The Merrill Social Work and Human Services Series

7TH EDITION

# EXPLORING CHILD WELFARE

## *A Practice Perspective*

CYNTHIA CROSSON-TOWER

## CSWE 2015 EPAS Core Competencies and Practice Behavior Examples in This Text

| Competency | Chapter |
|---|---|
| **Competency 1: Demonstrate Ethical and Professional Behavior** | **Ethical and Professional Behavior** |
| *Behaviors:* | |
| Make ethical decisions by applying the standards of the NASW Code of Ethics, relevant laws and regulations, models for ethical decision making, ethical conduct of research, and additional codes of ethics as appropriate to context | 9, 14 |
| Use reflection and self-regulation to manage personal values and maintain professionalism in practice situations | 2, 8, 12 |
| Demonstrate professional demeanor in behavior; appearance; and oral, written, and electronic communication | 14 |
| Use technology ethically and appropriately to facilitate practice outcomes | |
| Use supervision and consultation to guide professional judgment and behavior | 13 |
| **Competency 2: Engage Diversity and Difference in Practice** | **Diversity and Difference in Practice** |
| *Behaviors:* | |
| Apply and communicate understanding of the importance of diversity and difference in shaping life experiences in practice at the micro, mezzo, and macro levels | 2, 3, 10, 11, 12 |
| Present themselves as learners and engage clients and constituencies as experts of their own experiences | 2 |
| Apply self-awareness and self-regulation to manage the influence of personal biases and values in working with diverse clients and constituencies | 3, 6, 7 |
| **Competency 3: Advance Human Rights and Social, Economic, and Environmental Justice** | **Human Rights and Justice** |
| *Behaviors:* | |
| Apply their understanding of social, economic, and environmental justice to advocate for human rights at the individual and system levels | 2, 6, 9 |
| Engage in practices that advance social, economic, and environmental justice | 1 |
| **Competency 4: Engage in Practice-informed Research and Research-informed Practice** | **Research-informed Practice (OR) Practice-informed Research** |
| *Behaviors:* | |
| Use practice experience and theory to inform scientific inquiry and research | 7 |
| Apply critical thinking to engage in analysis of quantitative and qualitative research methods and research findings | |
| Use and translate research evidence to inform and improve practice, policy, and service delivery | 4, 6 |

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## CSWE 2015 EPAS Core Competencies and Practice Behavior Examples in This Text

| Competency | Chapter |
|---|---|
| **Competency 5: Engage in Policy Practice** | **Policy Practice** |
| *Behaviors:* | |
| Identify social policy at the local, state, and federal level that impacts well-being, service delivery, and access to social services | 5, 6 |
| Assess how social welfare and economic policies impact the delivery of and access to social services | 1, 8, 11, 14 |
| Apply critical thinking to analyze, formulate, and advocate for policies that advance human rights and social, economic, and environmental justice | 1 |
| **Competency 6: Engage with Individuals, Families, Groups, Organizations, and Communities** | **Engagement** |
| *Behaviors:* | |
| Apply knowledge of human behavior and the social environment, person-in-environment, and other multidisciplinary theoretical frameworks to engage with clients and constituencies | 5 |
| Use empathy, reflection, and interpersonal skills to effectively engage diverse clients and constituencies | |
| **Competency 7: Assess Individuals, Families, Groups, Organizations, and Communities** | **Assessment** |
| *Behaviors:* | |
| Collect and organize data, and apply critical thinking to interpret information from clients and constituencies | 4, 11 |
| Apply knowledge of human behavior and the social environment, person-in-environment, and other multidisciplinary theoretical frameworks in the analysis of assessment data from clients and constituencies | 8 |
| Develop mutually agreed-on intervention goals and objectives based on the critical assessment of strengths, needs, and challenges within clients and constituencies | 5 |
| Select appropriate intervention strategies based on the assessment, research knowledge, and values and preferences of clients and constituencies | 5 |
| **Competency 8: Intervene with Individuals, Families, Groups, Organizations, and Communities** | **Intervention** |
| *Behaviors:* | |
| Critically choose and implement interventions to achieve practice goals and enhance capacities of clients and constituencies | 4, 8, 13 |
| Apply knowledge of human behavior and the social environment, person-in-environment, and other multidisciplinary theoretical frameworks in interventions with clients and constituencies | 10, 11 |
| Use inter-professional collaboration as appropriate to achieve beneficial practice outcomes | 12 |
| Negotiate, mediate, and advocate with and on behalf of diverse clients and constituencies | |
| Facilitate effective transitions and endings that advance mutually agreed-on goals | 9 |

## CSWE 2015 EPAS Core Competencies and Practice Behavior Examples in This Text

| Competency | Chapter |
|---|---|
| **Competency 9: Evaluate Practice with Individuals, Families, Groups, Organizations, and Communities** | **Evaluation** |
| *Behaviors:* | |
| Select and use appropriate methods for evaluation of outcomes | 3 |
| Apply knowledge of human behavior and the social environment, person-in-environment, and other multidisciplinary theoretical frameworks in the evaluation of outcomes | 4 |
| Critically analyze, monitor, and evaluate intervention and program processes and outcomes | 12, 13 |
| Apply evaluation findings to improve practice effectiveness at the micro, mezzo, and macro levels | |

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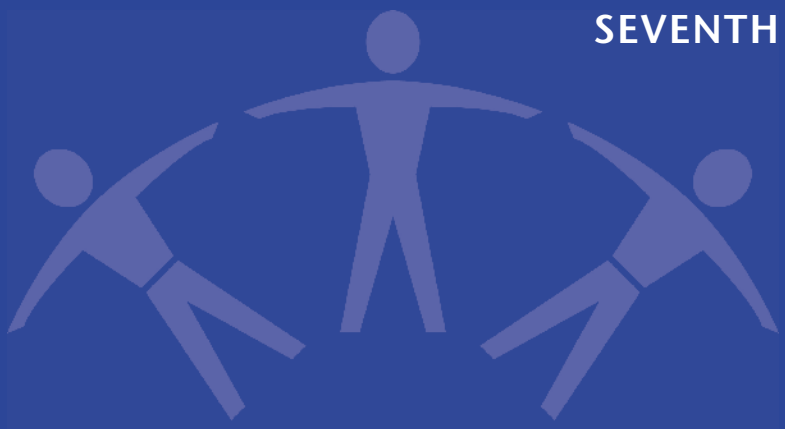

# Exploring Child Welfare

## A Practice Perspective

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*For Andrew, whose journey*
*through the service system*
*has taught us a great deal,*
*with much love.*

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# Preface

We cannot forget that children are our most important resource. It is through our children that we can touch the future. Children must depend on all of us to protect and nurture them to meet that future. Usually that task falls to parents. But what if they are struggling, unable, or even unwilling to carry the burden themselves? Hillary Clinton, in her book *It Takes a Village*, expanded the African saying "It takes a village to raise a child" and spoke of how it is every citizen's responsibility to ensure children's well-being.

The services provided under the child welfare system are the tools that the "village," or society, uses to care for its children. These services vary greatly in purpose, intensity, cost, and procedures. To someone unfamiliar with the services for children and their families, they may seem like a maze. This book is designed to help potential practitioners understand these services and become comfortable using them and working within a variety of fields. The following pages emphasize the practice perspective from the vantage point of the professional as well as the child or family that is being helped. Because the goal is to empower the individual and family, the term *consumer* has become increasingly popular as a way of referring to those using services. By seeing the person as a consumer, rather than a "patient" or "client" as in the past, the practitioner becomes more of a guide or support as the family seeks to help itself. Thus, the analogy of the "village" becomes stronger by bringing to mind a community that helps its members rather than disempowers them. Certainly, there are times when a family is not able to care for its children and society must step in, but with increased community efforts to support family life, we hope that this is less likely to happen.

## Plan for the Text

This book is designed to explore child welfare services from the least intrusive to the more intrusive and finally those that substitute care for the family. The chapters are arranged so that, after a brief background of child welfare and the family, the reader will recognize the services that support family life, those that supplement the family's roles, and those that substitute for what the family should provide.

The overarching theme of this edition is to consider trauma-informed practice. Many—if not most—of the children who come to the attention of children's services have experienced some form of trauma, whether it be child maltreatment, exposure to violence at home or in the community, exposure to addictions, or a variety of other assaults on their development. Our schools also report that a significant number of children in our educational system are impacted by trauma of various types. Recognizing this, it is vital that those who work with children and their families do so in ways that do not further traumatize them. Throughout the chapters of this text, the authors emphasize trauma-informed practice in an effort to prepare the future professional to meet the needs of traumatized children.

Chapter 1 presents a framework for child welfare by considering the past: how children were perceived and treated and the services available for them. Chapter 2 looks at

traditional and non-traditional families. It explores the roles and rights of family members in diverse cultures. The chapter also outlines internal and external stressors that may lead a family to seek help from the community.

Many children within our society live in poverty, which makes it difficult for them to develop normally. What are the implications of growing up in poverty? Chapter 3 answers this question. It also looks at current methods of fighting poverty and speculates about ways in which society might reduce child poverty.

Poverty is not the only social problem that plagues today's children. They must deal with many issues. Two of the most prevalent are violence and addiction. Chapter 4 explores the problems facing children who grow up in a violent society, who are addicted to drugs or alcohol, or have parents who are substance abusers. Many children are also brought up by parents who are involved in military service. Chapter 5 looks at the needs of and services for military families, a population with its own unique needs. Chapter 6 acquaints the reader with the services provided for children through education and socialization, outlining childcare and school-based services and how these might be trauma-sensitive. Chapter 7 looks at families that have parenting problems that lead to child abuse or neglect. Chapter 8 discusses family preservation services that strive to keep families together in their own homes and asks the question "What *really* is in the child's best interests?" Children may come to the attention of the court system for a variety of reasons. Juvenile court services for children are outlined in Chapter 9.

Today, a problem of troubling proportions is teens having children, at a younger age than ever, and attempting the challenging role of parenting. Chapter 10 examines this phenomenon and its impact on the teens and their children.

When families are unable to provide for their children, substitute arrangements must be made. Chapters 11–13 explore these arrangements. Chapter 11 provides insight into the foster care system, from entrance into the placement process to termination. It describes the roles, feelings, and attitudes of the birth parents and foster parents. The role of the foster care social worker also is discussed. Chapter 12 outlines the adoption process, from the ways children are released for adoption to the feelings of the adoptive parent(s) and the problems they face. But not every child is able to adjust to a home environment. Chapter 13 describes residential settings for children for whom the family is not a viable alternative.

The text concludes with Chapter 14, which explores the future for children and their families. What will this century bring in the way of policy changes, resources, and new problems to be faced? These are topics of discussion for today and challenges for tomorrow's practitioners. Case examples from field experience have been woven throughout the text to help the reader see the faces behind the words.

This seventh edition provides updated information about services and their impact on children, especially in the twenty-first century, with its pervasive violence and changing values. It should be noted that much of the research on child welfare is now being done in the Canada, Britain, and other European countries as these cultures strive to cope with improving their services to children. Although I have used these sources when they were germane to the issues in the United States, some of the most current literature was based on the policies of those particular cultures.

## New to This Edition

New to this edition is the format of the text.

- Each chapter features Learning Outcomes to give the student an idea of what will be covered in the chapter. These correspond to the sections in the chapter and each section is summarized individually at the end of the section.

- Throughout the chapter, you will notice words in **boldface.** These are key terms that you should know. They are further defined for you at the end of the book in the Glossary.

In addition, there have been changes in the content.

- The book has been revised with thought to trauma-informed care and treatment, a concept that is the driving force in today's service provision.
- The chapter on poverty (Chapter 3) is new and reflects the current thinking and practice in dealing with this difficult issue.
- The chapter on court services (Chapter 9) has been rewritten by an attorney who specializes in juvenile court services and reflects the most up-to-date thinking.
- The educational settings chapter (Chapter 6) has been refocused to explore trauma-sensitive educational approaches.

*Exploring Child Welfare: A Practice Perspective* is a suitable text for both undergraduate and graduate students in the fields of social work, human services, psychology, sociology, counseling, and education.

## Instructor Supplements

This text is accompanied by the following instructor supplements, which can be downloaded from Pearson's Instructor's Resource Center at www.pearsonhighered.com. Click on Support and then Download Instructor's Resources.

- Instructor's Manual with Test Bank
- PowerPoint® Lecture Presentations

## Acknowledgments

Many have helped, directly or indirectly, with the completion of this text. My thanks go first to my family—my husband, Jim, my son, Andrew, and his dad, Charlie—who have made allowances and helped me out as I sought to get these revisions in on time. My appreciation goes to my dear friend Marcia Gagliardi, who has become one of my best advocates and source of encouragement. And once again to Peggyann Prasinos, my research assistant and friend, whose cheerfulness, creativity, and computer savvy are invaluable.

The contributors to this edition deserve mention: thanks to Lynne Kellner, Laura Garofoli, Catherine Sinnott, and Kathleen Craigen.

Also, I thank the reviewers of this edition—Pamela Bailey, Montgomery County Community College; Joyece E. Dykes Anderson, University of South Carolina; Ebony English, Community College of Allegheny County; and Sheri Weistaner, Lewis-Clark State College.

This book would not be possible without the numerous students and colleagues over the years who have motivated me to explore ever new vistas in child welfare and my son, Andrew, through whose experiences I have seen child welfare services through new eyes.

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# About the Author

**Cynthia Crosson-Tower,** M.S.W., M. Div., Ed. D., is the author of numerous books, including *Understanding Child Abuse and Neglect*; *When Children Are Abused: An Educator's Guide to Maltreatment*; *Secret Scars: A Guide for Survivors of Child Sexual Abuse*; *The Educator's Role in Child Abuse and Neglect*; *A Clergy Guide to Child Abuse and Neglect*; *Confronting Child and Adolescent Sexual Abuse*; and *Homeless Students*. She has also authored the monograph, *Designing and Implementing a School Reporting Protocol: A How-To Guide for Massachusetts Teachers* (revisions co-authored by Anthony Rizzuto), for the Children's Trust Fund in Boston and a similar monograph for Catholic Schools published by the Archdiocese of Boston. She is also the author of *Only Daddy's Dog*, a children's book about service dogs for veterans with post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD).

Dr. Crosson-Tower has over 45 years of experience in child welfare practice. She has worked in protective services, foster care, adoption, and corrections; with juvenile and adult courts and with the homeless; and in a variety of counseling situations. She was also a regional trainer for the Massachusetts Department of Social Services. Her book *From the Eye of the Storm: The Experiences of a Child Welfare Worker* chronicles some of her experiences in the field. She is Professor Emerita of Behavioral Sciences at Fitchburg State University in Massachusetts and has taught seminarians at Andover Newton Theological School.

Dr. Crosson-Tower is the pastor of a church and has broadened her writing and training to include clergy. She has counseled survivors of childhood trauma and perpetrators of child sexual abuse through Harvest Counseling and Consultation. Most recently, Dr. Crosson-Tower has been working with veterans of OEF/OIF through NEADS/Dogs for Deaf and Disabled Americans. She has been instrumental in developing a program for NEADS to place specially trained service dogs with veterans returning from combat with post-traumatic stress disorder. She is at work on a memoir chronicling her experiences in developing this program and had authored several children's books about service dogs.

Dr. Crosson-Tower now consults for other service dog programs and has consulted for Assistance Dogs International, the accrediting body for service dog organizations, as they seek to develop guidelines for placing dogs for veterans with PTSD.

## Introducing the Contributors

As I began writing this text, with many years in child welfare practice under my belt, it became evident to me that there were too many aspects of child welfare and too many varied services for me to know all of them in depth. For this reason, I enlisted the contributions of colleagues who are experts in their fields and who were anxious to help me present a positive picture of these services to future practitioners. The following introductions will give the reader insight into these authors and their contributions to the field.

**Laura M. Garofoli,** Ph.D., is associate professor of psychological science at Fitchburg State University. She is a licensed special educator and a former member of the board of trustees for the largest child care agency in central Massachusetts. Prior to her position at Fitchburg State, Dr. Garofoli was the educational assessment specialist and reading disabilities specialist at a premier residential school in Massachusetts for children with significant mental health disorders and trauma histories. She has extensive experience with disability testing and IEP development, and she continues to provide consultation services to families with learning disabled children. As the parent of a child with a rare autoimmune disorder and life-threatening food allergies, she is an active advocate and consultant for children with food allergies and health needs within her community and beyond. Her research interests include early childhood behavior and the effects of early trauma on cognition and brain development.

**Lynne Kellner**, Ph.D., is professor of behavioral sciences at Fitchburg State University. She supervises graduate and undergraduate students in the field. She has more than 25 years of experience in community mental health, specializing in children and family services. Other research interests include resiliency in children, creating a model of treatment for male sexual abuse victims, and evaluating a Massachusetts-based welfare-to-work program. She has authored a number of Continuing Education courses for those in the mental health fields, including ones Adoptive Families, Childhood Trauma, and Ethics of Children's Health Care. Dr. Kellner is the New England Director for the Council on Standards in Human Services Education.

**Catherine C. Sinnott**, Esq. is the Attorney-in-Charge of the Lowell, MA office of the Children and Family Law Division (CAFL) of the Committee of Public Counsel Services (CPCS), the public defender office of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts. She has represented children and parents in child-welfare related cases throughout the Commonwealth both in the trial and appeals courts for over 20 years. She has also represented clients in New Hampshire and in civil, probate, and criminal matters. She has great hope in the future and believes that strong families—of all kinds—ensure strong futures and that restorative justice is an essential element of law. Attorney Sinnott has been a high school teacher, a CSO, a counselor in a teen shelter, and a journalist. She is a graduate of New York University, the University of Arizona, and Boston College Law School.

**Kathleen Craigen**, B.S., is an Assistant Clinician for Community Resources for Justice (CRJ). Before joining CRJ, Ms. Craigen dedicated 2 years to AmeriCorps while simultaneously pursuing her education in Human Services at Mount Wachusett Community College and Fitchburg State University. Ms. Craigen has worked with a variety of populations, including at-risk youth, first-generation and non-traditional college students, and adults with developmental disabilities. Other research interests include the impact of civic learning and community engagement on students and the greater community and how public policies affect the well-being of vulnerable populations such as people with disabilities and low-income households.

My thanks and appreciation to all of the contributors.

# 1

# Children: Our Most Important Resource

## LEARNING OUTCOMES

*After reading this chapter, you should be able to:*

- Discuss the incidence of children in need of child welfare service today.
- Describe how children were treated throughout early U.S. history.
- Describe the early efforts that were made to help children whose needs were not being addressed.
- Explain the concept of child advocacy, how it originated and how it helps children today.
- Discuss the current picture of child welfare and how services are delivered to children today.

The fate of one child in the United States today can be the fate of all children. In the interest of serving all children, we must seek to help each individual child. It is this goal toward which the child welfare system strives.

## THE NEED FOR CHILD WELFARE SERVICES TODAY

There is no denying that America's children need help. Each day, 2,500 babies are born into poverty and in 1,267 cases, that poverty is extreme. At least, 1,492 of their families have no health insurance.

## CHAPTER OUTLINE


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SUMMARY 18

Each day, 65 babies die before their first birthday while 870 are born significantly underweight. It is not only poverty that affects our children. Each day, 761 babies are born to teen mothers who may not have the resources to care for them. As children grow and live their lives, they meet other stumbling blocks. In the United States, there are 1,836 confirmed cases of child abuse and neglect each day. This does not take into account the reports of child maltreatment where there may not be enough evidence to confirm it. In public schools, and despite state laws, 838 are corporally punished. Not surprisingly, 2,857 students drop out of school each day. Children and teens also come to the attention of the juvenile justice system. Each day, 884 are arrested for drug crimes and 167 for other violent crimes (Children's Defense Fund, 2014).

As we consider the problems that plague our youth, we become aware that these figures often differ depending on racial or ethnic background. Table 1.1 provides an overview of many of these problems as they are distributed by ethnic group.

If we look at the problems that face children day by day and compare them to the statistics of the last few years, some trends become evident. Although the number of white and African American children born into poverty has decreased slightly, the numbers of Hispanic, Asian American, and Native American children have increased. On the positive side, more children of all ethnic groups that were reported now have health insurance. The numbers of low birth weight among all babies have decreased and there appear to be fewer births to teens (Children's Defense Fund, 2012, 2014).

What is responsible for such changes? Are they indicative of changes in the population or of prejudicial treatment of certain groups? As a future child welfare professional, you need to consider these demographic shifts.

All of these children are our future—our most important resource. It is up to today's adults to intervene so that all children will have a better future. This is the challenge facing the child welfare system.

To understand our view of children and our responsibility to protect and provide for them, we must consider the history of children's services. A brief history follows. Individual chapters expand on the etiology of specific services.

### Summary of This Section

- America's children suffer from a variety of problems including poverty, low birth weight, early death, and lack of health insurance.
    - Some children drop out of school, are suspended from school, are arrested, are abused or neglected, and are killed by guns.
    - The percentages differ between various ethnic groups.
    - These circumstances require societal intervention that is provided through child welfare services.

## A BRIEF HISTORY OF THE PLIGHT OF CHILDREN

The concept of childhood as we know it is relatively new. At one time, children were seen as miniature adults with many of the responsibilities of adults but few of their rights. Novels of various periods often reflected children's plight. For example, Disraeli's novel *Sybil: The Two Nations* (1845) described how children were subjected to horrendous conditions (sleeping on dirty moldy straw in damp cellars amid waste, both human and

**Table 1.1** **Comparison of Children's Problems in the United States by Ethnic Group**

| | White | | | African American | | | Hispanic | | | Asian American | | | Native American | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | 2008 | 2011 | 2014 | 2008 | 2011 | 2014 | 2008 | 2011 | 2014 | 2008 | 2011 | 2014 | 2008 | 2011 | 2014 |
| *The number of children every day who* | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Die in infancy | 51 | 52 | 30 | 24 | 25 | 19 | NR | NR | 13 | NR | NR | 2 | NR | NR | 1 |
| Are born into poverty | 781 | 811 | 737 | 755 | 607 | 597 | 867 | 955 | 1,153 | 79 | 57 | 66 | 53 | 23 | 44 |
| Have no health insurance | 672 | 725 | 633 | 312 | 332 | 104 | 1,098 | 944 | 408 | NR | NR | 49 | NR | NR | 19 |
| Are born at low birth weight | 75 | 447 | 407 | 224 | 233 | 211 | 186 | 198 | 173 | NR | NR | 61 | NR | NR | 10 |
| Are born to teen mothers | 819 | 846 | 331 | 292 | 312 | 199 | 382 | 402 | 285 | 21 | 21 | 15 | 22 | 24 | 18 |
| Are suspended by public schools | 7,552 | 7,236 | 5,233 | 6,792 | 6,916 | 6,191 | 3,303 | 3,726 | 3,453 | 335 | 351 | 189 | 238 | 267 | 129 |
| Are arrested | 2,982 | 2,722 | 4,408 | 1,345 | 1,296 | 1,274 | NR | NR | NR | 64 | 64 | 55 | 56 | 51 | 54 |
| Are arrested for violent crimes | 95 | 86 | 88 | 103 | 96 | 95 | 3 | NR | NR | 2 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 1 | 2 |
| Are arrested for drug abuse | 268 | 266 | 303 | 118 | 94 | 95 | NR | NR | NR | 3 | 4 | 5 | 4 | 3 | 5 |
| Drop out of high school | 1,856 | 1,270 | 1,066 | 439 | 936 | 763 | 761 | NR | 834 | 106 | 98 | 81 | NR | 62 | 67 |
| Commit suicide | 4 | 3 | 4 | NR | 1 | 1 | NR | NR | 1 | NR | NR | NR | NR | NR | NR |
| Are killed by guns | NR | 4 | 2 | NR | 4 | 3 | NR | NR | 1 | NR | NR | NR | NR | NR | NR |
| Are abused or neglected | 1,198 | 823 | 805 | 556 | 417 | 384 | 419 | 387 | 399 | 24 | 21 | 19 | NR | 20 | 21 |

NR = not reported

*Source*: Based on data from The State of America's Children (2014). Children's Defense Fund. Retrieved from http://www.childrensdefense.org/library/state-of-americas-children/each-day-in-america.html. © Cynthia Crosson-Tower.

animal). In the novel, a child was given drugs by his nurse and eventually left to die on the streets at age 2. Charles Dickens wrote of children apprenticed to cruel masters and kept in poorhouses where their needs were neglected (see *Oliver Twist*, 1987). David Copperfield was neglected by his stepfather and eventually sent to work in a dirty, dark warehouse (Dickens, 1981). In literature, numerous other accounts speak of how children were treated as chattel and abused and neglected because adults saw them as expendable.

## Abortion, Infanticide, and Abandonment

Abortion did not originate with contemporary society, nor did contraception. If contraception was ineffective, abortion was the traditional solution. Numerous studies reveal that abortion was widely accepted in ancient societies. Unwanted children who were not aborted were often abandoned or killed. **Infanticide** was common. During the Roman Empire and the flourishing of the Greeks, infanticide, although prohibited by law, apparently was one response to poverty and the burden of too many female children. Despite admonitions by secular officials and clergy not to continue in the killing of children, the practice seems to have persisted in Western Europe as late as the early nineteenth century (Stone, 1977).

From historical references and popular ballads of early times, we also know that infanticide was one solution to bearing children out of wedlock. For example, the well-known old English ballad "Mary Hamilton" tells how a lady-in-waiting to the Queen (believed to be Mary, Queen of Scots) became pregnant by the royal consort ("the highest Stewart of all") and was driven to solve her problem by tying it in her apron and casting it into the sea to drown (Symonds, 1997).

Infanticide was used to control the population and ensure that the populace would remain strong and healthy. In their early histories, Hawaii and China practiced infanticide as a form of maintaining healthy populations. Hawaiians drowned sickly children and sometimes female children (ten Bensel et al., 1999).

Since there was no agency for their protection, practices such as infanticide were considered to be the prerogative of the parents who had the ultimate authority to determine the fate of their children. Occasionally, a child's death would be noted by the courts and the parent prosecuted. For example, in 1810 a woman was tried for admitting that she had killed her baby. However, a jury found her not guilty, possibly due to insanity (Myers, 2008). Before 1875, the only remedy for the killing of children was prosecution and yet parents were often exonerated. On the other hand, if children were particularly unruly, parents might be brought to the attention of a magistrate for not teaching their children appropriate moral behavior (Myers, 2008).

Sometimes infanticide took the form of abandonment. Parents unable to care for their children might leave them to die or to be found by someone else. Caulfield's (1931 as cited in Kadushin and Martin, 1988) remarked that in England in the 1700s, abandoning unwanted infants drew little comment or consequences. Even during the late 1800s, children were abandoned in the streets of New York City at an astonishing rate. Although we would like to think that abandonment is a practice of the past, the high incidence of drug addiction among parents of young children means that some children continue to be abandoned and even killed.

## Child Labor and Education

During the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, approximately two-thirds of children died before the age of 4 (McGowen, 2005; Myers, 2008). Those who did live were expected to work along with their parents. Farm children in a largely agrarian society did

chores to contribute to the family's livelihood. At one time, children were also indentured to learn trades. **Indenture** was an arrangement whereby a child would be given over to an individual who could teach the child (usually male) a trade. Some of these children were well-treated but others were not. In *Oliver Twist* (1987), Dickens depicted the plight of one such apprentice. Oliver was the apprentice to an undertaker who not only mistreated him but also exposed him to the fine points of death. Like Oliver's master, many people who used apprentices made them work long hours and in unreasonable circumstances.

The industrial revolution brought a new way of using children in the workforce. Children were more plentiful than adults and, due to their small hands and bodies, able to do jobs that adults were too large or cumbersome to do. For example, children were frequently employed in mining and chimney sweeping because they could enter tight places. Little thought was given to the effect of the soot or mine dust on their growing bodies. In addition, children could be paid very little. Because they were thought to have no rights, few people objected to the long hours they were expected to work, the conditions under which they labored, or their treatment in general. Often, parents who depended on their child's bringing in extra income dared not protest the child's maltreatment if they knew about it. Other parents felt that their children owed them the wages they earned, whatever the conditions.

It wasn't until the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries that child labor was addressed in a significant way. Through the efforts of reformers such as Jane Addams, Homer Folks, and Grace Abbott, the National Child Labor Committee (NCLC) was organized in 1904 to undertake reforms on behalf of working children (Stadum, 1995; Whittaker, 2003; Reef, 2007). Through its numerous publications that reported field investigations, the NCLC appealed to church, women's, and college groups to advocate for the reform of child labor laws. The message was straightforward. Reformers believed that children could help with tasks around the farm or home but that they should also be allowed a childhood free from "unhealthy and hazardous conditions," "unsuitable wages," and "unreasonable hours that could interfere with their 'physical development and education'" (Trattner, 1970, 9–10).

The first White House Conference on Children in 1909 stimulated the establishment of the U.S. Children's Bureau in 1912. It was the Bureau's role to advocate for children. One of its first tasks was to further child labor reforms. The number of children in the workforce who were 10 to 13 years old had dropped from 121 per 1,000 in 1900 to 24 per 1,000 by 1930 (Trattner, 1970), but many children were still being used as migrant labor, and many were uncounted in the census. When the Fair Labor Standards Act of 1938 established rules governing wages and hours for all workers, Grace Abbott of the Children's Bureau lobbied to expand the act to ensure that children younger than 16 could not be used in certain industries (Stadum, 1995; Whittaker, 2003; Reef, 2007; Myers, 2008).

However, the economic needs of World War II strained the enforcement of child labor laws, and the NCLC changed its focus to vocational training for children leaving high school. This change in focus would culminate in the NCLC's becoming the National Committee on the Employment of Youth in 1957 (Trattner, 1970).

It would seem that early child labor laws would be applauded by all, but some families found that the enacted prohibitions meant that there was one less wage earner in the family. Recognizing families' needs, social workers questioned the new legislation's stringency. At the same time, poor parents were often portrayed as lazy individuals who would rather send their children to work in factories than become employed themselves. Rarely did the hardworking parents who labored along with their children to eke out a meager livelihood come to the attention of the media or public (Stadum, 1995; Myers, 2008).

States began to allow children to be employed if a severe family need could be documented. The NCLC opposed such exceptions, and by 1921, most states had eliminated this practice. The NCLC argued that allowing children to work for low wages actually contributed to family poverty by "driving down the pay for adults who should be the household supporters" (Stadum, 1995, 37).

Along with the argument against child labor came the push for mandatory school attendance. Thus, school attendance laws piggybacked the child labor laws while some parents questioned the need for formal education of children needed as wage earners. The first compulsory attendance laws in the 1920s addressed children under the age of 14; by 1927, most states had increased the age to 16. Still, if families could demonstrate an economic need, children were given a certificate that allowed an exception from school in favor of earning a wage. Even if a child did attend school, it was permissible for him or her to complete a full week's work after school hours (Stadum, 1995).

It often fell to the juvenile courts to verify a family's need to require their children to work. In some areas, this task fell to the Charity Organization Society (COS). It was the role of the COS (later called the Family Welfare Association) to advocate and coordinate services for families in need of assistance (Ambrosino et al., 2011). When COS workers refused to grant the requests of parents to have their children work instead of attending school, tempers flared and the debate became heated. To encourage children to stay in school, the COS began instituting "scholarships" for needy families that equaled what the child would have earned in wages. Reformers discovered that these scholarships increased children's likelihood of remaining in school. "Mother's pensions" were also given to a select group of women who were raising their children on their own. These payments became the forerunner of Aid to Families with Dependent Children (AFDC) (Stadum, 1995; Myers, 2008; Ambrosino et al., 2011).

Today, most states decree that children must remain in school until age 16. More recent legislation protects children from unfair labor practices and ensures that they have an opportunity for an education.

### Policy Practice

***Behavior:*** *Assess how social welfare and economic policies impact the delivery of and access to social services.*

**Critical Thinking Question:** What does the history of child welfare say about the evolution of the attention to the rights of children? How have policies evolved? How might knowing the history of child welfare inform your own practice?

## Summary of This Section

- Prior to the twentieth century, children were seen as mini adults with similar responsibilities to their superiors.
- Children were considered to be the property of their parents and for the most part, parents had the ultimate say over the fate of their children.
- Infanticide, the killing of children, was an early solution to unwanted, malformed children or children who were not of a desired gender.
- Unwanted children or those for whom parents were unable to care of might also be abandoned.
- There was no agency until the late 1800s that was responsible for the protection of children.
- Children were also expected to work alongside of adults, and some children were placed by their parents in indenture—the practice of working with a master to learn a trade.
    - The Industrial Revolution increased the need for children in the workforce as their small bodies and dexterous hands and fingers were needed for certain tasks.
    - Early reformers expressed concern about child labor and other treatment of children resulting in the first White House conference in 1909. This resulted in important legislation to protect children.

# EARLY EFFORTS TO CARE FOR AND HELP CHILDREN

## Out-of-Home Care

Because children were originally considered their parents' property, parents were expected to take responsibility for their children unless they could not do so. Poor parents took their children with them to suffer the degradation of **almshouses**. Other children remained at home, and their parents received "outdoor relief," a form of in-kind assistance. Orphans and children who could not be kept by their parents were cared for by others, originally church-sponsored organizations. The first U.S. **orphanage** was the Ursaline Convent, founded in 1727. But orphanages were slow to develop. There were only 5 U.S. orphanages in 1800 and only 77 in 1851. However, once the idea took hold, orphanages quickly multiplied. By 1900, there were 400 (Smith, 1995). By 1910, 110,000 children resided in 1,151 orphanages (Smith, 1995). Orphan asylums, as they were sometimes called, might house a few children or many. Although these institutions were established primarily to care for dependent children, Holt (2004) chronicles the development of orphanages for Native American children that attempted to **enculturate** the children into white society (see also O'Connor, 2004; Coleman, 2007). The late 1800s also saw children being moved from orphanages and "placed out." Instituted largely by **Charles Loring Brace**, **placing out** gave children an opportunity to live with families in the midwestern United States (O'Connor, 2004). Children were transported by orphan trains to waiting parents, often on farms. Here the children were fostered or adopted becoming extra hands to work with the family (see Chapter 11 for more complete details). However, as the number of western farms declined, so did the demand for dependent children as free labor at the turn of the twentieth century (Hegar and Scannapieco, 1999).

For the children who remained in orphanages, life varied depending on an institution's type, administration, and particular environment. Corporal punishment was the norm, and little thought was given to children's developmental needs. Life in an orphanage gave children actual necessities like shelter and only sufficient food to prevent starvation. These children were seen as pathetic individuals who needed the charity of others (Thurston, 1930).

Early childcare institutions were also largely segregated. In fact, the only facilities for many African American children were jails or reform schools, even when they were not delinquents. In the early twentieth century, associations of African American women began to address the needs of African American children (Peebles-Wilkins, 1995). Mary Church Terrell (1899), the first president of one such organization, explained that the mission of these organizations was to build a foundation for the future by promoting morality, integrity, and strength in children with the hope that by molding children—the future of the world—with these values, such issues as prejudice would be eliminated.

Institutions specifically for African American children, such as the Colored Big Sister Home for Girls in Kansas City, Missouri, and the Carrie Steele Orphan Home in Atlanta, began to emerge (Peebles-Wilkins, 1995). As in the case of African American children, little was provided for Native American children. Whether or not they had parents to care for them, they often were sent to orphanages or boarding schools as a way of not only providing for their care but also enculturating them into white society (Holt, 2004). Childcare institutions were not fully integrated until the mid-twentieth century.

During the 1920s, the institutions saw the need to modernize slightly. Increased recognition of children's needs prompted attempts to provide more humane treatment and

more "advantages" to the residents. Punishments continued to be severe in some cases, in spite of reformers' criticisms of corporal punishment.

Another way to care for dependent children became the **free boarding home**. Here, children were placed with families who agreed to assume their care, initially for no compensation. Eventually, a fee was granted for room and board, and agencies began to study those wanting to provide homes. These "free homes" were a precursor of today's family foster homes (see Chapter 11).

Children in orphanages and boarding homes were expected to show gratitude for their care by being respectful, compliant, and generally well-behaved. Children who misbehaved were threatened with expulsion. Children who complied with the institution's rules could stay until their majority (Hacsi, 1995; Smith, 1995; Holt, 2004; McGowen, 2005).

With the recognition that children need families, the use of orphanages declined in favor of family foster care. During the 1940s and 1950s, child welfare advocates spoke of the limitations of institutional care for children. Lillian Johnson, executive director of the Ryther Center in Seattle, compared an institution for a child to a life jacket that keeps the child's head above water until he or she can be helped to find solid ground (Smith, 1995, 135). The number of children in childcare institutions dropped from 43 percent in 1951 to 17 percent in 1989 (Merkel-Holguin, as cited in Wolins and Piliavin, 1964; Smith, 1995).

Today it is rare to find an institution dedicated solely to providing care for dependent children. Instead children are cared for by providing assistance payments to their parents or in family or group foster care. Current institutions are reserved for emotionally disturbed or delinquent children (see Chapter 13).

## Childcare

Parents were expected to provide their children's daily care. During the years of the at-home mother, this usually was not a problem. However, World War II and the advent of the mother who joined the workforce considerably changed this picture. Working mothers were confronted with a variety of challenges during World War II in that there was marked hostility toward mothers working outside of their home even in the service of defense. Numerous well-known critics, including Father Edward J. Flanagan of Boys Town, J. Edgar Hoover of the FBI, and other defenders of the father-led family spoke out against these women (Tuttle, 1995).

The advent of these working mothers, many of whom had husbands fighting at the front, necessitated that new programs be instituted for the care of their children. Signed by Franklin Roosevelt, the Defense Housing and Community Facilities Act of 1940, more popularly known as the **Lanham Act of 1940** provided, among other funds for communities, money for childcare centers. Despite suppositions that the end of war would see mothers returning home to care for their children, "Rosie the Riveter" found that she enjoyed her new freedom and her family's increased income. The era of working mothers had begun, and childcare outside the home increased (Stoltzfus, 2004). That trend has continued to the present. Many families currently depend on the mother's income to survive.

## Summary of This Section

- Children whose parents were poor might be sent to poorhouses or almshouses along with their parents.
- Children with poor or absent parents might also be relegated to orphanages. The first orphanage was in 1727 but these institutions were slow to develop until the mid-1800s.

- In the late 1800s, Charles Loring Brace developed the practice of "placing out" or sending children on orphan trains to new homes in the midwestern United States.
- For those who remained in orphanages, life was not always easy.
- Orphanages were segregated well into the twentieth century. There were fewer orphanages for African American children and little or nothing for Native American children.
- Eventually free boarding homes developed—the precursor to today's foster homes.
- During World War II, more mothers were forced to join the workforce necessitating day-time care for their children. The Latham Act of 1940 provided funds for childcare.

## ADVOCACY IN THE PROVISION OF CHILDREN'S SERVICES

Over the years, a number of agencies, individuals, and pieces of legislation have actively advocated the provision of services for children. One of the earliest agencies to advocate for children was the New York Children's Aid Society, founded in 1853. Through this organization, Charles Loring Brace began to address the needs of dependent children through "placing out" (see Chapter 11). If the numbers attest to success, this agency's efforts were extremely successful. By 1873, Brace's program had placed 3,000 children; in 1875, the peak year, 4,026 children found new homes in this manner (Hegar and Scannapieco, 1999; Popple and Leighninger, 2010; Ambrosino et al., 2011; Zastrow, 2013).

The 1874 case of **Mary Ellen Wilson** (see Chapter 7) elicited the efforts of Henry Bergh, then director of the American Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals, and his colleague Elbridge Gerry, who advocated not only for Wilson but also for all the abused and neglected children by forming the Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children, the first agency with the specific mission of intervening in cases of child maltreatment (McGowen, 2005; Shelman and Lazoritz, 2005).

Another group of advocates in the latter part of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries consisted of individuals associated with the settlement house movement. **Jane Addams**, **Julia Lathrop**, and others blazed the way for reform in child labor, the court system, and other matters affecting children.

In 1912, the **U.S. Children's Bureau** was established as a result of the first White House Conference on Children in 1909. Its creation marked the first recognition that the federal government had any responsibility in the provision of services for children. Lathrop became the first director and led efforts to institute programs to improve maternal infant care and decrease infant mortality. The Government Printing Office still carries one of the Bureau's first publications, *Infant Care*, which has undergone more than 20 revisions since its first printing (Johnson and Schwartz, 1996; Downs et al., 2008; Ambrosino et al., 2011).

The **American Association for Organizing Family Social Work** (later the Family Service Association of America) was founded in 1911, and the **Child Welfare League of America** was founded in 1921. Both organizations established standards for the provision of children's services and led the way in promoting research, legislation, and publications related to child welfare (Johnson and Schwartz, 1996; Ambrosino et al., 2011; Child Welfare League of America, 2011).