

The Child in the Family and the Community

Janet Gonzalez-Mena



SECOND EDITION



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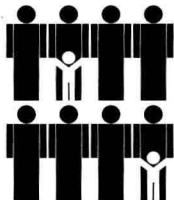


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Janet Gonzalez-Mena

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*To Mo,
who always gave me such a lot to think about!*

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Preface

This is a personal book, written to the reader from the author about the socialization of young children. It focuses on childrearing, caring, and early education within a developmental context. The style is different from most textbooks because of its emphasis on real life experience, personal insight, and academic discipline. The theory lying behind the practical emphasis is explained in terms of specific concrete examples.

This text approaches learning by using a Piagetian theory of knowledge acquisition and construction, where learners attach new schema to existing ones. In other words, readers are encouraged to reach into their own experience to make sense of new information in terms of their existing knowledge.

Because whatever we read is always filtered through our own subjective experience, this text acknowledges that fact and capitalizes on it. The author lets her voice come through as she tells personal stories and shares insights. Students are asked regularly to look at the issues, information, and examples the text presents in terms of their own ideas, feelings, and experience. Examples given are designed to appeal to both traditional and nontraditional students by reflecting the demographics of the United States today.

Based on twenty-six years of experience teaching a course on socialization called "Child, Family, and Community," this text gives information that students need to work with and rear young children. It is written for early-childhood students who plan to be teachers, caregivers, childcare workers, family childcare providers, or parents. General education students will also benefit. Trainers in the field find the book valuable for use in inservice training for teachers and childcare workers; parent educators find it useful as well.

HOW THE SECOND EDITION IS DIFFERENT

This new edition focuses on up-to-the-minute issues, and gives an even broader coverage of topics. The reference lists are extensive and represent an expansive view of culture and gender issues, reflecting both recent and classic well-

respected works in the field. This edition contains even more material on cultural perspectives, and racial, class, and gender issues, always emphasizing a multicultural/antibias approach for a pluralistic America.

New pedagogical features include a chapter opener that begins with *In this chapter you'll discover*, and another called Test Yourself. The Test Yourself section provides a list of instructional objectives that can easily be turned into quizzes or examinations by the teacher. Each chapter closes with a list of discussion questions, followed by a section called Personal Reflections. The latter section is designed to take discussions into the personal realm and can be useful in journal writing as well.

Perhaps the highest compliment paid to this text was a remark made by an African-American community college instructor. The occasion was a statewide discussion of rewriting the early-childhood course curriculum to infuse diversity into each class. The instructor announced that she wasn't going to touch her Child, Family, and Community class, because with "Janet's book as the text the course already met the diversity requirement."

SUMMARY OF CHAPTERS

Part 1, The Child: Socialization in a Developmental Context, examines the developmental context of socialization, providing information about the foundations of socialization and examining four major issues of the first five years.

The reader is led to examine brief overviews of three perspectives of child development theory, and then is introduced to the dynamic theory on which this book is based. An inclusive theory, it regards behavior as a result of the interplay of the biological organism (and his or her individual genetic makeup) with developmental stage theory, behaviorism, and social learning theory.

Chapter 1, Attachment, looks at Erik Erikson's stage of Trust versus Mistrust and examines how attachment relates to this stage. Building relationships and meeting needs are important themes of this first chapter, which looks at both childcare and parenting. The attachment of a prenatally drug-exposed baby is a sidelight of this chapter.

Chapter 2, Autonomy, explores the toddler behaviors that indicate the push toward becoming a separate independent individual—behaviors such as rebellion and negativity, exploration, self-help skills, and a sense of possession. Loss and separation and helping toddlers develop the skills needed to cope are also features of this chapter.

Teen parents—children raising children—is a sidelight of this chapter.

Chapter 3, Initiative, explores the development of a conscience by explaining the second two of Erik Erikson's conflicts, Autonomy versus Shame and Doubt and Initiative versus Guilt. Also featured are the role of imagination and fantasy; a look at shy children and aggressive children; and how to empower children.

Sidelights of this chapter include a look at a child with Attention Deficit Hyperactive Disorder (ADHD) and addressing the roots of violence by teaching problem-solving skills.

Chapter 4, Self-Esteem, discusses what self-esteem is and how to influence it. Dimensions of self-esteem are laid out and suggestions of how to promote self-esteem are given. The chapter also includes an examination of the relationship of cultural differences to self-esteem and how an antibias approach can promote self-esteem.

A sidelight of this chapter is a peek into a preschool staff meeting where teachers discuss the self-esteem of four-year-old Travis.

PART 2, The Family: Socialization for High Self-Esteem in Healthy Families, looks at the socialization of the child in a family context and is designed to present a view of the array of components essential for high self-esteem and mental health.

Chapter 5, Goals, Values, and Culture, starts with a look at cultural differences in goals and values and the relationship of those goals and values to child-rearing. It explores contrasting cultural patterns and the cultural conflicts that sometimes occur. Another major theme of this chapter is teaching morals and values to children.

A sidelight of this chapter is a comparison of the values of independence and interdependence and how they show up in childrearing practices.

Chapter 6, Childcare: An Extension of the Family, looks at childcare as a childrearing environment that supplements the home. The state of childcare in America today is examined as well as the issues of affordability and availability. Quality is considered as well as what goes into making for quality childcare settings. The concept of the gap between school and home is discussed, and there is an exploration of parent-provider relations.

Sidelights of this chapter are the stories of Debbie, Walt, and Sean, who are looking for childcare for their children.

Chapter 7, Disciplining for High Self-Esteem, starts by defining the word *discipline*. It looks at seven ways to *prevent* the need for controlling children's behavior, then examines seven ways to respond to unacceptable behavior.

Sidelights of this chapter are the story of one mother who stopped using punishment and started using consequences to guide the behavior of her son; the story of a mother who has abused her child; and the story of what one town did to work toward preventing physical abuse of its children.

Chapter 8, Accepting Feelings, starts with the proposition that all feelings are positive and need to be accepted, and then discusses how we learn feelings, including cultural scripts. Ways to teach children to express and cope with feelings are explored.

Sidelights of this chapter show how Marcie, stepmother of Amy, learns to cope with her anger in healthy ways, and how Julie, another mother, learns to let go of responsibility for her child's feelings.

Chapter 9, Problem Solving, is about conflicting needs and what to do about them. What to do when the child has the problem is different from what to do when the parent has the problem or when both have problems. The chapter also explains the problem-solving process and gives a structure to follow. How problem solving relates to cognitive development is also explored.

When parents don't know about using problem-solving approaches, emotional abuse can occur. A sidelight of this chapter is the story of Brian, a stepfather who was emotionally abused as a child. Brian refuses to do the same to his stepchildren.

Chapter 10, Strokes and Affirmations: A Path to Self-Esteem, looks closely at promoting self-esteem in specific ways. The chapter advocates using strokes to change behavior and affirmations to create "self-fulfilling prophecies." Adult self-esteem relates to child self-esteem, so suggestions for how adults can work on their own self-esteem are included.

A sidelight of this chapter tells how Mary and her daughter Susan disagree over the need for stroking Susan's son, Jake. Another sidelight is the story of how Jennifer, a single parent, discovers that she is inadvertently sexist in the ways she strokes her children.

Chapter 11, Modeling and Teaching Sex Roles, starts with a quick history of the struggle for women's equality and goes on to look at sex equity and childrearing. The relationship of choice of toys to broadening or narrowing children's options is explored. Language issues and differential socialization are examined and guidelines for parents and teachers are laid out.

A sidelight of this chapter is a discussion about cultural differences in sex roles, and where traditional roles end and oppression begins.

Chapter 12, Stress and Success in Family Life, looks at what it takes to be a healthy family and examines the lives of six families who, in spite of many stresses, are struggling to be successful. This chapter touches on the issues of substance abuse, divorce, child custody, and poverty. It examines the influence of family structure and makeup and includes nuclear families, single parenting, stepfamilies and blended families, teen parents, and special needs children.

A sidelight of this chapter looks at what families do in early childhood that helps ensure later school success.

Part 3, The Community: Socialization in the Community Context, looks at the broader issues of socialization. The child, with developmental issues unfolding within the family, is now viewed in a community context. Part 3 includes society's goals and values from a "majority" and "minority" perspective and discusses the effects of racism, classism, and sexism on the socialization of children.

Chapter 13, Community Resources, looks at the way the community serves and supports families through social networks and institutions. The chapter shows how the six families of chapter 12 connect to the resources in their community.

A sidelight of the chapter is a description of various ways that families find and get connected to community resources.

Chapter 14, Socializing Agents, looks at a number of agents, including the family, schools, peer group, and the media. The chapter also examines factors in socialization such as inequity and diversity, classism, and racism.

Sidelights of the chapter include a look into what "ready to learn" really means and also recommendations regarding television and young children.

Chapter 15, Social Policy Issues, considers what the community can do to ensure that all children get an equal chance to develop high self-esteem and fulfill

themselves in this society. This chapter examines social policy issues and addresses the question, Who is responsible for America's children? It ends with a discussion of child advocacy.

Sidelights of the chapter include culturally responsive care, recommendations for childcare, and statistics responding to the question, Does every child get an equal start?

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