

Monday, June 12, 2000

Subject: education of boys

I have a 5 year-old son who (all parental bragging aside) is bright and intelligent. I recently attended a series of classes for parents at his school, where we were told, among other things, that children needed to be surrounded by books and receive constant encouragement regarding their study efforts.

The only problem is that my son's mother and I are divorced, and thanks to the Family Court I get to see him/he gets to see me only 6 days per month. He lives with her in a small flat situated not more than 5 minutes by car from where I live, and spends most of his non-school time watching cable TV. Even now he is almost 6 years old, he sleeps with his mother in her double bed. Their telephone conversations are centred around such expressions as " I love you mummy, do you love me?" Some people might think it an over-reaction when I say that she seems to be using our son as a substitute boyfriend. He is fast becoming overweight, and is obviously not accustomed to discipline. There are no books in the house, and his mother occupies her "spare" time sewing. She spends some of her single parent pension on baby-sitting fees rather than let him spend extra time with me, because she is "bitter" about the break up of our relationship which she initiated with the "help" and support of welfare workers. Our son is at grave risk of becoming another victim of the Family Court's policy of giving "ownership" of children to mothers. Perhaps your study has identified other examples of this type of highly unsatisfactory situation?

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