

# Home Education Foundation

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## **.Media Release –Preschool Bad for Children, Says Swedish Parental Rights Advocate**

February 5, 2013

**Palmerston North, NZ** – As the government Select Committee draws up its report on the Social Security (Benefit Categories and Work Focus) Amendment Bill, the Home Education Foundation (HEF) of New Zealand hopes that the Committee members will look to Sweden—as an example of how not to care for children.

“In Sweden, it’s illegal to home educate children,” says Barbara Smith, National Director of the HEF. “The authorities will tear home educating families apart with little provocation. In the most infamous case, nine-year-old Domenic Johansson was forcibly removed from his parents by Swedish authorities two years ago. The Johanssons have not even been able to see their son for months.”

Mrs Smith believes that the Social Security Bill, which makes preschool compulsory for the children of beneficiaries, is a step towards Swedish-style family tragedy.

“Is this what New Zealand is headed for?” she asks.

“With all the emphasis on poverty and vulnerable children, together with the assumption that preschool is the only responsible choice for early child care, it would seem so.”

According to Jonas Himmelstrand, a Swedish parental rights advocate, the Swedish government has not yet made preschool compulsory. However, “the propaganda about the blessings of day care, even for one-year-olds, is very intense. Not having your child in day care after parental leave is considered strange and even weird by a large part of the general public.”

Mrs Smith says, “Paula Bennet, the Minister for Social Development, has also been telling us that preschool is a widely-accepted social norm and her Bill merely puts ‘the right kind of care’ around beneficiaries and their families.

“Why is she ignoring the hundreds of families, some of which are beneficiaries and all of which are just an injury or job loss away from being beneficiaries, who have made informed decisions to provide better or different child care than that available at their local preschool?”

“And why is she ignoring the evidence against preschool?”

Jonas Himmelstrand says, “The Swedish Government claims that research shows that children in day care develop and learn much better than home cared children. But the Swedish statistics tell another story. Psychosomatic symptoms such as regular headaches, tummy aches, worries and anxiety tripled for girls and doubled for boys during the years 1985-2005.” Government investigations, says Mr Himmelstrand, also show that in comparison to similar European countries, Sweden has the “worst development in psychological health among our youth”. School results also plummeted since the inception of subsidized day care in 1985, and are now in some subjects below the OECD average.

“The quality of parenthood has deteriorated, and adult sick leave is high, especially for women,” says Mr Himmelstrand. He believes that the early separation of children and parents for too long is “the most realistic cause”. “As Sweden is materially rich with a wealth of public social insurances and good wealth distribution and low child poverty this is hardly the cause.”

Concerned New Zealanders should write, call, and visit their local MPs and the Select Committee, Mrs Smith urges.

Tell your friends. Make appointments to see the Committee members or your local MP.

“We still have the freedom to make decisions for our children’s developmental and psychological health,” she says. “Let’s not lose that.”

The Select Committee members are Jacinda Ardern, Simon Bridges, Melissa Lee, Jan Logie, Asenati Lole-Taylor, Peseta Sam Lotu-liga, Tim Macindoe, Alfred Ngaro, Rajen Prasad, Mike Sabin and Su’a William Sio. Letters to individual MPs should be sent to this address (no stamp necessary):

Parliament Office  
Private Bag 18888  
Parliament Buildings  
Wellington 6160

More information on the bill and contact details can be found at <http://hef.org.nz/2013/urgent-action-required-social-security-bill/>

## About the Home Education Foundation

The Home Education Foundation has been informing parents for 28 years about the fantastic opportunity to de-institutionalise our sons and daughters and to embrace the spiritual, intellectual and academic freedom that is ours for the taking. Through conferences, journals, newsletters and all kinds of personal communications, we explain the vision of handcrafting each child into a unique individual, complete with virtuous character, a hunger for service to others, academic acumen and a strong work ethic. For more information, please visit [www.hef.org.nz](http://www.hef.org.nz) or more specifically [hef.org.nz/2012/make-a-submission-reject-compulsory-early-education-for-3-year-olds/](http://hef.org.nz/2012/make-a-submission-reject-compulsory-early-education-for-3-year-olds/)

## Contact

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