC PARENTING became the official title of what was formerly the Journal of the Canadian Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children (ISSN 0705-6591)

EMPATHIC PARENTING, official publication of the Canadian Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children, is published four times a year (Winter, Spring, Summer, and Fall) and is mailed without charge to all CSPCC members.

|                              |          |
|------------------------------|----------|
| Annual Supporting Membership | \$25.00  |
| Annual Sustaining Membership | \$100.00 |
| Annual Endowing Membership   | \$250.00 |

Membership fees and donations are income tax deductible. Registration No. 0457960-09-13.

The Editor welcomes letters, suggestions for content, articles, photos, drawings, etc. for consideration. Opinions expressed in EMPATHIC PARENTING are not necessarily those of the CSPCC or the Editor.

Copyright © Canadian Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children 1996. Requests for permission to reprint will be granted whenever possible.

Second Class Mail registration No. 4947. Return postage guaranteed.

Subscription orders, undeliverable copies, and change of address notices should be sent to CSPCC, 356 First Street, Box 700, Midland, Ontario, L4R 4P4. Phone: (705) 526-5647 Fax: (705) 526-0214 Email: [cspcc@bconnex.net](mailto:cspcc@bconnex.net)

Indexed in the Canadian Periodical Index, the Canadian Magazine Index, and available on-line and on CD ROM through Canadian Business and Current Affairs. All back issue are available from Micromedia Ltd., 20 Victoria Street, Toronto, Ontario, M5C 2N8 Phone (416) 362-5211, ext. 2605 Fax (416) 362-6161 Toll Free (800) 387-2689, ext. 2605 URL <http://www.micromedia.on.ca> E-mail [rsmeijer@micromedia.on.ca](mailto:rsmeijer@micromedia.on.ca)



**In this issue...**

**Current Multiple-Caretaker Systems** **Inside Front Cover**

**The Origins of Love & Violence and the Developing Human Brain** **pp 2-11**

**Early Child Care: Infants & Nations at Risk** **pp 12-13**

**Polluted or Not, Breast Milk Still Best** **pp 14-16**

Many articles from past issues of Empathic Parenting are now available on the Internet and may be freely downloaded by anyone. There are three 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/>

# The Origins of Love & Violence and the Developing Human Brain

*James W. Prescott, Ph.D.*

**Michael Mendizza:** *If there was one thing that you could do to reduce violence, what would that be?*

There are two fundamental issues. One is the issue of the bonded and unbonded child. The other is full gender equality. Until women are able to control their own body, and not just reproduction but the whole spectrum of her sexuality, it will be very difficult to achieve the first step which is the bonded child. Just look at all the violence against women: the rapes, domestic violence and battered women. It's epidemic, as is child abuse and neglect.

**Most people would say that we males cause most of this violence.**

So, we have to trace the roots of what produces the violent male? And also ask the question, why more and more women are being violent against their own children? What causes the anger and rage which leads to violence? What encodes the brain for anger and rage, as opposed to peace and tranquillity? We have answers to these questions based on substantial scientific data. Yet the deeper ques-

tion remains. What prevents us from acting on the scientific data we have gathered over the past twenty-five years?

**David Bohm and our Dialogue project looks at this question. Professor Bohm points out that we have constructed very deep and powerful defense structures which distort our perception and these barriers are built into the nervous system.**

This perspective is not new. In the 1930's, Wilhelm Reich, the German Psychoanalyst, who had major differences with Freud, observed how sexuality — when abused and repressed in childhood and adolescence — leads to what he called the emotional plague; and the "armour" (defense structures of Bohm) we develop is to protect the vulnerability of our emotional-sexual core.

**For example?**

With the ability to experience joy and pleasure, you have a more openness toward life and change. People who are rigid, highly armoured, are limited in their capacity to feel empathy, compassion or to change. Bohm's work, and many others,

James Prescott is a developmental neuropsychologist and cross cultural psychologist. He received his doctoral degree in psychology from McGill University and served as Health Scientist Administrator, Developmental Behavioural Biology Program, National Institute of Child Health and Human Development, NIH (1966 - 1980). He has given expert testimony on the origins of human violence, particularly domestic violence, before the U.S. Congress; the Senate of Canada, and many other legislative and professional organizations.

Reprinted with permission from the Fall 1995 issue of Touch the Future® edited by Michael Mendizza and available from 4350 Lime Avenue, Long Beach California 90807-2815 (310) 426-2627 Fax (310) 427-8189. TTFuture@aol.com

shows that any attempt to deal with adults who are already structured, already armoured, requires an enormous amount of work. From a purely statistical point of view we have to question if this will bring about any significant change.

*The ability to experience pleasure is blocked by this armour. Yet pleasure is natural and necessary.*

Unfortunately our society and culture are based on philosophical and religious world views and values. We have a moral philosophy which says that pleasure and the body are evil and the spirit or soul is good. There is a division between the natural state of the body and our ideas about good and evil.

We are at war with our own bodies and in many ways woman, her body and children are the targets in this war. The very idea of Mother Earth carries the archetype of the body which implies pleasure, particularly, sexual pleasure. The Body, Woman and Pleasure however, have been equated with evil and wickedness by Plato and Pythagoras, in the old Testament and in most, if not all theistic religious traditions. There's no major religion that affirms the full equality and dignity of woman with man. She's always subor-

dinate.

These religious systems have been used to control the individual and therefore society. This control is achieved by limiting access to pleasure. When young children are not touched, held or surrounded with affection, the neural systems required to experience pleasure are not developed which leads to an individual and

a culture that is self-centered, violent and authoritarian.

*Let's go into that.*

When the experience of physical pleasure is believed to be morally sinful, this impacts on the ability of adults to rear their children in environments of pleasure and affection, as opposed to pain and suffering.

Then combine

this with a value system that is racist, sexist, anti-Semitic, etc. and you have a package that establishes both the "engine" and the "guidance system" for violence. The repression of pleasure sets up the reservoir of rage; and the belief system or values create the target. Both work together and it is this bi-directional system which has to be changed since both reinforce the other.

*It's easy to accept the need for being touched, which is pleasurable, when re-*

If we do not get the sensory stimulation we equate with love, bonding and intimacy during the formative periods of brain development, we're going to be impaired, if not crippled in our ability to experience and express this "language of love" later in life.

*sponding to young children who are pre-sexual. When sexuality clicks in however, touch often becomes taboo.*

We have to look at sexuality in quite a different context, that is, as an integral part of who we are. Children are often punished for touching their genitals for pleasure, e.g. masturbation, and made to feel shame and guilt which creates a neural-dissociative state in the brain. The sensory deprivation of pleasure results in the failure of certain neural pathways and systems to develop properly. Sensory stimulation acts like a nutrient for brain growth and development. The richer the networks, the greater the interconnectivity and neural integration of the brain.

The integration of our sexuality with our total "persona" is a critical aspect of our development as human beings.

*Simply stated, in order for the brain to grow and to develop, it needs to be stimulated.*

A rich array of sensory stimuli, of all the senses, maximizes development of the brain. If we do not get the sensory stimulation we equate with love, bonding and intimacy during the formative periods of brain development, we're going to be impaired, if not crippled in our ability to experience and express this "language of love" later in life.

*When we first met I suggested that love*

*is a hardwired capacity, everybody has it. You said, "Yes, but" — if a child has not been exposed to these specific sensory (love) experiences the neural-perceptual pathways needed to experience and to express love are not fully developed. You compared it to being colour blind. One might be surrounded by colour, but if your brain system hasn't plugged itself together in such a way to experience colour, all that is seen are shades of gray.*

Our sensory systems have a genetically pre-disposed structure for function. When light hits the eye the iris will contract. You don't control that. We have a natural propensity to avoid pain and to seek pleasure. Following the path of pleasure provides the basic building blocks which ultimately lead to the experience of what we call love. The ultimate foundation for a system of ethics therefore, has to rest upon a neuropsychology of pain and pleasure. If we violate these basic evolutionary principles, which many of our philosophies and theologies have done, by creating a war against the body, against women and children, then we pay a very high cost.

*Let's create the best hypothetical world we can, the most enriching, nurturing, affectionate, bonded environment for a human nervous system to flourish. Describe what those characteristics might*

Many teenagers seek sexual relationships to get the physical contact, affection and pleasure they were denied as infants and children. This is a major driving force behind teenage pregnancy.



By depriving intimate body contact between mother and infant, Harlow created emotionally, socially and sexually dysfunctional animals.

*be.*

First, every pregnancy would be wanted and every child is a wanted child, which gets back to our first point, that woman must have control over her own body.

*Thousands of babies that are being born to unwed teen mothers. These young girls think that they want to have a baby until they get pregnant. Actually the majority of pregnancies are unplanned, regardless of social or economic conditions.*

Many teenagers seek sexual relationships to get the physical contact, affection and pleasure they were denied as infants and children. This is a major driving force behind teenage pregnancy. Secondly, they want a child to love and who will love them in return because they didn't get love in their own infancy and childhood.

With many, the intention of the pregnancy is to fill a need in the young mother, to give her self-respect, to give her pleasure, to fill a void. It goes right back to the same common ground, a failure of affectional bonding to meet the basic, fundamental, emotional needs of the infant and child.

*We often miss the impact fear and anxiety have on human development.*

Fear has been used by our religious systems for centuries to control pleasure. Today the medical and scientific community use fear very effectively to keep woman, her pregnancy and birth under

their control. We force birthing mothers to do all sorts of unnatural things. Having her lay flat on her back during delivery, for example. No other mammal gives birth on its back. We know that premature cutting of the umbilical cord is damaging and the benefits of placing the infant to the breast of the mother right away, and of maintaining close physical body contact. But the medical profession routinely intervenes and takes the baby away from the mother. Deny direct body contact with the mother and we set the stage for fear, anger and rage right at the start. No other mammal separates the newborn from its mother at birth except the human mammal.

*Isn't this what Harlow did back in the 50's — he separated mothers and infant monkeys at birth with devastating consequences?*

We need to begin before Harlow. Rene Spitz, John Bowlby, and Wayne Dennis noticed that many children reared in orphanages or institutions had arrested emotional, social and intellectual development. Bowlby found a link between these early separation experiences and later delinquency — findings that my cross-cultural studies, which we will go into later, supported.

Spitz noticed that these many of these hospitalized infants, who had the best medical and physical care but no "mother love" — nobody touched, held or hugged them, had depressive and autistic-like be-

haviours. Spitz called this Marasmus — sickness and death due to depression associated with loss of mother love. With deprivation of physical affection and body contact, which is the biology of love, these infants and children withdrew into their own world and in extreme cases, they gave up and died.

*How did you get involved in this field?*

There are many roots to that question which are deeply embedded in one's own early life experiences. Without reviewing those factors, I was challenged to explain — as a developmental neuropsychologist — the brain processes that were involved in the wide variety of abnormal emotional-social behaviors created by Dr. Harlow in his isolation reared (mother deprived) monkeys when he separated the infant monkeys from their mothers at birth and reared them in cages by themselves where they had no physical contact with other animals. In one such experimental rearing condition the infant monkeys were reared in a colony room where they had social contact with other animals, yet being housed alone in cages could not touch or be touched by other animals. When separated from their mothers at birth, these infants would immediately protest being separated by crying and by being extremely agitated. When mother was not returned, they became profoundly depressed, engaged in chronic rocking behaviours, self-stimulation, and tactile avoidance behaviours. By depriving intimate body contact between mother and infant, Harlow created emotionally, socially and sexually dysfunctional animals. As juveniles and adults, they engaged in self-mutilative behaviors (biting the flesh from their arms and legs — previously documented in isolation reared dogs by Melzack and his associates at McGill University) and pathologi-

cal violent assaults against other animals. They could not engage in normal grooming and sexual behaviours. Their reproductive system was intact, but the emotional and social skills that goes with normal sexual behaviours were destroyed.

I was particularly struck by Dr. Harlow's denial in one of his published papers in 1964 that his social isolation rearing conditions did not involve sensory deprivation. He stated: "The most extreme deprivation condition we have studied is total social isolation (not sensory isolation, only social isolation)". This error of conceptualization that removed sensory processes from the social environment was reinforced by Rene Spitz — a developmental psychoanalyst who studied the effects of hospitalization upon infants — who stated in a 1965 paper the following: "In recent years a great deal of illuminating and interesting work has been done with animals and humans on the effects of sensory deprivation. ...It should be realized that sensory deprivation and emotional deprivation are not interchangeable concepts."

Both Dr. Harlow and Dr. Spitz were in fundamental error when they dissociated sensory processes from emotional and social behaviors. This dissociation removed the need to raise questions of sensory neurobiology and brain processes from their "purely social" experiments and prevented the establishment of neurobiological and neuropsychological studies of these isolation reared monkeys — until I redefined and reconceptualized the "maternal-social deprivation" syndrome as a special case of "Somatosensory Affective Deprivation" syndrome. It was clear that not only were sensory processes involved — it is the only way we can interact and communicate with the environment — but the question remained



## When it comes to “love” all the senses are not equal — ask any newborn infant or any lover who is never touched or held!

which of the sensory systems were the most important in accounting for the social isolation rearing effects or what we can call the failure of “mother love”. When it comes to “love” all the senses are not equal — ask any newborn infant or any lover who is never touched or held!

It was this task which I had established as a major priority research goal of the Developmental Behavioral Biology Program of the National Institute of Child Health and Human Development (NICHD), National Institutes of Health, which I created when I joined the NICHD in 1966. In my capacity as Health Scientist Administrator of that Program, I initiated the brain studies on these isolation reared monkeys and proposed that the cerebellum was a principle brain structure involved in the mediation of the abnormal emotional-social behaviors of these mother deprived monkeys and that the cerebellum was deeply involved in the regulation of limbic-frontal cortical brain activity (The limbic-frontal cortical brain is the primary emotional-sexual brain in primates).

This suggestion was heresy at the time but abnormal brain electrical activity was found in limbic and cerebellar brain structures in these isolation reared violent monkeys under an NIHCD research contract that I established with Drs. Saltberg and Heath at Tulane University in the late 1960's. Subsequent brain studies by other investigators identified structural brain damage in the cerebellum and somatosensory neocortex of these mother deprived monkeys; and in a joint study involving cerebellar neurosurgery of the cerebellum

with neurosurgeon Dr. A.J. Berman and his neuropsychologist wife, Dr. Doreen Berman, we demonstrated that such neurosurgery could eliminate most of the “autistic-like” behaviors in the isolation reared infant monkeys and completely eliminated the pathological violence in an adult monkey. Without going into the details, the surgical removal of the presumed abnormal paleocerebellar cortical cells (paleocerebellar decortication) resulted in a profound reduction in abnormal emotional-social behaviors which did not occur with a neocerebellar decortication. The reason for this differential effect is that the paleocerebellum has its primary connections with the limbic brain and the neocerebellum has its primary connections with the cerebral neocortical brain.

I was led to the vestibular-cerebellar system as a neural system involved in the mediation of the “Somatosensory Affective Deprivation” syndrome by the innovative studies of Drs. Bill Mason and Gershon Berkson who also studied infant monkeys reared in isolation but they added a surprising variable.

Few realize that Drs. William Mason and Gershon Berkson conducted one of the most significant primate infant isolation rearing studies in the history of such studies that surpassed, in my view, the original contributions of the Harlows.

Some of the surrogate mothers (a fur wrapped Clorox bottle with a pie pan attached to the bottom) could move, and others were stationary. A rod was placed through the Clorox bottle which could be moved by a cam operated device — or it

was bolted to the floor. That one simple change, adding movement had a tremendous impact. The infants reared on the moving surrogate did not develop the broad range of emotional-social psychopathology that had been so well described in isolation reared monkeys.

They were not autistic, they were not depressed, they were alert, they were inquisitive and would physically touch and interact with human attendants which the "non-moved" infants could not do. There was no anger or rage or violent behaviours observed in these animals. Clearly, "movement" had a powerful effect on the emotional, sexual and social centres of the brain.

*And the only difference was clinging to a moving rather than stationary Clorox bottle?*

Yes. The areas of the brain which control emotional, sexual and social development, including pleasure, pain, rage, peace and affection were being affected by stimulation from the Vestibular Cerebellar Complex, which is the brain system that mediates body movement in space and balance.

*And love?*

Body touch and movement provide for the primary biological foundations of "love" where "love" reflects an integrated system of complex neural processes involving the frontal cortex which has extensive connections with the Limbic system and cerebellum. My hypothesis is when limbic brain pleasure — which results from body touch and movement — becomes integrated with the higher brain centres of the frontal and prefrontal cortex and the cerebellum, then "love" — a brain gestalt — is created.

This process leads to an altered state

of consciousness we experience as love. Intimacy, as a special characteristic of "love", is mediated primarily by the "olfactory-limbic" system which is another story to be told. From these considerations we can begin to understand that breastfeeding involves much more than the nutrients found in breast milk. Encoding the developing brain with the smell of woman's body (mother) is essential for the future of intimate love. The plastic bottle of formula milk cannot compete with mother's breast.

*What else did you learn ?*

Two other consequences of early sensory deprivation need emphasis. One is the tactile avoidance and the other is impaired pain perception. When the two sensory systems for primary socialization are damaged: pain and pleasure, the consequences of this damage is asocialization and violence. Early sensory deprivation also leads to stimulus-seeking behaviours. The animal will engage in behaviours that seek the sensory stimulation which it was deprived of early in life. Thus, the self-stimulation of stereotypical rocking, toe and penis sucking, self-mutilation and violence, mentioned before are commonly seen in "Somatosensory Affectional Deprivation" reared animals.

*When deprived of normal affection, being touched and held, what takes place internally?*

A small stimulus evokes a big response. When these deprived animals are touched their response is explosive. Ordinarily, a light touch doesn't produce that kind of response, but in sensory deprived animals it does. That's what sensory deprivation does. It produces a hyperexcitable state which demands sensory stimulation which often includes the chemical

stimulation of drugs. This is why Ritalin — a stimulant — quiets some hyperactive children. Vestibular-cerebellar stimulation, e.g. gymnastics, would very likely achieve the same results in many children labelled “hyperactive”.

*How does this translate into the explosion of human violence, the anti-social behaviour, car-jacking, gangs, aggressive- sexual media and increased drug abuse?*

All of those activities reflect stimulus-seeking behaviours. We need sensory stimulation and will get it one way or the other. It would be helpful to look at the brain in terms of its “engine” and its “guidance system”.

The engine’ is the emotional power plant — the Limbic system and the brain stem which includes the arousal system. (Reticular Activating System - RAS). The emotional-arousal system creates the energy but doesn’t tell you where that en-

ergy is going. That comes from the cognitive brain, the cerebral neocortex with its values and rules of behaviour.

Sensory pleasure deprivation results in states of diffuse neuroexcitability that translates into an anger state or rage reflex. According to Cannon’s “Law of Denervation Supersensitivity”. The thinking brain — the cognitive system — gives direction to that reflex. If you happen to have a racist ideology or sexist ideology, that reflex-rage response is going to be directed at women or blacks or minorities, or whatever. They become the target. The cognitive map, or values, create the “guidance system”. Keep in mind however, that our ideas, our religious and philosophical beliefs also have a tremendous impact on the sensory environment (pain or pleasure) we are exposed to as children, which, in turn, sets the stage for the development of rage and violence or for joy and peace. It is religious values and social customs that dictates, for example, genital mutila-



# It is my challenge to the legal-judicial system to find one murderer, rapist or drug addict in any penal system who has been breast-fed for “two years and beyond”

tion (circumcision) of children and punishment (pain) for masturbation (pleasure).

*Let's go back to the mother and her new baby.*

Given this research, the single most important recommendation I could make that would reduce depression and violence would be that every newborn/infant should be carried on the mother's body as much as possible throughout the day and sleeping together at night.

Body movement provides continued vestibular cerebellum stimulation which is the dominant form of stimulation *in-utero*. And it's that body movement and close physical contact with the mother that creates the sensory-environment — the new umbilical cord — for “Basic Trust”. When this bond of sensory stimulation is suddenly broken at birth, that sensory loss is a profound shock in two ways: One, disconnection from the mother and two, the brain is not receiving the sensory stimulation it needs for normal growth and maturation. Deprivation of this sensory connection with mother significantly alters brain development resulting in a predisposition to depression, anger, rage and violence. When provided however, this body movement stimulation is integrated within the other sensory systems which creates the neuropsychological foundation for human love and affection and moral behaviours.

The second most important recommendation is extended breastfeeding for “two years and beyond”, as recommended

by the World Health Organization. Breast milk contains specific nutrients not found in formula milk that are essential for normal brain development and health, e.g. immunological factors, long-chain polyunsaturated fatty acids (LCPS) and tryptophan, a precursor amino acid essential for the development of brain serotonin. Deficiencies of brain serotonin have been established in depression, impulse dyscontrol and violence (homicide and suicide). The failure to breast-feed human infants for the duration intended by mother nature is to prepare the brain of those infants for later depression, impulse dyscontrol, violence and substance abuse. It is my challenge to the legal-judicial system to find one murderer, rapist or drug addict in any penal system who has been breast-fed for “two years and beyond”...



A summary of Dr. Prescott's cross-cultural studies involving primitive cultures on the failure of mother-infant affectional bonding and later adult violence and its implications for contemporary human societies will be in the next edition of *Empathic Parenting*.



Humans evolved as an infant carrying species  
from 30 million years of primate evolution.

# early child care

## INFANTS & NATIONS AT RISK



B Y D R . P E T E R C O O K



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

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

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

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

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

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

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

## **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.

“This small book should be dropped like leaflets all over the country to get past the ubiquitous network of now entrenched daycare propagandists and reach the parents of tomorrow who have never heard the whole story.” ETB

“It remains indisputable that the early experiences of infants and young children in the western industrialized world have changed dramatically over the past several decades...

...Whereas today children beginning in the opening days, weeks and months of life are likely to find themselves in the care of people who only days, weeks and months ago were perfect strangers to their parents, and who they will lose contact with in a few months if not weeks, such people were certainly not those with whom ancestral or aboriginal parents shared their rearing responsibilities. They relied upon relatives and kinsmen with whom they had enduring relationships and with whom the child would have long-lasting relations. Thus, it is simply misleading to contend as so many have that the normative human condition is for parents to share rearing responsibilities without simultaneously acknowledging how different current multiple-caretaker systems are from this historical practice.

Fortunately not all have been intimidated by accusations of antiwomen bias or of historical ignorance which has greeted those of us who are willing to raise concerns about the contemporary child care scene, especially with regard to infants. Dr. Peter S. Cook is one of those professionals who has come to the conclusion that there are risks in keeping quiet or being intimidated by the scourge of political correctness. As one who has raised concerns in America about developmental risks associated with early day care as we know it and have it -- in contrast to some idealized form that simply does not exist to any great extent -- I welcome Dr. Cook into the ranks of those few of us who seem willing to publicly raise concerns...”

*Jay Belsky Ph.D.*

*Distinguished Professor of Human Development, Department of Human Development and Family Studies, College of Health and Human Development, The Pennsylvania State University*

“...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.”

*Harvey J. Marrable*

*M.B., Ch.B., F.R.A.N.Z.C.P., M.R.C. Psych., D.C.H.*

*Published by News Weekly Books, 582 Queensberry Street, North Melbourne, Victoria, 3051, AUSTRALIA. Copyright © Peter S. Cook, Sydney, 1996 ISBN 0 646 29299 4. A\$24.95. If you want to enquire about airmail price to North America contact the publisher at Telephone: (03) 9326 5757 Fax: (03) 9328 2877*

# Polluted or Not, Breast Milk Still Best

*Dr. Jack Newman*

Scare articles have been appearing with some regularity in the media over the past few years with regard to pollution of breast milk by PCB's, dioxins, pesticides and other chemicals.

The fact that these chemicals appear in mother's milk is undoubtedly of concern, but when physicians are asked whether it would be preferable for a baby to be formula fed, their answer should be an unqualified no.

Should breast-feeding be advised, but the duration of breast-feeding be curtailed? Again the answers should be an unqualified no.

Breast milk is not formula, though many physicians think there is no difference from a practical point of view. They are wrong. The benefits of breast-feeding to both the mother and baby are definite, though it may be difficult for the practicing physician to observe this.

For example, the incidence of invasive H. influenza disease is much less in the child who is being breast-fed, by a factor of anywhere from 4 to 16, depending on the study. Yet the average family practitioner may not see a case of invasive H. influenza during many years of active practice. Furthermore, many mothers are not breast-feeding exclusively, and thus the protective effect against various illnesses is decreased.

Indeed, one of the reasons that many studies do not show a protective effect of breast-feeding is that they do not compare babies who are exclusively breast-fed to those who are exclusively bottle fed.

Despite this, a recent review summarizes the protection provided by breast-feeding against not only H. influenza, but also gastroenteritis, respiratory diseases, otitis media, and probably allergy, though the protection against the latter has undoubtedly been overstated in the past.

In later life, breast-feeding may provide protection against certain types of lymphoma, juvenile diabetes mellitus, Crohn's Disease and ulcerative colitis, and may delay the onset of celiac disease. Furthermore, the best protection for the baby against iron deficiency, a topic much in the news recently, is not iron enriched formula, but breast-feeding.

The mother also benefits from breast-feeding. There is evidence that breast-feeding helps decrease the incidence of breast cancer, ovarian cancer, and osteoporosis.

For these reasons alone, the medical community should be doing much more active promotion of breast-feeding than it is doing. In fact, one can hardly say that health professionals in general are doing much breast-feeding promotion at all -- more accurately, with so many physicians and nurses handing out free formula samples, one can say that health professionals, in general, are promoting formula feeding and discouraging breast-feeding.

What about the so called "safe" alternative? Is it likely that formulas are free of any contamination, when nothing else in our environment is? There may be different contaminants, but there are contaminants present nonetheless.

*Dr. Jack Newman is head of the breast-feeding support program at the Hospital for Sick Children and Doctors Hospital Toronto. This article is reprinted from The Medical Post, 777 Bay St., Toronto, Ont. M5W 1A7*

Formulas are generally made from a base of cow milk or soya bean. The cows are raised and the soya beans are grown in fields sprayed with herbicides and pesticides. Fats are taken out, but then other fats added. These fats (palm oil, coconut oil) frequently originate in developing countries where pollution standards are lower, and enforcement even laxer than in Western countries.

Furthermore, formulas tend to have high levels of metals -- aluminum, lead, cadmium, and manganese for example -- that are far from safe, and whose long-term effects in some cases (lead) are very well known, and others (aluminum, manganese) worrisome to say the least.

In several studies, unopened cans of formula have been shown to contain pathogenic bacteria, which in some cases have been documented to cause serious disease.

On occasion, errors in formulation of artificial milks have caused serious ill-

nesses, as in the case of chloride-deficient formula in the late 1970's.

Any question about breast milk automatically drives many health professionals to suggest that breast-feeding should be terminated or not even begun. Questions about formula usually elicit calm -- nay, smug -- reassurance and cautions against making the mother who chooses formula feeding feel guilty for her choice.

Though the Canadian Pediatric Society immediately issued a letter reassuring pediatricians that the very high levels of aluminum in formulas was of no concern after a television program publicized this information, no such letter or statement was issued when the stories regarding the contamination of breast milk hit the

news last year and this has terrified many women.

This double standard is appalling given the tremendous health benefits of breast-feeding for both the mother and

Formulas are generally made from a base of cow milk or soya bean. The cows are raised and the soya beans are grown in fields sprayed with herbicides and pesticides. Fats are taken out, but then other fats added. These fats (palm oil, coconut oil) frequently originate in developing countries where pollution standards are lower, and enforcement even laxer than in Western countries.

baby, and indeed, society in general.

It should not be forgotten that breast-feeding is free and nonpolluting. The finished product, formula, comes to us after considerable processing, and considerable expenditure of energy and resources.

Producing the raw materials uses land, fertilizers, herbicides, pesticides. Transporting the raw materials, processing the raw materials, packaging the finished product, transporting the finished product, advertising the finished product, disposing of the containers -- all use up energy, and create pollution and garbage. Are we really likely to come to grips with the problems of pollution by suggesting alternatives which pollute?

Finally, breast-feeding is the only reliable method of birth control for much of

the world. It has been postulated that much of the increase in the world's population over the past century has been due to the decreased incidence and duration of breast-feeding. From this point of view, the environmental degradation engendered by the use of artificial feeding is incalculable.

It's not nice to try and fool Mother Nature. Seemingly small changes in lifestyle may ultimately cause serious, indeed overwhelming problems.

That mother's milk is contaminated is appalling. But it should not increase the pressure on mothers to bottle feed. This information should push all of us to re-examine our way of living. Putting pop cans into the blue box is not enough if we are to avoid global disaster. ☺



This sign was one of many activities of the North Simcoe Breastfeeding Network during **Breastfeeding Awareness Week -- October 1st to 7th.**

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

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

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

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

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

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





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

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

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

# CREDO



## 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.