**Hedley J *Re L (Care: Threshold Criteria)* [2007] 1 FLR 1050**

"Basically it is the tradition of the UK, recognised in law, that children are best brought up within natural families. Lord Templeman, in *Re KD (A Minor Ward) (Termination of Access)* [1988] 1 AC 806, [1988] 2 FLR 139, at 812 and 141 respectively, said this:

'The best person to bring up a child is the natural parent. It matters not whether the parent is wise or foolish, rich or poor, educated or illiterate, provided the child's moral and physical health are not in danger. Public authorities cannot improve on nature.'

"There are those who may regard that last sentence as controversial but undoubtedly it represents the present state of the law in determining the starting point. It follows inexorably from that, that society must be willing to tolerate very diverse standards of parenting, including the eccentric, the barely adequate and the inconsistent. It follows too that children will inevitably have both very different experiences of parenting and very unequal consequences flowing from it. It means that some children will experience disadvantage and harm, while others flourish in atmospheres of loving security and emotional stability. These are the consequences of our fallible humanity and it is not the provenance of the state to spare children all the consequences of defective parenting. In any event, it simply could not be done."