

## Book Review: Social Work Practice With Children and Families

Contributed by Sandra Fortier

Yuen, F. (Ed.) (2005). *Social Work Practice with Children and Families: A Family Health Approach*. New York: The Hawthorn Social Work Practice Press. 273 pages, \$39.95.

Taking a "family health" approach, this anthology exposes the reader to the wide and varied field of social work practice with children and families. Social work from a "family health" perspective is described by the book's editor as reaching beyond treating physical and mental health to encompass a person's healthy sense of connectedness with the natural and human world. In this sense, family health social work is vast, seemingly all-encompassing, and congruent with social work values. In fact, family health seems to be a reiteration of social work values as described in the NASW Code of Ethics. What is not clear to this reviewer is the distinction between family health social work and social work as a whole. The two seem one in the same.

This book is made up of thirteen chapters, each of which addresses practice with a particular population or macro issue. In a primarily textbook fashion, each chapter outlines the general problem/issue, touches on relevant theories, and provides suggestions for interventions. Moving through micro, meso, and macro practice, the anthology reviews such issues as forensic social work in child sexual abuse cases, bibliotherapy for children of divorce, rural families living with HIV/AIDS, children with disabilities, children's reactions to loss, Mexican migrant and farmworker families, grandparents as parents, lesbian and gay families, child welfare and foster care, homeless women and children, the neighborhood as a resource, and community practice to benefit families.

As a graduate level textbook, *Social Work Practice With Children and Families* provides a wide array of information and exposes readers to the vast field of practice with children and families. Many chapters conclude with case examples, discussion questions, and exercises. Additionally, the integration of particular theories, including theories of human development and learning theories, makes this book useful in the classroom setting. As a text for use by professionals, this book may be helpful to those considering changing their field of practice from social work with other populations to practice with children and families. However, with the exceptions discussed below, the book's breadth and tendency to focus on basic issues in the field make it not as useful to professionals already working with this population.

Two chapters stood out as useful to professionals working with children and families in a variety of settings. Chapter Seven—"Family Health Social Work Practice with Mexican Migrant and Seasonal Farmworking Families" (Barranti, C.) provides a plethora of intriguing information on this neglected and ubiquitous population. Barranti's chapter sheds light on the experiences and needs of the three to five million farmworkers, including 800,000 children, in the United States each year. Barranti's chapter is essential reading for child and family social workers, whether they practice in a health, school, clinical, or community setting. Additionally, Chapter Twelve—"The Neighborhood as a Resource for Family Health Social Work Practice" (Nicotera, N.) provides a fascinating literature review on ways children perceive their neighborhoods, drawing heavily on studies with child participants. Nicotera also offers guidelines for readers to assess neighborhoods themselves, including how to access and use census data, how to gather observable information, and questions for interviewing children about their neighborhoods.

*Social Work Practice With Children and Families* is most useful as a classroom textbook for graduate level study and will provide students with insight into the breadth of child and family social work, as well as much fodder for thoughtful discussions.

Reviewed by Sandra Fortier, a graduate of California State University—Sacramento and licensed social worker in New Mexico.