



The Welfare of Children

Duncan Lindsey

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According to the United Nations' latest data, the United States has more children living in poverty than any other industrialized nation in the world. More than a fifth of all children grow up in poverty. The poverty rates for African-American and Latino children often exceeds 40 percent. Furthermore, the United States--a country that once pioneered strategies to prevent child abuse and that now spends more money fighting child abuse than any other industrialized country--also has the highest rate of child abuse in the industrialized world.

Against this background, Duncan Lindsey, a leading authority on child welfare, takes a critical look at the current welfare system. He traces the transformation of child welfare into child protective services, arguing that the current focus on abuse has produced a system that is designed to protect children from physical and sexual abuse and therefore functions as a last resort for only the worst and most dramatic cases in child welfare. In a close analysis of the process of investigating child abuse, Lindsey finds that there is no evidence that the transformation into protective services has reduced child abuse fatalities or provided a safer environment for children. He makes a compelling argument for the criminal justice system to assume responsibility for the problem of child abuse in order for the child welfare system to be able to adequately address the well-being of a much larger number of children now growing up in poverty.

This new edition of *The Welfare of Children* takes into account a major legislative change since the publication of the first edition: the welfare reform legislation of 1996. This legislation has fundamentally altered the public child welfare system as broadly understood, and Lindsey thoroughly examines its implications on policy and practice, refuting the claim that welfare reform has actually reduced child poverty. *The Welfare of Children, 2nd Edition* is a compassionate blueprint for the comprehensive reform of the current child welfare system to one that administers to the economic security of the larger number of disadvantaged and impoverished children. Concrete policy proposals such as a Child's Future Security account, similar to the Social Security program for older citizens, will spark serious debate on a major public policy issue facing our society.

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