ALL OUR CHILDREN: 
THE AMERICAN FAMILY 
UNDER PRESSURE
by Kenneth Keniston 
(The Carnegie Council on Children)
Harcourt Brace Jovanovich 1977, 255 pp., $10.95

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

THE SURPRISE PARTY
by Annabelle Prager
illustrated by Tomie de Paola
Pantheon Books, $3.95

Here is a story with a neat twist on the birthday-party plot. A small boy persuades his friend to have a surprise birthday party, with all the trimmings, for him. His friend agrees, with some misgiving. How can it be a surprise party if the honored guest has been the one to plan it behind the scenes? Ingeniously, the friend is able to get a surprise element into the birthday party, and one that is truly believable.

The author seems to have heard and seen what young children want and enjoy at birthday times. The story rings true to the spirit of this important celebration, as do Tomie de Paola’s fun-filled illustrations.

Although written as a book for beginning readers, it is also a very acceptable “read-aloud” story, one that, if a bit long for a single sitting, divides nicely into two parts.

SENDING MESSAGES
by John Warren Stewig
illustrated by Richard D. Bradley
Houghton Mifflin Company, $6.95

How many different ways there are, besides spoken and written language,Continued on p. 25

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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. A task force report on participation; more utilization of parents 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:

There are many rearrangements and precautions that would tangibly reduce the present conflict between being a good parent and being a productive worker. The essential first step toward bringing work practices into line with families’ and children’s needs is a commitment to do so on the part of policy makers in business, labor, and private groups, including families themselves. A task force report on work in the United States has illustrated how great a part of our nation’s crime and delinquency, mental and physical health problems, and manpower and welfare dilemmas have their genesis in the world of work.[p.130]

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.

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.

WHO CARES FOR THE BABY?
CHOICES IN CHILD CARE
by Beatrice Marden Glickman and Nesha Bass Springer
Schoken Books
1978, 250 pp., $9.95

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

Continued on the next page