

The following is a summary of the American Academy of Pediatrics' involvement in the controversy regarding the Ezzo parenting books *On Becoming Babywise* and *Preparation for Parenting*.

For several years a pattern was observed in which numerous medical professionals across the nation noted an association with the use of the Ezzo parenting program and poor infant outcomes (such as poor infant weight gain, early breast milk supply failure, dehydration, failure to thrive, and potential child abuse). These professionals inquired to the AAP and expressed their concerns. Many of these medical professionals (including pediatricians, nurses, lactation consultants, and child development experts) reviewed the books and discovered that most of the medical information, which is posed as fact, was indeed false, misleading, and unsubstantiated.

This led to a letter of concern describing these medical problems and the medical misinformation as being inconsistent with AAP recommendations. It was signed by over one hundred healthcare professionals and sent to the AAP on February 10, 1997. Included with this letter were: (1) A hospitals' review and statement against the material, (2) Case stories regarding the medical problems observed, and (3) a review and statement against the material by the Child Abuse Prevention Council of Orange County.

In response to this letter, the AAP requested that a pediatrician member of the AAP write an article for the AAP News. This article was written by me and published in April 1998. At that time, the AAP also issued a "Media Alert" reaffirming its stance against scheduled feedings.

On 2/5/98 the AAP District IV, consisting of eight states, passed and submitted a resolution for the National AAP Annual Chapter Forum in 9/98. At that convention, pediatrician AAP representatives from each of the fifty states passed and amended this resolution. Both resolutions state that the infant feeding program described in *On Becoming Babywise* and *Preparation for Parenting* is inconsistent with AAP recommendations.

In the June 1998 issue of the AAP News there was a letter to the AAP members from Dr. Joe Sanders, the AAP Executive Director, regarding the "controversial parenting style promoted in the book '*On Becoming Babywise*.'" He stated, "The Academy . . . stands by its latest policy statement (December, 1997, *Pediatrics*), which states: 'Newborns should be nursed whenever they show signs of hunger, such as increased alertness or activity, mouthing or rooting. Crying is a late indicator of hunger. Newborns should be nursed approximately eight to 12 times every 24 hours until satiety... In the early weeks after birth, nondemanding babies should be aroused to feed if 4 hours have elapsed since the last nursing.'"

A new edition of *Babywise* was published in 1998, which stated that its feeding advice is within American Academy of Pediatrics recommendations. The AAP then requested for a review of this new edition. This review was submitted to the AAP on 9/4/98, which demonstrated that the new edition still contained the same problems with regard to infant feeding as well as other medical issues. After reviewing this new edition it was found that the information is still very much inconsistent with AAP recommendations and guidelines.

Nevertheless, Mr. Ezzo created and posted on his website comparison charts of the AAP vs. *Babywise* and *Preparation for Parenting*. I have written an analysis of this comparison chart, which reveals that they contain misleading information, take statements out of context, and give a false impression that the AAP is consistent with his program. The information from the thousands of pediatricians in the AAP and the information from Mr. Ezzo, is far from equal. Mr. Ezzo has a high-school diploma and a master's of arts in ministry designed for non-college graduates that gives credit for life experience. He is not in the position to contradict medical research and provide information on delicate professional topics such as infant nutrition, lactation, and child development.

In a letter dated 8/30/99, regarding "the Academy's evaluation of the BabyWise program," Dr. Roger Suchyta, the AAP Associate Executive Director, stated, "This issue has undergone considerable study and review as part of an evaluation of restrictive parenting programs by our Workgroup on Breastfeeding, the Committee on Psychosocial Aspects of Child and Family Health, and the Committee on Early Childhood, Adoption, and Dependent Care." The conclusion was that "the existing Academy policy statements on Breastfeeding and Discipline, as well as parenting guidelines and suggestions (e.g., *Caring for Your Baby and Young Child Birth to Age 5*) clearly delineate the AAP position in these areas." Furthermore he adds, "The issue of breastfeeding and adequate nutrition and fluids are at the top of the related concerns."

The following pages/files contain the above stated documents.

Matthew T. Aney, M.D.