

# TEACH Bulletin

Thorough Education Achieved in a Caring Home

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## Why the Push for Universal Preschool?

Government makes so many wonderful promises about how they will improve education for preschoolers. There is no law which requires the government to get involved, there is no constitutional precedent, there is no public demand. But this Labour Government especially is very generous with other people's money. Why are they doing this when the schools they *are* required to maintain are having major difficulties producing acceptable levels of literacy?

Then Education Minister Trevor Mallard announced as part of the Budget press releases on 27 May

2004 that:

*We are investing new funding of \$365 million over the next four years in early childhood education, bringing total annual funding by 2007-08 to approximately \$660 million. Funding will increase to around \$750 million annually in 2011-12. From the middle of 2007, three and four-year old children will be entitled*

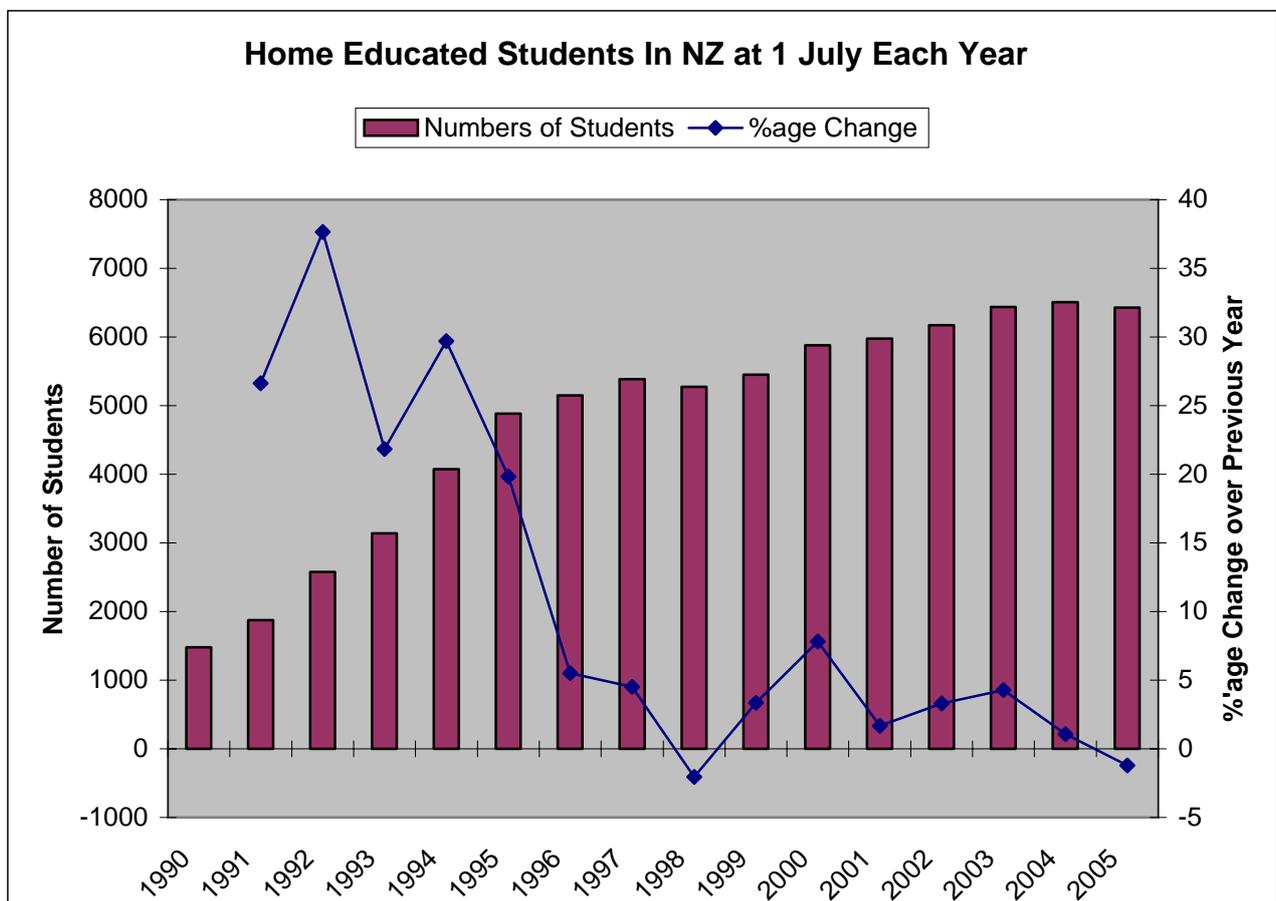
*to 20 hours free attendance per week at a community-based early childhood education service. This is a significant step, extending the tradition of free early childhood education from kindergartens to other community-based centres.<sup>1</sup>*

### Research: Yale

Naturally he makes reference to research showing the benefits, but recent major studies of significance should cause New Zealanders to be very wary of these moves.

“Progressive” thinkers are always pressing to get children into non-maternal care at earlier and earlier ages. Five-year-olds, after all, need to prepare for first grade by going to

## Our Numbers Are Steady — See Page 5



kindergarten. Three- and four-year-olds need to get a leg up on the kindergarten curriculum by attending preschool. One- and two-year-olds need an early start on socializing by spending their days in day care. And so it goes, in a regression that pulls children out of the home at ever-earlier ages. But a study recently completed by researchers at the Yale Child Study Center makes the misfit between young children's needs and preschool programs' offerings all too clear.

Drawing data from 4815 randomly selected classrooms in the 52 state-funded pre-kindergarten programs in the 40 states that have such programs, the researchers uncovered a very disturbing pattern: pre-kindergarten students are expelled from their programs at rates more than three times as high as those for students attending kindergarten though twelfth-grade classes.

The pre-kindergarten expulsion rate ran one-and-a-half times higher among four-year-olds than among three-year-olds and more than four-and-a-half times higher among young boys than among young girls. Some readers of the new study may wonder if the young children getting

expelled from their pre-school programs are not actually the smart ones: perhaps they have, after all, figured out what they must do to get back home with their mothers — where they belong in the first place.<sup>2</sup>

### Research: Berkeley

Preschool has a negative effect on a child's social and emotional development, according to a study of 14,000 US preschool children from University of California, Berkeley and Stanford University. The study, titled "The Influence of Preschool Centers on Children's Development Nationwide: How Much Is Too Much?", found that the social skills of white, middle-class children suffer — in terms of co-operation, sharing and engagement in classroom tasks — after attending preschool centers for more than six hours a day, compared to similar children who remain at home with a parent prior to starting school.

"The biggest eye-opener is that the suppression of social and emotional development, stemming from long hours in preschool, is felt most strongly by children from better-off families," said UC Berkeley sociologist and co-author Bruce Fuller.

On average, the report found that the earlier a child enters a preschool center, the slower his or her pace of social development.

A Harvard Longitudinal Study found that daycare children are significantly disadvantaged in later life by the inability to form psychological attachments. Again, the younger the age at which children are put in daycare, the worse is this effect.

Morningstar Educational Network sponsors a national outreach called Considering-Homeschooling.com, which encourages parents to care for and pre-

school their young children at home. "These negative social behaviors children are displaying are getting worse," said Denise Kanter, a Morningstar research advisor. "In December of 2003, *Time* magazine reported on the consequences of negative emotional and social problems among young children. In *Time's* report the child-advocacy group Partnership for Children survey showed that 93 percent of 39 schools responding said kindergartners today "have more emotional and behavioral problems than were seen just five years ago."<sup>3</sup>

A study released in April 2001 by the National Institute of Child Health and Human Development (NICHD) of Bethesda, Maryland, found that 17% of 4-1/2 to 6-year-old kids in day care for 30 hours or more each week scored significantly worse in such evaluation categories as: "gets in lots of fights," "bullying behavior," "cruelty" and "explosive behavior."<sup>4</sup> That is compared with 6% for the group of children in day-care for less than 10 hours a week. The study followed more than 1,300 children in 10 U.S. cities in a variety of settings, from care with relatives and nannies to preschool and large daycare centres. Its conclusions are based on ratings of the children by their mothers, those caring for them and kindergarten teachers.

"There is a constant dose-response relationship between time in care and problem behavior, especially those involving aggression," says Dr. Jay Belsky of Birkbeck College in London, one of the study's main investigators. And this link between day care and aggression, he says, was evident whether the child was rich or poor, male or female and held true whether the quality of the day care center was low or high.

Years ago, as a Penn State University Associate Professor, Dr Belsky was lionized by the feminist movement for his scientific studies that *supported* day care. But "a slow, steady trickle of evidence" of its harm led him in 1986 to publish an analysis titled "Infant Day Care: A Cause for Concern?"

"Maybe the future's going to be a world of everyone out for them-

## TEACH Bulletin

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Hear, my son, your father's instruction,  
and reject not your mother's teaching.  
— Proverbs 1:8

selves,” Dr. Belsky told the *Financial Times*. “Maybe putting kids in child care is a great preparation for that society. You are creating kids who will be smart, advantage-taking aggressors who will break rules and not get along.”<sup>5</sup>

### Research: New Zealand

A study of 200 New Zealand families (using the Dunedin longitudinal sample of more than 1000 New Zealanders born in the early 1970s) shows that girls raised in a positive, nurturing environment during their preschool, childhood and adolescent years, are much more likely to raise their own children that way. The study also shows such parenting during the early years helps boost language, emotional well-being, thinking skills and academic achievement.

In the March/April 2005 issue of the *Journal Child Development*, lead researcher Jay Belsky, director of the Institute for the Study of Children, Families and Social Issues at London University’s Birkbeck College, said that women raised within a low-authoritarian household during the preschool years, with a cohesive, positive family environment and little conflict during the middle childhood years, who established a trusting, openly communicative, and close relationship with their parents during their teenage years, were more likely to engage in a warm, sensitive, stimulating parenting style themselves when raising the next generation. The New Zealand researchers were Judith Sligo and Phil Silva of Otago University plus Lianne Woodward of Canterbury University.<sup>6</sup>

### Runaway Costs

Universal preschool is an attractive idea....to politicians. Those in Quebec eight years ago argued that every dollar spent on preschool would save \$2.50 by boosting graduation rates and lowering juvenile crime. But such calculations inevitably underestimate the ultimate bill since they don’t take into account the inflationary pressures that the program itself creates. The final price tag for Quebec’s day care program was 33 times what was originally projected, gobbling up \$1.7 billion every year.

This mountain of moolah has not gone mostly to increased quality and access but instead to: the 40% wage increase day care worker unions levered by threatening strike action; the increased demand caused by the city’s 90% subsidy of entrance fees; and the disruption caused by the collapse of the private day care market, which was declared ineligible for the subsidies (a policy later reversed, after the damage was done).

Even worse is the reinforcing of inequities the program was meant to eradicate. Low-income families not only lost their child-care tax deductions (so the city could finance the program), middle- and upper-income parents more savvy at negotiating the system also crowded them out. According to research by Peter Shawn Taylor for the Canadian Taxpayers Federation, half of Quebec’s day care spaces are taken by families in the top 30 percent income bracket.

Did Quebec’s universal preschool operation improve educational outcomes, an argument all advocates claim as nearly self-evident? Pierre Lefebvre, an economics professor at Universite du Quebec, has just completed a study comparing 4- to 5-year-olds in Quebec with kids elsewhere in Canada and found that Quebec kids have no better scores on the Peabody vocabulary test — the most widely used indicator of school readiness.<sup>7</sup>

### Political Madness

And in the UK, under the Child-care Bill, childminders would teach the curriculum to children “from birth”. The National Confederation of Parent Teacher Associations called the proposals “bizarre”. Parents’ Associations spokeswoman Margaret Morrissey said: “We are now in danger of taking away children’s childhood when they leave the maternity ward. From the minute you are born and your parents go back to work, as the government has encouraged them to do, you are going to be ruled by the Department for Education. It is absolute madness.”<sup>8</sup>

The whole concept of universal preschool appears to be pushed by politicians and those with agendas for other people’s children. The research into preschool outcomes is far from reassuring, and the track record of government involvement in the schooling of young people is a story of moral, social and intellectual decline when the promise has always been to eliminate the necessity for prisons by producing a highly talented and literate populace. Again, state involvement in education produces the very thing it was established to eliminate. Let us home educators strive to motivate our friends and neighbours to rescue their children from these institutions.

### Notes:

1. “Landmark budget for educating young kiwi kids”, 27 May 2004, <http://www.beehive.govt.nz/budget/releases/education-landmark.cfm>
2. The Howard Center for Family, Religion and Society; World Congress on Families: Family Update, Online!; Vol. 6, Issue 48, 29Nov2005. Source: “Trouble in the Preschool,” New Research, vol. 19, no. 10, October 2005; [http://www.profam.org/pub/nr/nr\\_1910.htm](http://www.profam.org/pub/nr/nr_1910.htm) ; abstracted from Yale University Office of Public Affairs, “Pre-K Students Expelled at More Than Three Times the Rate of K-12 Students,” Yale Medical News 17 May 2005: 1-2 [www.yale.edu/opu](http://www.yale.edu/opu) .
3. LifeSiteNews.com, 10 Nov 2005, “Preschool Damages Children’s Social Skills and Emotional Development.” See related LifeSiteNews.com coverage: World’s Foremost Child Care Study Shows Day Care Leads To Aggression: <http://www.lifesite.net/ldn/2001/apr/01042403.html>. Many U.S. Day Care Centers Harmful: Study: <http://www.lifesite.net/ldn/1999/apr/99041207.html>. Conservative Woman MP Slams Liberal Party’s Child Care Plan as Sexist: <http://www.lifesite.net/ldn/2005/feb/05021605.html>.
4. *The National Post*, 20 April 2001, “Study paints daycare as hothouse for aggression”, [http://www.cccf-fcsge.ca/pressroom/pr\\_15\\_en.htm](http://www.cccf-fcsge.ca/pressroom/pr_15_en.htm)
5. “Illegitimocracy (or The Mommy Wars)” by Lowell Ponte, FrontPageMagazine.com, April 25, 2001, <http://www.frontpagemag.com/Articles/ReadArticle.asp?ID=3966>.
6. “Study shows a nurtured child most likely a good mum,” 30 March 2005, <http://www.stuff.co.nz/stuff/0,2106,3232431a11,00.html>
7. *San Francisco Chronicle*, 4 Dec

2005, Universal preschool is inviting universal disaster, <http://www.sfgate.com/cgi-bin/article.cgi?file=/chronicle/archive/2005/12/04/ING6JG1BA81.DTL>

8. BBC News, 9 Nov 2005, "Mixed response to toddler plans," <http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/education/4420138.stm>

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## Marriage & Meals

Parents searching for a way to give their children help in the classroom need look no further than the ring finger on their left hand. A new study published in the *Journal of Divorce & Remarriage* clearly shows that parents who make their marriage successful are conferring a remarkable academic benefit on their children — especially their daughters.

By using data for 265 seniors enrolled in a Colorado Springs public high school, researcher Barry D. Ham assesses "the impact of divorce in relation to students' academic achievement." And the pattern is clear: "Adolescents from intact homes perform better academically and maintain better school attendance than do those students from either single-parent or remarried homes."

Ham calculates that in comparison with peers from other family structures, students from intact families earn GPAs that average more than 17% higher. He further calculates a distinctively low rate of absenteeism among students from intact families; they missed 78% fewer class periods than peers from non-intact households.

Some have supposed that parental remarriage would erase the harmful effects of parental divorce. Researcher Ham finds that, overall, "children in remarried households performed no better than children in either single-mother or single-father families." More careful parsing of the data, however, indicates that "when a stepparent is brought into the home, the males somehow benefit" while females do not. Highlighting it as "one of the most significant findings of this study," Ham points to statistics indicating that "females were more negatively impacted" than males by living in a stepfamily created after parental

divorce.

Says Ham: "Those students residing with their two biological parents appear to be given an increased chance to excel educationally."<sup>1</sup>

"The Importance of Family Dinners", a report using data from the Center for Addiction and Substance Abuse's 10th annual back-to-school survey, finds that, compared to teens who have five or more family dinners per week, teens who have two or less are:

- Three times likelier to try marijuana;
- Two-and-a-half times likelier to smoke cigarettes; and
- More than one-and-a-half times likelier to drink alcohol.
- Overall, about one-quarter of teens and half of parents desire more frequent family dinners.
- About half of the teens and almost all of the parents who have fewer than three dinners with their families in a typical week would like to have more frequent family dinners.<sup>2</sup>

Fewer and fewer teenagers share their meals with their families. When a team of researchers from the University of Minnesota recently surveyed 4746 adolescents from ethnically and economically diverse neighborhoods in the Minneapolis-St. Paul area, they found only about "one-fourth (26.8%) reported eating seven or more meals with their family in the past week, and almost one-third (33.1%) reported eating family meals only one to two times per week or never."

As the Minnesota scholars examined their survey results closely, they discerned a number of bad adolescent outcomes linked to infrequent eating of family meals — especially among teenage girls. These findings were reported in a study appearing in the *Archives of Pediatric and Adolescent Medicine*.

By systematically parsing their data, the Minnesota scholars established that compared to peers

who regularly eat their meals with their families, adolescents of both sexes who seldom or never eat with their families are more likely to use tobacco, alcohol and marijuana, more likely to receive low grades in school, more likely to suffer from depression and more likely to think about suicide. In addition to these negative outcomes, distinctively weak self-esteem and distinctively high likelihood to actually attempt suicide was observed among adolescent girls who rarely or never ate meals with their families. Because of the gravity of the finding on likelihood of a suicide attempt, the researchers underscore the point: "girls reporting more than seven family meals per week were almost half as likely to report a suicide attempt compared with girls eating no family meals."

Of course, some of the protective effect of eating meals with the family might be interpreted as the natural consequence of overall family closeness. However, when the researchers deployed a sophisticated statistical model that made separate allowance for reported "family connectedness," teenagers of both sexes who seldom or never ate meals with their families were still especially likely to fall into these negative behaviours. The persistence in this statistical model of family mealtime as a predictor of behavioral and psychological outcomes indicates to the researchers that "eating meals as a family has benefits for young people above and beyond their general sense of connection to family members."

So durable is the link between teenagers' not eating meals with their families and their experiencing adverse consequences that even when the researchers took separate statistical account of family connectedness, parents' marital status, school level, race and socioeconomic status, their statistical models still showed that teenage boys who seldom or never ate meals with their families were distinctively at risk to smoking and use of alcohol and that teenage girls who seldom or never ate meals with their families were particularly likely to use alcohol and marijuana and to suffer from depression.

(Continued on page 5)

In trying to explain why teens who do not eat with their families are so vulnerable to psychological problems, so likely to engage in risky or even self-destructive behaviors, the Minnesota researchers reason that "family meals may ... provide a formal or informal 'check-in' time during which parents can tune in to the emotional well-being of their teens, particularly girls. Likewise family mealtimes may serve as a marker for young people spending more time at home and away from negative peer influences or youth culture more generally."<sup>3</sup>

**Notes:**

1. Howard Center for Family, Religion and Society: World Congress on Families: Family Update, Online!, Vol. 6, Issue 39, 27Sept2005. (Source: Barry D. Ham, "The Effects of Divorce and Remarriage on the Academic Achievement of High School Seniors", *Journal of Divorce & Remarriage* 42.1/2 (2004): 159-178.)
2. The Howard Center for family, religion and society; World Congress on Families: Family Update, Online!, Vol. 6, Issue 38, 20Sept2005. (Source: Joseph A. Califano, Jr., "Accompanying Statement," *The Importance of Family Dinners II*, CASA Family Day, The National Center on Addiction and Substance Abuse at Columbia University, September 2005; <http://www.casafamilyday.org/PDFs/FamilyDinnersII.pdf>.)
3. The Howard Center for family, religion and society; World Congress on Families: Family Update, Online!, Vol. 6, Issue 38, 20Sept2005. (Source: Marla E. Eisenberg et al., "Correlations Between Family Meals and Psychosocial Well-being Among Adolescents," *Archives of Pediatric and Adolescent Medicine* 158 [2004]: 792-796.)

**New Zealanders  
Becoming Trogladites**

Children would prefer to play computer games than play outside or read, a new survey shows. The Duracell-sponsored survey involved children aged between five and 10 in Auckland, Wellington and Christchurch, showing that habits vary between the three cities.

Overall, playing outside (18 per cent) and reading (10 per cent for boys and 14 per cent for girls) were

unfavoured compared to playing computer games (28 per cent) and playing with toys (25 per cent). **Under three per cent** of all surveyed were involved in club activities such as Brownies or Scouts.

Half of Auckland children surveyed said they saved their pocket money, compared to 39 per cent in Christchurch and only 20 per cent in Wellington. Most Auckland children also held on to their savings for much longer than those in the other cities.

Christchurch children (55 per cent) appeared to be more sociable than Aucklanders (53 per cent) and Wellingtonians (38 per cent) when it came to playing with their friends. All said they would rather play with friends than with sisters or brothers.

(NZPA, 14 Nov 2005, "Kids prefer computer games to fresh air", <http://www.stuff.co.nz/stuff/0,2106,3478609a11,00.html>)

**Our Numbers  
Are Steady**

Here are the official MoE numbers of students holding exemption certificates (A) on July 1 each year, plus the percentage increase (B) that number represents over the previous year:

Year	A	B
1990	1479	
1991	1873	26.63
1992	2578	37.64
1993	3141	21.84
1994	4074	29.7
1995	4882	19.83
1996	5151	5.51
1997	5384	4.52
1998	5274	-2.04
1999	5451	3.36
2000	5877	7.82
2001	5976	1.68
2002	6173	3.3
2003	6437	4.28
2004	6506	1.07
2005	6428	-1.2

Note how the percentage of growth was quite impressive from 1990 through 1995. What happened in 1996 to slow it down so much?

This writer will venture my own opinion on that. In July of 1994, Dr Lockwood Smith, then Minister of Education, stopped all reviews of home educators. He said he could not justify the expense as home educators were virtually all passing their reviews with flying colours and represented an extremely low-risk group. What more could home educators want? Our general standard of excellence was officially recognised.

Incredulously the Home Schooling Federation hit the headlines claiming that the Government had abandoned home educators and called on Dr Smith to reinstate regular reviews. How else, the Fed said, could home educators themselves and the public at large be assured that parents teaching their children at home were doing a good enough job?

To some of us this kind of talk from what we thought were fellow home educators was nothing less than treasonous.

For the rest of 1994 and all through 1995 and 1996, the home education community, especially in Auckland, was wracked by fear, accusation and counter accusation. In 1996 the MoE proposed annual self-evaluation reports be written by each home educating family to replace the reviews. Also that year the MoE sent out a lengthy questionnaire to "randomly selected" home education families to try to gain some statistical understanding of this movement.

Then there was the disastrous Federation AGM in September 1996 at which delegates nearly traded blows. All of these things made the home education community rather unhappy and insecure. Annual TEACH Forums were instituted in 1996 to help bring us all together. But at the 1997 TEACH Forum, the Auckland delegates declared that Auckland was 8 years behind the rest of the country when they heard about developments elsewhere from the other delegates.

By 1998 the unhappiness and distrust had spread to the South Island, and the TEACH Forum in February of that year was a two-day event (the largest TEACH Forum ever)

marked by a heightened anticipation that “something definite would be done” about the Federation. And indeed, an inter-island working party was established to form an organisation specifically to represent home educators to Government in opposition to the Federation. There were conflicts within the working party, made worse by the Education Legislation Amendment Bill No. 2, which proposed to hand a number of powers to the ERO.

Home educators made submissions like never before, many appearing before the Select Committee itself and gaining many favourable comments in the Hansard Report. While we did manage to get proposed ERO powers pared back, home educators were exhausted, expending themselves on political machinations when we just wanted to be with our families. These things probably explain the slow down in growth and the negative growth of home education in 1998. A fuller historical account is given in *TEACH Bulletins* Nos. 72 to 77, July 2003 to January 2004.

The negative growth shown for this year is easily explained: the Exclusive Brethren denomination has stopped home education and instead established its own Westmount Independent School with 10 campuses all over the country. Their opening role had 476 in August this year, most of those coming from the ranks of home educators.

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## Secular Demands Out of Line

Parent Nicki Butt didn't like her child having to recite the Lord's Prayer at Remuera's Victoria Avenue School weekly assembly, as it has done throughout its 52-year history. Fair enough. The school decided to officially close for that time so the girl would not be truant if she did not attend. But even though Mrs Butt transferred her daughter elsewhere, she still pursued the school, saying it was not appropriate for a secular school to recite a prayer from any religion.

Why should Mrs Butt be allowed to force her minority secular beliefs down everyone else's throat (91%

of parents want the prayer retained)? The Education Act's "secular clause" (Section 77) merely says that "the teaching shall be entirely of a secular character". The teaching must be secular, but the school's flavour, character emphasis and ethos can be as religious as the Trust Board wants. That was the whole point of the Tomorrows Schools reforms of 1990.

"We are not promoting any sort of religion. It is about the tradition and history of our school," said Board of trustees chairwoman Sarah Fyfe.

Mrs Butt said, "The alternative is a state school that every single week is indoctrinating children into a religion that I, as a parent, don't want." She clearly identifies her point of reference: what she wants takes precedence over and above the school's 52-year tradition, the desires of the other parents, the efforts made by the school to provide alternative activities for the child, etc.

Incidentally, New Zealand is bound specifically to uphold the Christian religion. MPs, other government officials and naturalised citizens swear or affirm allegiance to the Queen. They must, therefore, help uphold her coronation oath: "Will you to the utmost of your power maintain the Laws of God and the true profession of the Gospel? Will you to the utmost of your power maintain in the United Kingdom the Protestant Reformed Religion established by law?"

New Zealand's Parliament is opened with the prayer, "Almighty God...we beseech Thee to grant that we may conduct the affairs of this House and of our country to the glory of Thy Holy name, the maintenance of true religion and justice...through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen."

It is Nicki Butt who is out of line objecting to the Lord's Prayer at school assembly, not the school.

(Facts from *NZ Herald*, 17 Dec 2005, "School on mat over weekly prayer," [http://www.nzherald.co.nz/section/story.cfm?c\\_id=1&objectid=10360415](http://www.nzherald.co.nz/section/story.cfm?c_id=1&objectid=10360415))

## Who Owns Your Kids?

This is the question parents in New Zealand and all over the world are having to face – and answer definitively – before the Government just assumes ownership and leaves parents out in the cold.

There are many scary stories of what governments around the world are doing to take ownership, declare ownership or just assume ownership. Politicians are quite possibly giving their mindset away when they use rhetoric such as, "Children are this county's most important natural resource!" Yeah, right up there with lamb exports and wool. How dare they talk about my children that way! Successive Ministers of Education wax eloquently when they say how the schools are going to prepare New Zealand's children for life in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century.....as if parents have nothing to contribute, except occasionally as a "partner" with the MoE and the local school teachers.

I'll never forget the way one of the better state school Principals in Palmerston North, Alison Collett of Queen Elizabeth College, explained in the press how it takes *seven years* for the MoE to fully implement a bright idea into the nation's schools, what with drafting the original proposal, running a few pilot programs, evaluation, more pilots, more evaluation, adjustments, etc.

This kind of time-lag will guarantee that government school graduates are chronically behind the needs of business and development...and not being connected with either business or development, government schools are hardly likely to even be close to what is needed.

On the other hand, some private schools and we home educators can implement bright ideas overnight, and we don't have to hassle with the PC brigade.

## California

In California on November 2 this year, Judge Stephen Reinhardt of the 9<sup>th</sup> Circuit Court of Appeals wrote why he and his colleagues were upholding the district court's decision against the six parents who

sued the Palmdale, California, School District for conducting a sexually charged survey with their primary aged children. Reinhardt wrote:

*We agree [with the previous ruling], and hold that there is no fundamental right of parents to be the exclusive provider of information regarding sexual matters to their children... We also hold that parents have no due process or privacy right to override the determinations of public schools as to the information to which their children will be exposed while enrolled as students. [Emphasis Reinhardt's].*

The survey questions included asking in class children as young as 7 years old about the frequency of:

- Touching my private parts too much
- Thinking about having sex
- Thinking about touching other people's private parts
- Not trusting people because they might want sex
- Getting scared or upset when I think about sex
- Can't stop thinking about sex

Carrie Gordon Earll, director of issue analysis with Focus on the Family Action, said, "The 9th Circuit did more than rule against parents who were upset that their elementary-school-aged children were being asked explicit questions about sex in class. They told all parents they have no right to protest what public schools tell their children.

"What the court did here is declare parenthood unconstitutional. It's long been the liberal view that it takes a village to raise a child – but never before have the 'villagers' been elevated, as a matter of law, above mothers and fathers." <sup>1</sup>

## Montana

In February this year, home educators in the State of Montana packed out the state capitol building to hear testimony regarding a Bill to toughen up on a certain type of "home schoolers" who've been in the news there lately: the "shadow children" discovered locked in closets and the 14-year-olds who couldn't read. Senator Ryan, pushing the Bill, told a heart-wrenching story featuring an 18-year-old home edu-

cated girl whose lifelong dream was to be a nurse. In visiting with a nurse, the nurse became concerned that her academics were 4-6 years behind what she would need to enter college, and so wrote the senator about her concerns.

Senator Ryan had other proponents for the bill there, including several school superintendents and administrators who denied any possible way that a parent could be qualified to teach all subjects, especially without a college degree. In support of the Bill they claimed: Public school is safer due to measures to background check and fingerprint teachers, safety inspections of the buildings and fire drills; homeschoolers are so socially inadequate that they will never function in society and will only be stuck at home for life; schools have to provide 7 hours of instruction per day while homeschoolers don't (a factual error, since the law does stipulate a required number of hours per day).

A Bill opponent produced copies of an email from Senator Ryan sent to all the superintendents around the state asking for homeschool "horror stories". Then an unknown lady stepped up to the microphone. She said she hadn't intended to speak and was unprepared, but since Senator Ryan had mentioned the academically-behind 18-year-old who wanted to be a nurse, she wanted to clarify the situation. She very graciously explained that the girl was her daughter (every homeschooler in the room gasped, wondering what was to come). She had been born with cerebral palsy, hip joint problems and near total deafness. A specialist told the parents that if she was sent to public school, she would never learn to speak, read or write. They decided to homeschool. The girl learned to walk at 3 1/2, speak at 4 1/2 and now signs and lip reads well. She does indeed dream of becoming a nurse, and is now in her second semester of college. Presented as a "horror story" by Senator Ryan, this turned instead into a story of victory for home education.

The Bill was voted into oblivion. It was a victory for Montana home educators and hopefully also a lesson in how the government agents don't always play fairly.<sup>2</sup>

## Misc. Barbs

And there is a constant barrage of barbs against home educators from the educational establishment. Here is a sampling:

"Can there be anything more important to each child and thus to our democratic society than to develop virtues and values such as respect for others, the ability to communicate and collaborate and an openness to diversity and new ideas? Such virtues and values cannot be accessed on the Internet." (Professor Dennis Evans, 2003).

Public schools are "... one of the few remaining social institutions ... in which children might come to learn such common values as decency, civility, and respect." (Professor Rob Reich, 2002).

"The National Education Association [NEA] supports early childhood education programs in public schools for children from birth [you read correctly!] through age eight." (2003 NEA Resolution. NEA is the largest teachers' union in the USA.)

"The National Education Association believes that home schooling programs based on parental choice cannot provide the student with a comprehensive education experience. When home schooling occurs, students enrolled must meet all state requirements. Home schooling should be limited to the children of the immediate family, with all expenses being borne by the parents/guardians. Instruction should be by persons who are licensed by the appropriate state education licensure agency, and a curriculum approved by the state department of education should be used. The Association also believes that home-schooled students should not participate in any extracurricular activities in the public schools. The Association further believes that local public school systems should have the authority to determine grade placement and/or credits earned toward graduation for students entering or

re-entering the public school setting from a home school setting.” (NEA Resolution No. B-73 for school year 2005-2006.)

“The effect of this amendment is that the statutory protection for use of force by parents and guardians will be removed. They will now be in the same position as everyone else so far as the use of force against children is concerned.” (Crimes Amendment Bill currently before Parliamentary Select Committee. The “force” to be removed is titled in law, “Domestic Discipline – Section 59”. Parents will be able to discipline their own children using the same degree of force “as everyone else” could use with their children: zero. Parental authority to discipline will be outlawed by this Bill. Please see Action Station box below.)

### Notes:

1. WorldNetDaily, “Court: It *does* take a village when it comes to sexuality”, 3 Nov 2005, [http://wnd.com/news/article.asp?ARTICLE\\_ID=47195](http://wnd.com/news/article.asp?ARTICLE_ID=47195)
2. Posted to StateLeaders.net email loop by Cathy, 15 Feb 2005.

## Home Educators Overseas Hounded Out of their Countries

**Brazil:** (14 Dec 05) Please pray for us as we are underground homeschool leaders in Brazil. We need protection. Last Tuesday, my wife and I were summoned to appear before a court about the way we bring up our son. A relative betrayed us because he does not understand homeschooling. We will appear before the court next Monday, and I ask for your prayers, because the attacks are many, and I lost my job recently. (19 Dec) My wife and I have appeared in the juvenile court today, and we were ordered to enroll our 8-year child in the school, under jail threat. Besides, our discipline practices were judged and officials said that the use of rod is illegal. We will be prosecuted. (20 Dec) The Tutelar Council for the Child and Adolescent Rights is “investigating” our practices. We are under two criminal offenses: homeschooling and physical disci-

# Coming Events

## Sat 11 Feb 2006

### Curriculum Fair Manawatu

Time: 10am — 4pm

Venue: Harmony House, Reformed Church, 541 Ruahine St., Palmerston North

Entry: free

Vendors:

- Christian Education Services, Auckland
- Singapore Maths, Hastings
- Learnex, Auckland
- Geneva Books, Palm Nth
- Home Education Foundation, Palmerston North
- Issacharian Books, Palmerston North
- Dayspring Academy, Palmerston North

Program: Browse the stalls. Each vendor will also have one or two 15-minute mini-seminars to more fully explore for you their products and services. Free tea and coffee!

Contact: Sandra, ph. (06) 354-5678

## Sat 1 April 2006

### Education Resource Expo Hamilton

Incorporates Science and Maths Fair.

Contact: [edexpo@xtra.co.nz](mailto:edexpo@xtra.co.nz)  
<http://edexpo.bravehost.com>

take advantage of this situation, especially because President Lula’s administration is pro-abortion and pro-homosexuality, not mentioning that it is deeply Socialist. – Julio Severo. See Julio’s article at: [www.lastdayswatchman.blogspot.com](http://www.lastdayswatchman.blogspot.com) (21 Dec) HSLDA is helping the Severos relocate to Canada.

**Germany:** Richard and Ingrid Guenther, the home educators leading the legal charge to preserve home education unhindered from state intervention, have had to flee Germany. Other couples have split, with a number of fathers staying in Germany to work while their families have re-located to Austria.

The Guenthers are now on the western edge of Houston, Texas, helping with the ministry of James and Stacy McDonald, editors of *Homeschooling Today* Magazine. The battle in Germany, especially Bavaria, is against expressions of Christianity and parental freedom. The Eckermans, top German lawyers, will carry on the battle.

pline. We are under great pressure. I am a writer, and I am an author of a number of known articles on homosexuality and abortion, and I fear that if our case becomes public, we will have to face not only the government brutality, but also attacks from homosexual and abortion groups. They could

## Action Station

1. Write a submission to the Justice and Electoral Select Committee of Parliament telling them that you oppose the Crimes (Abolition of Force as a Justification for Child Discipline) Amendment Bill. It can be very short giving only one reason (i.e., it will too greatly compromise parental authority with their own children) plus one recommendation (leave Section 59 intact, just as it is). Send 20 copies addressed to: Clerk of the Committee, Justice and Electoral Committee, Select Committee Office, Parliament Buildings, WELLINGTON, to arrive by 28 February 2005. Further guidelines on submission writing at: <http://tinyurl.com/46u2e>. This matter is far too important to ignore. The integrity of every New Zealand family is at stake. See [www.FamilyIntegrity.org.nz](http://www.FamilyIntegrity.org.nz).
2. Contact [Family.Integrity@xtra.co.nz](mailto:Family.Integrity@xtra.co.nz), (06) 357-4399, for brochures to distribute to family, friends, church, neighbours.
3. Mark the two Coming Events into your calendar for next year and plan to attend one or both!

CRAIG S. SMITH, Editor