

Child care conspiracy

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One can be forgiven for thinking there's a conspiracy going on around here. In a study called *The Benefits and Costs of Good Child Care*, authors Michael Krachinsky and Gordon Cleveland conclude there is a \$2 savings in labour productivity and decreased social costs for every \$1 the government invests in 'quality' child care. The solution? More money for it, naturally.

Another report by the feds concludes that child care workers are woefully under funded and National Crime Prevention Council research shows that negative childhood experiences are closely linked to latter criminal behaviour. These studies may be entirely sound, but their authors seek more than mere mammon. They want nothing short of a national tax-funded universal daycare program and we're being inundated with messages for its need.

Some argue the traditional, single income family is under attack by those who advocate such a program. The problem, they claim, is that the taxes of the already beleaguered single income family will be further increased to expand the subsidy to their dual income neighbours benefiting from the program, an inequitable transfer of funds from those who make sacrifices to keep one parent at home to those who do not. And they're absolutely right!

Reform MP Eric Lowther correctly contends that the government needs to extend a child care credit to "ALL

parents, including those who care for their children at home, instead of further straining the most critical relationship in the long term health of society: the parent-child bond." Plato, who advocated removing all children from the family unit and having them reared entirely by the state, would be pleased with the proposed developments in Canada. Those who recognize the need for such bonding should be anything but.

On a positive note, Dr. Kyle Pruett's study at Yale's Child Study Center concludes that children raised by men (yes Virginia, men) "are often active, vital and vigorous" and show a particular interest in "the external environment." Can you say, 'politics'? Perhaps the fact that my father was very instrumental in raising me is the reason you're reading this column today.

Studies also show how the nurturing activities of both parents stimulate the emotional attachment so vital in the development of personality in the early years. The changing faces of daycare workers can't replace that, so if staying at home with them is an option... take the option. The benefits could be inestimable.

ADDENDUM: The Swedish government provides virtually free day care for all pre-schoolers 16 months of age and older. To finance this and other lavish programs, their parents' tax rates are among the highest in the world, forcing both to work, which in part explains why 92% of qualifying pre-schoolers in that country find themselves in said care. And the outcome? Education standards are falling while psychosomatic disorders among Swedish youth are climbing at a faster rate than in comparable European states. If these facts are related, then it would seem making child rearing a state responsibility is precisely the costly, destructive, liberal misadventure conservatives have always said it is. Note: This doesn't make conservatives smart... just caring.