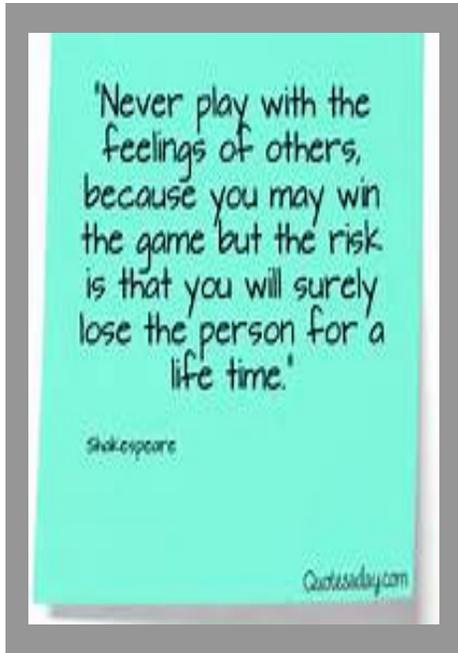


Are You Getting This....?

April

2014



Public Policy for 21st Century (continued...)

This would have to occur before any meaningful strategy could be implemented. In contrast the parents of poor children, particularly minorities have a very poor record of participating in the political process and as a result have little or no influence on important national and state public policy. Also impoverished children however deplorable their situation may have not captured the attention and concern of the broader society. The one exception is health where there does appear to be universal support for insuring that all children including poor children have access to the health care they need. Poverty isn't the only issue that needs to be tackled if significant erodes are going to be made in preventing child maltreatment. There is a significant shortage of affordable housing in the US Strategies must be implemented to prevent the existing affordable housing stock from deteriorating and at the same time stimulate the construction of new affordable housing particularly in larger cities.

Public Policy for the 21st Century

The history of child welfare is inundated with well-intended failed reform efforts. Mind you, billions in federal, state and local dollars are poured into the child welfare systems annually. Scandal and class action lawsuits into state as well as federal inquiries into child welfare services, along with the efforts of private foundations and child advocacy groups have continued to negatively affect the child welfare system. No state or county has been recognized for having a model system.

Child welfare systems have unstable appetites. They can absorb almost any amount of money thrown at them by federal and state elected public officials, particularly those being pressured to do something about child maltreatment complaints or class action lawsuits stemming from abusive and unprofessional practices. The public child welfare systems are precocious because of the way they manage to thrive even in a difficult fiscal environment when other services are being cut back. Also some of the administrators of some of these agencies have become adept at getting their way. They will often scare politicians by implying that children may die or there may be scandals and lawsuits if they don't get more money for more protective services and foster care workers.

Now these tactics have improved the job market for child welfare workers and expanded child welfare bureaucracies but have little impact on improving the quality and effectiveness of services to abused and neglected children. Of course, this is a discouraging picture we can't nor should we give up. We must keep trying to develop new and more effective strategies for reform due to Traditional approaches have not served us well in the this time.

There are many who believe the child welfare system will swell when impoverished adults are no longer eligible for cash assistance, particularly if they aren't earning enough to support themselves and their children or are unemployed. Although recent welfare reform measures believe that welfare recipients dropped from the rolls will get jobs, there are also questions about whether new or restructured welfare – to work programs will have a major impact on those at the bottom of the socioeconomic ladder. While supporting the goal of elimination child poverty the reality is that this will require a long-term national commitment and will take decades to achieve. Moreover as desirable as this may be there is no consensus of public and political opinion that the elimination of child poverty be adopted as a national goal.

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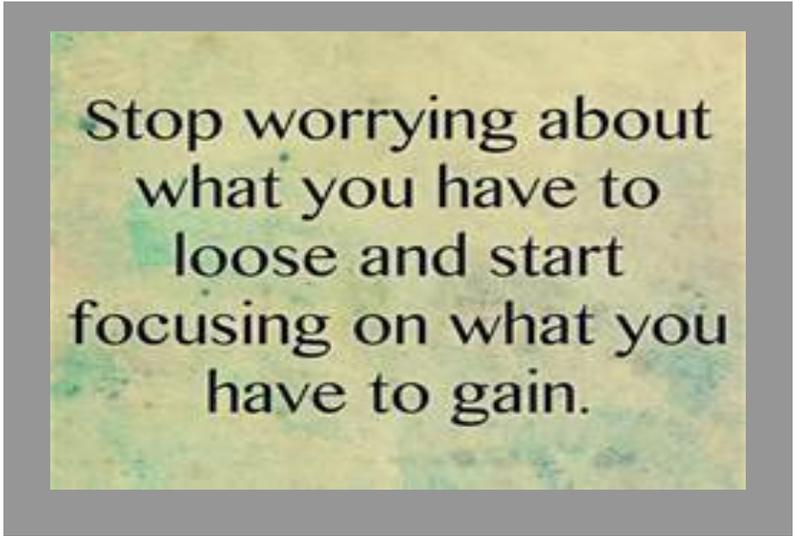
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“Don't wait until everything is just right. It will never be perfect. There will always be challenges, obstacles and less than perfect conditions. So what. Get started now. With each step you take, you will grow stronger and stronger, more and more skilled, more and more self-confident and more and more successful.”

“Twenty years from now you will be more disappointed by the things that you didn't do than by the ones you did do. So throw off the bowlines. Sail away from the safe harbor. Catch the trade winds in your sails. Explore. Dream. Discover.”

Mark Twain



Stop worrying about
what you have to
lose and start
focusing on what you
have to gain.

21st Century Privatization

Now Kansas was one of the first states to privatize its child welfare system. Now those who want to explore the privatization option, the Kansas experience offers some important lessons. Especially that the process can be transparent carefully and openly observed. This is by no means that the Kansas approach should be adopted by everyone or be viewed as a panacea. And also it does not represent however a strategy that is promising. Each state and surrounding jurisdiction should adopt a strategy that is promising. Each state and surrounding jurisdiction should adopt a strategy as well as customizing it to fit their own needs and goals. The massive rates of recidivism or the recycling of children in and out of institutions, particularly private not for profit group homes and residential treatment centers needs to be addressed quickly and carefully.

In conclusion, the child welfare system was charged with the responsibility of protecting children and making decisions that were in the best interest of the children involved as well as the families. We are not persuaded that an obsolete tired and failing child welfare system can be or even should be rejuvenated and take on the added and awesome responsibility of addressing the myriad needs and problems troubled families with vulnerable children in our society are confronting.

I truly think the existing system can be and should be improved. History suggests that policy makers, professionals and child advocates should be guarded in their expectations. Attempts at trying to reform services to abused and neglected children along traditional lines have not accomplished very much. Moreover, Americans do not generally favor or support radical change. It is unlikely that anything short of this will have much of an impact on the child welfare system it's time to usher in the new 21st Century way of thinking and the change that goes with it.

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F.Y.I.

Compassion, Control and Delinquency

Hardly a day goes by without a report in the media about crime particularly violent crime. The violent juvenile crime rates are extremely high and are a major concern for the public and elected officials. The public is deeply concerned about juvenile crime with many people fearful of being the victim of violent acts by young people.

Previous causes of juvenile crime can be considered the relationship between child abuse and delinquency. Much has been discussed and assumed about the relationship between child abuse and neglect and delinquency. However, the assumption by many about child maltreatment causes delinquency and that we can specifically identify and predict which abused children will commit delinquent acts such as acts of violence. The connection has yet to be made.

It has long been discussed that the boundaries between the child welfare and juvenile justice system are not as distinct as one might think. It also has been suggested that whether a child enters the child welfare system or the juvenile justice system is often a function of how the child's behavior is defined. It is a simple matter to redefine delinquent type behaviors like acting out as a symptom of an emotional disturbance special needs.

Relatively little credible data exists to shed light on the movement of children between these systems and for understanding what predicts transitions between or keeping children within them. In general literature has been written about how exposure to abusive and neglectful living environments prior to out of home care may have some effect on later development e.g. (foster care placement, residential care facilities etc.)

