
Creating a need for daycare



Prof. John McKnight

You first read the philosophy of John McKnight, Associate Director of the Center for Urban Affairs and Policy Research at Northwestern University, when he discussed the problems of the elderly in Volume 1, Number 3 of the Doctor's People Newsletter.

In this Newsletter, Professor McKnight enlarges on his concept that "services produce needs" by focusing on daycare as well as eldercare.

Today, there are two fast-developing professional areas—childhood development and geriatric care. Universities across the country are tooling up to produce tens of thousands of specialists to provide geriatric services to the old and childhood development services to the young.

In both cases, if these professionals are to do their jobs, they will need to take responsibility away from parents, families and local communities. They will need to convince us that our children should be in school at the age of two and that our

*Everybody's
"right"*

*The power
of
professionals*

grandparents should be in "eldercare" homes during their final decade.

This trend already is obvious. As is traditional when professionals move in on the family, it begins by focusing on extreme cases. Therefore, one hears a great deal about the need for early childhood development for low-income children. In actuality, this means professionals are using poor people to establish the premise that they should have jurisdiction over the lives of children beginning at age two. Once this program for the poor is established, professionals will argue that it is a "right" for everyone, and universal childcare will be urged upon legislatures.

At the other end of life, the professionals will develop programs for the most afflicted elderly, creating services and special places for them (Alzheimer's is a frontline example). Having established the programs to meet these needs, the number of people in need will be expanded through new diagnoses, and the models developed for the "care" of those with extreme cases will be extended to the average person. And, in a final inversion, extending "eldercare" to all older people will be called a "right." Actually, as it is with young people, this "right" belongs to the professionals, allowing *them* to decide how the oldest and youngest people in our societies should live their lives. As we come to believe that the oldest and the youngest "need" professional care and the services of specialists, these experts and specialists will turn to the government to confirm their power, and the government will gradually confirm the proposition that professionals should control the lives of children and old people.

Therefore, we can predict that, if this process indeed develops, professionals will gain the power to decide which children can be effectively removed from their parents to prevent poor parenting by providing the "right" to childcare. "Prevention" is the key word in developing these new professional powers so that the specialists will have the legal authority to control children—not because they have been abused but because their parents *may* abuse them. It may not be long before we invent a new kind of orphanage for young children whose parents are alive and want to raise them, but whose lives actually are under the legal control of professionals.

Obviously, the same process can take place with old people so that *their* lives become surrounded by a wall of geriatric services with no function for friends and relatives. Once this wall is built, we can be assured that euthanasia will be a common practice, decided upon by technical experts measuring a person's life against a set of guidelines for "appropriately" ending life.

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