



Whatever Happened to Mommy?

The Washington Post called it “a sign of the times” when 3-year-old Zoe Rosso was suspended from her elementary pre-school for a month because she didn’t quite make it to the bathroom in time to avoid an “accident.”

Betsy Rosso, the child’s mother, pays \$835 a month to send her child to Claremont Elementary, a Montessori preschool that is part of the Arlington County, Virginia, public school system. She continued to pay that astronomical fee during the child’s suspension in addition to virtually shutting down her business and rushing about trying to find suitable child-care substitutes.

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To put the financial outlay in perspective, in 1960 the tuition for an entire year at a top private school in the Washington, D.C. Metro area (of which Arlington County is a part) was about \$600. When the less-structured Montessori schools first came on the American scene, they were predicated on childhood *freedom* in a natural environment, entirely private and unconnected to any public school system. They were criticized as lacking needed structure to a child’s life, but today, in comparison with most public schools in chaos, the Montessori system seems downright orderly.

Lost in the debate over small bladders, fairness, school policies, and the inevitable teasing by peers once the child returns to preschool — readers can “google” some 13 pages of listings alone on the story — is that government has essentially replaced Mommy as caretaker and nurturer.

Back when birth control first became a viable alternative for women seeking a life that included more than homemaking and childrearing, theologians, family experts, and moralists all worried that the warm-and-fuzzy memories of past generations of children would vanish, and that persons unrelated to the child, would be less sensitive to youngsters in their care because they would lack any real personal and intimate connection with them. This, so the thinking went, would have a deleterious effect on society as a whole as time went on.

Looking at today’s newspapers, rife with the blood of spattered and maimed innocents at the hands of their peers, it seems that day has arrived. All the government-spewed prattle about “individual differences” dissolves into thin air once every event — right down to a potty trip — must be codified in policies, programs, and rules. Begun at the 3-year-old level, it does something else, too: It trains the toddler to expect a lifetime of senseless regimentation at the hands of a detached government bureaucracy — all unresponsive, dispassionate, and aloof (in the name of “fairness,” of course).

It’s a classic ideas-have-consequences dilemma, and the blame does not fall to birth control. Bearing baby after baby in quick succession no doubt was harmful to women, and females typically died before men previous to its advent, as their physical stamina became slowly diminished. Today, barring accidents, war and high-risk social behaviors, human females tend to outlive males by a considerable margin, and one reason boils down to physical stamina — i.e., women are allowed to fully recuperate following childbirth (See: "[Why Women Live Longer than Men.](#)")

But this advance has not occurred without physical and social side-effects. In the early 1970s, the same birth control that allowed women to heal physically placed a whole new kind of burden upon them.

First of all, girls and women were *expected* to accept the entire responsibility for childbearing and children in general. Men, of course, did what they always had done — but the very existence of birth control ended up meaning that women were solely responsible for pregnancy in the social sense, which



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freed up men, in a way, to wash their hands of the whole business if they chose. Over time, this led to new government regulations, such as “deadbeat dads” legislation, in which money was automatically deducted from a man’s salary if it could be proved that he fathered a child — inside or outside of wedlock. Of course, back when birth control first emerged on the scene, few imagined that DNA evidence could be used to garner such “proof.” The side-effect was that government became involved in procreation — not necessarily a good thing.

The second side-effect was that young females no longer were protected from sexual predators by their fathers, who typically are better at such things than mommies. The term “sexual predator” in this context does not mean “rapist.” It means what are fashionably referred to as “hookups,” “one-night-stands,” “raging hormones,” and “youthful experimentation.” Since girls can now decide whether to use birth control or not, rape today does not even constitute a crime punishable with a life sentence or death.

In today’s “Who’s Your Daddy?” culture, fathers who still try to protect their daughters by, say, meeting any young, male who attracts his little girl’s fancy, or banning car dates for daughters under a certain age, or forbidding a 13-year-old from dating an 18- or 20-year-old boy — all these are considered “overprotective,” with the father in question having “control issues.” Who decided this? Child “experts” (psychologists and psychiatrists), who are part and parcel of the agencies known as Child Protective Services. These know-it-alls have moved into the public schools, becoming a central part of America’s Nanny State.

The next side-effect was day care, which included toddlers, then infants. Much of this had its roots in 1960s feminism, but by 1980 day-care was no longer a choice but an expectation. Meaning that government “should” pay for it if the workplace wouldn’t. What’s more, female employees believed they should be free to get pregnant as often as they liked on the taxpayer’s dime. Whether or not their children were actually wanted, as opposed to being symbols of a mother’s oh-so-hot sexuality — the babe paraded about like a trophy, suckling on what the new mom hoped would be viewed as a likeness of a pop-star’s breast gracing the cover of *Cosmopolitan* magazine — was another story, of course, and none of the taxpayer’s business anyway.

Forty years ago, common wisdom had it that children went to school at five or six years old, depending on when *Mommy* determined the child was ready. Today, government “experts” have determined that parents stand in the way of child development, and children should be “socialized” as quickly as possible. Never mind that little bodies have a less-developed immune system, and thus are more susceptible to hepatitis and other serious diseases. Thus, did government mandate that all infants and toddlers be given a battery of vaccines — not spread out, but *all at once* — as though one size fit all. When autism and other previously rare anomalies then flew through the roof, government experts blamed the messenger (parents) in the absence of firm proof and marched smugly back to their offices to write professional papers denigrating mommies and daddies.

And what of little Zoe, who didn’t make it to the bathroom in time...again!! Well, you see, little Zoe is a product of the one-size-fits-all mentality — including her bladder and her maturity level. To heck with her mother, stuck with \$835-a-month for day care. She **chose** to have that kid, didn’t she?

Zoe’s mother doesn’t appear to “get” it. Unaccustomed to a life where mommies wipe runny noses, change yucky diapers, select their children’s little friends, push them on swings at the playground, place them on the potty at specific times of day, and sing the “a,b,c” song till they’re blue in the face, she considers \$835 a bargain in comparison to giving up her business.



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Zoe probably will make it through this trying, if embarrassing, time. But will she have that warm and fuzzy feeling once associated with childhood? She will learn all about sexually transmitted diseases, date-rape, and the kinkier aspects of premarital sex well before she is ready, but little about romance and tenderness at the feet of her beleaguered mother. She won't read stories about protective, if make-believe, Prince Charmings, because that would be sexist, after all. The "boogey-men" in the closet will fill her nightmares with neighbors and family members, not with imaginary monsters of old, which were arguably less scary than the cold, unapproachable bureaucrats that inhabit today's Nanny State of social-"service" agencies run amok.

Beverly K. Eakman began her career as a teacher in 1968. She left to become a technical writer for a NASA contractor. She was a former speechwriter for the Voice of America and for the late Chief Justice Warren E. Burger when he chaired the Commission on the Bicentennial of the U.S. Constitution. She served as a writer for the U.S. Dept. of Justice before retiring from the federal government. She is the author of six books on education policy, mental-health issues, data-trafficking and political strategy with dozens of keynote speeches, feature articles and op-eds to her credit. She can be reached at www.BeverlyEakman.com.



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