

In order to compare the views of African American and Hispanic parents to those of white parents, supplementary interviews were conducted with 300 black and 300 Hispanic parents. The results: regardless of race and ethnicity, all three groups of parents are critical of how teens and children are turning out, of the job parents are doing, and for the most part, all are concerned about the same social problems threatening youngsters. Where there are differences, these are usually differences in degree, not in kind. African American and Hispanic parents are sometimes more critical of today's youth than are white parents, for example, and black parents are more attracted to government child and health care programs.

### Teens Are Trouble

The general public's disapproval of how teenagers are turning out is mirrored among all parents, and black and Hispanic parents are hardly an exception - in fact, they are often more disapproving.

About 7 in 10 African American, Hispanic, and white parents resort to negative adjectives when describing today's teens (73%, 68%, and 71%, respectively). Black and Hispanic parents are more likely than whites to say teens who get into trouble because they have too much free time on their hands are very common (63%, 61% versus 49%). African American and Hispanic parents also are more likely than white parents to criticize teenagers for lacking self-discipline (49%, 46% versus 38%), and for being disorderly and wild in public (49%, 43% versus 31%). Minority parents are only slightly more likely than white parents to have positive evaluations of teens — to say, for example, that they are helpful toward neighbors or treat adults with respect.

On the other hand, minority parents view youngsters with more empathy. Black — and to a lesser extent, Hispanic — parents find it easier than white parents to communicate with teens (52%, 47%, and 38%, respectively). They are also more likely to say that many adults have a hard time with kids because they forget what it was like when they were younger (49%, 42%, and 33%, respectively).

### Children Too

Like Americans in general, the criticisms of teens carry over to children for African American, Hispanic, and white parents. When asked what comes to their mind when describing children — defined as older than 5 but not yet teens — half or more parents from each group resort to negative adjectives (56% of black, 49% Hispanic, and 56% white).

Although the criticisms are not as intense as those made of teens, parents across all groups do not view children in hopeful and endearing terms. Much of the focus is on children who are spoiled, with about half of black, Hispanic, and white parents saying such

children are very common. Black parents are more likely than Hispanic and white parents to believe out-of-control or lazy children are very common. Black and Hispanic parents are slightly more likely than whites to believe friendly or respectful children are very common, but they are far from ready to sing their praises. For example, few African American (25%) or Hispanic parents (19%) say children who are friendly and helpful toward their neighbors are very common. Among white parents, the number is 16%.

### Hopes For A Better World

Once again, just as was the case among the general public, the picture is not all bad. Many parents across the three groups do believe that today's children are bright and eager to learn (40%, 37%, and 32%, respectively). But in the end, regardless of their racial or ethnic background, parents concur with the general public: they do not expect the current generation of children to fulfill or redeem hopes for a better world. In similar majorities, black, Hispanic, and white parents believe today's children will make little difference or make the nation an even worse place when they grow up (61%, 54%, and 58%, respectively).

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### Look To The Parents

As was the case with the general public, there is a widespread belief — shared by about 8 in 10 black, Hispanic, and white parents — that it is harder than ever for parents to do their job. But, like Americans in general, parents across the three groups are critical of the job parents are doing in important areas of responsibility. African American parents often stand out as more critical than Hispanics and whites, and simultaneously more understanding of the pressures facing parents.

Sizable majorities of black, Hispanic, and white parents believe parents today have children before they're

ready to take responsibility for them (72%, 69%, and 63%, respectively); and that they often break up too easily rather than try to stay together for the sake of their kids (56%, 57%, and 58%, respectively). Many parents across all three groups echo the public's complaint that parents often fail to discipline their children and resent advice about their kids. And about half of parents in each group reproach parents who believe buying things for kids means the same as caring for them. Small percentages believe that parents who teach their kids right from wrong are very common.

African American and Hispanic parents are substantially more critical of fathers for choosing careers as more important than children (47%, 39% versus 33%), and of parents in general for abusing welfare (41%, 43% versus 29%). But they also stand out as more sympathetic to the challenges facing parents when, for example, they say parents who sacrifice and work hard on behalf of their children are very common (65%, 58% versus 52%) or when they cite economic pressures on parents as a serious problem (60%, 53% versus 42%).

## Drugs, Crime, And Gangs

According to parents, economic pressures and the demands of the workplace are only the beginning of the story of what makes parenting and raising children so difficult today. Even if parents do a good job, widespread social problems threaten children, in their view. Black and Hispanic parents are attuned to these dangers by larger margins, but white parents are not far

behind. Drug and alcohol abuse on the part of young people are a serious threat according to black, Hispanic, and white parents (79%, 83%, and 67%, respectively). Crime and gangs are another very serious problem according to 77% of both black and Hispanic parents, and 60% of

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white parents concur. Parents across the three groups point to schools that fail to adequately teach children as another very serious problem. And wide majorities — more than 7 in 10 in each group — decry sex and violence in the media as threatening to the well-being of young people. No wonder parents — across all groups — overwhelmingly deem it harder than ever to be a youngster growing up in the U.S.

Moreover, parents perceive these social threats to be widespread and not at all unique to youngsters from disadvantaged backgrounds. For example, about 7 in 10 black, Hispanic, and white parents believe the risks of crime and gangs are widespread. Even higher percentages across all three groups believe drug or alcohol abuse by kids is widespread, and not limited to those from lower income families. African American parents do add another problem to the list of threats: 58% point to a lack of strong communities where

neighbors care about kids. Fewer Hispanic (45%) and white (41%) parents agree.

## What To Do

If the public refuses to give up on youngsters, even in the most difficult circumstances, it is only to be expected that parents will evince at least the same level of commitment. Indeed, nearly 9 in 10 African American, Hispanic, and white parents believe that even very troubled teens can be redeemed given enough attention and guidance. But are parents from different racial and ethnic backgrounds attracted to the same solutions?

In comparable numbers, black, Hispanic, and white parents look to improving the quality of schooling kids get as a key solution (76%, 67%, and 70%, respectively). And although after-school programs in community centers are particularly compelling to black and Hispanic parents (75% and 67%), they speak to a majority of white parents (57%) as well. Most parents in each group also believe in the effectiveness of relying on volunteer organizations dedicated to youngsters, such as the Boy Scouts. Nor are parents across the spectrum resistant to tougher measures to keep kids off the streets and productive: majorities of black, Hispanic, and white parents support nighttime curfews for young people (63%, 66% and 54% respectively).

## Differing Views On Government Programs

There are some substantial differences between African American parents in particular and white parents, and these are often over the role of government programs — although even here there are some areas of commonality. African American parents — and to a lesser degree, Hispanic parents — are more likely to cite a shortage of government programs on behalf of kids as a very serious problem (47%, 36% versus 27% of white parents). And they are considerably more apt to believe that government funding for child care and health programs would be a very effective approach to help kids (56%, 45% versus 36%). Interestingly, black parents continue to stand out in support of such programs even when their incomes reach middle-class levels. By contrast, although such programs draw support among lower-income white and Hispanic parents, that support declines when their incomes rise.<sup>12</sup>

The racial or ethnic background of parents makes little difference, however, when it comes to views on the efficacy of welfare programs. Few black, Hispanic, or white parents have very much faith in the effectiveness of such programs (16%, 13%, and 8%, respectively). What's more, about 7 in 10 parents in the three groups think government programs to help at-risk families have led to mostly mixed results, not success. Like the general public, minority parents

attribute the lack of success to their sense that the families that need such programs do not make good use of them. It is little wonder that, when it comes to helping parents who have serious trouble raising their kids, all three groups of parents would first look to volunteer groups or neighbors — not government.

African American parents — and to a lesser extent, Hispanic parents — are also more likely to cite economic pressures on parents as a serious problem (60%, 53%, and 42%, respectively). Consequently, they also believe a proposal to increase wages and job security of parents would be an effective way to help kids (60%, 51%, and 44%, respectively). Once again, black parents across income levels often continue to worry about the impact of economic stress on kids and families, and to support increased wages and job security. For white — and to a lesser extent, Hispanic — parents, levels of concern about such issues more closely track income levels.<sup>13</sup>

### **Helping And Volunteering**

Although African American, Hispanic, and white parents generally share the same positive views toward helping and volunteerism, some differences do stand out.

African American parents would be much more comfortable than Hispanics or whites telling a neighbor that their child had gotten into mischief (59% versus 37% and 37%); substantially more likely to be willing to volunteer for an organization that helps kids (63% versus 53% and 49%); and to say they had made a difference in the life of someone who was not a family member (61% versus 45% and 47%).

But black parents also seem to be more careful about helping. For example, 6 in 10 black parents say you have to be careful when helping because some people will try to take advantage of good intentions, while Hispanic and white parents are far less likely to hold this view (43% and 34%). African American parents are also more likely to say they help when they see the difference it makes to the other person. Both African American and Hispanic parents are more likely to want to make sure recipients of help truly want their assistance before they come forward.

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### **From Where You Sit**

When it comes to views about young people today, more often than not, African American, Hispanic, and white parents have a shared understanding of the problem — and its solution. In turn, their views are rather close to those of Americans in general. This is hardly surprising. When it comes to views toward race relations or criminal justice, differing historical and personal experiences can lead to differing perceptual lenses. But on most other issues — for example, education — attitudinal differences across racial and ethnic groups are usually modest at best. And when talking about kids today, shared perceptions seem to be the norm. It makes very little difference whether one is an African American, Hispanic, or white parent, or whether one is watching and interacting with kids as a nonparent.

Teenagers surveyed as part of this study generally describe themselves as happy and say they have warm relations with their parents and other adults in their lives. But large numbers also say they have plenty of time on their hands and describe an environment filled with hazards and potential trouble. A third say there is no adult in the house when they come home and about a quarter admit that they have engaged in risky behavior such as smoking cigarettes or drinking alcohol.

Thus far, *Kids These Days* has reported what adults think about young people today: their concern that adolescents fall far short when it comes to character and conduct; and their belief that parents, with very little help from society, are responsible for this state of affairs. But what do young people have to say about themselves, their friends, and the environment in which they live? To find out, the study probed the views of 600 adolescents 12 to 17 years of age using a questionnaire designed both to compare their views to those of adults, and to capture attitudes unique to them.

### I'm OK

The vision of sullen, alienated youth seems to fly in the face of what young people have to say about themselves. Most America's adolescents report they are doing well — not only when it comes to their physical well-being but on a personal level as well. A little more than 6 in 10 (61%) say the description "I am usually happy" comes very close to capturing how they feel. And, in what might be

a surprise to many adults, two-thirds (66%) say "faith in God is an important part of my life," and about equally as many (68%) say they attend religious services at least once a month.

Nor do the vast majority of adolescents worry about physical and financial deprivation. Three

in four young people (75%) do not worry *at all* about one parent losing a job, and 72% do not worry *at all* that their family will not have money to take care of the basics. About 3 in 4 adolescents (74%) say they *never* have to "worry about having enough food or a place to sleep." The large majority of youngsters seem to live secure and comfortable lives, although the finding that even a quarter of the nation's young people are sometimes anxious about having enough to eat or a place to live will undoubtedly disturb many Americans.

### My Parents Are OK

When youngsters talk about their own parents, they describe them as supportive and giving. If caring, lov-

ing parents are critical to the emotional well-being of children — and most everyone agrees they are — most youngsters say they are in good shape when it comes to this dimension of parenting.

About 8 in 10 (81%) say "I can always trust my parents to be there for me when I need them." In fact, the percentage of adolescents saying they trust their parents to be there for them is higher than the percentage saying the same of their friends (81% versus 62%) — an unexpected finding given all the focus on how important peers and friends are in young people's lives. Almost 7 in 10 (68%) say they get a hug or kiss from their parents almost every day. And few teenagers find a statement designed to capture that ever-present "generation gap" compelling. A surprisingly low 24% say "My parents don't really understand the problems I face" captures the way they feel.

These positive reinforcements often continue when youngsters leave the house and interact with adults. Nearly 8 in 10 (79%) say the adults they run across outside of school are friendly toward them and their friends. About two-thirds (65%) say they get a compliment or encouraging word from adults almost every day. And 7 in 10 (70%) have adults other than parents they can talk with about a serious problem. Responding to a question about whom adolescents could confide in, this Denver teen said, "My next-door neighbors...I've known them for five years and we're really close. I tell them everything. And if I can't talk to my parents about it, then I tell them."

### Why Are Kids Saying Such Nice Things?

At first brush, the way youngsters describe their own relationships with adults seems entirely incompatible with what adults have been saying about them throughout this study. What accounts for these vastly differing viewpoints? This study was not intended to be the definitive accounting of the day-to-day lives, attitudes, and experiences young people go through. But the data do suggest some reasons for the contrasting views of adults and youngsters.

Although it is obvious that most youngsters do not have routinely antagonistic relationships with adults — nor are they particularly dissatisfied with the major features of their lives — it is important to reiterate

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that *the public's fundamental concerns about young people center not on their day-to-day happiness, but on the quality and quantity of moral guidance they receive.* In fact, it is not unlikely that some adults interviewed for this project might think many youngsters would be better off if they occasionally had a few antagonistic encounters with adults telling them to behave themselves.

## Attention Deficit

But do youngsters themselves sense that they are not getting the guidance they need? The results of Public Agenda's 1997 study, *Getting By: What American Teenagers Really Think About Their Schools*, suggest that many youngsters *do* want more structure and supervision in their lives. It showed students were drawn to caring but firm teachers, to more rigorous academic standards, and to policies that made expectations of their behavior clear. High school students thought highly of teachers who managed to both care about them and run a focused classroom where little nonsense was tolerated. They also strongly supported measures to remove disruptive students from classrooms.

There are also indications in this study that many adolescents may not be getting the sort of attention and supervision they need. One-third (33%) say there is no adult at home when they return from school. And 53% reported that there was no parent or guardian in the room as they were answering the questions to this survey — a survey that lasted about 23 minutes on average, and asked about relatively private attitudes and experiences. Although phone interviewers were encouraged to provide details to kids and their guardians about how to contact Public Agenda for further information about the organization and the study's purpose, only one parent called Public Agenda offices to inquire about the purpose and content of the survey in which her child had taken part.

## At Malls, People's Houses, Wherever

The public's concern that young people do not have enough meaningful things to do in structured environments may be well placed, according to what the youngsters say. Seven in 10 youngsters (69%) do not belong to any club or organization outside of school. When meeting friends, 7 in 10 say they usually hang out without anything specific to do; only 28% get together to do something specific. "I hang out with my friends," said a Westchester teen, "at malls, people's houses, wherever."

While adolescents have a reputation for wanting more freedom and less supervision, in this study, many youngsters seem to think that too many of them do not receive enough guidance and attention. Nearly half (49%) believe most people their age need more

guidance and attention from adults, while 42% say things are about right. "It is true," said another Westchester teen, "when you have a lot of free time on your hands, you are going to sometimes get into bad things or else you will be totally bored."

Still another question is whether most youngsters have the life experience and perspective to truly judge whether they are personally getting the supervision and adult guidance they need. It may be too much to expect teenagers to conduct a self-conscious accounting of their personal freedom, their own shortcomings and those of the people who they are closest to and most dependent upon. Among the youth surveyed here, it seems far easier to see gaps and shortcomings in other youngsters and in other people's parents, than to judge their own parents and their own behavior as lacking.

## My Friends' Parents...

While they have good things to say about their own parents, adolescents are far more equivocal about other parents around them. While over half (57%) say most parents do an excellent or good job of raising their kids, a substantial number — 43% — think they are doing only a fair or poor job.

"A friend of mine — her parents aren't together," said a Denver teen, "and when her father comes along her parents are always arguing, and her little sister and brother are always hearing their arguments. And the mother's into drugs. It's not a happy life." Parents who are failing to fulfill their responsibilities may not be the rule, according to youngsters, but they are also hardly the exception.

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Some of the specific criticisms young people have of today's parents echo the criticisms of the general public, although often by lesser margins. About 4 in 10 (41%) adolescents think parents who have children before they're ready to take responsibility are very common. Another 43% believe parents who spoil their kids are very common; one-third (33%) that parents fail to discipline their kids. The need for setting limits was apparent to this California teen: "We have this one friend who has this mom who is so devoted to him, he just fools around with her. He calls her by her first name: 'I need this, come give it to me.' And she does it." And parents do not get stellar marks for raising their kids with the right values: only about 4 in 10 (39%) say parents who are good role models and teach their kids right from wrong are very common. "My friend's parents just don't care, they are never home," said a California teen. "There is food in the house, but they are never there to talk or confide in, so he turns to friends. It's not a question of a poverty stricken home — he just has no one to confide in."

## Something's Wrong

For the most part, these results do not portray the levels of blame and finger-pointing found among the general public and of parents themselves, and that may be good news. But the very fact that substantial numbers of young people have noticed something wrong with how many parents are doing their job is telling.

One might say it's only natural for young people to jump at the chance to turn the tables on adults and criticize them for a change. But youngsters also give parents their due: half (50%) say parents who sacrifice and work hard so their kids have a better life are very common. Many youngsters, such as this one from California, also acknowledge "it is tougher to be a parent today than it was 20 years ago." And the things youngsters criticize in parents — spoiling children, not taking responsibility for them, failing to teach them right from wrong — are hardly self-

serving. And, once again, large numbers hold these views regardless of their economic circumstances: using free/reduced lunch eligibility to distinguish disadvantaged youngsters from those who are better off, middle-class

kids are as critical as those who are disadvantaged. If this many young people take parents to task for failing to provide guidance and values to their generation, it is little wonder that adults are far more upset.

## Dangers Lurking

Once they leave the immediate context and safety of their home, these young people talk — in focus groups and the survey — about a very different reality they see close up, one they are exposed to everyday. They talk about how friends, other people their age, and sometimes they themselves get into trouble — sometimes serious trouble. And where in the past kids may have worried about fitting in, budding romance, or the neighborhood bully, today youngsters talk about drugs, fighting, and gangs, as a daily fact of life they had to deal with. "Most kids I know are struggling," said a Denver teen. "Drug addiction, gang violence..." To hear them describe it, their world is full of dangers, requiring them to be ever-watchful and on guard.

These are more than focus group impressions. About 4 in 10 (41%) say that they see people their age using drugs or alcohol every day or almost every day. About a third (34%) report being to a party in the past 6 months where other kids were drunk. Three in 10 (30%) say their parents "press me to stay home because they think it's not safe out there." One-fifth (22%) come across gangs every day or almost every day. These are not majorities, but that is small com-

fort; the numbers indicate many adolescents live in environments where threats and dangers are commonplace.

## A Fight Every Day

At school, this Denver youth had a far more practical concern than fitting in: "I've just got to watch my back and make sure they don't try to jump somebody or me. They take shoes, clothes..." In Long Beach, this teen reported that trouble was an everyday occurrence: "At my school, the people are getting worse. There is a fight every day. It used to be a good neighborhood, now there is tagging (graffiti) everywhere. At a party, there always has to be a fight."

## Risky Business

But some youngsters do more than merely observe the dangers around them. Forty percent say "my parents would be very upset if they knew some of the things my friends have done." What's more, the number of adolescents who admit they themselves are crossing some lines and taking some risks is far from insignificant. One in four youngsters (26%) admit to smoking cigarettes in the past six months; 1 in 4 (26%) to drinking alcohol; 13% to using illegal drugs; and 10% to getting into trouble with the police.

This behavior does not seem limited to lower-income youth. Both youngsters who are disadvantaged and those who are better off are as likely to see people their age using drugs or alcohol every day or almost every day (45% and 40%, respectively); to report they themselves had used illegal drugs in the past 6 months (14% and 11%, respectively); and to have had alcohol to drink (25% for both groups). The disadvantaged, however, are more likely to come across gangs by a 31% to 18% margin.

## Be Careful How You Look

Adults, as noted earlier, fault today's young people for a preoccupation with things material. For their part, there seems to be no more conspicuous manifestation of this preoccupation than the clothes they wear. More than 6 in 10 (63%) adolescents believe that most or all people their age pay too much attention to their appearance — what they wear and what they look like. The pressure to keep up appearances is there, although many youngsters deny that they are personally affected by it. In Westchester, one 10th-grader wearing a Calvin Klein tee-shirt, designer jeans and the requisite three or four earrings insisted that she would never allow another teen to influence what she buys because "that girl is not the one paying for my clothes — I am." Peer pressure is often more subtle than crude. Based on this study it seems more often a function of milieu rather than direct taunting.

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And today, young people find themselves in a milieu fostered by targeted marketing, advertising, and celebrity endorsement, one that is commonly tolerated by the adults and authority figures in their lives.

If adolescents report their peers are paying very careful attention to how they dress, they also report they are not paying careful attention to how they treat each other. Only one-fifth (21%) say most people their age are very respectful toward each other. In Long Beach, California a teenager compared her experience growing up in England to that in the U.S.: "In England, kids, you look at them and they smile at you. Here you look at them and they are like, 'What are you looking at?'" And one girl in Denver reported this behavior crossed the line into abuse: "Some of the girls are really ruthless. If they just see you and they don't like the way you look or how you are walking, they'll start something with you. . . For a while I had these girls calling my house, following me home from school." Nor do young people rate adolescents' behavior toward adults very highly — only 26% say people their age are very respectful of adults. "I have a friend who has no respect for her dad at all," said a California teen. "She calls him very bad names to his face, and she just has no respect."

In the end, youngsters are hardly more optimistic than adults about having faith in their generation's capacity to change the world for the better. About 6 in 10 (57%) say people their age will not make much difference to the country or even make it worse; one-third (32%) think they will make it better. Historically, young people have often been dismissive of adults and the world they had fashioned, beaming with a self-confident "step aside and let us do the job" attitude. They now seem to display little confidence that they themselves will be up to the task.

### **If I Am Only For Myself...**

There does seem to be a large pool of potential energy among youngsters waiting to be tapped. Young people today are not only waiting for help and guidance; they seem very willing to help and guide each other, and to help adults who need it.

As with the adults in this study, fully 7 in 10 (70%) youngsters subscribe to the notion that people should help others because it's the right thing to do. "My

family is that way . . . that's how I was raised, to help people out," said a California teen. About 6 in 10 (59%) youngsters would be very comfortable watching a younger child for a neighbor as a favor, without pay; and 60% have recently done it. Two-thirds (67%) would be very comfortable running errands for a neighbor; and half (51%) have recently done so.

Adolescents also are willing to contribute to community-wide efforts to help the needy. For example, 55% would feel very comfortable volunteering at a hospital or church; about half (51%) would be very comfortable feeding poor or homeless in a soup kitchen. It is interesting to note the drop off, however, between willingness to help and actually helping, one similar to that found among adults. Only 37% of youngsters, for example, report they have recently volunteered at a hospital or church. It seems that the same ground rules regarding helping that prevail among adults often prevail among youngsters as well. The reciprocity norm seems, for example, to be widely espoused by young Americans: 69% say someone who gets help should express their gratitude; and 56% say someone who gets help should return the favor when they can.

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### **To Give Is To Receive**

Some of the things young people say may be heartening for those who suspect that kids are not as bad as many think they are. Other findings confirm that things could be much better. But one compelling theme emerging here is that many young people are ready, willing, and able to help others and help each other. Many children's advocates look at society and ask what can be done to help kids. But rather than simply playing the role of the passive beneficiaries, many youngsters themselves are interested in helping, not only their friends and neighbors, but others in the community. The potential resonance of this theme is threefold: it fits nicely with the notion of reciprocity about helping that the public already has; it contradicts the widely-held image of spoiled kids who lack character; and, perhaps most importantly, it meshes perfectly with the public's focus on teaching children character and responsibility.

People have very negative feelings about today's youngsters, and they fault parents for the problems they see. At the same time, they readily acknowledge how tough it is to be a parent in today's world — even as they feel compassion for what the young are up against.

To some, the public's voice in *Kids These Days* may sound strident at times, or even contradictory. But Americans do recognize the complexity of the problem. People are critical of parents and kids, but they

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**There are troubling obstacles to volunteerism that do not lend themselves to a quick fix or clever slogan.**

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are also sensitive to the problems they face. But most important of all, they are neither confused nor ambivalent on how best to help the youngsters. People are riveted by one goal — the necessity of teaching all children the

values of integrity, ethical behavior, concern for others, respect, civility, compassion, and responsibility. They believe that these values are the arsenal children need to become responsible adults and to benefit society.

### A Sweeping Diagnosis

Many of those who spend their professional lives helping children worry that America pays lip service to the young but doesn't really care about them. We found quite the opposite to be true. People are deeply concerned. They are frightened *for* these children, who seem to be growing up with such serious deficits in character and morals. And sadly, in some cases, they are frightened *of* these children as well. As the study points out, however, such attitudes are not reserved solely for teenagers; nor are they directed exclusively at the residents of our most disadvantaged inner cities. The diagnosis is much more sweeping, encompassing all of society and including the very young.

Traditional child advocacy has historically focused on ending poverty and improving the health of young people through expanded nutrition and medical care. While many people find these goals persuasive, and few Americans adamantly oppose them, they are — given the focus of the public's concerns — somewhat beside the point.

### The Need For Responsible Adults

People of every persuasion are crying out for adults — in any guise — to help youngsters become peaceable, disciplined, and respectable human beings. They want schools to play a very significant role. They want children to be taught such values as honesty, tolerance, and respect for others, and they want students to be held accountable for their behavior.

Further, they call for parents to begin taking parenting seriously, to understand the sacrifices that must be made, to understand that all young people need discipline and limits to thrive, and thereby start life on the right foot. And, they endorse the need for individuals, schools, and agencies other than the government to step in and fill the gaps when parents have serious trouble raising their children properly.

As we have observed, however, there are troubling obstacles to volunteerism that do not lend themselves to a quick fix or clever slogan. Free time is increasingly hard to come by these days, but discomfort over intruding into someone else's life is the real action-stopper. Reserve and hesitancy have overwhelmed old-fashioned "neighborliness." People simply seem to have lost confidence that "people are people" everywhere.

### No Magic Bullets

America has not reached this impasse overnight, nor will the situation be remedied in a fortnight. There is no magic potion that will quickly unleash the public's desire to care for all of the nation's youngsters. But the public has defined the path we must follow to regain our footing.

For many of those who have labored long and hard to help children and teenagers, this message may be tough to take. But if we are truly committed to engaging all Americans in the business of improving the lot of all youngsters, the centerpiece of such an endeavor must surely be the creation of a morally intact generation.



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**TABLE 1: VIEWS ON TEENAGERS**

“Now I’m going to describe different types of teenagers and ask if you think they are common or not. How about teenagers who [INSERT ITEM]? Are they very common, somewhat common, not too common, or not common at all?”<sup>1</sup>

% saying “very common”	General public	Parents	Parents of teens	African American parents	Hispanic parents	White parents
Face social problems like drugs, gangs, or crime	62%	66%	62%	71%	72%	64%
Get into trouble because they have too much free time	50	51	45	63	61	49
Have poor work habits and lack self-discipline	41	40	43	49	46	38
Lack good role models	36	36	35	43	34	36
Are wild and disorderly in public	30	33	30	49	43	31
Are lively and fun to be around	29	25	24	35	25	25
Are friendly and helpful toward their neighbors	12	10	12	16	14	10
Treat people with respect	12	9	9	17	11	8

1. “Teenagers” were defined for respondents as 13 to 17 years old.

**Sample Sizes:**

General public = 2,000; Parents = 763; Parents of Teens = 162; Parents of Children = 293; African American Parents = 367; Hispanic Parents = 348 White Parents = 596; Youth = 600.

**TABLE 2: VIEWS ON CHILDREN**

“Now I’m going to describe different types of children and ask if you think they are common or not. How about children who are [INSERT ITEM]? Are they very common, somewhat common, not too common, or not common at all?”<sup>1</sup>

% saying “very common”	General public	Parents	Parents of children	African American parents	Hispanic parents	White parents
Face social problems like drugs, gangs, or crime	54%	56%	52%	63%	58%	53%
Are spoiled and do not appreciate what they have	48	49	44	54	51	48
Don’t get enough attention and support from adults	46	45	42	45	47	45
Are bright and eager to learn	32	32	37	40	37	32
Are out of control in public areas such as restaurants and movies	31	30	28	39	34	29
Are lazy and do not apply themselves	30	30	30	38	28	28
Are physically or sexually abused	21	23	21	31	29	21
Are friendly and helpful toward their neighbors	17	17	22	25	19	16
Treat people with respect	12	11	14	20	14	9

1. “Children” were defined for respondents as older than 5 but not yet teenagers.

**TABLE 3: VIEWS ON PARENTS**

“Now I’m going to describe different types of parents and ask if you think they are common or not. How about parents who [INSERT ITEM]? Are they very common, somewhat common, not too common, or not common at all?”

% saying “very common”	General public	Parents	African American parents	Hispanic parents	White parents	Youth (12-17 years old)
Mothers who have to give up time with their kids to work so their families can make ends meet	75%	78%	83%	76%	79%	NA
People who have children before they are ready to take responsibility for them	63	65	72	69	63	41
Parents who break up too easily instead of trying to stay together for the sake of their kids	55	57	56	57	58	31
Parents who sacrifice and work hard so that their kids can have a better life	51	54	65	58	52	50
Parents who do not know how to communicate with their kids	51	52	54	56	51	32
Parents who think buying things for their kids means the same thing as caring for them	50	51	53	52	51	29
Parents who fail to discipline their children	50	50	58	49	50	33
Parents who spoil their kids	49	50	56	46	50	43
Parents who resent advice about their kids even when it comes from people who mean well	43	42	48	44	40	NA
Fathers who act like their careers are more important than their kids	35	35	47	39	33	NA
Parents who care more about their jobs than their kids	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	11
Parents who abuse welfare and teach their kids to depend on handouts	32	31	41	43	29	NA
Mothers who give up time with their kids and go to work to gain personal satisfaction	27	29	32	33	26	NA
People who are failures as parents and should never have had kids to begin with	22	21	31	29	17	12
Fathers who are affectionate and loving toward their kids <sup>1</sup>	22	20	24	20	20	35
Parents who are good role models and teach their kids right from wrong	22	19	32	25	18	39

1. Wording for Youth: “Fathers who are warm and loving toward their kids”

**TABLE 4: PROBLEMS FACING TODAY'S KIDS**

"I'm going to describe different problems and ask if you think each is a serious problem facing today's kids. How about [INSERT ITEM]? Is that problem very serious, somewhat serious, not too serious, or not serious at all for today's kids?"

[If "very" or "somewhat serious":] "Do you think this problem mostly affects kids from lower income families, or is it widespread?"

% saying problem is "very serious"	General public	Parents	African American parents	Hispanic parents	White parents
% saying problem is "widespread" <sup>1</sup>					
Kids abusing drugs or alcohol	71%	69%	79%	83%	67%
Kids abusing drugs or alcohol is widespread	95	95	93	93	95
Kids seeing too much violence or sex on television and in the movies	69	71	76	75	71
Kids seeing too much violence/sex in the media is widespread	96	97	95	95	98
Kids threatened by crime or gangs	62	64	77	77	60
Kids threatened by crime/gangs is widespread	67	70	75	73	71
Kids failing to learn such values as honesty, respect and responsibility	61	63	67	66	62
Kids failing to learn values is widespread	91	91	88	90	92
Welfare programs that encourage single-parent families and teen pregnancy	58	57	66	62	55
Welfare programs encouraging single-parent families/teen pregnancies is widespread	46	47	55	50	46
Public schools that fail to give kids a good education	49	52	60	53	49
Public schools failing to give kids a good education is widespread	76	77	61	71	80
Fewer families teaching their kids religious faith and values	49	50	58	55	48
Fewer families teaching religion/values is widespread	95	95	91	92	95
Kids suffering because of economic pressure on their parents	44	44	60	53	42
Kids suffering from economic pressure on parents is widespread	64	67	64	61	69
Kids lacking the support of strong communities where neighbors care about them	40	44	58	45	41
Kids lacking support from communities is widespread	80	82	74	72	84
Families facing a shortage of government programs that support kids	27	30	47	36	27
Shortage of government programs that support kids is widespread	50	51	43	54	51

1. Percentages saying problems are widespread are based on respondents who identified the problems as either *very* or *somewhat* serious

**TABLE 5: WAYS TO HELP YOUNG PEOPLE**

Now I'll read different ways to help kids and ask how effective you think each would be. Do you think that [INSERT ITEM] would be a very effective way to help kids, somewhat effective, not too effective, or not effective at all?<sup>1</sup>

<b>% saying "very effective"</b>	<b>General public</b>	<b>Parents</b>	<b>African American parents</b>	<b>Hispanic parents</b>	<b>White parents</b>	<b>Youth (12-17 years old)</b>
Improving the quality of the public schools <sup>2</sup>	67%	71%	76%	67%	70%	51%
More programs and activities for kids to do after school in places like community centers	60	60	75	67	57	46
Employers giving parents more flexible work schedules so they can spend more time with their kids	55	57	66	59	58	NA
Nighttime curfews after which kids could not be on the streets without their parents	53	55	63	66	54	30
More involvement by volunteer organizations dedicated to kids, like the Boy Scouts and the YMCA	53	51	61	55	50	NA
Pressuring the entertainment industry to produce movies and music with less violence and sex	49	50	54	58	49	26
Tougher punishment for kids who commit crime	48	51	50	48	52	49
Neighbors spending more time with kids and watching out for them	47	49	59	46	48	33
Increasing the wages and job security of parents	44	46	60	51	44	NA
Holding parents legally responsible when their kids get into trouble	37	35	32	37	37	15
More government funding for child care and health care programs	34	37	56	45	36	NA
Increasing government funding for such welfare programs as AFDC and food stamps	10	8	16	13	8	NA

1. Wording for youth: "Now I'll read different ways to help kids and ask how effective you think each would be."

2. Wording for youth: "Making the public schools better"

**TABLE 6: GENERAL VIEWS OF HELPING**

Now I'll read you statements about helping people. Please tell me how close each come to your own view. [INSERT STATEMENT.] Is that very close, somewhat close, not too close or not close at all to your view?

<b>% saying "very close"</b>	<b>General public</b>	<b>Parents</b>	<b>African American parents</b>	<b>Hispanic parents</b>	<b>White parents</b>	<b>Youth (12-17 years old)</b>
People should help others because it is the right thing to do	75%	75%	76%	65%	76%	70
Someone who gets help should show that he appreciates it	60	60	71	57	60	69
You have to be careful to avoid embarrassing people when you try to help them	56	54	64	53	52	42
People usually help out of the goodness of their hearts	55	53	57	61	53	40
When someone gets help he should reciprocate and return the favor when he can <sup>1</sup>	51	50	54	41	52	56
People who help others are usually appreciated	44	41	52	44	41	NA
You have to be careful because some people will try to take advantage of you when you try to help	37	37	60	43	34	37
Many people help only when they think they can get something in return	24	21	31	22	19	NA
People who spend a lot of time helping others often forget to take care of their own families	17	16	23	23	15	NA
Many people help only when they feel embarrassed or pressured to do so	16	13	20	15	12	NA
People who help often interfere in other people's personal affairs	14	14	17	16	13	NA

1. Wording for youth: "Someone who gets help should return the favor when he can"

**TABLE 7: HELPING – COMFORT LEVEL AND BEHAVIOR**

“Now I’ll describe different ways of trying to help kids and ask which you would feel comfortable doing and which you would feel uncomfortable doing. How about [INSERT ITEM]? Would you feel very comfortable doing that, somewhat comfortable, somewhat uncomfortable, or very uncomfortable?”\*

“Have you done anything like that in the past six months?”

% saying they would be “very comfortable” doing item	% saying “yes” they have done something like item in past six months	General public		Parents		African American parents		Hispanic parents		White parents	
Complimenting a neighbor’s child who has done a good deed or done well in school		85%	70%	89%	78%	89%	76%	81%	71%	89%	79%
Taking some extra time off from work just to do something special with your kids <sup>1</sup>		NA	NA	80	72	81	69	82	69	79	72
Watching a child for a neighbor who has to run an errand		71	52	79	70	74	65	73	65	79	69
Taking a child to a ball game or a show <sup>2</sup>		62	43	71	60	75	54	69	60	71	60
Helping out a neighbor who is a new mother with a baby		56	29	66	37	70	43	64	39	66	35
Having a serious discussion with a teenager who is not your own about a problem they are having		52	46	56	52	69	61	52	45	54	51
Volunteering to be a mentor or to help in some way at a local school		48	24	55	33	61	34	56	29	54	32
Joining a volunteer organization that helps kids <sup>3</sup>		47	23	52	28	63	27	53	17	49	28
Taking some action if you suspect a neighbor is abusing their child		47	10	48	11	59	12	51	11	49	11
Telling kids who are misbehaving in a public area to behave themselves		39	47	44	58	50	60	40	51	44	58
Knocking on a neighbor’s door if you think the family needs help		38	26	40	29	46	32	39	23	40	29
Telling a neighbor that their child had been getting into mischief		33	28	39	39	59	43	37	37	37	38

1. Asked of parents or guardians of children under 18 who live with them

2. Wording for parents/guardians: “Taking a child who is not your own to a ball game or a show”

3. Follow-up question: “Are you now a member of this type of organization?” Chart shows percent saying “yes”

\* Respondents were assured that no one would contact them about doing any of these activities.

**TABLE 8: WAYS TO VOLUNTEER**

Suppose you wanted to do something new to help kids and you were considering different options . . . . What if [INSERT ITEM]? Would that make you more likely to help, less likely, or would it not make much difference? [IF LIKELY: Is that much more likely or somewhat more likely?]\*

<b>% saying "much more likely"</b>	<b>General public</b>	<b>Parents</b>	<b>African American parents</b>	<b>Hispanic parents</b>	<b>White parents</b>
You could bring kids along to an activity you already do with your own children <sup>1</sup>	NA%	50%	56%	57%	48%
You could help occasionally, whenever you found extra time, instead of making a regular commitment	47	49	51	52	49
You could take kids to something you enjoyed, like a hobby or a sports event	45	49	58	55	48
You could develop a special bond with one child	37	41	46	43	39
Your close friends were already involved	34	35	35	43	36
You could meet new friends while helping kids	32	34	44	41	32
The kids you were helping came from an inner-city neighborhood	14	13	22	20	10
You could donate your time to a kids' organization without dealing with the kids themselves	12	11	18	21	9

1. Asked of parents or guardians of children under 18 who live with them.

\* Respondents were assured that no one would contact them about doing any of these activities.

**TABLE 9: THE VIEWS OF YOUNG PEOPLE**

“Now I’ll ask you how close each of the following statements comes to how you feel. [INSERT STATEMENT.] Is that very close, somewhat close, not too close or not close at all to your view?”

<b>% saying “very close”</b>	<b>Youth (12-17 years old)</b>
I can always trust my parents to be there for me when I need them	81%
If I ever need to talk to an adult, there is someone other than my parents I can go to	70
Faith in God is an important part of my life	66
I can always trust my friends to be there for me when I need them	62
I am usually happy	61
I am good at helping other kids with their problems	48
Many of the adults in my neighborhood know me by name	46
My parents would be very upset if they knew some of the things my friends have done	40
My parents sometimes press me to stay home in the evening because they think it’s not safe out there	30
When my friends and I are in stores or at the mall, we often get suspicious looks, as if we’re up to no good	25
My parents don’t really understand the problems I face	24
I avoid certain areas in my neighborhood just to be safe	24
I enjoy spending time with people who are in their 60s or older	21

**TABLE 10: YOUNG PEOPLE'S EXPERIENCES**

Now I'm going to describe some things and ask how often you experience them. How often do you [INSERT STATEMENT]? Every day, almost every day, sometimes, almost never, or never?

<b>% saying "every day" or "almost every day"</b>	<b>Youth (12-17 years old)</b>
Get a hug or kiss from your parents	68%
Get a compliment or encouraging words from adults	65
Come across teachers who really care about their students	60
Get help or advice from your parents with homework or school projects	51
See people your age using drugs or alcohol	41
Feel bored	39
Come across adults who have a hard time dealing with people your age	34
Come across people who try to put you down	30
Get excited by something you study in school	26
Wish you had more good friends	26
Cut corners when it comes to schoolwork	24
Feel tense or nervous about your day	24
Come across gangs	22
Get into an argument with your parents	22
Come across people who try to intimidate or bully you	18
Worry about how well your parents are getting along	18
Worry about having enough food or a place to sleep	5
Get into a physical fight with other people your age	4

**TABLE 11: COMFORT LEVEL AND BEHAVIOR OF YOUNG PEOPLE**

“Now I’ll describe different ways of helping and ask which you feel comfortable doing and which you would feel uncomfortable doing....How about [INSERT ITEM]? Would you feel very comfortable, somewhat comfortable, somewhat uncomfortable, or very uncomfortable doing that?”\*

“Have you done anything like that in the past six months?”

% saying “very comfortable”	% saying “yes,” they have done something like item in the past six months	Youth (12-17 years old)	
Running an errand for a neighbor who needed help		67%	51%
Watching a younger child for a neighbor as a favor, without getting paid		59	60
Doing volunteer work once a week at a place like a hospital or church		55	37
Helping to feed poor or homeless people at a place like a soup kitchen		51	24
Volunteering to tutor kids at school		47	37
Spending time once a week with very old people who need company		44	41

\* Respondents were assured that no one would contact them about doing any of these activities.

1. Princeton Survey Research Associates (sponsored by *Newsweek* and NBC News). National telephone survey of 656 adults, conducted April, 1997. "Which of the following is a bigger threat to the United States...foreign nations working against us, or young Americans without education, job prospects or connections to mainstream American life?" Foreign nations, 18%; Young Americans, 74%; Don't know, 8%.

2. For example, Princeton Survey Research Associates has conducted many surveys that include questions on attitudes toward teenagers, including the Family Circle Family Index Project, for *Family Circle* magazine in June, 1993 and *Speaking of Kids—A National Survey of Children and Parents* (June 1991), conducted for the National Commission on Children.

3. After hitting a low of 27% in 1992, the percentage of high school seniors who have used any illicit drug in the past 12 months has increased each year, reaching 40% in 1996. Source: National Institute on Drug Abuse, Monitoring the Future Study, 1996.

The suicide rate for people ages 15 to 19 increased from 5.9 per 100,000 in 1970 to 10.8 per 100,000 in 1990. More recent data shows that for people ages 15 to 24 the suicide rate increased from an estimated rate of 12.9 per 100,000 in 1992 to 14.9 per 100,000 in 1994. Source: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, *Trends in the Well-Being of America's Children and Youth: 1996*, p. 88

In 1994, 21.2% of children under 18 lived in poverty. Source: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, *Youth Indicators, 1996*, p. 54.

In 1994, 30% of children lived with either one parent (27%) or no parent (3%). Source: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, *Trends in the Well-Being of America's Children and Youth: 1996*, p. 21.

Forty-eight percent of public school students say "too much drugs and violence in school" is a serious problem, and 68% identify cheating on tests and assignments as a serious problem. Source: *Getting By: What American Teenagers Really Think About Their Schools*, Public Agenda, 1997, p. 42.

4. Hart and Teeter Research Companies (sponsored by NBC News and the *Wall Street Journal*). National telephone survey of 2,003 adults, conducted December, 1996. Fifty-one percent agreed with the statement "Most serious problems in our society stem mainly from a decline in moral values, 37% agreed

with the statement "Most serious problems in our society stem mainly from economic and financial pressure on the family." Eleven percent volunteered that they agreed with both statements and 1% were not sure which statement was closer to their view.

5. John Locke, *An Essay Concerning Human Understanding*, (ed. Peter H. Nidditch). Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1975.

6. See: *First Things First: What Americans Expect from the Public Schools*, Public Agenda, 1994; and *Getting By*, p.42.

7. For example, see *Great Expectations: How American Voters View Children's Issues* (published by the Coalition for America's Children, 1997) and the National Opinion Research Center's General Social Survey 1990 for many survey questions on support for proposals and programs that benefit children, such as nutrition programs, pre-school programs, health care, and child care.

8. *The Values We Live By: What Americans Want from Welfare Reform*, Public Agenda, 1996.

9. See: *First Things First and Assignment Incomplete: The Unfinished Business of Education Reform*, Public Agenda, 1995, p. 43.

10. See Public Agenda's three statewide studies on attitudes toward crime and sentencing: *Punishing Criminals: The Public's View, An Alabama Survey* (1989); *Punishing Criminals: The People of Delaware Consider the Options* (1991); and *Punishing Criminals: Pennsylvanians Consider the Options* (1993).

11. *The Values We Live By*, p. 18.

12. For example, of those earning \$15,000 or less per year, 60% of black parents, 53% of Hispanic parents, and 52% of white parents think that more government funding for children and health care programs would be a very effective way to help kids. For those earning \$25,001 to \$40,000 per year, 61% of black parents, 48% of Hispanic parents and 37% of white parents say the same.

13. For example, of those earning \$15,000 or less per year, 62% of black parents, 59% of Hispanic parents, and 52% of white parents think increasing the wages and job security of parents would be a very effective way to help kids. For those earning \$25,001 to \$40,000 per year, 63% of black parents, 51% of Hispanic parents and 43% of white parents say the same.

*Kids These Days: What Americans Really Think About The Next Generation* is based on two telephone surveys within the continental United States. The first is a survey of 2,000 adults aged 18 years or older, plus oversamples of 300 African American and 300 Hispanic parents. The second is a survey of 600 young people aged 12 to 17 years old. In addition, six focus groups were conducted in sites across the country, as well as dozens of in-depth, follow-up telephone interviews with adults who had completed the survey.

### **The Survey Of Adults**

Two-thousand telephone interviews with adult members of the general public were conducted between December 3 and December 18, 1996. The interviews averaged approximately 39 minutes in length. The interviews were conducted using a random sample of households and a standard, random-digit-dialing technique whereby every household in the region covered had an equal chance of being contacted, including those with unlisted numbers. The margin of error for the 2,000 members of the general public is plus or minus two percentage points; the margin of error is higher when comparing percentages across subgroups.

In addition to the national random sample interviews, oversample interviews were conducted with 300 African American and 300 Hispanic parents of children under the age of 18 living at home. When the study reports results about African American and Hispanic parents, it pools the oversampled parents with those appearing “naturally” in the national sample, netting 367 African American parents and 348 Hispanic parents.

### **The Survey Of Young People**

Six-hundred telephone interviews with young people aged 12 to 17 years old were conducted between December 3 and December 18, 1996. The interviews averaged approximately 23 minutes in length. Similar to the adult sample, the interviews were conducted using a random sample of households and a standard, random-digit-dialing technique whereby every household in the region covered had an equal chance of being contacted, including those with unlisted numbers. The margin of error for the 600 young people is plus or minus four percentage points.

Interviewers were instructed to provide details about the purpose and content of the study, and to encourage parents to contact Public Agenda if they wished to know more about the survey their child had participated in.

### **The Questionnaires**

The questionnaires were designed by Public Agenda, and all interpretation of data reflected in this report was done by Public Agenda. As in all surveys, question order effects and other non-sampling sources of error can sometimes affect results. Steps were taken to minimize these, including extensively pre-testing the survey instruments and randomizing the order in which some questions were asked.

Western Watts supplied the sample. Interviews were conducted by Robinson and Muenster Associates, Inc. of Sioux Falls, South Dakota.

### **The Focus Groups**

Focus groups allow for an in-depth, qualitative exploration of the dynamics underlying the public's attitudes toward complex issues. Insights from these groups were important to the survey design, and quotes were drawn from them to give voice to attitudes captured statistically through the survey interviews.

A total of six focus groups were conducted. Five focus groups took place in May 1996 in three cities: Long Beach, California; Denver, Colorado; and Secaucus, New Jersey. In Long Beach two focus groups were conducted, one with African American parents, and one with teenagers aged 15 to 18 years old. In Denver two focus groups were conducted, one with parents and one with young people aged 12 to 14 years old. In Secaucus, one focus group was conducted with adults who were not parents of school-aged children living at home. One focus group of high school students was conducted in September 1995 in Westchester, New York. In all cases, local professional market research organizations recruited participants to Public Agenda's specifications. All focus groups were moderated by Public Agenda senior staff.

## RELATED PUBLIC AGENDA PUBLICATIONS

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\**Getting By: What American Teenagers Really Think About Their Schools* (1997). Public high school students are the focus of this national telephone survey that examines how teens view their schools, teachers, and the learning process. Includes insights into what students say would motivate them to work harder in school and how they define "good" and "bad" teaching. Special sections on African American and Hispanic students, private high school students, and students from Jefferson County, Kentucky and the San Francisco Bay Area are included. Copies are available from Public Agenda for \$10.00.

*The Troubled American Family: Which Way Out Of The Storm?* (1996). Prepared for the National Issues Forums (NIF), this issues book examines the pressured American family. Three diagnoses of what has gone wrong with the family as well as three courses of public action are explored. NIF consists of locally initiated town meetings and study circles that bring citizens together in over 5,000 communities across the nation for nonpartisan discussions. The publication can be ordered from McGraw-Hill by calling 1-800-338-3987.

A new National Issues Forums book with a focus on children will be available in the fall of 1997. This NIF issues book will focus on the problems today's young people are facing. Three approaches that have wide public support will be explored. The publication will be available for ordering from Kendall/Hunt by calling 1-800-228-0810.

\**The Values We Live By: What Americans Want From Welfare Reform* (1996). This study examines public attitudes toward welfare reform: what bothers Americans about welfare; why they are so frustrated with the current system; what kind of change they are seeking. A special focus on the views of African Americans and residents of New York, Florida, and Illinois is included. Copies are available from Public Agenda for \$10.00.

\**Assignment Incomplete: The Unfinished Business Of Education Reform* (1995). Prepared in collaboration with the Institute for Educational Leadership, this study examines why support for public schools is in jeopardy; why Americans are so concerned with the basics; whether people are really committed to higher standards; and whether they value education in and of itself. This study is based on a telephone survey of 1,200 Americans, including oversamples of parents with children attending public schools and public school teachers, plus a mail survey of leaders in business, education, government, and the media, and focus groups. Copies are available from Public Agenda for \$10.00.

\**First Things First: What Americans Expect From The Public Schools* (1994). Based on an examination of the views of over 1,100 members of the general public, including 550 parents of children currently in public school, this report looks at public attitudes toward values issues in the schools and toward education reform efforts. A special focus on the views of white and African American parents, as well as parents identified as traditional Christians, is included. Copies are available from Public Agenda for \$10.00.

\* Reports marked with an asterisk can be ordered by calling or writing Public Agenda at 6 East 39th Street, New York, NY 10016, tel: 212-686-6610, fax: 212-889-3461. Shipping and handling costs will be applied.

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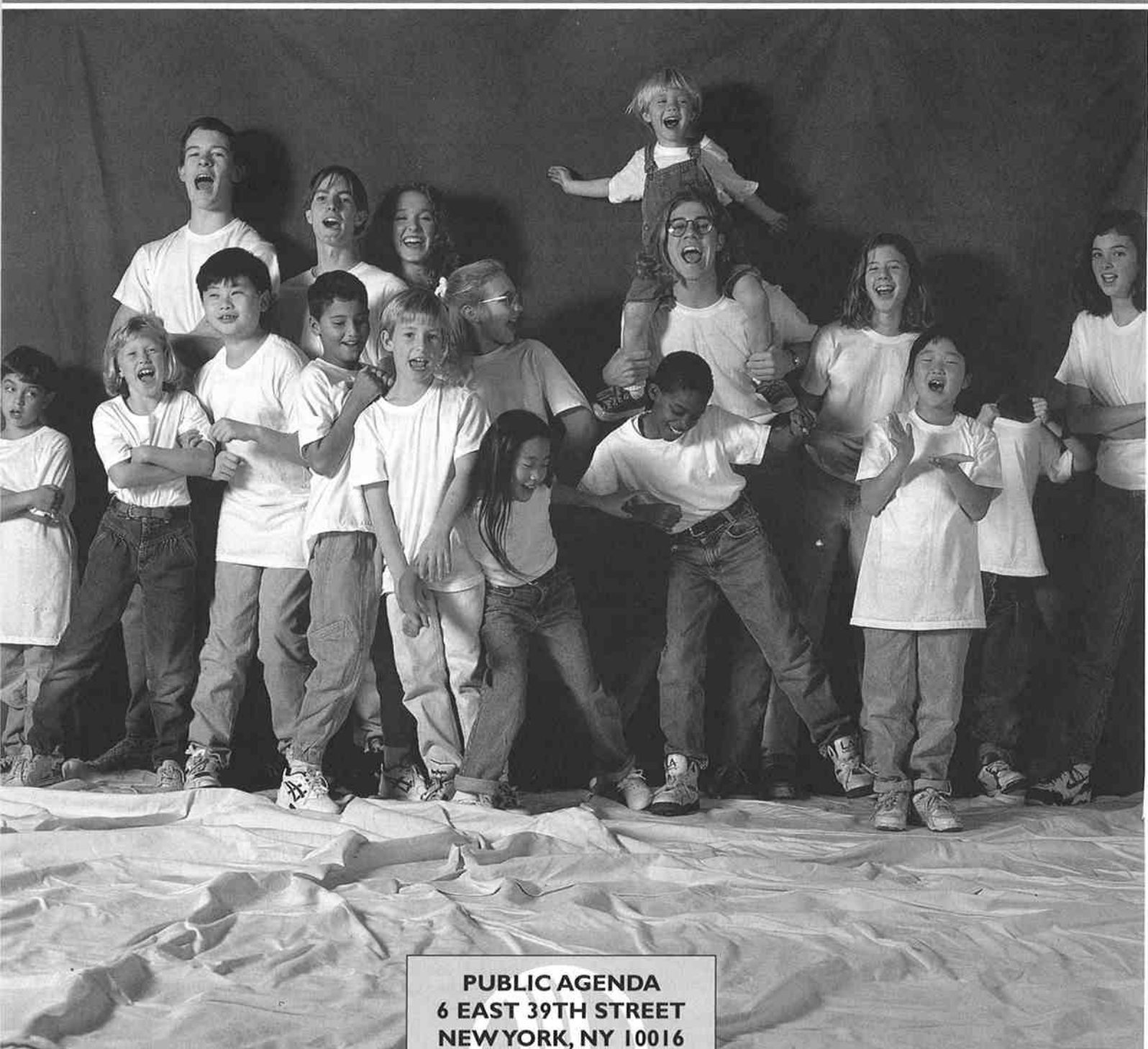
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Price: \$10.00  
ISBN 1-889483-46-X