

The Edmonton Journal, Sunday, October 29, 1988

Devine's wife urges help for moms

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Motherhood is so important that governments should subsidize women to stay home for the first three years after childbirth, says Chantal Devine.

Psychologists tell us the first three years of life are crucial to healthy development of a child," the wife of Premier Grant Devine told the annual conference of the Alberta Federation of Women-United for Families.

"Considering this, why aren't we encouraging governments to subsidize mothers to stay home for the first three years or until their children reach school?" she asked Saturday.

"Why not support those who need financial assistance and choose to stay home and make child-rearing a career?"
Tax laws could also be restructured

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Chantal Devine

tured to allow women to stay at home with their children, she said.

Devine — who later received a standing ovation — said she pitied children who were "relegated to day-care centres away from the natural bonding of the mother" shortly after their birth.

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Devine, who was introduced by Margaret Getty, wife of Alberta's premier, said the family is under serious attack.

"Traditional values are being challenged by . . . forces that purpose there is no right and no wrong," said Devine, a mother of five.

"Those who promote permissive sex education, schools without values, instant divorce, state-controlled day care and abortion-on-demand are all part of an anti-family agenda" that's being led by radical feminists, Devine said.

"Their goal is to ultimately oppress the family," so it becomes more dependent on government, said Devine.

British Columbia columnist Marie Salway earlier told the conference that universal day care is "destructive and inherently flawed."

"If we think we can pop our kids into day care and have them emerge with our value system, we are dreaming," Salway said.

Studies show children who turn out the best have bonding with one consistent care-giver for the first three years of life, she said.

"But day care can't provide this consistency because the institution has to wrestle with sick time and holidays, education leave and pro-

motions. Then the workers get fed up and quit," she said.

One study of day care found a six-month-old baby had 15 different care-givers in a three-month period.

Salway discounted arguments that day care is necessary because both parents must work.

"We (society) are not concerned about day care for the poor," she said. "Day care is to ease the guilt of the well-to-do as they abandon their kids in greedy pursuit of the fast lane."

While "men have always preferred the market place to nurturing, now women are doing it. We hire people with less power to care for our kids and we get away with it because kids are the least powerful members of society."

North Americans need a "whole new mind-set" when it comes to day care so "that nurturing years can be viewed as a time-out period."

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