

---

Update No. 11 – February 16, 2001

## **Child Well-Being and Social Cohesion**

### **Résumés**

Danziger, Sheldon, and Jane Waldfogel. 2000. "**Investing in Children: What Do We Know? What Do We Do?**" Centre for Analysis of Social Exclusion (CASE), London School of Economics, CASE Paper No. 34. <http://sticerd.lse.ac.uk/Case>

In October 1998, scholars, policy makers, and practitioners were invited by CASE to review what we know about the processes that affect child development, and how we might wisely increase public and private investments in children to promote both their well-being and the productivity of the next generation. The conference, held at Columbia University in New York and sponsored by the Ford Foundation's Program on Asset Building and Community Development, brought together American psychologists, economists, sociologists, demographers, political scientists, social workers, and medical doctors.

Participants began by examining current investments in children and how they affect the development of the skills and competencies children need to succeed as adults in work, family, and society. Then they reviewed and synthesized what has been learned about childhood interventions from birth to college, and what further investments in children are required, especially for disadvantaged children. In this paper, the authors review the background to the conference, summarize the conference findings, and outline their views regarding a number of key investments. They conclude that there is no better way to break the cycle of poverty and inequality than to invest in children. They propose expanding investments in five key areas: programs to improve the health of women of childbearing age; early childhood interventions, targeted to the most disadvantaged children; measures to raise the quality of child care and pre-school education; after-school and mentoring programs; and programs to raise the level of college attendance by high-ability youth from low-income families.

---

Human Resources Development Canada (Applied Research Branch). 1999. "**Investing in Children: Ideas for Action.**" Report from the National Research Conference held in Ottawa, October 27-29, 1998. <http://www.hrdc-drhc.gc.ca/arb/publications/research/investing.shtml>

Canada is undergoing significant change as a result of its adaptation to an increasingly competitive and knowledge-intensive global economy. With the economic and social environments shifting to meet the challenges of globalization and the technological revolution, Canada's economic growth and health as a society are dependent on its collective ability to prepare children for the future. Nations that are successful in the future will place a high premium on knowledge and innovation, which, in turn, are dependent on human resources - the children who are growing up now. Governments have a responsibility to work in combination with all parts of society to bring greater coherence to policies and programs in order to give children increased and equitable opportunities to achieve their potential.

Better information on how children are doing and the results of our collective efforts is essential. Longitudinal monitoring of the health and development of Canada's children is crucial for the construction of a society that is both competent and capable of coping with change. The National Longitudinal Survey of Children and Youth (NLSCY) provides researchers and policy-makers with the insight necessary to form a supportive set of government policies and programs in order to ensure the healthy development of our children in the future. Human Resources Development Canada presented findings from the first cycle of NLSCY research at its national conference, Investing in Children: A National Research Conference, held in Ottawa in October 1998. The objectives of the conference were to showcase the most recent NLSCY research on Canadian children and families, and to engage researchers, practitioners, and policy-makers in discussion on the application of these findings to policy and program development. This report describes the ideas for action generated at the workshop discussions.

---

Jenson, Jane, Paul Bernard, Alexandra Dobrowolsky, Denis Saint-Martin, and Deena White. 1999. "**Fostering Social Cohesion: A Comparison of Policy Strategies.**" SSHRCC Strategic Program on Social Cohesion. As of March 15, 2001, information and papers can be obtained from: <http://www.fas.unmontreal.ca/pol/cohesionsociale>

This strategic research project is based on the premise that social cohesion comes to the forefront of public debate at times of rapid social change, such as during the current era of globalization. The research team theorizes that social cohesion in Canada after 1945 was promoted through a citizenship regime based on the figure of the "citizen-worker." They speculate that this figure is now under stress because of labour market restructuring, which increases non-standard employment, income polarization and poverty. An additional theory will also be tested, which is that the Canadian policy response has been to raise two new figures - the child and the poor person - as rallying points for social cohesion.

---

The Institute for Public Policy Research (IPPR), a centre-left British think tank, publishes "New Economy," a quarterly journal that focuses on social and economic policy issues. In the March 2000 issue, the journal featured an article on "**Child Well-being and Social Cohesion**" that sought to explain why the United Kingdom has the worst record of child poverty in the European Union. For an overview of the article, consult: [http://www.ippr.org.uk/research/newe7\\_1intro.pdf](http://www.ippr.org.uk/research/newe7_1intro.pdf)

---

The Child Indicator is a project of Child Trends, an American social policy research institute established in 1979. The latest issue of "**Child Indicator**" is now available on-line:  
<http://www.childtrends.org/homePg.asp>

---

## What's New?

Although this is not entirely new, information is now available on-line regarding the intergovernmental agreement that took place last fall on early childhood development. As the Communiqué indicates, "First Ministers affirm their commitment to the well-being of children by setting out their vision of early childhood development as an investment in the future of Canada. Canada's future social vitality and economic prosperity depend on the opportunities that are provided to children today." For more information:  
[http://www.scics.gc.ca/cinfo00/800038005\\_e.html](http://www.scics.gc.ca/cinfo00/800038005_e.html)

The Economic and Social Research Council, the British counterpart of SSHRC in Canada, has recently launched a new research program that focuses on children as social actors. The Web site is full of interesting information, and contains a useful bibliography on children.  
<http://www.hull.ac.uk/children5to16programme>