

AGE

Multicultural Education in a Pluralistic Society

Chapter 8

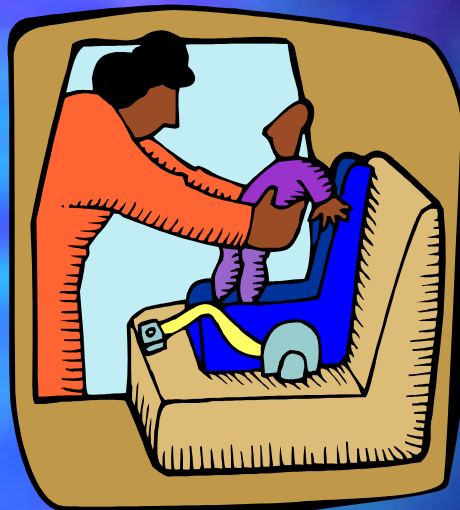
Brigid Collins

George Maurer

Susan MacDonald

Whittney Smith

AGE



Introduction:

The introduction raises a number of key elements in relation to age. It points up the difficulties of adolescence, and illustrates for us that problems can occur for any child, regardless of their background. In fact, it showcases a young man from an affluent background, and describes his difficulties in adjusting to life, ultimately resulting in his own suicide.

Each age is marked by its own unique issues. The text notes: **“How we behave is often a function of age.”** However, individuals also experience things uniquely. For example, many adolescents have the same kinds of feelings; yet, “ethnicity, socioeconomic status, religion, and gender interact with age to influence a person’s behavior and attitudes.”

Childhood



“If people learn to love and learn to share in early adulthood, they will be able to care for and guide the next generation effectively.”

-Fergus P. Hughes and Lloyd D. Noppe (1991).

Childhood:

Poverty is one of the most critical issues that U.S. educators face in regard to the children they teach. Fact: More than one in six children lives in poverty. Many children of poverty have a single parent, most often, a mother. They lack positive male role models. Beyond that, their mothers usually work outside of the home because they alone support the family. This impacts the family in a number of ways. Children do not always have the supervision they need, and further, an older sibling may be the one who has to assume responsibility of the younger children. Many suffer due to lack of proper housing, nutrition and health care. They live in houses that are not heated or cooled, which affects their sleep and physical well-being. They have trouble finding their way out, and therefore the cycle is often not broken.

The **ten risk areas** determining the conditions for children in the nation are as follows:

- low-birth weight babies
- infant mortality
- child deaths rate
- teen deaths by accident, homicide, or suicide
- teen birthrates
- teen high school dropouts
- teens not in school and not working
- children with parents without full-time, year-round employment
- children living in poverty
- children in families headed by a single parent

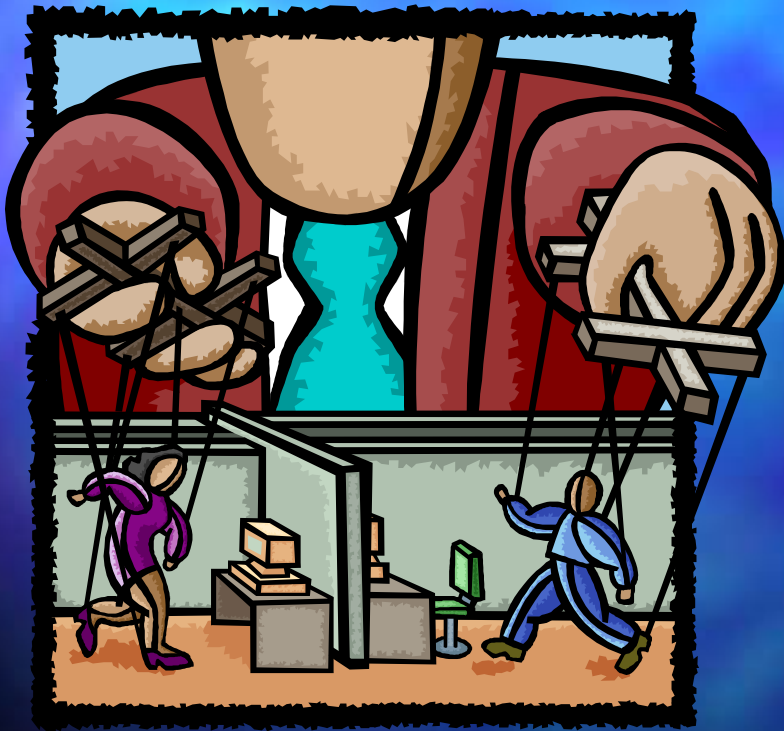
Interestingly, Washington, D.C., our nation's capital, leads the nation with children in poverty in all but one risk area.

Immigrant Children



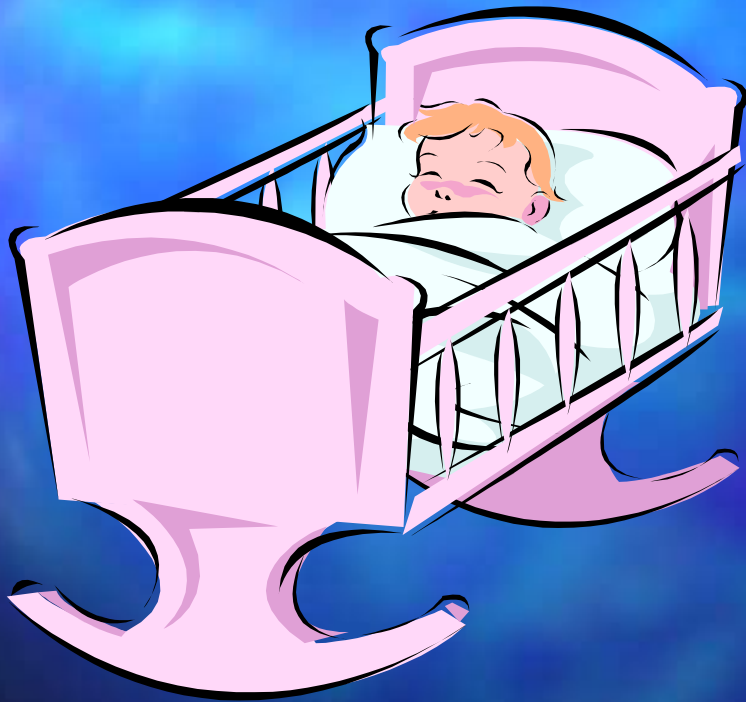
- Immigrant children often experience a “culture shock.” This leads to shame and feelings of inadequacy, a failure to belong. Children want to become more acculturated to relieve these feelings, and yet their parents often want to cling to their cultural values. This results in conflict and puts further pressure on these families, often dealing with issues of poverty on top of these bicultural issues.

Prejudice



- **Prejudice** is another harsh factor for many children of poverty. Hate crimes and violence of recent years highlights the fact that race is still a major problem area in the United States. In fact, the text points up that by age 5, some children have developed high levels of prejudice toward other racial groups. Children are influenced by what those around them say and do. The media, school texts and school itself all affect a child's attitudes. The time to combat prejudice, as studies show, is during the very early years of elementary school, before the problem becomes too deeply rooted.

Child Abuse



- **Child Abuse**: Each year hundreds of children die due to child abuse. It is the physical or psychological mistreatment of children. The statistics are alarming: In 2002 there were 896,000 victims of child abuse actually reported in the U.S. More than half of them suffered from neglect.

Child Abuse

- Almost 20% were physically abused, 10% were sexually abused, and 7% were emotionally maltreated. And, more than $\frac{1}{4}$ of these children were reported to have suffered more than one of these abuses. It is estimated that 1,400 children died of abuse and neglect in 2002. However, some experts believe that the number of children who die from abuse each year is three times greater than the number reported to authorities.
- Though these factors are all huge problems for our society, it is important for educators to remain optimistic in relation to the lives of our children, and as the text remarks:

Adolescence



- **Adolescence:**
- ⑩ Period of time when a young person is attempting to be free from the role of being a child but not equipped to assume the responsibilities of adulthood
- ⑩ Unique to Western Culture → individuals are *not* expected to make an immediate jump from childhood to adulthood

Adolescent Directory online:

<http://education.indiana.edu/cas/adol/adol.html>

Relationship with parents...



Relationship with parents:

- Emotional ties shift from parent to peers
- Parents who expect problems with adolescence (i.e. alienation and dissonance) often have a self-fulfilling prophecy happen to them
- In the quest for independence, young persons do not yield to family support
- Parents are reluctant to grant adolescents adult privileges because of lack of responsibility

Parent's Guide to Surviving the Teen Years:

<http://kidshealth.org/parent/emotions/behavior/adolescence.html>

At-Risk Behaviors



At-Risk Youth and High-Risk Behavior

At-risk → youth who live in disadvantaged status (e.g. neglect, abuse, poverty, etc.)

High-risk behavior → youth engage in that make them or others vulnerable to physical, social, or psychological harm or negative outcomes (e.g. alcohol or drug abuse, sex yielding unwanted pregnancies or STDs, etc.)

Substance Abuse

- Use of banned or illegal drugs and substances or the overuse of legal substances
- Adolescents use substances to seek relief, escape, or comfort from stress
- Categories of adolescent drug users:
 - Experimenters – majority of adolescent drug users

Recreational Users

Compulsive users

US Department of Health, Alcohol and Drug Information:

<http://www.health.org/newsroom/abuseInformation/default.aspx?s=youth>

National Youth Network: <http://www.nationalyouth.com/substanceabuse.html>

Sexual Behaviors



. Sexual Behaviors

- Teenage intercourse decreased 16% from 1991-2001
- Number of high school students engaging in risky sexual behaviors is down
- Teen birth rate is still high compared to most industrialized countries
- Teen birth rate is closely linked to poverty

CDC Sexual Risk Behaviors:

<http://www.cdc.gov/HealthyYouth/sexualbehaviors/index.htm>

Adolescent Suicide



Adolescent Suicide

- Although down since 1992, it is the third leading cause of death in young people
- 2000 suicides each year
- Large group who commit suicide or attempt it are age 15-19
- Suicide rate among 10-14 year olds has increased in the last decade
- Students of color are more at-risk

Focus Adolescent Services: <http://www.focusas.com/Suicide.html>

Youth Violence



- Youths 13-18 constitute 10% of the population in the U.S. --- this age group accounts for 20% of all arrests
- The U.S. was responsible for 73% of all child homicides worldwide

CDC, Youth Violence:

<http://www.cdc.gov/ncipc/factsheets/yvfacts.htm>

- Warning signs for youths who could be violent:

- oAggressive behavior
- oSevere depression / considering suicide
- oDifficulty maintaining relationships
- oReduced physical activity
- oMorbid suicidal thoughts
- oLow self-esteem
- oProblems at school
- oChanges in sleep
- Factors that influence youth violence:
 - oEasy access to hand guns
 - oEarly drug use
 - oGang involvement
 - oWeak parenting
 - oAbsence of strong male role model
 - oLack of connectedness
 - oDysfunctional family life

The Young African American Male: An Endangered Species



The Young African American Male: An Endangered Species

- Six social indicators or serious problems experienced by African American males
 - o Lack of education
 - o Unemployment
 - o Delinquency
 - o Drug Abuse
 - o Teenage Pregnancy
 - o Mortality Rates

Street Gangs

- Youth become involved in gangs for a variety of reasons:
 - Family stress
 - Protection
 - Achieving status in a community
- Violent gang activity is a growing problem in the country
- Gang membership is usually structured by race or nationality
 - Most visible among these gangs are Latino, African American, and Asian gangs as well as Jamaican Posses
- Gang members are identified by clothing, communication, graffiti, and tattoos

Gang information: <http://www.streetgangs.com/>

Adulthood

- **This book targets ages 20 – 64.**
- **Physical vitality**
- **Marriage**
- **Birth of children**
- **Choices in education**
- **Failed marriages**

Two major cohort groups – “Baby Boomers & Baby Busters”

- **Baby Boomers are those individuals born in 1946 through 1964. Born during a time when the fertility rate for American women reached an all-time high 2.9 per woman.**
- **The baby boomers are the most influential cohort in the US. Oldest of these people are in their late 50's and 60's.**
- **The boomers set the moral and political tone for the country. President George W. Bush is part of this group.**
- **Baby boomers are the most educated cohort group in the history of this country – 85% of boomers have a high school degree and 36% have completed college.**

Generation “X”

- **Born between 1965 and 1976**
- **Politically, nearly 50% of busters identify themselves as independent compared to 38%.**
- **Born into a more diverse world, the “Xers” tend to be more accepting than older Americans in matters related to ethnicity, family structure and lifestyle.**

Generation “Y”

- Children of the Baby Boomers
- Born between 1980's & 1994
- Comprise 1/3 of population
- Characterized as overachieving, over-managed and pressured
- Highly educated

The Aged

- Individuals who are 65 years or older
- Aged are often discriminated against
- Described as infirmed, cranky, sexless, childlike, senile or useless
- Resemble other oppressed groups – suffer from prejudice, discrimination, and deprivation

Generation “Y”

Some Beliefs

- Photographs have always been processed in an hour or less
- Alan Greenspan has always been setting the nation’s financial direction
- There’s always been a Rock and Roll Hall of Fame

Fallacies

- Most elderly people cannot be productive
 - The elderly are as productive as young workers
 - They are less prone to job turnover
 - Lower absentee rates
- Most elderly people are senile
 - Fewer than 10% have incapacitated mental or senility
- Most elderly people are sick or infirm
 - Only 20% are in this category and 10% are unable to engage in normal activity