Resources for Addressing Childhood Concerns

Childhood should be a time for play, exploration, and discovery about one's self, one's society, and the world. For far too many youngsters today, however, childhood is a time of misery and despair. Poverty, broken families, drug and alcohol addictions, physical and mental abuse, prostitution, homelessness—these are everyday experiences for many youth. When their problems surpass their ability to cope, many young people take what seems to be the only way out: suicide.

Educators alone, of course, can't solve these complex problems, but we can contribute to their solutions by increasing our awareness and being more responsive to students' needs. The following are just a sampling of the many resources available for addressing these problems.

Organizations and Projects

Action for Children's Television (ACT), 20 University Rd., Cambridge, MA 02138. ACT advocates the improvement and expansion of children's television programs to meet the educational and informational needs of young people. ACT's publications include: Fighting TV Stereotypes: An ACT Handbook; TV News Children; Community Cable for and by Children; An ACT Handbook; and The TV-Smart Book for Kids: Puzzles, Games, and Other Great Stuff.

Children's Defense Fund (CDF), 122 C St., N.W., Washington, D.C. 20001. CDF's goal is to educate the nation about the needs of children (in particular, minorities, the poor, and the handicapped) and to encourage preventive investment in children before they become ill, drop out of school, or begin unlawful activities. A Call for Action to Make Our Nation Safe: A Briefing Book on the Status of Children in 1988 describes a host of successful cost-effective programs.

Just Say No Clubs, c/o Oakland Parents in Action, 1404 Franklin St., Suite 610, Oakland, CA 94612. (800) 258-2766. These nationwide clubs are dedicated to combating and eventually eliminating drug abuse among children. Young club members—supported by parents, educators, police officers, and local officials—work through the schools to encourage children to "just say no" to drugs.

National Committee on Youth Suicide Prevention, 67 Irving Pl., S., New York, NY 10003. This volunteer network of parents, professionals, and government officials is working to acquire, organize, and disseminate information about youth suicide and to help develop prevention programs. Publishes a quarterly newsletter.

Curricular Materials


Day Care and Early Education, 72 Fifth Ave., New York, NY 10011. This journal publishes practical, insightful articles on child care programs, curriculum, staff development, family-school relationships, health, nutrition, infant/toddler programs, and child development.


Phi Delta Kappan. (1988). Child Abuse. Bloomington, Ind.: Phi Delta Kappan. According to the editors, this text includes "the best and most pertinent articles from research and practice on child abuse." Also available in this series are texts on teenage pregnancy, dropouts, and drug abuse.

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