

The Broken Infant Fallacy

Written by Skip Oliva.

Awhile back I saw an article in one of the Canadian papers about some group calling for three-year-olds to be placed in government schools. The funny thing was the group's argument was less about what was in the best interests of the kids and more about promoting job growth. In other words, if we make all three-year-olds go to school, then we have to go out and hire a bunch of "qualified" teachers to watch them. This means not just a bunch of new teaching jobs, but jobs teaching the teachers (to become "qualified") and, of course, parents can now go out and get jobs instead of staying home with their kids. It's the Broken Window Fallacy, but with live humans instead of windows!

The period between birth and roughly the age of five is troublesome for central planners. As long as children remain dependent on their parents — and not "society," as controlled by the state — there's a risk of them developing habits that will become impossible to break once they enter a state-sanctioned institution, i.e. Kindergarten. The state has made several inroads to separate children from parents, such as the demonization of "co-sleeping," the practice of a mother and child sleeping together. Periodically you'll see hysterical local news reports warning about the dangers of co-sleeping, which of course has been safely practiced by humans for thousands of years. To the extent there are problems with co-sleeping, it's because of inappropriate bedding material or the parent's general unfitness (i.e., they're alcoholics). Co-sleeping itself is a necessary product of human evolution. Few mammalian species leave their children alone at night to fend for themselves.

The real problem is that co-sleeping, like many aspects of early childhood, is a relationship that exists outside of the state. There's no government regulation of co-sleeping. A parent who foregoes a crib (a product regulated by federal authorities) and a separate bedroom for her child is not spending money — and thus, not paying sales taxes to the local government. More alarmingly, the child isn't being taught to substitute material desire for human contact. In the eyes of central planners, a peaceful co-sleeping child is an abomination. An isolated child "comforted" by a \$100 Teddy bear is a future consumer-and-taxpayer-in-training.

Then there's the single biggest threat to state control of childhood — breastfeeding. Officially, governments claim to support breastfeeding, and there are any number of propaganda sites where you'll see such messages. But that's just a facade. The planners go out of their way to encourage rejection of breastfeeding as anything more than a short-term option. Consider the widespread demonization of the female breast, as exemplified by the FCC's long crusade to punish a brief appearance by Janet Jackson's nipples on national

television. I'm not suggesting there was some hidden FCC agenda to discourage breastfeeding; I'm saying that the government gladly promotes the cultural taboo that breasts are sexual objects first and a source of infant nutrition second.

More recently, the FDA has crusaded against raw animal milks sold by farmers. The FDA insists, without evidence, that such milks are always unsafe to consumer. Which begs the question: If raw animal milks are always unsafe, how can raw human milk ever be safe? Remember, the FDA regulates the content of infant formula (even though the term "formula" falsely implies there's a uniform composition to these artificial milks). It can't regulate the content of human milk. Government agencies generally don't like anyone competing with them, and this case, every nursing mother is little more than a potential terrorist.

"Extended" nursing — breastfeeding past one year — poses a major challenge for central planners. As with co-sleeping, which promotes frequent nursing, the longer a child depends on his mother for nutrition, the longer he's kept away from the state-managed food system. Human milk does not follow USDA dietary guidelines. A nursing toddler is "untrained." In a school environment, he can be forced to delay eating until an arbitrary "lunchtime." He can be kept immobile at his desk until an arbitrary "recess," assuming one is even allowed, so he can't work off the calories he just consumed. He can learn to be sedentary and passive.

Ideally, if you extend the "let's put three-year-olds in school" argument to its logical conclusion, human children would be separated from their mothers soon after birth, much like dairy farmers do with goats. This way, their diet can be strictly monitored for compliance with federal guidelines, mothers could re-enter the workforce sooner (driving down employers' labor costs), and children would learn from the age of three months or so that they can't exist outside the central planners' view of "society." And hopefully, they'll finally do well on those standardized tests!

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