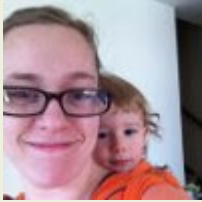


The Anarchy of Attachment Parenting



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"Balancing on My Toes" is an original column appearing every other Friday at Everything-Voluntary.com, by Angel M. Ethell. Angel lives in the Chicagoland area with her family: sons Teen (13) and Lil G (2) along with their little sister Cassie Pie (dog), her partner Daddy G and father-in-law Grandpa G. She loves learning new things along with learning that she might not always be right... 100% of the time. Archived columns can be found [here](#). BMT-only RSS feed available [here](#).

I have naturally been an attachment parent for the most part. These principles are simple: keep your baby close, breastfeed until baby wants to wean, and listen to your baby. Attuning to your baby's communications and always, always go to them when they cry or need something. These aren't difficult in the first couple of months. Bed-sharing, or co-sleeping, is great for the early breastfeeding relationship and it potentially reduces the amount of money spent on "baby things." But it can go further than that. If one is a stay-at-home mom, elusive breastfeeding is an option that costs little to zero dollars (including things like nursing bras and reusable breast pads if used; sorry if that's TMI for some of you). But all of this not spending money on stuff really adds up, and not just in the bank. At least not in your bank only. Which gets me to my original point, anarchy and attachment parenting.

What is Anarchy?

The Internet defines *anarchy* a few ways. "Without government or law" is the first, which doesn't so much apply as it does prove my later point. Second, "disorder due to loss of government," again doesn't really apply, but here is where it does. The last definitions are "lack of obedience" and "insubordination" and the confusion that comes from it. These *totally* apply. For many years now so-called experts have been advising sleep training which leaves your baby to cry until it gives up on the hope of its parent returning, and telling us as parents that the more we touch and soothe our babies the more clingy and dependent they will become. This basic theory came from behaviorists and not from experts in the more relevant field of child psychology. The problem is that we trust our doctors too much. Maybe this is exclusive to the USA, but I'm guessing not. We have been told also by doctors that artificial formula is just as good as mother's milk, so it's okay to use it instead of breastfeeding. Who led this campaign? The formula companies. The same

ones that profit from the lack of real facts about formula and breastfeeding. We are told we need cribs and playpens, swings and strollers, and so many more things to care for our babies, when really it could be virtually cost-free if you consider breastfeeding and attachment parenting. When we stop paying these associated costs, raising babies on a dime becomes achievable. It also does not contribute to a bloated system designed to prey on new parents and their material weaknesses.

The Costs of a Traditionally-Raised Baby

My web sources are at the bottom*, but I didn't do hard core research like I could have. I think you will thank me for it. It would be really boring. The average cost of child care is about \$1,000 per month. Sounds atrocious right? I don't pay anywhere *near* that much, but still pay more than I can afford sometimes. The average cost of all the baby stuff in baby's first year is \$5,500 and I'm guessing that doesn't include diapers if you use disposables, or the detergent and energy for reusable. These costs for diapering are not negotiable in my book, but there is a school of thought that says if you really pay attention to your baby you can have a toilet trained baby before the first year is up. Then there are new clothes and toys along with any other related cost for clothes to keep a child warm. So figure about \$2,400 per year for diapers and clothes as a rough estimate. We are at almost \$9,000. Add in the cost to formula feed if you don't choose to breastfeed. This costs a *lot* of money. Even for women that get their formula from government programs there is still the added cost of bottles and keeping them clean. Total for one year of formula? Between \$1,138.5 and \$1,188.00 and if your baby has a sensitivity to regular formula and needs a special kind it can be *much* more. This blows way past ten grand and into the tens of thousands. So an average of \$12,000 for baby's first year for a traditionally raised child. Almost 4 million babies were born last year. Can you imagine the amount of money spent annually on baby things?! I can't and I'm not about to do the math. I'll save that for the more mathematically inclined (seriously, do the math and post it in the comments if you like, I'll wait).

A Stupid Amount of Money, Right?

If we as parents decided one day to do what is best for our kids by breastfeeding, co-sleeping and attaching there is an awful *lot* of money *not* funding the bloated system; *not* funding government programs that have to try to remind mothers that they should be breastfeeding their babies; *not* relying on an artificial food for them that funds atrocities across the world; *not* funding more and more corporations that create products that promote irresponsible parenting like baby bottle holders and car seat add-ons. This all sounds vague so let's break this down, too. Baby bedding. Some families don't even buy anything special they just put their babies in bed with them. This does not work for all, but if a parent co-sleeps they at least don't need a monitor *per se*. So a big cost there is gone. Bassinet, bedding, crib and bedding, all gone. Baby bath tubs. More things that are not

needed. Bathe the baby when you bathe. Some parents don't even use soap and just use water. This is good enough for some occasions, but in my opinion babies need to be soaped up because they get dirty. Strollers? Forget about them! Just give me a wrap until baby is old enough to walk. I don't care for strollers and neither does my little guy anyway. Also I totally don't trust wagons, but that's just me, probably. So more costs down, and considering a sling is *real* easy to make with a sewing machine; a parent can make her own for very little money.

Does it Constitute Anarchy?

I think it does. Potentially \$12,000 in costs not going to corporations, times 4 million. That is something. We could all do it. Just stop funding the corporations that have convinced us of the wrong parenting practices in order to earn a profit. In my son's first year, after gifts were all bought and about two years worth of clothes donated to my 'lil guy by friends and family, we only bought a car seat. That's the only thing I'm going to recommend. Go ahead and buy it new; especially if you don't know its explicit history. There are more things like no vaccinations or delayed vaccinations that can further bring down costs. No well child visits every three months means no huge doctor bill to add on to what you are already paying. Getting clothing second hand because there is already so much out there is a great way to curb costs. I'm not saying you shouldn't have nice things, but we don't *have to* buy into it. We really don't because just like spanking there is a better way. Do we as attachment parents mean to be anarchists? Not many start out that way, but we see the backwards corporations, we see the distance from our babies as a bad thing, and so we venture onto the road less traveled. This creates anarchy. Doing research *before* making parenting decisions is a very anarchist trait. We will *not* bow down to those things that are really not in our baby's best interest. These are the decisions that are made as an attachment parent.

And its a Happy Life!

Attachment parents spend time with their children. They do not let them cry it out, they do not sleep separate, and many carry their babies in wraps or arms. Their children get rocked to sleep and most do not use violence against their children. Because of this we are often shamed. Attachment parents face many adversities, but also overcome many in their alternate lifestyle. Doctors tell them they are wrong, family and friends often tell them they are wrong and so does society. To persevere anyway is anarchist. So I and my fellow attachment parents are practicing a type of anarchy, even if we don't realize it.

* Redfin.com, cnwnnews.com, BFCAA.com