

Parents or No Parents

It is May 13, 1929. Ada is born in London. She is not an ordinary healthy baby girl. She is born with a clubfoot - her right foot. Her mother and father argue about what should be done and eventually decide to “let nature take its course”. It seems obvious to me that they have really decided to do nothing. Parenthood is a big responsibility. You would think that parents would want what is best for their child. When parents decide to do nothing, they are not fulfilling their responsibilities and obligations as a parent. Some people should not have the right to be parents. In this case, choosing medical intervention for Ada would seem like the “natural” thing to do as parents. I have several reasons for believing this.

First, for the majority of babies born with a clubfoot, research shows that it can be corrected in infancy in about 6-8 weeks with the proper gentle manipulations and plaster casts. Even though being born with a clubfoot is actually considered a birth defect, it does not have to remain a defect. It also has been found through research that less than 5 percent of infants born with clubfeet require special treatment and may or may not need surgical correction. Treatment should begin in the first week or two of life in order to take advantage of the elasticity of the tissues. Research also shows that the average cost of a cure for clubfoot is only about \$400.

Secondly, is that without treatment, arthritis commonly will develop in the foot and can cause a lifetime of issues. When the book begins, Ada is 10 years old. She has never left her apartment in London. Her mother is too embarrassed to let her go outside because of her twisted

foot. Ada is forced to spend her days inside a one-bedroom apartment with only a window that lets her see the outside world. She spends her entire life crawling and can barely stand up. Children who have parents that are sensitive to their needs and emotions are more likely to be socially competent and communicate better. Ada does not have any friends. She only has her brother, Jamie, who is 6 years old. She doesn't go anywhere. Her relationship with her mother has impacted her physically, mentally, and emotionally. Her mother seems to treat Jamie better than her. Nature has taken its course in the past 10 years and she is not even able to really do anything like a normal 10 year old child.

On the other hand, there are many who disagree with the idea that some people should not have the right to be parents. The Supreme Court has maintained that parents possess a fundamental constitutional right to raise their children as they see fit. The fundamental liberty interest of natural parents in the care, custody, and management of their child is protected by the Fourteenth Amendment. Even still parents play an irreplaceable role in the lives of their children. The definition of care and management of their child should include doing whatever is necessary to help the child lead a normal life.

Ada's mother is abusive to her. She doesn't treat her like she is even capable of learning and doesn't really try to help her succeed at anything. In fact, when Ada has returned home from her foster home, she is on crutches and her mother takes them away. She even tells Ada "with a foot like that, there's nothing useful you can do. You'll be a cripple all your life."

As you can see, Ada is in a situation where she has no control of her life. Everything her mother says is abusing Ada emotionally. She is only 10 years old and her mother has already decided that she is a cripple and will not ever amount to anything. With medical intervention, Ada could have had a normal first ten years of her life. With medical intervention, Ada could have had friends and possibly have had a relationship with her mother. She could have played outside with friends like normal children do. However, there really is no comparison to the cost of the cure for her club foot and the cost of her 10 years being unable to walk. Between diapers, formula, food, clothes, furniture, and hospital costs, children are expensive. And later in life, they will need a phone, a car, college, food, and even more clothing. Being a parent means that you may have to give up things for yourself. Ada's mother tells her "I'm never paying to fix your foot." She even goes on to say "I never wanted either of you" speaking to Ada and her brother. Every child should have the right to good parents and this is why some parents should not have the right to be parents.