Kenneth Keniston and his group spent several years and millions of dollars since 1972 to produce several reports on the state of the child in this country. The results have been incorporated into this volume and several others, and have been widely discussed as expected. Headquartered in New Haven, The Carnegie Council on Children comprised noted members such as Marian Wright Edelman, William Kesson, and Laura Nader, as well as an economist, social worker, history professor, pediatrician, and attorney. The Council’s staff of 60 included research and statistical assistants, associates, and administrators, plus public affairs and television writers. They studied the problems extensively, although their findings may not be surprising to those familiar with the issues.

All Our Children reviews and analyzes the problems of the evolving family in society today and the issue of providing for all children within the context of changing policies and pol-

continued on the next page
itics. At the outset, the belief is expressed that public policy should catch up with the changes taking place; but we are far from that dream in reality. The report covers such major areas of concern as the historical changes and functions of the family, the economics of child rearing, marriage and its redefinition, the increased employment of both parents, changes and stresses in standard of living, the breakdown in the schools, health services and other factors that have an impact upon the changing structure of the family.

The Council indicates how the current health services for children reaches only a fraction of those who need them, a reality to which many readers can attest. The report questions the penalties imposed on parents who take enough time off from work to engage in activities with their children, and discusses the need for a proper balance in work and child rearing, with flexible scheduling. Protection of unborn children, maternity leave, income supports and other financial balancing, access to services without stigma or barriers based on race or class, more emphasis on prevention, and other topics are covered.

A shift in basic principles to create these changes is suggested: universal access or services open to everyone and priority to those in greatest need; broader racial and economic integration; more secondary support services bringing more convenience and coordination with government regulatory supervision; greater options to choose services; increased parent participation; more utilization of paraprofessionals and volunteers; and greater emphasis on preserving the family.

The following statement reflects the Council’s concern with providing greater social support to the family:

"...a task force report on health services, such as start-up costs, planning and designing new programs, training, and demonstration and guarantees of quality."

Realizing it is impossible to cover everything in one book, the Council has provided an analysis of the problems and suggestions for what might be done in each area—education, health, law, child care, and other family services. They conclude with a suggested policy for public advocates:

- support jobs for parents and a decent living standard,
- support fair employment, a decent minimum income, and flexible working conditions,
- support an integrated network of family services, proper health care, and improved legal protection.

They conclude with a vision of our society which would put children first. Since we’ve heard this many times since 1969, we wonder whether anyone else has, especially those who propose cutbacks in service or discontinuation of programs.

Many suggestions are made for what the government should be doing to guarantee greater implementation of services, such as start-up costs, planning and designing new programs, training, and demonstration and guarantees of quality.

The authors have brought together an excellent book on child care and covered many important aspects. They share their concerns as mothers and as members of a society that has yet to fulfill its promise beyond the carrying out of extensive and costly studies of those services that care for and about children.

The book emanates from the authors’ concern for quality in programs. They viewed both good and bad programs and saw the variety of choices available, although most families do not have access to the services they most need. The authors

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