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Questionable Study Claims ADHD is *Under-Diagnosed*

About 2.5 million American children and adolescents returned to school this fall on ADHD medications, but a recent study in the *Archives of Pediatrics and Adolescent Medicine* speculates that three times that many actually have ADHD.

“There is a perception that ADHD is overdiagnosed and overtreated,” said lead researcher Tanya E. Froehlich, M.D., of the Cincinnati Children’s Medical Center. “But our study shows that for those who meet the criteria for ADHD, the opposite problem — under-diagnosis and under-treatment — seems to be occurring.”

The research team used the fairly new standard for ADHD diagnosis found in the fourth and latest edition of the *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual for Mental Disorders (DSM-IV)*. This is the first study to use this standard to calculate ADHD’s prevalence in the population. According to the researchers’ application of the standard, 2.4 million children between the ages of eight and 15 have ADHD — 9% of all children in that age group. Only 48% of these have been diagnosed with ADHD, and only 32% receive drug treatment.

The news about ADHD’s supposed under-diagnosis went out immediately over every major business wire. The study could greatly enrich the pharmaceutical companies responsible for drugs such as Ritalin and Adderall, on which Americans already spend \$2.3 billion a year. In fact, the study was funded in part by the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, which has close financial and policy ties with the pharmaceutical industry.

Many scientists and others, however, still question the usefulness of the ADHD diagnosis. “The behaviors exist, but the concept of ADHD is too simplistic to account for the complexity that exists in all the reasons that kids may have difficulty concentrating, being impulsive, or being distractible,” says Thomas Armstrong,

Ph.D., author of *The Myth of the ADD Child*. Armstrong also points out that the loose list of symptoms composing the “gold standard” for ADHD diagnosis is far from definitive.

Dr. Karen Effrem, a pediatrician and policy analyst, agrees. “Given that the authors of the DSM call their own criteria for mental disorders ‘subjective’; that authors of major textbooks on ADHD and the National Institutes of Mental Health admit that there is no evidence to call ADHD a brain disorder; that the Surgeon General and the World Health Organization both say that it is extremely difficult to accurately diagnose children with any dis-



order due to rapid changes in development, I think it is foolish and very dangerous to put out these kinds of statistics.”

The study concluding that 9% of children have ADHD shows, among other things, that the “gold standard” in the *DSM-IV* defines ADHD much more broadly — broadly enough to diagnose twice as many children as having ADHD. In the past, scientists have seen the disorder’s very definition as ruling out anything like a 9% population incidence.

Since ADHD does not have any strictly biological markers the way diseases like diabetes and cancer do, its definition is — or was — based on statistical rarity. By definition, ADHD is a disorder in which

children act more hyperactive, less attentive, etc., than other children their age. “Given that the definition of ADHD is based on statistical rarity, only a limited number of children can qualify as having the disorder,” explained a 2003 paper in the *Scientific Review of Mental Health Practice*. “The ADHD prevalence estimate was set at 3% to 5%. . . . Unless a biological marker is identified, an agreed-upon gold standard diagnostic procedure is established, or ADHD is redefined, a population-based ADHD rate exceeding 3% to 5% by definition represents a problem of ADHD over-diagnosis.” The recent study may indicate that just such a redefinition of ADHD is occurring. Of course, as the standard for ADHD diagnosis is broadened, the more children will seem to have ADHD, and the more children will be treated with medications that have serious and sometimes fatal side effects.

(See ADHD, page 4)

Arabic Language and Culture Public School Opens in New York

German, Mandarin and Spanish charter schools focus on the language and culture of the theme country in a religiously neutral environment. Can schools focus on the Arabic language and culture and maintain the same religious neutrality? Khalil Gibran International Academy (KGIA), in New York City, opened this fall in the midst of a heated debate on that question.

The NYC Department of Education established KGIA in March of this year as an Arabic language and culture-themed public school, to open in September. Some community members immediately expressed concern about the school, fearing it might become a “government-funded madrassa.” “The mate-

rials that are included in an Arabic curriculum have a natural tendency to promote Islam,” warned Daniel Pipes, an expert on radical Islam. Concerned citizens banded together into the group Stop the Madrassa, intending to ask the Department of Education some very difficult questions about the school. To most of these, Stop the Madrassa believes it still has not received answers.

Three imams serve on the school’s advisory board, along with Christian and Jewish clergy. “If the KGIA has no religious content, then why is every one of its advisory council members a reverend, rabbi, or imam, plus one Ethical Culture representative?” asks Stop the Madrassa. Most of these Christian and Jewish clergy represent extremely liberal viewpoints within their traditions. Among the imams, however, at least one serves in a mosque at the opposite end of the spectrum. “Allah is our goal,” declares the website of the Mosque of Islamic Brotherhood, where board member Talib Abdul-Rashid preaches. “The prophet Muhammad is our leader. The *Qur’an* is our constitution. Jihad is our way. And death in the way of Allah is our promised end.”

The department did make one major change to KGIA’s staff before the school opened last month. Dhabah “Debbie” Almontaser helped to found the school, and was principal-designate until August. Her appointment drew criticism immediately because of her history of extreme political views and ties to groups such as the Council on American-Islamic Relations (CAIR). Community members who criticized Almontaser and asked for more

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information on her background received little attention from the department; but in August, the principal-designate was forced to resign.

It became public that Almontaser shared an office with an Islamist group that sold T-shirts reading “Intifada NYC.” The word “intifada” refers to Islamic radicals’ attacks on Israeli Jews between 1987 and 1993. Almontaser defended the T-shirt, stating that “intifada” meant merely a “shaking off” and that no one should object to the slogan. This lost her the political support of New York’s Mayor Bloomberg and the education department, which until then had made her position impervious to public outcry. CAIR issued a statement denouncing the result, saying that Almontaser was “unfairly pressured to resign from her position as principal due to attacks.” Although Almontaser won’t direct the school as principal, her influence will linger. She helped to create KGIA’s mission and curriculum, and appointed the faculty who will remain and carry on that mission.

Though the school has already opened its doors, the coalition to close them again is still growing. The Thomas More Law Center, a Christian legal group, has now lent its support to Stop the Madrassa. “Rather than use the public school system to assimilate Muslims and

(See Arabic Language, page 2)

Parents Work with Local Library for Age-Appropriate Materials

Laura Kostial and her 11-year-old daughter didn’t expect to be confronted on a visit to their local library with books promoting both homosexual and heterosexual teen sex. The library, St. Louis County’s Daniel Boone Branch in Ellisville, Missouri, recently opened a separate teen department for patrons ages 11-16. The teen department offered this age group such titles as *Making Sexual Decisions: The Ultimate Teen Guide*, *Homosexuality: What Does it Mean?*, *Teen Fatherhood*, *Prostitution and Sex Trafficking*, *Growing up Gay in America* and others.

The books’ content made it hard to believe that the library shelved them at all,

let alone in a section for children as young as eleven. Laura Kostial discovered that some of these books graphically described specific sexual acts and how to perform them, step-by-step. Many of the books also offered generous helpings of very bad advice.

From *Growing up Gay in America*: “Do you have to date guys your age? Of course not! While there are laws prohibiting adults from engaging in sex with minors, you’re free to date guys who are younger or much older. In fact, it’s common and perfectly normal for teen guys to be attracted to people who are older or even a few years younger.”

(See Library Materials, page 4)

EDUCATION BRIEFS

In a preliminary ruling, a judge upheld a public school's right to punish student Avery Doninger for an insult she wrote, outside of school, on her online blog. According to the judge, Avery's Burlington (CT) school district could punish her for something she wrote off campus because it concerned school officials and other students were likely to read it. This ruling, warned Avery's attorney, Jon L. Schoenhorn, means that if "any student anywhere, in an email or IM or blog, a letter to a friend, maybe orally in a conversation at McDonald's, makes any kind of vulgar or offensive remark about the school or anyone in it, the school can track them down and take some action." (*The Hartford Courant*, 9-1-07)

Teachers and administrators across all educational levels gave millions to Democratic presidential candidates in the first half of 2007. They gave \$1.5 million to Sen. Barack Obama, \$940,000 to Sen. Hillary Clinton, and an additional \$700,000 to other Democratic candidates. They also gave about \$1 million to Republican candidates. Educators gave three or four times as much during the 2004 election as they did during elections in the 1990s — partly because of widespread dislike for Pres. George W. Bush, and partly because their pay has increased. (www.opensecrets.org)

A Tucson area nonprofit will pay a few hundred low-income students \$25 a week to stay in school. The students attend two high schools with dropout rates of 22 and 24%. During their junior and senior years, students could receive as much as \$1,200 if they also receive bonuses for perfect attendance and a 3.0 or higher GPA. (*Arizona Daily Star*, 8-9-07)

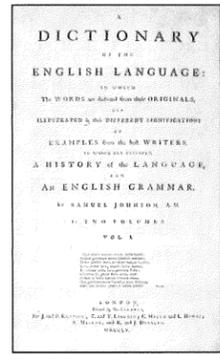
In the U.K., just six out of ten children leave primary school with basic knowledge in all three of the "R"s. 20% of students failed standardized tests in reading, and 23% failed in math. 26% of girls and 40% of boys failed in writing. Schools Minister Lord Adonis said that changes this year will help remedy the problem. "There will be a renewed emphasis on phonics in early reading teaching, and in math children will focus more on mental arithmetic, including learning times tables one year earlier," he promised. (*The Sun*, 8-7-07)

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In Arizona, Some Teachers Don't Speak English, Either

Each year since 2001, Arizona officials have visited classrooms across the state where students are learning English as a second language. English language learners fare worse on reading, writing and math assessments every year, and these state officials have been trying to find out why. Their visits last year discovered at least one important reason: nine out of 32 districts employed teachers who barely spoke English themselves. In 12 of the districts, some teachers flouted state law and taught their English language learners in Spanish.



Officials said that some teachers were

almost impossible to understand. Others were comprehensible but mispronounced words and used incorrect grammar and syntax. The visitors recorded several examples of teachers' poor grasp of English:

"You need to make the story interested to the teacher."

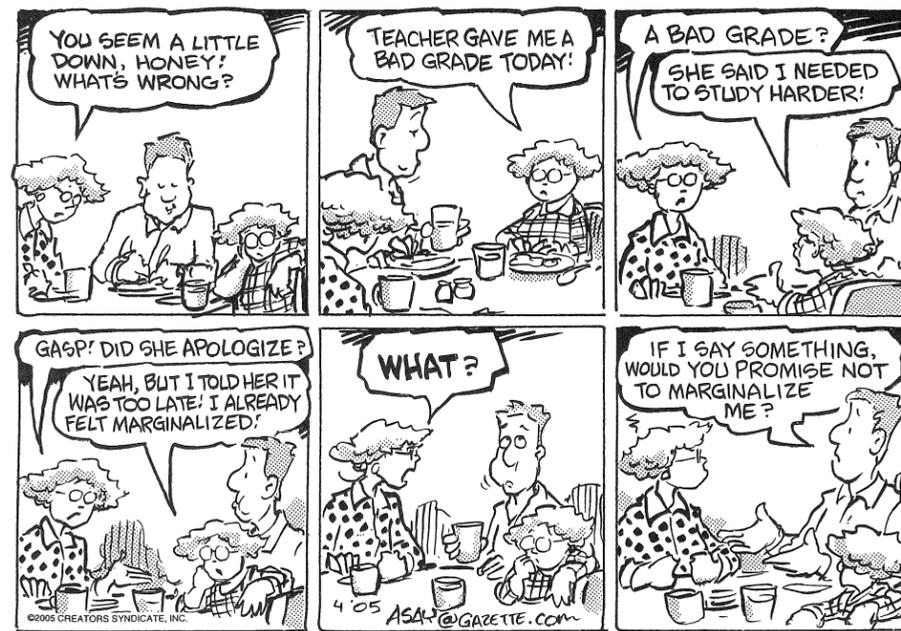
"If you have problems to who are you going to ask?"

"How do we call it in English?"

"Read me first how it was before."

Last year's visits also uncovered legal violations in whether or how schools provided English instruction to students.

Major changes in English education go into effect this year in Arizona. English language learners must now spend four hours a day in classes devoted exclusively to language: English phonetics, grammar, reading and writing.



Zero Tolerance for Doodles of Weapons

In the space of two weeks, two Arizona 8th-graders in different districts were suspended for drawing pictures of guns. Payne Junior High in Chandler issued a five-day suspension, later commuted to three days, to a student who sketched a gun on a homework assignment. Although it was only a doodle of a laser gun and depicted no violence or human targets, school officials said the drawing "was absolutely considered a threat" under the district's zero-tolerance policy. (*East Valley/Scottsdale Tribune*, 8-21-07)

The following week, a student at Walker Butte K-8 School in Florence drew a cartoon on several index cards

of a stick figure holding a gun. This 8th-grader also received a three-day suspension. A spokesman from the Florence Unified School District explained that the punishment fit the crime "because it is the intent of the district to provide a safe environment in which to learn." (*Arizona Daily Star*, 8-31-07)

Both sets of parents objected to the suspensions, saying the schools were overreacting. "I just can't believe that there wasn't another way to resolve this," said the Payne student's mother. In Chandler, there is no way for parents to appeal any punishment less severe than a ten-day suspension.

Arabic Language (Continued from page 1)

other immigrants into American culture, New York City is doing everything it can to keep them isolated — a target-rich environment for recruiting potential new homegrown terrorists and a recipe for a future 9/11 disaster, according to my read of the NYPD report," said Richard Thompson, president of the Thomas More Law Center. Together with the citizen's coalition, the group has promised to bring a federal lawsuit against the school if it learns that religious indoctrination or other violations

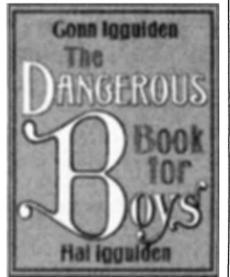
have occurred.

Khalil Gibran is not the only public school in the United States with an Arabic language and culture theme. Others include Tarek ibn Ziyad Academy in Inver Grove Heights, Minnesota, and Amana Academy in Alpharetta, Georgia. As Daniel Pipes has documented (www.danielpipes.org/blog/758), taxpayer funds go to a variety of other Arabic language programs at public schools, some of which have suspicious ties to politically extremist Islamic groups.

Book of the Month



The Dangerous Book for Boys, Conn and Hal Iggulden, Collins, 2007, 270 pp., \$24.95



Name a few things you think boys today miss

out on. Heroes and history that will inspire them to grow into true manhood? Adventures in the real world and not just on a screen? The chance to learn in ways that interest them rather than in ways designed by women specifically for girls?

Whatever you name, *The Dangerous Book for Boys* probably offers something to help fill the gap. As if catapulted there by a slingshot, this compendium of activities, stories, and useful information hit the top of British and American bestseller lists. "We hope in years to come that this will be a book to dig out of the attic and give to a couple of kids staring at a pile of wood and wondering what to do with it," write the authors.

With *The Dangerous Book's* help, a pile of wood might become a workbench, go-cart, bow and arrows, or even a treehouse. The book also explores such projects as paper airplanes, secret inks, electromagnets, navigation, and hunting and cooking a rabbit. Each of the more dangerous sections gives calm, practical advice on doing these things safely and well.

The less dangerous sections also have many charms, including the humor the authors use throughout. In the section on girls, they advise their readers not to taunt a girl who needs help. Instead, if she is trying to lift something heavy, "approach the object and greet her with a cheerful smile, while surreptitiously testing the weight of the object. If you find you can lift it, go ahead. If you can't, try sitting on it and engaging her in conversation."

Interspersed with more active sections are inspiring stories of heroes who explored the world's least hospitable regions or helped to win the Battle of Britain; tales of famous battles and other important moments in history; answers to questions about the world; and even sections on Shakespeare, Latin phrases, poems, the most important rules of grammar, and the Ten Commandments.

The book itself is beautiful, with careful illustrations and images in color wherever they are useful. Since a pocket edition is now selling in England, it will probably be available soon in the U.S. The hardcover book, however, is very complete and would make a wonderful Christmas gift for any American boy.

FOCUS: Answers to Liberal Teachers' Arguments — for Parents Challenging Objectionable Books in Schools

by Laurie Higgins

As a new school year begins, here are some brief responses to the arguments that parents may encounter when they challenge books (e.g. *The Chocolate War*, *Fat Kid Rules the World*, *The Laramie Project*, or *Angels in America: A Gay Fantasia on National Themes*) for their problematic ideological messages, the nature and extent of profanity and obscenity, or the nature and extent of depictions of sexuality.

Parents who challenge a book because of language need to bear in mind that many of the parents and teachers who approve of these objectionable texts use the same obscene and profane language commonly and casually in their personal lives, even with their children, though they likely will not admit it. Therefore, it is highly unlikely that they will concede that profanity and obscenity are objectionable, for conceding that would constitute a personal indictment.

1. PARENTS ARE TAKING WORDS OUT OF CONTEXT, AND IT IS THE CONTEXT THAT JUSTIFIES THE LANGUAGE.

Response: There is no context that renders frequent and excessively obscene language acceptable in texts selected by public school teachers for minor children. In other words, the extreme nature and pervasiveness of obscenity renders the entire text unsuitable for public schools whose mission is to cultivate the best behavior in students.

2. PROFANE AND OBSCENE LANGUAGE IS JUSTIFIED BECAUSE IT REPRESENTS AUTHENTIC ADOLESCENT LANGUAGE.

Response: If the author is justified in using this language to portray authentically adolescent culture and the emotional experiences of adolescents, then surely students are justified in using this language in school in order to be authentic and to express adequately and accurately their emotional truths. Teachers, too, should be allowed to use this language because it also represents authentic adult language and experience. In fact, society often erroneously and euphemistically refers to profanity and obscenity as "adult language."

3. COUNTING NUMBERS OF SWEAR WORDS CONSTITUTES AN IMMATURE OR SILLY EVALUATIVE MECHANISM.

Response: Taking into account the extent of foul language is neither silly nor juvenile. There is a substantive difference between one incident of "f**k" and one hundred. The incessant drumbeat of obscenities desensitizes readers to their offensiveness and normalizes their use. Moreover, although adults may distinguish between literary use and endorsement, many adolescents do not.

First, the prevalence of foul language should be taken into account. Second, the nature of the obscenity or profanity should be taken into account. Third, who is using the offensive language should be taken into account. Is it the hero or the antago-

nist? Fourth, parents and educators should realize that books with profuse obscenity and the willingness of educators to teach them convey the message that there are justifiable reasons and contexts for using extremely foul language.

4. SINCE STUDENTS MATURE AT DIFFERENT RATES, SOME STUDENTS ARE MATURE ENOUGH FOR THESE TEXTS. PARENTS, THEREFORE, SHOULD DECIDE WHAT IS APPROPRIATE FOR THEIR CHILD.

Response: Whoever makes this argument should be asked to define maturity. If they are referring to intellectual development, then it is irrelevant to the discussion in that parents who challenge texts because of language, sexuality, or pro-homosexual messages, are not doing so because they find the material intellectually inaccessible.

If educators are referring to emotional maturity, meaning that students are emotionally stable enough to read and discuss emotionally difficult material without being traumatized, that too is likely irrelevant, for few parents who object to language, sexuality, or pro-homosexual messages are concerned that their children will be emotionally traumatized.

The concern conservative parents have is with moral development. They recognize that all adolescents, including even mature high school seniors, are not yet adults. They are still constructing a moral compass. They are impressionable, malleable, and much more vulnerable to external influences than are adults whose moral compass is likely fixed and stable.

All parents should be able to send their children to school confident that their beliefs regarding decency and morality will not be challenged by educators or curricula, especially since this confidence can be secured without compromising the academic enterprise. It is even more important today in a culture in which profanity, obscenity, and sexual imagery relentlessly bombard our youth that schools stand as one of the last bastions of integrity, civility, and temperance.

5. A SMALL MINORITY GROUP IS TRYING TO IMPOSE ITS MORALITY OR RELIGIOUS BELIEFS ON THE WHOLE COMMUNITY.

Response: Since schools are ostensibly committed to honoring the voices of all in the community, there is no justifiable reason to ignore the concerns of even minority voices. Schools should respect the values of people of faith, especially when doing so does not compromise student learning. In addition, objections to obscenity, sexuality, or pro-homosexual messages can be either religious or secular in nature. If objections to, for example, the use of obscenity represented the imposition of religious belief, then why do virtually all school districts have policies against its use by students in school? It is the mark of a civilized society to honor the concerns and values of people of diverse faiths and to aspire to decency.

6. THERE ARE OTHER OPTIONS FOR THOSE WHO OBJECT TO PARTICULAR TEXTS.

Response: First, opting out of reading an assigned class text results in a diminished, isolated academic experience for students. But equally important is the issue of whether taxpayers, even those who have no children in school, should be required to fund the teaching of offensive material. A text like *Angels in America* contributes to the debasement of an already vulgar culture, and schools should never in any way contribute to the baser aspects of culture. This does not mean that texts must avoid looking at the flaws and evil that afflict man. Rather, it means that we should choose texts that look at the presence of ignobility and evil but do so in ways that inspire, edify, chasten, and point us in the direction of truth, beauty and righteousness. Texts like *Angels in America* do none of this.

7. REFUSING TO OFFER THIS BOOK WILL LEAD INELUCTABLY TO THE WORLD OF BOOK-BURNING À LA FAHRENHEIT 451.

Response: This is an irrational, alarmist, specious canard. There is simply no evidence that including in selection criteria the nature and extent of obscene language or sexuality, or a consideration of highly controversial political messages, will result in wholesale book banning. There is, however, ample evidence, that a steadfast refusal to ever take into account these elements will result in a slippery slide down the other slope to the use of corrosively vulgar and polemical texts.

8. THIS BOOK HAS WON PRESTIGIOUS LITERARY AWARDS OR HAS BEEN APPROVED BY THE AMERICAN LIBRARY ASSOCIATION (ALA).

Response: This justification begs the question: Who serves on committees that award prizes or review texts? And this argument calls for a serious, open, and honest examination of the ideological monopoly that controls academia and the elite world of the arts that for decades has engaged in censorship of conservative scholarship. To offer as justification for teaching a text the garnering of literary prizes or ALA approval without acknowledging that those who award the prizes and belong to the ALA are generally of the same ideological bent is an exercise in sophistry.

What school committees, departments, administrations, school boards, the ALA, the National Education Association (NEA), and organizations that award literary prizes desperately need is the one form of diversity about which they are least concerned and to which they are least committed: ideological diversity.

9. KIDS RELATE TO THIS BOOK AND, THEREFORE, IT CAPTURES AND HOLDS THEIR INTEREST.

Response: If this criterion has assumed a



dominant place in the selection process, then teachers have abandoned their proper role as educators. Appealing to the sensibilities and appetites of adolescents should not be the goal of educators. There's another word for capitulating to the tastes of adolescents: it is called pandering. Schools should teach those texts that students will likely not read on their own. We should teach those texts that are intellectually challenging and offer insight, wisdom, beauty, and truth. We should avoid those that are highly polemical, blasphemous, or vulgar.

10. TO REMOVE THIS TEXT CONSTITUTES CENSORSHIP.

Response: Parents who object to the inclusion of texts on recommended or required reading lists due to obscene language, sexuality, or highly controversial messages are not engaging in some kind of inappropriate censorship. All educators evaluate curricular materials for objectionable content, including language, sexuality, and controversial themes. The irony is that when teachers decide not to select a text due to these elements, the choice constitutes an exercise in legitimate decision-making, but when parents engage in it, they are tarred with the label of "censor."

Furthermore, virtually no parents advocate prior restraint and only rarely are they asking for the removal of a text from a school library. Rather, parents are suggesting that it is reasonable to include the nature and extent of profanity, obscenity, and sexuality when selecting texts to be recommended and/or taught to minors in public schools.

Are those teachers, administrators, and school board members who disagree with that suggestion saying that they will never take into account the nature and extent of profanity, obscenity, and sexuality? If they are claiming that they will never take into account these elements, then parents should reconsider their fitness for teaching.

In all four years of high school English, students read approximately 28-32 books. From the dozens and dozens of texts available, it seems unlikely that any student's education would be compromised by teachers, in the service of respect for parental values, comity, and modesty, avoiding the most controversial texts.

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'Educational' DVDs for Babies Under Scrutiny

40% of three-month-olds watch television, DVDs or videos regularly. By the age of two, 90% of children watch 1 1/2 hours of TV or videos a day. Many programs and movies aimed at infant and toddler audiences claim to be educational and to stimulate babies' "cognitive development." A recent study, however, came to the opposite conclusion about such products.

The study appearing in the *Journal of Pediatrics* found that the more "educational" movies infants ages 8-16 months watched, the more slowly their vocabularies developed. For each hour per day

infants watched these programs, they understood six to eight fewer words than infants who did not watch them.

Infants in the study watched movies from brands such as Baby Einstein and Brainy Baby, which sell well and generally have a good name with parents. The group Campaign for a Commercial-Free Childhood has filed a complaint with the U.S. Federal Trade Commission against both of those brands, for claiming to help babies learn when the research seems to contradict that claim. The complaint also includes BabyFirstTV, the first channel specifically for babies and toddlers. (*The Scotsman*, 8-7-07)



P.E. Making a Comeback

After years of physical education and recess cutbacks, many school districts and states now realize that children need to exercise more than their minds in the average school day.

Concern about low math and reading achievement had motivated many districts to cut out Physical Education (P.E.) or recess, especially since the No Child Left Behind Act took effect. P.E. proponents argue that children learn better and act out less in class if they have some free time to move around during the day.

Florida, Oregon and Mississippi recently passed laws requiring 150 minutes of P.E. a week for elementary students. Mississippi's law also requires 150 minutes of P.E. a week for middle schoolers. Oregon mandated 225 minutes a week of P.E. for middle schoolers, along with 45 minutes a week of health education for all students K-8. Texas and Illinois also recently strengthened P.E. requirements for their students.

36 states require elementary schools to offer P.E., but many of them also offer waivers that large numbers of schools use



to get around the mandate. Even where P.E. requirements apply broadly, some require as little as 30 minutes a week of P.E.

Legislators warm up to P.E. as they notice obesity trends and the effect obesity has on Medicare and Medicaid costs. 66% of Americas are overweight, including 32% who are obese. About 19% of children ages 6 to 11 are overweight or obese today, compared to 4% in the 1960s. Very young children and adolescents are about three times more likely to be overweight than they were in the 1960s.

The federal government may consider an amendment to NCLB that would offer incentives to schools with P.E. classes. The American Medical Association and P.E. advocacy groups such as the National Coalition for Promoting Physical Activity are working to motivate Congress to include such an amendment in NCLB's reauthorization. (*Washington Times*, 8-26-07)

Students for Concealed Carry on Campus

On at least 84 college campuses, students have organized to influence more colleges and states to allow concealed carry permit holders to carry guns on campus. 38 states ban weapons on school grounds, with 16 of those specifically banning them on college campuses. In states that leave the decision up to colleges, most seem to choose outlawing concealed carry. Utah is the only state where colleges cannot legally prohibit concealed carry.

The four Virginia chapters of Students for Concealed Carry on Campus (SCCC), have drawn media attention since the April shootings at Virginia Tech. Virginia law currently allows universities to prohibit or allow guns on campus; and most schools choose to prohibit them. "There's no way to know what could have happened" had Virginia Tech allowed concealed carry, student Andrew Dysart told the *Washington Times*. Dysart founded the George Mason University chapter of SCCC. "But

the students at Tech really should have had a chance. They should have had the chance to defend themselves if it came down to that." (*Washington Times*, 8-13-07)

"In a sense, [students] don't have the same rights to self-defense on campus as the general public," Dysart pointed out. Virginia lawmakers used the same arguments in support of a bill to require changes in schools' concealed carry policies. "Obviously, the current policy is ineffective," said Delegate Mark Cole. "It certainly didn't protect anyone at Virginia Tech." The bill was defeated in subcommittee, but Cole may try to reintroduce it.

Opposition to such measures, however, is very strong. The International Association of Campus Law Enforcement Administrators, which represents campus safety officials, says that students carrying concealed weapons could "dramatically increase violence on our college and university campuses."

ADHD (Continued from page 1)

The study's authors also treated it as a given that stimulant drugs are the most effective treatment for ADHD. Recent scientific evidence tells a different story. Ritalin, the most popular ADHD drug, improves children's behavior in the short term, but the advantage compared to behavioral intervention wears off within three years. A major study demonstrated this in August's *Journal of the American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry*. After three years, children who receive only behavioral intervention are as well-behaved as those who take drugs, and have several advantages: they have learned to control their symptoms on their own, and have avoided the side effects of Ritalin, which include stunted growth. This news, however, made less of a splash than the 9% study. Just days after the study's publication, various researchers and practitioners called out for more children to go on ADHD drugs.

American children are ten times more likely to take psychiatric drugs for ADHD than children in Europe. European children are also less likely to be diagnosed with ADHD, at least in part because European nations use a stricter set of criteria to diagnose the disorder. Nevertheless, Europe's prescription rates of behavior-altering drugs for children are also on the rise. In the U.K., doctors write ten times as many prescriptions for drugs in this class for children as they did just a decade ago.

Other recent findings

Several other important studies have recently investigated ADHD, and have made some surprising discoveries about factors that accompany or may be responsible for ADHD symptoms in some children.

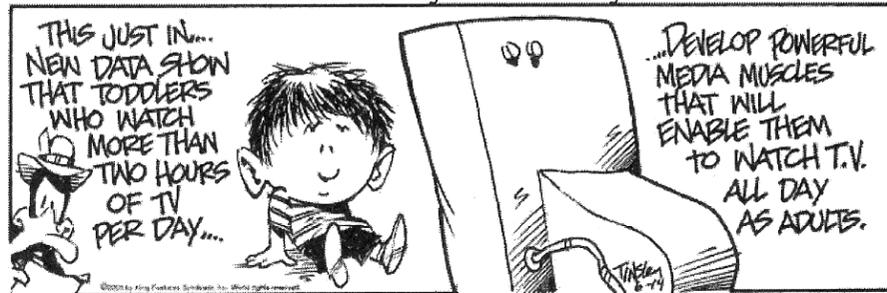
A study from New Zealand linked

children's excessive TV watching with attention problems later in life. Children who watched more than two hours of TV a day between the ages of 5 and 11 were much more likely to have attention problems between the ages of 13 and 15. Each extra hour of TV children watched increased their likelihood of "high adolescent attention problems" — serious difficulty concentrating as teenagers — by 40%. "Children who watch a lot of television may become less tolerant of slower-paced and more mundane tasks, such as school work," hypothesized the researchers. The study appeared in *Pediatrics'* September issue.

Another study published in *Pediatrics* indicated that the sleep disorder obstructive sleep apnea (OSA) might result in an ADHD misdiagnosis for some children. Children who don't sleep well because of apnea may become inattentive and exhibit other symptoms associated with ADHD. Enlarged adenoids and tonsils usually cause OSA. In this study, half of the children who had been diagnosed with both OSA and ADHD no longer showed symptoms of ADHD a year after having their tonsils and adenoids removed.

British researchers found that a mixture of food additives made elementary-aged children significantly more hyperactive, and shortened their attention spans. The study, published in *The Lancet*, tested a mixture of artificial food colorings and preservatives, all common in the packaged foods that so many kids love. The findings supported years of anecdotal evidence from parents of children with ADHD, some of whom have found that a more natural diet with fewer additives helps their children's symptoms.

MALLARD FILLMORE / by Jeff Tinsley



Library Materials (Continued from page 1)

From *Homosexuality: What Does it Mean?*: "Experts still don't know what determines a person's sexual orientation. However, they do know it is not a choice. Sexual orientation appears to be set early in life, probably by age eight."

From *Making Sexual Decisions*: "Knowing that they may not always agree with their family or church and that that does not make them a bad person may help" teens to feel less guilty about their sexual decisions.

Laura Kostial and fellow homeschooling mother Jeannine Floyd led a community effort to question these books' presence in a section of the library dedicated to pre-teens and teens. After some initial setbacks, they were able to engage in a productive conversation with library personnel.

The library is creating a committee to review the age-appropriateness of the books in question. The committee will also reevaluate how the library acquires and classifies books. Because the staff does not normally review new books that come in to the teen section, the library did not know these books contained such graphic content. The Daniel Boone branch has now promised to reclassify explicit books as "Adult" and remove them from the library's teen section. If the staff finds that the books lack any merit that would make them worth retaining, they will simply get rid of them.

Other branches in the same system and in other areas, however, circulate the same books and make them accessible to equally young children.