

# American Social Welfare Policy: A Pluralist Approach

## Chapter 15

### Child Welfare Policy

# History of U.S. Child Welfare Policy

- Current child welfare policy in the United States has its origins in the 1870s
- Etta Wheeler
- Child welfare proved an effective rallying issue for Progressives
- Child labor emerged as a primary concern of early child welfare advocates

**TABLE 15.1** Ranking Child Well-Being in Developed Nations

Nation	Ranking
Netherlands	4.2
Sweden	5.0
Denmark	7.2
Finland	7.5
Spain	8.0
Switzerland	8.3
Norway	8.7
Italy	10.0
Ireland	10.2
Belgium	10.7
Germany	11.2
Canada	11.8
Greece	11.8
Poland	12.3
Czech Republic	12.5
France	13.0
Portugal	13.7
Austria	13.8
Hungary	14.5
United States	18.0
United Kingdom	18.2

# Protective Services for Children

- States proceeded to develop services to children independent of one another
- Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act
- The rapid deterioration of child welfare services
- Family preservation and kinship care

**TABLE 15.2** Federal Funding for Child Welfare, Foster Care, and Adoption (in millions of dollars)

Year	IV-B Child Welfare	IV-B/2 Safe & Stable Families	IV-E Foster Care	IV-E Independent Living	IV-E Adoption
1986	198	—	605	—	55
1987	223	—	793	45	74
1988	239	—	891	45	97
1989	247	—	1,153	50	111
1990	253	—	1,473	60	136
1991	274	—	1,819	70	175
1992	274	—	2,233	70	220
1993	295	—	2,547	70	272
1994	295	60	2,607	70	325
1995	292	150	3,050	70	411
1996	277	225	3,114	70	485
1997	292	240	3,692	70	590
1998	291	255	3,704	70	697
1999	292	275	4,012	70	843
2000	292	295	4,255	140	1,012
2001	292	305	4,395	140	1,201
2002	292	375	4,523	140	1,342
2003	290	404	4,485	182	1,463
2004	289	404	4,524	185	1,561
2005	290	404	4,541	187	1,703
2006	287	454	4,439	186	1,823
2007	287	454	4,422	186	1,920
2008	282	428	4,451	185	2,039

# Foster Care for Children

- Foster care is primarily a service for victims of child abuse;
  - More than half were placed there by child protective service workers
- Permanency planning
- Increasing demand for foster parents and homosexual rights

# Adoption

- An important child welfare service
- Adoption is not without controversy
- Indian Child Welfare Act
- Changes in family composition
- Fostering Connections to Success and Increasing Adoptions Act

**TABLE 15.3** Race/Ethnicity of Children Waiting to Be Adopted and Adopted, 2001 (in percentages)

Race/Ethnicity	Waiting Children	Adopted Children
White	32	38
African American	42	35
Hispanic	11	16
Two or more races	2	3
Other	2	2
Unknown	4	5
Missing data	6	0

# Head Start

- Incorporated in the Economic Opportunity Act of 1964
- Many poor families dispatched both parents to work to stabilize family income
- Has largely become a pre-kindergarten program

# Emerging Issues in Child Welfare

- Day Care
  - Has risen in importance as more and more parents with children work
- Maternal and Child Health
  - Younger, poor women give birth to low-birth-weight babies
    - Received inadequate prenatal care

# Emerging Issues in Child Welfare

- WIC
- Teen Pregnancy
  - Childbearing among very young women remains a compelling social problem
  - Poses a serious problem for public policy
    - School drop out
    - Welfare

**TABLE 15.4** 2012 Child Welfare Budget Allocations (in percentages)

Payments to states for foster care	-17.5
Promoting Safe and Stable Families	
Mandatory	-6.9
Discretionary	-34.0
Abandoned Infant Assistance	-8.7
Adoption Awareness	-100
Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act	-8.2
Child Welfare Services	-8.7
Mentoring Children of Prisoners	-100
Adoptions incentives	+634.1
Adoption opportunities	+36.1
Child welfare training	+244.7
Community Services Block Grant	+3.6

# Conclusion

- Many child welfare advocates have become pessimistic
- The Obama administration has introduced no new initiatives in child welfare
- Federal cuts in child welfare spending