**Tasks**

HHS4C Child & Child Rearing

**Seminar 6**

*Learning Goal (Begin with the End in Mind): I will see that child rearing is a social construct or idea, that understanding child development is rooted in science and psychology, and that parenting advice has changed markedly since the 1950s, post WWII. These changes continue to occur and today the focus is largely on psychological and cognitive wellbeing. The implications of the way we view children impacts both them and their parents.*

1. Read… Child and Child Rearing p. 91-107 by   
   Glenda Wall

**Terms - Minds On**

“blank slate” the idea that children are born as blank

slates, with nothing written on them, to be filled in by

their parents and society – learn as they grow

“child rearing” the process of raising a child

“infant mortality” death rates of infants or infant death

inoculation - vaccination against diseases

child centred advice – parenting advice centered on the child rather than the parent

maternal deprivation – being deprived of one’s mother

attachment – level of connection between a mother and child

attachment theory – theory that those with a strong attachment have a nurturing and responsive mothers and that those who don’t do not

cognitive needs – brain development or brain needs

intensive mothering – high pressure concentration on mothering – that mothers should provide for positive self worth, psychological health, and intelligence

concerted cultivation – middle class phenomenon where parents need to make sure their child is in sports, activities, training, healthy , socially adjusted, highly reasoned and so on

brain drain (common definition) - loss of some of our best talent to the US

brain drain re: Mike Harris and the Ontario Early Years Study - loss of potential if we don’t properly train our children as future citizens of Ontario

**Discussion Questions – Action**

Intro, History, Developmental Psychology

1. Briefly outline the new focus on the way we view children from about the late 1800s to now.

* Late 1800s social reformers press for child labour and protective laws, and legislated public schooling – this prolonged dependency on parents
* This trend is increasing throughout the 1900s and into the 2010s
* Also a new focus on teenagers as a new stage emerges during the 1900s particularly a focus post WWII
* Dependency extends now well past 18 due to longer schooling and career establishment
* Also new focus in the 1900s on child rearing advice and literature – we can’t see how people behaved based on this but we know it was considered to be important and desired & it shows us more about what people felt children’s needs were and social expectations
* Children are valued, important and we feel mothers need some sort of parental advice

1. Why was child-rearing advice toward mothers ramped up in the early 1900s in Canada? What other factors were/ are involved but were largely ignored?

* The infant mortality rates were high due to no refrigeration, no inoculation for contagious diseases, unsafe sewage and water systems
* It was common for families to lose at least one baby – so the government and medical communities decided that there needed to be certified milk depots, well baby clinics, and education aimed at mothers
* Other factors that contributed to infant mortality like poverty, and unsafe living conditions were not dealt with
* The experts were in the fields of medicine and psychology who promoted the scientific management of children

1. What was the goal of much of the advice provided to mothers?

* To train children to be scheduled, of good habits and character and to be disciplined
* Children were meant to be trained and managed
* Focus is physical and moral wellbeing but not so much emotional or psychological
* Women’s heavy workload cooking, cleaning, sewing, home making essentially required babies to nap, play on their own and so on > mothers’ and babies’ needs overlapped

1. Why was there a shift in child rearing advice post world war II? What did this shift mean for mothers specifically?

* Canada experienced dramatic cultural and structural changes – men came home from the war, the economy started to boom, 2 wars and the depression had happened – people wanted prosperity and stability
* Marriage rates rose, average age for first marriage and first baby lowered, family size increased
* Traditional family with male bread winner and female home maker emerges for middle and upper class families
* As far as medicine was concerned, medical advances, refrigeration, vaccinations, and clean water and healthy sanitations systems had improved infant mortality rates, the new focus becomes psychology and the mother child relationship and its role in children’s psychological wellbeing
* In 1946 Dr. Spock’s book Baby and Child Care first appeared, it promoted child centred and permissive parenting, parents were encouraged to trust their instinct, relax and enjoy their babies
* There is a distinct shift to seeing the child as more psychologically vulnerable instead of fussy or spoiled
* The mothers needs become less important and the baby becomes the most important, the overlap disappears
* Moms are being encouraged to enjoy their babies – so if you were struggling or not felling fulfilled there was something wrong with you

1. What was the goal of much of the advice provided to mothers?

* A lot of what we think we know about children comes from this research
* Bowlby’s work on maternal deprivation and attachment become very influential
* He concluded that an absent mother had profound effects for later development and adult personality, this became linked with the idea that mothers should not work full time outside the home

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1. How did developmental psychology impact child rearing advice and our ideas of childhood? Include information about Bowlby’s work here.

* A lot of what we think we know about children comes from this research
* Bowlby’s work on maternal deprivation and attachment become very influential
  + During the post war period there were more orphans, and children injured or separated from their parents, which provided for interesting research opportunities
  + However, it should be noted that the infants were being deprived of more than just their mothers but Bowlby identified the key factor to be maternal deprivation (see the way we interpret and see things can make a huge difference to people’s lives)
  + He concluded that an absent mother had profound effects for later development and adult personality, this became linked with the idea that mothers should not work full time outside the home

1. Briefly describe Bowlby’s ideas regarding attachment. Describe Ainsworth’s strange situation test, and attachment theory. What do later critics have to say about this?

* Bowlby…Human infants instinctively seek a strong social bond to their mothers to ensure survival, this strong attachment is needed for emotional, psychological, and cognitive development, & the strength of this bond was dependent on the continual presence of a warm, loving, responsive mother
* Ainsworth strange situation test… test to measure attachment,
  + a mother and young child are in a room with toys, and a stranger.
  + the mom leaves and after a short time returns
  + the stranger offers comfort to the child if they seemed upset
  + if they played on their own while the mom was there – protested her leaving – and was comforted by her return they were said to be securely attached
  + infants who behaved otherwise were said to be insecurely attached
* Ainsworth surmised that infants with nurturing responsive mothers were more securely attached than those who were more negative and less responsive
* Since then critics have pointed out there are so many unaccounted for variables or factors like
  + personality, cultural practices or simply healthy independence for some children,
  + the fact that the findings are derived from animal experiments and involved severe deprivation is another concern
  + daycare children do not display attachment problems
* many of the assumptions however are pretty entrenched in our belief systems, that mothers are key
* however, to be fair, fathers and other caregivers and now more commonly included and the idea of continuous maternal care is rarely seen as necessary for secure attachment to form

Children’s Needs and Child Rearing Today

1. What are intensive parenting and or mothering? What does Lareau mean by concerted cultivation? How is income a factor in all of this? What role do fathers play in this? How have family sizes been a factor?

* As the century progressed, the stress on baby’s psychological and cognitive needs has grown even stronger
* Hays coined the term intensive mothering to describe social expectations that surround mothers today – the good mother is constantly attentive to her child’s development of self worth, psychological health, and intelligence
* She argues that this is exhausting and demanding physically, emotionally, and financially at a time when women are also experiencing high workplace demands – some requirements seem excessive ex. Sibling preparedness workshops
* Concerted cultivation is the increasing intensity among middle class parents to enrol their children in every sport and activity going – foster good language skills, reasoning etc.
* Dual income families factor into this, most are deemed necessary to make ends meet, and to cover the costs of all these activities etc. , concern with moms in the work place to make sure children are not suffering – quality versus quantity time…
* Dads are now playing a much larger role because they have to and because they see their roles as changing – not being so rigid as in the past
* Intensive parenting is only really feasible with a small number of children, so lots of families are smaller – in order to enable dual working couples to still parent and be able to balance it all time wise and financially

1. What is the concern or emphasis on brain science when it comes to parenting? What does the “class womb” mean?

* Brain science of the early 1990s has proposed that in order to ensure optimal brain development and future brain potential that the first 3 to 5 years of life are key – important to stimulate a baby’s brain and growth
* This growth includes pre birth or in utero – increasing child centered focus on pregnancy – don’t drink or smoke – keep the best environment possible for baby, fetal rights are important, food groups, proper exercises and rest, avoiding workplace hazards appropriate
* Class womb – pre birth tips for women – best prenatal environment produces the best baby – eat well, listen to classical music, think good thoughts, sing, talk to baby but not like a baby…

1. What do all these developments suggest about our current conceptions of childhood in Canada? What is the difference between investing in children individually and blanket social programs? What is the difference between social equality and equality of opportunity?

* We are witnessing a shift in he treatment and understanding of children, moving away from a view of children as the property of adults and toward a view of them as autonomous individuals – citizens with rights – no spanking or corporal punishments in school or at home, neglect and child abuse wrong
* children are more socially valued and better treated than ever before
* the difference between investing in children and blanket social programs is that there as been a right wing or conservative shift toward the idea that everyone should have an equal opportunity to make something of themselves but that the state is not responsible and does not need to provide social programs, people need to fend for themselves and their children versus the idea that if we have good social programs we will have a better chance of everyone doing better
* social equality would mean everyone was equal and had equal access to money, property, education and so on, whereas equal opportunity is this idea that we all can achieve if we work hard enough despite barriers like having no money, poorer nutrition and so on, they just need to work a little harder – overcome the difficulties

1. What have the cutbacks to social programming since the 1990s caused? How deep were the program cuts and the welfare cuts of 1995? How did the work expectations for mothers with young children, on welfare change? What happened to childcare centres as well?

* The cutbacks caused more social problems and higher levels of poverty;
* Education, health and social assistance programs were cut by 1/3
* Welfare rates were cut 21% in 1995 and have never rebounded – moms are expected to be looking for jobs now even with young children (were given a bit of a break with small children in the past)
* Child care centers lost funding and we still nave no national child care program though they have been discussing it now for two decades – right wing not into it, left wing is even though about 70 % of families have both parents working and the majority of single mothers are also working

1. What are the poverty rates for children in Canada as of 2005? What are the rates for children of recent immigrant families? What are the rates for urban aboriginal children? Look at the line graphs on page 105, what do they show?

* 11.7 percent of children in Canada living in poverty as of 2005
* 49 % for immigrant children
* 40% for urban aboriginal children
* we know there is a link between poverty and healthy, basic functioning and learning

The line graphs show…

* Children with delayed speech are much more likely to live in lower income households, markedly different between less than 20 000 and more than 20 000 – which is the welfare difference really

35% 18% 17% 16% 10% 14% 8%

< 20 000 >80 000

* Children with basic health problems higher with lower income

14% 10% 8% 8% 8% 8% 6%

< 20 000 >80 000

1. What is the difference between the social importance of child potential and the ways in which children’s needs are provided for by social policy in Canada?

* One looks after the states money and allows us to say everyone has equal opportunity because there are no laws saying they cannot succeed or be treated equally, but if a family cannot meet their children’s needs oh well, whereas if there is a social policy that allows for needs to be met, there would be fewer children hungry and living in unsafe conditions and so on

1. Why is it important that our social policies take into consideration entire families and not just children, particularly for those in need?

* Children grow up in their families and their needs cannot be separated out from the needs of their parents

**Reflection Questions - Consolidation**

1. What are your own views on the attachment work? Do you agree with Bowlby and or Ainsworth and if so how and why?
2. Do you think that children who are raised by concerted cultivation differ from those who are not? Which would you prefer to be and why?
3. Is the idea of concerted cultivation driving lower family sizes or is it the other way around?
4. How do you feel about the discrepancy between ideas of needing to promote child development – physically, socially, emotionally, and cognitively and the pulling back of money to social programming?