

Will Big Brother take your child away?

by Scott Thompson

In his book *Brave New World*, British establishment kook Aldous Huxley forecast a world without families. Test-tube babies, genetically engineered at various convenient mental levels ranging from cretins to geniuses, would be raised in creches to fill certain categories of social and economic functions. Children would be raised by social workers to respond to the words “mother” and “father” with disgust. The child would owe all his allegiance to the state.

Sound far-fetched? Not when you look at the Parents as Teachers (PAT) program, which is being implemented to varying degrees in 40 states, and which is also being proposed on the federal level through House of Representatives bill H.R. 485 (“America 2000”), part of the Clinton administration’s legislative package on education reform.

Starting with a St. Louis, Missouri pilot project in 1981, “co-parenting” programs have been introduced to replace parental authority with that of social workers, starting, whenever possible, in the pre-natal period.

Laura Rogers exposed key features of PAT in an article titled “In Loco Parentis: The Brave New Family in Missouri,” which appeared in the February 1991 issue of *Chronicles: A Magazine for Educators*, published by the Hoover Institute. Rogers notes that only four years after PAT’s introduction in four Missouri school districts, “the Missouri Legislature had mandated the Parents as Teachers program for all schools and all children.” Now, PAT has spread to 40 states and 8 foreign countries.

PAT was promoted at the Bush administration’s Governors’ Conference on Education in 1989 by such social psychiatrists as Shirley McCune, who told the governors that the “strategic direction” of American schools must be to bring about “a total restructuring of the society.”

The body snatchers

PAT’s concept of social workers determining how a family raises its children, and taking the children away if the family does not comply, is reminiscent of the 1950s movie “Invasion of the Body Snatchers.” The film, an attack upon communist collectivism, showed human beings being turned into “pod people” who were controlled by a state with alien values. In a similar way, PAT snatches children from their

parents, to make their beliefs and attitudes conform to a “politically correct” paradigm shift in society’s values.

According to Rogers: “The process begins when a ‘parent educator,’ through home visits and school visits, bonds herself to a family. . . . First, under the guise of education screening, parents and children are evaluated, the child is given a personal computer code number, and a computer record is initiated that will enable . . . [the tracking of] each child for the rest of his life. . . . There is no code for normal.

“The next step of the PAT program is to change and usurp the relationship parents have with the children. The change agent, the ‘significant other,’ will be working with the children in a ‘mentoring program’ or perhaps as a ‘certified parent educator.’ ”

In many states, like Missouri, the “parent educator” is required by law to report the remotest sign of abuse to a telephone hotline. If, as a result, a judge deems the child to be “at risk,” the parents will lose legal custody over their child.

Rogers writes: “The ‘certified parent educator’ may prescribe mental health services and perhaps a drug like Ritalin. . . . If a parent refuses recommended services, the state can remove the child from the home, place it in a residential treatment center, and force the parent to take psychological counseling for an indefinite period.”

‘Risk factors’

According to Rogers’s report, the 12 “risk factor definitions” used in all states where PAT is found, include:

- “Inability of parent to cope with inappropriate child behavior (e.g., severe biting, destructive behavior, apathy).”
- “Low-functioning parent (due to limited ability or illness).” Parents who are ill, overweight, tired, depressed, have low-level intelligence, are substance abusers, handicapped, or injured are all considered candidates for the category of “abusive parents.”
- “Undue stress that adversely affects family functions.” This could include grieving over a death in the family, divorce, separation, frequent travel by a parent, prolonged illness, or low income.
- “Other (that wonderful catch-all!).” The official guidelines explain: “This can include a wide variety of conditions. . . . Consider such things as allergies, heavy cigarette smoking in the house, family history of hearing loss. . . .” In a word, PAT’s “change agents” boast that *anything* can be considered a warning sign of “abusiveness.”

PAT’s “body snatchers” can thus make a child a ward of the state if, in the judgment of a self-proclaimed “parent educator”—and without due process of law—a parent is overweight, a smoker, a person who gives too many toys, or is grieving over a death in the family. This system of child snatching could soon get a federal mandate, if President Clinton’s “America 2000” education bill is not blocked in the Congress.