



Written by [Warren Mass](#) on April 13, 2015

CPS Detains “Free Range” Children Who Played in Park Alone

Ten-year-old Rafi Meitiv and his six-year-old sister, Dvora, were picked up by police while walking home from the park in their Silver Spring, Maryland, neighborhood on Sunday afternoon, April 12. The children were about a third of a mile from home when the police intercepted them.



While the children’s parents, Danielle and Alexander Meitiv, waited anxiously for them to return home, police — who were acting on a tip from a “concerned citizen” — held the children in their patrol car for three hours before dropping them off at a local Child Protective Services Crisis Center. The children were kept at the center for another two and a half hours, without being fed anything, though it was well past the normal dinner hour when they arrived.

Fox News cited the Meitivs’ account of how this bizarre scenario played out. They said that CPS didn’t call them to let them know they had their children until about 8:00 p.m. — three hours after the police picked them up. (Remember, they were just a few minutes’ walk from their home at the time.) The Meitivs drove to CPS, thinking it would be a simple matter of picking them up and taking them right home. But in today’s world of the all-knowing nanny state, nothing is that simple.

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The Meitivs were told to “take a seat” and were not given any information about their children, except that they were at the facility.

Finally, after 10:30 p.m. — five and a half hours after the children were picked up and two and a half hours after arriving at CPS, the children were turned over to their parents. But not so fast, said the all-wise CPS bureaucrats. The Meitivs were required to sign a “safety plan” before being allowed to take their own children home, which apparently forbids them from leaving the children unattended at any time.

Again, the older Meitiv child is 10 years old.

Danielle Meitiv noted in a Facebook post:

The police coerced our children into the back of a patrol car, telling them they would drive them home. They kept the kids trapped there for three hours, without notifying us, before dropping them at the Crisis Center, and holding them there without dinner for another two and a half hours. We finally got home at 11pm and the kids slept in our room because we were all exhausted and terrified.



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NBC Washington reported that this was the second time that police had picked up the Meitiv children and reported the parents to CPS, the same scenario having occurred last December 20. As a result of that incident, in March, the Meitivs were found responsible for “unsubstantiated child neglect.”

NBC explains that the “unsubstantiated” ruling typically occurs when CPS “has some information supporting a finding of child neglect or has what appear to be credible reports that are at odds with each other or does not have sufficient information to reach a more definitive conclusion.”

In other words, CPS, relying mostly on hearsay, has gone on a fishing expedition and considers the parents guilty of something, though it has no evidence to charge them.

The Meitivs, notes NBC, have said they are responsible parents who are teaching their children self-reliance and responsibility and that the CPS investigation has infringed on their parental rights and invaded their privacy.

The Meitivs’ parenting style has been described in media reports as “free-range,” a term more commonly applied to livestock such as chickens that are allowed roam freely outdoors, rather than being confined in an enclosure for 24 hours each day.

When Baby Boomers (including this writer) were children, our parents — members of “the Greatest Generation” who had won World War II — had another name for such parenting. They called it “normal.”

Though this writer rarely interjects personal anecdotes into news stories, the following recollections are provided for the benefit of those too young to remember how members of “the Greatest Generation” raised their children back in the 1950s and 1960s.

This writer distinctly remembers playing in a nearby park, which was right in our neighborhood and did not require crossing any streets to visit. That was one fear parents had in those days — that their children might get hit by a car — so most parents did not permit their children to cross streets by themselves until they were about six years old. However, children were permitted “free range” (though the term was not used) of the entire block. One day, this writer and his playmates exchanged information about our respective ages and discovered that we were all four years old. That is correct! Parents in 1952 did not hesitate to let four-year-old children go out and play in the park by themselves, so long as they did not have to cross any streets to get there.

Two years later, in first grade, this writer and a group of six-year-old schoolchildren from the neighborhood (the same age as Dvora Meitiv) walked home from school together, without any parents or other adult supervision. (A Google map search just now to gauge the distance finds that it is exactly one mile — the same distance the Meitiv children were walking home from the park.)

Granting such independence to children was fairly standard in the 1950s. If anyone from the government had suggested that the parents of these children were guilty of “child neglect” they probably would have been dismissed as a crackpot. As for the “concerned citizen” who reported the Meitiv children by calling 911, we had a term for people such as those, as well. They were called “buttinskies”!

And this writer did not live in some bucolic, rural haven, either. The city in question was Hackensack, New Jersey, located a mere nine miles from Manhattan. This makes it quite comparable to Silver Spring, where the Meitivs live, which is six miles from Washington, D.C.

“But things were different in those days,” many will protest. Yes, they were different, but human nature



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has never changed. There were bad people then as there are today. The famous Lindbergh baby kidnapping occurred in 1932, yet it did not cause parents of the 1930s, '40s, and '50s to become paranoid to the point of never letting their children out of their sight.

What has changed more than anything else is not the inability of children to roam their neighborhoods independently and safely, but the overwhelming sense of fear that many of today's parents have. Such fear is probably generated mostly by today's instant communications, where a very rare kidnapping in one part of the country is on the evening news nationwide. Another factor is the growing reliance on government to perform responsibilities that were once parents' sole prerogatives. Parents have too often surrendered their natural right to be their children's primary educators and protectors to the state, with the consequence that the state has usurped the right to decide what is best for all children.

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