

EDUCATION OTHERWISE
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October, 1978

EDUCATION OTHERWISE is a membership organisation whose principal aim is to provide a support and information network for families whose children are being educated out of school, for those who are contemplating such a step, and for those who wish to support the freedom of families to take proper responsibility for the education of children.

We were initially formed by a small group of parents at the beginning of 1977. We now have just under 400 members, and receive between 25 and 40 enquiries a week. Most of these are straightforward enquiries for information, but quite a large proportion are cries for help, many of them quite desperate. It's clear that there is a pool of distress and anxiety amongst parents and children far greater than most people are aware of. We believe that everyone has a natural right to care about their own children and their upbringing and education, and that this concern is being frustrated and often totally denied by the present system. We are determined that Education Otherwise shall not only offer an immediate service for its members but shall devote itself towards improving the overall educational provision in this country, and to establishing the freedom of families to be allowed to make responsible choices about the sort of education best suited to them.

To do this we need not only a wide membership but far more resources than we have at present. At present we are an entirely voluntary organisation, so, clearly, there is an enormous need for help at many different levels. Obviously, financial support is crucial to our continued existence.

We have kept our annual subscription as low as possible since we want membership to be available to everyone. The subscription covers the cost of the newsletter, publications and administration, but if we are to work towards a better educational climate we do need much greater resources. If you can suggest sources of finance or if you can afford to subscribe more than the minimum, or if you can offer help of any other sort, please do so, but of course the backbone of this movement is the ordinary members who pay the ordinary subscription and who are practising Education Otherwise with their own families, or are hoping to, or are thinking of it, or who just wish to demonstrate their support by subscribing.

At a meeting held in September, 1978, we agreed to the following statement of our aims and immediate objectives:

1. To re-affirm that parents have the primary responsibility for their children's education and that they have the right to exercise this responsibility by educating them out of school.
2. To establish the primary right of children that full consideration, with due allowance to their age and understanding, shall be given to their wishes and feelings regarding education.
3. To support families in which for any good reason a child is being educated out of school, particularly in the following respects:
 - (a) by disseminating information through the medium of a newsletter, booklets and in other ways about (i) people's experiences (ii) available resources and (iii) exchange of skills and resources
 - (b) by providing advice and where needed specific help in (i) presenting their case to the authorities and (ii) the legal aspects of education out of school
 - (c) by providing advice about (i) educational methods and materials and (ii) devising programmes of activities
 - (d) by arranging meetings and by supporting the formation of local groups.
4. To support families where a child is suffering educationally, socially or emotionally from compulsory school attendance, particularly in the following cases:
 - (a) when the family is being inadequately served or advised by the statutory services
 - (b) when the family is in need of legal assistance.
5. It is not the intention of the group to act in conflict with schools or education authorities, and we endorse the legal responsibilities of the authorities in the following respects:
 - (a) as a safeguard for children who might otherwise be deprived of their right to education, and
 - (b) as providers of educational resources and services.

We envisage a situation in which schools and other educational services provide a resource which is freely available to all members of the community whatever their age.

The right to education and the prior responsibilities and rights of parents with regard to the education of their children are universally recognised in the statements below.

From the United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights, Article 24:

1. Everyone has the right to education
2. Education shall be directed to the full development of the human personality
3. Parents shall have a prior right to choose the kind of education that shall be given to their children

From the Protocol to the European Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms, Article 2, March 1952:

No person shall be denied the right to education. In the exercise of any function which it assumes in relation to education and to teaching, the state shall respect the right of parents to ensure such education and teaching is in conformity with their own religious and philosophical convictions.

From the Education Act (England and Wales) 1944, Section 36:

It shall be the duty of the parent of every child of compulsory school age to cause him to receive efficient full-time education suitable to his age, ability and aptitude, wither by regular attendance at school or otherwise.

From the Education Act (England and Wales) 1944, Section 76:

In the exercise and performance of all powers and duties conferred and imposed on them by this Act the Minister and Local Education Authorities shall have regard to the general principle that, so far as is compatible with the provision of suitable instruction and training, and the avoidance of unreasonable public expenditure, pupils are to be educated in accordance with the wishes of their parents.

From the Education (Scotland) Act 1962, Section 29 (i):

In the exercise and performance of their powers and duties under the Education Acts, the Secretary of State and Education Authorities shall have regard to the general principle that, so far as is compatible with the provision of suitable instruction and training, and the avoidance of unreasonable public expenditure, pupils are to be educated in accordance with the wishes of their parents.

From the Education (Scotland) Act 1962, Section 31:

It shall be the duty of the parent of every child of school age to provide efficient education for him suitable to his age, ability and aptitude by causing him to attend a public school regularly or by other means.

In the United Kingdom education is legally compulsory; schooling is not. The law is clear on this point. Parents are accorded the primary responsibility for their children's education and, while they commonly delegate this to schools, they need not do so.

The Education Otherwise group consists primarily of families who have decided that in present circumstances the only way to ensure that the children's education is "directed to the full development of the human personality" is to take upon themselves full responsibility for their education rather than delegate it to the schools. These families and their supporters believe that children have the right to relationships of concerned equality in which they can mature; that they should have considerable freedom of thought, decision and action; and that their value as people should not be related to their performance on narrow academic criteria. We also recognise that children have a right to a wider community than the home itself. It is on this basis that we believe "education otherwise" should be conducted, and the group exists to support any families practising or seeking to practise education on these principles.

We hope that you will join us even if you are not thinking of "otherwise" education immediately because we believe that the stranglehold schools and institutions have on education should be challenged and that there is need for a strong group committed to re-establishing family responsibility for children's education. We feel that this should be the concern of every family, whether or not it is proposing to practise education out of school.

We issue a newsletter four times a year, and information leaflets from time to time, all of which are free to members, and we also hold meetings from time to time, details of which appear in our newsletter.

The organisation has charitable status under the aegis of the Foundation for Alternatives, Registered Charity No. 273566, and is applying for independent charitable status.

Our membership subscription is £4.00 per annum (£3 if paid by Bankers Order).

Our publications are available to non-members from this address, as follows:

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| Digest of newsletters 1,2,3, 4: | 50p |
| Other newsletters - 5,6,7,8,9,10 | 40p ea |
| Information Leaflet 1: | |
| First Steps to Education Otherwise | 40p |
| Information Leaflet 2: | |
| Pre-school and primary education | 40p |

In all cases please send 12p stamped addressed envelope 10" x 7" minimum.