

# *Is this Child Abuse?*

*by Frederick Wickert*

A few days ago, there was a baby shower held for the daughter of a woman who is like a daughter to us. She often speaks of me as her step father. We are very close. It began when she was a little girl and now she has become a grandmother.

My wife was invited to attend the baby shower for her daughter. We had to go elsewhere later and it meant I was going to have to hang around as well as the two developmentally disabled adults in our care. She told us that is perfectly all right and there were going to be enough refreshments we could all participate.

We learned upon arrival we didn't need to worry at all as some of the husbands and some children of both sexes were there as well as the males in my wife's company. Most of the men however, confined themselves to the kitchen for the most part.

There were about 36 women in attendance at the party. There were all sorts of cute things, like balloons saying it's a girl, and little chocolate figurines on a stick. There were submarine sandwiches, salads, cake and ice cream too. In addition there was the inevitable opening of all the gifts.

Among all the other things that I observed at the shower was a young boy, about 11 years old in age. He could have been a year older or younger I suppose. I was appalled at the size of this young boy. He is enormously fat. His mother and siblings, one older and one younger are also very fat, but this youngster is far more obese than should ever be permitted.

He is so obese, that I looked around the room at all the women in the room. This boy's breasts are larger than those of most of the women present, just because of his obesity.

I began to wonder to myself if allowing this boy to become so obese is not in fact a form of child abuse. I think it is. I have no doubt the boy likes to eat and I have no doubt he is allowed to eat more than his share of deserts and other things unhealthy for him, resulting in such gross obesity.

I am one who does not want the government intruding in our private lives. I do not want the schools to dictate the diets of the children. I do not want the schools to dictate the care of the children. I believe that is at once the right, and the responsibility of the parents.

I believe we need to insure parents receive plenty of help and education concerning nutrition. I also believe we should be calling this behavior what it is, and that is child abuse. We already have laws and penalties against child abuse. While I am against the government intruding in the family affairs, I do believe child abuse laws need to be enforced to protect the children.

