

Poverty and Child Development: New Perspectives on a Defining Issue

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In the emerging field of child development and social policy, two of the oldest concerns involved (a) how poverty and social deprivation influences children's development and (b) how programs and policies can ameliorate the effects of poverty on children's development. Indeed, it could be argued that these twin concerns were defining features of the birth of the field. Edward F. Zigler has labored mightily to address these concerns, from his early efforts to understand the role of poverty in the development of what was then called *cultural-familial retardation*; to his efforts to design, implement, protect, and reform Head Start; to more recent efforts to improve early care and education and elementary schooling for children from low-income families and communities. In this chapter, as former students of Ed's who were mentored by him at three different periods over nearly a 30-year span, we describe some of the changes in the scientific and theoretical understanding of the effects of poverty on child development over the last 4 decades. In addition, we describe the evolution of program and policy efforts to protect children from the negative effects of poverty, paying particular attention to whether and how evolution in practice and policy was influenced by developments in theory and research.

Where possible, we draw on Zigler's own work to support this examination. But we also extend the examination beyond his work to include critical developments in the field as a whole. Finally, we discuss the implications of these major developments over the last 40 years for future research, practice, and policy concerning poverty and child development.

We begin with a brief overview of the changing definitions and understanding of poverty and social deprivation over the last several decades. We then turn to a complementary overview of changing conceptions and basic theories of the influence of poverty on child development. We conclude by discussing the implications of these changes in theories and research for the evolution of programs and policies on behalf of low-income children and their families.

Changing Definitions of Poverty and Social Deprivation: 1960 to 2000

Despite current knowledge of the pernicious and multiple negative impacts of poverty on the development of children and youth (e.g., Aber, Jones, & Cohen, 2000; Gershoff, Aber, & Raver, 2002; McLoyd, 1998), poverty as a construct remains difficult to define. This is a problem because, as Zigler taught each of us, it is very difficult to rigorously study what you cannot clearly define. Indeed, various definitions of poverty have been used in both research studies and public policy analyses over the last several decades. In this section we aim to clarify distinctions among these multiple definitions.

The measurement of income poverty in the United States is based on an absolute measure, the *federal poverty threshold* (FPT), developed in 1963 by the Department of Agriculture. The FPT roughly determines poverty to represent any level of sustenance below the cost of the Department of Agriculture's economy food plan times a factor of three. The economy food plan equals the least expensive budget a household could devote to food and still receive adequate nutrition (Orshansky, 1963). The value of the economy food plan was multiplied by three because studies showed that food represented about one third of an average family's household expense at the time. Thresholds are adjusted annually in concurrence with the Consumer Price Index (Fisher, 1992). For the year 2004, the federal poverty guidelines (a simplification of the FPT used for administrative purposes, such as determining assistance eligibility) define the poverty line for a family of four at the income level of \$19,157 (U.S. Census Bureau, 2004).

Although this definition of poverty is used in scores of programs and research studies, its limitations have been well documented. For example, since its development, it has not been adjusted for the decline in the proportion of families' total income devoted to food expenditures. Moreover, adjustments are not made for real differences in the cost of living in different geographic areas, and the standard definition ignores the increasing tax burden experienced by many lower income families (Citro & Michael, 1995; Edin & Lein, 1997). Using such a fixed-ratio definition does not allow other material costs to rise more rapidly than food (e.g., housing costs), nor does it account for other basic necessities such as transportation and child care. In addition, the FPT operates at an individual or family level and therefore cannot address larger contributing factors such as regional unemployment, job loss, or broader economic downturn (Aber et al., 2000; Gershoff et al., 2002).

Another limitation is that many programs and studies tend to use the FPT as a simple cutoff to identify the poor and nonpoor, despite the fact that it is broadly understood that the negative impact of poverty is not limited to those children living below 100% of the federal poverty threshold. Empirical studies document that living near the poverty threshold (variously defined as income between 100% and 185% or income below 200% of the federal poverty line) has also been linked to poor outcomes for children (e.g., Bolger, Patterson, Thompson, & Kupersmidt, 1995). Thus, any estimates of poverty's impact that fail to include children living near the poverty threshold are likely to grossly underestimate the

scope of the problem. Indeed, recent estimates indicate that 45% of kindergarten-age children live in or near poverty (Gershoff, 2003).

Two alternative concepts and measures of income poverty are those of relative poverty and subjective poverty. *Relative poverty* is defined as a gross family income that falls below a certain percentage of a jurisdiction's median income (usually 40%–50% of the national median income). As is clear, in contrast to absolute definitions of poverty, relative poverty is determined contextually, and is contingent on the assessment of the income of a particular individual relative to the income of the population. The rationale behind the use of a relative poverty threshold is that what is considered an acceptable standard of living changes with time and that families whose resources are significantly below other members of their society will be unable to participate fully in that society. *Subjective poverty* is defined as the average answer to the following question, "What is the minimum income required for a family [of four] to just barely get by in your community?" Subjective definitions of poverty allows estimates of the degree to which families perceive and are adversely affected by financial hardship, such as the degree to which families are able to purchase sufficient food, clothing, or shelter. In addition, the manner in which poverty is measured, by whatever definition, is critical to understanding its effects on children and families.

Persistence of Poverty and Income Dynamics

Differential outcomes for children living in persistent poverty in contrast to transitory poverty are well established (Duncan & Brooks-Gunn, 2000). Families living in persistent poverty have limited access to viable social and economic opportunities. In contrast, transitory poverty is primarily marked by fluctuations in income, which may result in breaks in access to social services. Overall, families living in persistent poverty are more susceptible to negative psychological, emotional, and physical outcomes. However, considerable controversy still exists over whether it is persistent poverty per se or other factors associated with persistent poverty that are the causal factors leading to negative outcomes (Mayer, 1997).

Socioeconomic Status and Poverty

There has been considerable debate regarding the use of socioeconomic status (SES) as a proxy for family income level. Different means of calculating SES as well as the use of different variables to represent SES produce different findings. Thus, the distinction between SES and poverty is critical. As noted by Bradley and Whiteside-Mansell (1997), "the co-occurrence of an undereducated mother or a father employed in an occupation of low status adds to, but does not replace the impact of inadequate economic resources" (p. 17). Hauser (1994) proposed a set of guidelines when measuring SES in studies of child development. He suggested that the measurement of SES can be improved by ascertaining the occupation (and industry) held by one or both parents, levels of parental education, and residential mobility.

Poverty and Co-Occurring Demographic Risks

A considerable amount of research has described the co-occurrence of poverty and multiple familial and ecological risk factors, such as teen and single parenthood, negative life events, violence exposure, marital distress, and parent psychopathology (e.g., Aber et al., 2000). Some have argued that poverty's deleterious impact on child development may be due in part to exposure to these family and ecological risks, which, both individually and in combination, have been associated with negative outcomes for children and youth (e.g., Sameroff, Bartko, Baldwin, Baldwin, & Seifer, 1998).

More recently, psychological research has begun to identify measures of socioeconomic status that assess psychological aspects of poverty, rather than relying solely on external or distal conceptualizations of poverty. In particular, the notion of social exclusion has received increased attention of late. *Social exclusion* refers to the notion that children who face economic insecurity at varying degrees of severity are not only "poor" but also are excluded from situations and activities that are considered to be a normal or desirable part of life (Aber, Gershoff, & Brooks-Gunn, 2002).

When poverty is operationalized in multiple ways, at both proximal and distal contextual levels, and within and across time, it allows for the consideration of poverty as a pervasive life experience that exists and influences children and families in multiple ways and at multiple levels of their own ecologies. As such, *developmental contextual models* (e.g., Bronfenbrenner, 1979), which recognize and incorporate the importance of contextual effects for both healthy and psychopathological development, are particularly useful for poverty researchers. Such an ecological approach allows for the identification of multiple contexts important to development, and can encompass both objective and subjective dimensions (Bronfenbrenner & Morris, 1998). Directing attention to the immediate as well as larger social context allows researchers to consider the variety of factors that compose socioeconomic status as well as to understand how one's position in a socially stratified system affects the everyday life of children and families. This, in turn, facilitates investigations into the mechanisms through which poverty in its multiple contexts impacts developmental outcomes.

The last several decades have witnessed an increase in the sophistication and complexity with which researchers are defining *poverty* for use in studies of child development. What is particularly important about these changes is that the definitions and operationalizations of poverty are beginning to synchronize with the complexity and depth of current theoretical understandings of child development in context. We now turn to a complementary overview of changing conceptions and basic theories of the influence of poverty on child development.

The Evolution of Science and Theory in the Development of Poor Children

Each of us has had the privilege of knowing Ed as an advisor, inspiring us with his patience, compassion, and commitment to improving developmental out-

comes for poor children across a span of more than 40 years. But what inspires Ed? In 1958, Zigler completed his dissertation research on the social potential of "feble-minded" children who had been institutionalized. Specifically, Ed examined the impact of providing positive feedback in the forms of verbal and nonverbal support to 60 children as they completed a simple, monotonous marble game. In his published dissertation research (Zigler, 1961) he reported in scholarly fashion that these children, because of their institutionalization and extensive social deprivation of supportive and loving contact with adults, played for longer periods of time than did children with less deprived histories. That is, his research participants could not have cared less about getting an experimenter's task "right," for these children, Ed's marble task was an opportunity to engage, even if repetitively, with a new person who would share time and attention with them. But look more closely, through the scientific and technical language that can distance us so well from the lived experience of real children. What do we see? The heartbreaking image of Ed as a young graduate student, testing each of those 60 children in what was probably a quite desolate institutional context, with children willing to persevere on a completely boring task just to spend time sitting with him, receiving his encouragement and interest. Knowing Ed, what choice could he have had, as he turned and walked away from those institutions at the end of the day, but to commit with unending perseverance to the challenge of improving children's lives?

1960s

Zigler's work on removing obstacles to children's social and cognitive potential in the context of "social deprivation" was exactly the kind of work that policymakers needed as they launched the national Head Start program in 1965 with 500,000 children and families as part of the War on Poverty. A number of historians have argued that the history of federal assistance to poor Americans "left behind" in the wake of post-World War II prosperity has fundamentally been a struggle between those who see poverty as a consequence of individual flaws and deficits and those who see poverty as resulting from the state's inadequacies in protecting its citizens from market exploitation (Katz, 1996; O'Connor, 2002). Strands of that debate recurred throughout the last 4 decades of research on children and poverty.

What led to the policy choice in the War on Poverty to invest in a package of human capital investments in poor children's and adults' skills rather than in a plan of income redistribution or private market reforms that might have been equally plausible solutions to the problem of postwar poverty and income inequality? O'Connor (2002) and others argued that central to this choice during the 1960s was the increased visibility of social and behavioral sciences in the government's and public's eyes, and the inclination of the science of the time to focus on individual and cultural, noneconomic factors related to families' material hardship. Specifically, work by anthropologists such as Lewis (1966) and social psychologists such as McClelland (e.g., McClelland, Atkinson, Clark, & Lowell, 1953) emphasized that the skills, beliefs, and motivations of poor adults and their children were intertwined with, if not responsible for, the perpetua-

tion of poverty. Although this obscured social structural class stratification explanations for poverty, it was also reflective of a remarkable sense of optimism: that children born into families in the lowest socioeconomic stratum were not barred by constitutional or social barriers from moving up.

What were the intellectual anchors in research on poor children's development that would have led the architects of Head Start to take such a stance? Within the field of child development generally, the first intellectual anchor was that children's futures (such as their likelihood of above-poverty earnings as adults) relied on some set of skills or abilities that were internal to the child and that demonstrated some degree of continuity over time (Jones & Zigler, 2002). Research by Hunt (1961) and B. S. Bloom (1964) suggested that cognitive skills were plastic and amenable to intervention early in life but became increasingly resistant to change over time. Thus, early childhood represented a critical period in which to intervene.

And what were our views of the development of poor children at that time? Head Start teachers were to serve as providers of cognitive stimulation and motivational support, in addition to ensuring children's health, social, emotional, and nutritional needs were being met (Zigler & Muenchow, 1992). Lewis (1966) set the stage for a focus on motivation by discussing the intense level of apathy and demoralization that poor adults felt in conditions of chronic material hardship. This depiction was consistently translated into a sense of hopelessness and despair on the part of children as well. Work by Harlow and Harlow (1965), Spitz (1945), and Bowlby (1969) underscored the costs of the absence of a nurturing and supportive adult caregiver in infants' lives. These investigators also offered the promise that dysfunction resulting from deprivation could be reversed, providing policymakers and the public with the kinds of metaphors that undergirded support for the role that Head Start teachers might be able to play in offering opportunities for "culturally deprived" children to build a sense of "effectance motivation" and mastery in formal learning environments (White, 1959). In light of nativist views of poor children's intellectual inferiority and a strong social psychological emphasis on motivation as a chief behavioral drive that leads to individual success, it is easy to see ways that well-intentioned policymakers might reach for a solution that included stimulating young children's curiosity as well as teaching them the basics of early schooling.

Zigler was among the first to suggest that public and policymaker expectations for Head Start were falsely inflated and that cognitive skills should not represent the only targeted outcome for poor children (Zigler, 1970). When reading today his works from the first 20 years of Head Start's implementation, it is clear that the field simply had not caught up with the depth or comprehensiveness of his insight into children's well-being and potential. In an *American Psychologist* article published in 1978 (Zigler & Trickett, 1978), for example, Zigler lays out clear, compelling quantitative evidence for ways that children's performance on standardized IQ tests is not wholly reliant on nor reflective of their potential. Zigler changed the policy environment and the field of scholarship by refuting the notion of "cognitive defect" as the key difficulty faced by a "culturally deprived" child, demanding that more complex models of childhood and poverty be considered (Zigler & Butterfield, 1968). Zigler gives the case example of a child who replies "I don't know" to a teacher's question of "What is your name?":

Something is wrong with this child, but it is not a cognitive defect. He is defective in the sense that he is interacting with the teacher in a way that is self-defeating to the child. His psychological stance, his orientation, is overly cautious to the extent that it takes him out of the mainstream of an educational system as it is typically structured. If the teacher wishes to help, the answer is not careful teaching of the child's own name, but giving him those experiences that will lead to his interacting with a strange adult in a trusting way. (Zigler, 1970, p. 408)

Zigler's early concerns both anticipated and were informed by early evaluation results. Generally dismal findings on the fade-out effects of Head Start on IQ gains were bad news to a model in which children were to be able to escape poverty simply by improving their human capital and cognitive potential in preschool (e.g., McKey et al., 1985).

1970s

When the simpler models of the influence of poverty and deprivation on children's development dominant in the 1960s failed to explain the emerging data, developmental psychologists began to offer a more complex portrait of poverty and child development in the early 1970s by considering children's experiences along a continuum of risk and resilience. For example, Elder (1974) studied child well-being in the context of large and unexpected income loss during the Great Depression. This work pushed psychologists and policymakers to recognize both the considerable variability in poor children's outcomes and the extent to which poverty was itself likely to be a result of exogenous economic forces as much as a result of personal failing on the part of the poor. Work by Bronfenbrenner in 1979 was central in locating children's experiences within the multiple ecologies of family, neighborhood, and formal institutions such as school. This ecological framework drew explicit attention to structural forces that might cause changes in interpersonal relations, family relationships, and dyadic interactions.

Although some developmentalists considered poor children's well-being in the context of exo- and macrosystems, other developmentalists considered the extensive biologic and neurologic risks that low-income infants were likely to face and also argued for complex, transactional models to predict prospects for positive versus negative developmental outcomes. Sameroff and Chandler's (1975) work was critical in convincing both social scientists and policymakers of the importance of considering biologic and environmental risks along a continuum, where neither anoxia nor low birth weight were guaranteed predictors of children's lower cognitive skill, nor was competent caregiving always a protective factor. The work of Belsky (1984) and Cicchetti and colleagues (e.g., Cicchetti & Rizley, 1981), focusing both on genetic and environmental sources of vulnerability, generated significant theoretical contributions in making clear that developmental processes were ongoing, complex, and transactional. Attachment research, research on parent-infant interaction, and research on cognitive stimulation continued to stress the primacy of parenting as the mediating nexus through which intervention and prevention efforts would likely offer the greatest prospects for success (e.g., Sroufe & Fleeson, 1986).

1980s

One important implication of this new decade of research was that policymakers increasingly recognized the need for much more intensive prevention efforts initiated earlier in children's lives, including efforts to support parents as the most proximal influences on children's development. Home visiting programs received more attention and funding at both the federal and state levels (Behrman, 1999). A number of intensive parenting and infancy-focused interventions (e.g., the Abecedarian Project and the Infant Health and Development Project) were implemented in multiple contexts such as child-care centers and homes to increase children's chances of success both in the context of biologic risk posed by low birth weight and environmental risk posed by cumulative disadvantage (Bennett, 1987; Ramey et al., 1990).

In the 1980s, developmental psychologists focused more clearly on parenting as a dynamic process, with wide variance among low-income families and more critically, with the possibility that parenting styles could change (for better and for worse) over time with rising and falling family fortunes. Perhaps most important to theory, conceptual lenses shifted to integrate both individual and structural factors that might seriously impede children's development in studies of multiple, cumulative disadvantage or risk (Rutter, 1987; Sameroff, Seifer, Barocas, Zax, & Greenspan, 1987). These studies offered evidence suggesting that it was no single characteristic (e.g., parental psychopathology, family structure, low income) but rather the accumulation of multiple stressors that place children's optimal development in jeopardy.

Again, rereading this literature today reveals the ways that our earliest theoretical models were pejorative in focusing only on negative outcomes among poor families. The field experienced an increasing emphasis on the construct of resilience in long-term, longitudinal studies that followed research participants from infancy to adulthood, such as Werner and Smith's (1982) study of infants followed into adulthood in Hawaii and Rutter's (1987) research on the children of women who had severe psychiatric histories.

Perhaps most important to policy was the new emphasis in the latter half of the 1980s on the role of earned income and the impact of income loss in families' lives. This model was proposed with newly introduced path analytic methods, clearer conceptualization of multivariate models in terms of mediation and moderation (Baron & Kenny, 1986), and new correlational data suggesting that sudden drops in income were associated with significant decrements in parenting skills and child functioning (e.g., Conger, Ge, Elder, Lorenz, & Simmons, 1994). McLoyd's critical (1990) paper marked a turning point in our discussion of the negative sequelae of child poverty as a function of parental unemployment or underemployment rather than as a function of cultural or familial dysfunction. This research focus on income loss paralleled a policy focus in welfare reform on increasing family income through low-income women's attachment to the labor force and through earnings. In addition, some psychologists recognized that the "other America" was being driven farther and farther into material hardship in the Reagan era, as the disparity between affluent Americans and poor Americans grew; as financing for public goods available to low-income families, children, and communities were cut; and as means-tested transfers were reduced (Strawn, 1992).

Investigators also began to measure the costs of poverty in material as well as psychological terms by assessing the children's home environments and childcare environments in careful detail. Designed and implemented in 1984, Bradley and Caldwell's HOME observer assessment was integrated into large scale survey research such as the National Longitudinal Study of Youth and the Panel Study of Income Dynamics, offering a common metric with which to identify the costs of economic hardship in terms of poor children's constrained educational opportunities. Some investigators were concerned that the HOME measure promoted a deficit-oriented perspective toward poor families and failed to assess other forms of human and cultural capital that might be more frequently provided in ethnic minority, low-income households. Despite these limitations, the Bradley and Caldwell (1984) measure provided a key means of measuring environments as well as children, offering a way for the field to distance itself empirically from nativist views of the intractability of poor children's average lower performance on standardized tests (e.g., Scarr, 1981).

Similarly, large-scale survey research of child-care quality began to document the serious inadequacy of out-of-home care received by low-income children in terms of safety, staffing, and cognitive stimulation. Early findings from the first wave of randomized early childhood interventions such as the Perry Preschool Project (Berrueta-Clement, Schweinhart, Barnett, Epstein, & Weikart, 1984), the Abecedarian Project (Ramey & Campbell, 1984), and demonstration home visiting programs such as Olds' Elmira nurse visiting program (Olds et al., 1998) made clear that with sufficient economic investment in poor children's early care and education, children's health, cognitive performance, and social outcomes improved.

Whereas some investigators focused on economic context, others placed the lens of scholarly critique and innovation squarely on cultural context, emphasizing the extent to which ethnic minority family practices, values, and beliefs represented sources of strength as well as potential conduits for alienation, with strong critique of the long tradition of focusing on ethnic and cultural difference as a source of deficit (e.g., Ogbu, 1985). Psychologists called themselves and the field to task for the implicit racism of past models and instituted stronger editorial and funding requirements to guard against the exclusion of ethnic and racial minority families from basic research, and to avoid the inclusion of racial stereotypes from published research (National Institutes of Health, 1994).

1990s

The pathbreaking April 1994 *Child Development* issue on children and poverty, now over 10 years old, highlighted many of these transitions in the field. Many of the studies published in that volume underscored the value of examining within-group differences among samples of poor, African American, inner-city youth, adults, and children as "necessary to understand why some youth fail, some survive, and some even thrive in high-risk environments" (Connell, Spencer, & Aber, 1994, p. 493). Closer empirical attention to within-group differences was complemented by a number of studies' application of greater statistical sophistication and model complexity in comparing young children's cognitive

functioning and behavioral problems across poor and nonpoor as well as White and non-White groups of children in large-scale survey research (e.g., Duncan, Brooks-Gunn, & Klebanov, 1994). These studies demonstrated that much of the gap in test scores between young White children and young children of color could be accounted for by large disparities in family income, with much larger proportions of families of color experiencing much material hardship for much longer periods of time (Duncan et al., 1994). At the same time, the field offered clearer, more detailed economically grounded conceptualizations of child poverty at individual, family, neighborhood, and state levels (e.g., Aber, 1994). Increasingly, investigators have moved away from the use of the Hollingshead multifactor assessment of socioeconomic status to the use of income-to-needs ratios and to subjective measures of families' experiences of material strain, as well as to more structurally focused conceptualizations of neighborhood poverty (e.g., Brooks-Gunn, Duncan, & Aber, 1997; Wilson, 1987).

The 1990s also saw renewed debate regarding the direction of causal influence when considering models of poverty, income, family functioning, and child well-being. In some ways, it is tempting to view this debate as a resurrection of the old one raised when the War on Poverty was started. Some recent models of family poverty emphasize personal flaws, with income modeled as endogenous to parents' problems and poor choices (Mayer, 1997), whereas other models emphasize ways in which low-income families struggle to remain competent and psychologically healthy despite their exposure to such exogenous shocks as neighborhood violence or income loss (e.g., Morris, Huston, Duncan, Crosby, & Bos, 2001). Indeed, several new studies are striving to test which of these models fit the data emerging from new studies better (e.g., Gershoff, Aber, & Raver, 2002). Some of Zigler's former students are in the thick of these new projects. So there is much to suggest that the debate has shifted and become more complex, largely because of Zigler's intellectual legacy.

Are today's debates similar to or different from those of 40 years ago? First, the debate has shifted to consider income inequality, material hardship, and social exclusion as we search for better means of modeling structural as well as individual socioeconomic factors that may have an adverse impact on child development (e.g., Aber et al., 2002). As a vocal participant in debates regarding poor families' access to institutional supports such as paid family leave upon the birth of a child and high-quality child care, Zigler has consistently highlighted the gaps between services offered for affluent families versus those services available to poor families. In short, by emphasizing developmental processes and child-focused policy from both universal and targeted perspectives, Zigler has consistently asked us to examine the ways in which institutional supports for families can and should be more equitably distributed.

Second, Ed has impressed each of us repeatedly with the need to maximize our understanding of individual differences within groups. His commitment to understanding the developmental trajectories that support positive outcomes among families and children facing the highest levels of psychosocial, behavioral, or neurological risk has remained constant and sterling throughout his and our careers. Ed has counseled us to be patient, careful, and thorough when analyzing the problems of poor families. There is no one community of poor, no one community of advantaged, and Ed has supported

each of us in examining rather than turning away from that diverse, complicated story.

Third, Ed's legacy is clear in that, in the face of conflicting findings suggesting that individual characteristics versus societal inequities are responsible for low family income, he expects us to forge ahead rather than to falter. If evidence were to mount on both sides of the poverty debate, Ed would (and does) expect us to come up with policy solutions for both individual obstacles and for societal disadvantages that young children face. Given such findings, how will we transcend ideological fights and press on with the work that needs to be done? What policy would represent an effective solution and an effective test? In short, Ed would not be satisfied with the simpler solution of antipoverty critique, but he has consistently demanded that we move antipoverty action forward with good antipoverty science.

The Evolution and Evaluation of Program and Policy Initiatives

As definitions, theories, and research unfolded over the last 40 years, antipoverty programs and policies also underwent change. The modern history of efforts in the United States to address the problems faced by poor families is rooted in a much larger history, is enormously complex, and is fraught with wide ideological differences in the perspectives that various scholars have brought to their analyses. For example, contrast the perspectives of Murray, Mead, and Himmelfarb on the right (who believe that the basic causes of poverty reside in the character of individuals or the cultures of families and communities), with Katz, Skocpol, and O'Connor on the left (who attribute the basic causes to the structure of modern societies and economies, or to some combination of all of the above).

This chapter is not the place (nor are we the right authors) to offer a careful historical analysis of the multiple and competing foci affecting the evolution of antipoverty programs and policies over the last half of the 20th century. But it is the right place to sketch for the reader something of the content and nature of changes in antipoverty programs and policies over the period of time Zigler has been working on behalf of poor children and their families.

Table 9.1 summarizes some of the more significant antipoverty program and policy initiatives of the last 5 decades at the federal government level. We have organized the entries both by time (from the 1960s to the first decade of the 21st century) and by focus (i.e., Does the program or policy focus primarily on poor children, their poor parents, or their poor schools or communities?). It is interesting to note that well in advance of having a formal ecological theory of human development (Bronfenbrenner, 1979), the pragmatism of program and policy appears to have driven the field to adopt an implicit ecological perspective, generating strategies that addressed all four foci.

In the 1960s, as part of Lyndon Johnson's War on Poverty, Head Start was created to close the huge gap between poor and middle-income families in their young children's readiness for school. The Elementary and Secondary Education Act (1965) was enacted to provide additional resources to serve poor chil-

Table 9.1. Prototypical Program and Policy Initiatives on Behalf of Low-Income Children, Families, and Communities: 1960-2000

Decade	Child focused	Adult focused	School focused	Community focused
1960s	Head Start	Office of Economic Opportunity	Elementary Secondary Education Act (1965)	Model Cities
1970s	Follow Through	Comprehensive Employment and Training Act (1973)	Community schools movement	Community development corporations
1980s	Comprehensive Child Development Program	Family Support Act (1988)	Education for All Handicapped Children Act (1975)	Comprehensive Community Initiatives for Children, Youth, and Families
1990s	Early Head Start	Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act (1996)	Whole-school and standards-based reforms	Empowerment zones and enterprise communities

dren (in poor schools), the Model Cities initiative was launched to combat the housing problems of the poor, and the Office of Economic Opportunity was charged with orchestrating much of the War. Although the content of these issues look quite moderate by today's standards, the 1960s is remembered as the decade of the birth of liberal domestic social policy toward the poor, perhaps because the programs and policies contrasted so much with those of the immediate postwar period and earlier.

From the 1960s to the 1970s and 1980s, programs and policies shifted from more of a focus on single services and individuals to comprehensive services and communities. Just as researchers realized that no single factor explained the nonoptimal development of low-income children in the science of the times, advocates found that no single factor was an adequate target for programs and policies. Comprehensive programs and community initiatives for children became promising approaches. But as providing more services through comprehensive initiatives appeared not to make the positive difference many had hoped for, a new desire for bottom-line responsibility grew among policymakers in the 1990s. This impetus to hold service providers accountable for outcomes ushered in an era of promoting individual responsibility and system accountability. This approach both supported and was supported by a growing popular attraction to more conservative approaches to domestic policy in general and to child and family policy in particular.

Even this cursory sketch of the evolution of domestic programs and policies toward poor children, families, and communities allows us to draw a few gen-

eral conclusions. Our first conclusion is obvious but merits consideration anyway: The evolution in programs and policies was influenced much more by ideological debate, political negotiations, fiscal realities, public and policymaker perceptions of need, and the history of program and policy successes and failures than they were influenced by theory and research. This does not mean that research has had no impact (more on this point later), but it does mean that power, money, and values usually trump knowledge as bases for program and policy formulation.

Second, theory and research can be valuable even if not frequently determinative. As we already noted, research can indirectly and positively influence the general zeitgeist surrounding decision making, as it did in the 1980s when basic research on the multivariate influences on the development of poor children helped shift program and policy away from magic bullet and single-factor models of intervention toward comprehensive, multitarget models.

Another important way that research can influence program and policy is through the design and conduct of rigorous evaluations. Negative findings from some evaluations of early initiatives for low-income children and families both decreased support for existing programs and simultaneously stimulated the development of new approaches. For example, the Westinghouse evaluation of Head Start perhaps slowed the growth of the program (due to finding the fade-out effect) and so provided the impetus for Follow Through. Similarly, the evaluation of the Comprehensive Child Development Program may have dampened state government's interests in truly comprehensive early childhood initiatives but may have fostered the more focused but multitarget approach of Early Head Start. Finally, evaluations and meta-analyses of several different types of welfare reform strategies have led policymakers to favor rapid workforce attachment models over human capital investment models (Gueron & Pauly, 1991) for reducing welfare caseloads and suggest that strategies that reduce welfare dependency have positive effects on poor children's learning and development only if they lead to increased family income as well (Morris, Gennetian, & Duncan, 2005). Rigorous evaluations are increasingly able to identify what antipoverty programs and policies work, for whom, and under what conditions. But identifying what works is not sufficient to convince policymakers, or the public for that matter, that they should spend the money and the political capital to adopt what works. To address these challenges of advocacy and social marketing requires a different set of skills, abilities, and sentiments, as laid out by Gruendel and Aber (see chap. 3, this volume).

It is interesting to note that the examples of rigorous evaluations noted previously were experiments in which individuals were randomly assigned to experimental (e.g., Comprehensive Child Development Program or Early Head Start) or control conditions. But the program and policy initiatives listed in the two right-hand columns of Table 9.1 include initiatives aimed at schools and communities as well. Over the last decade, there has been growing interest in and commitment to "place-randomized trials" (Boruch, 2005). When program or policy interventions are delivered at the group level (e.g., classrooms, schools, organizations, or neighborhoods), it is usually most appropriate to randomize at the group level to most rigorously assess the impact of the intervention. Recent examples of group-randomized evaluations of place-based program or policy

interventions on behalf of low-income children and families include the recent experiment that randomized poor schools to Success-for-All or business as usual (Borman, Slavin, & Cheung, 2005) and the Progreso experiment in Mexico that randomized villages to a set of fiscal incentives to promote health care and education for young children or business as usual (Gertler & Boyce, 2001). The scientific methodology to conduct place-randomized trials is advancing at a rapid pace (see H. Bloom, 2005). But the theory and measurement strategies to assess variation in places (contexts) and over time lag behind. Fortunately, federal (e.g., National Institutes of Health) and private (e.g., W. T. Grant Foundation) sponsors of research have recognized the scientific value of place-randomized trials in the evaluation of antipoverty programs and policies. Funders have also recognized that until theory on and measurement of key features of places progress, we will still not be in a position to learn what we need to about what works, for whom, and under what conditions when targeting schools and communities as the loci of change. Thus, the emergent field of child development and social policy has recognized for nearly a half century (a) the vital role that schools and communities play in the development of low-income children and (b) the valuable role that rigorous evaluation research can play in improving programs and policies, but it is only now beginning to generate rigorous evaluations of (school and community) place-based strategies.

Implications for the Future

In this chapter, we have described two of the oldest concerns of the emerging field of child development and social policy: how poverty and social deprivation influences children's development and how programs and policies can ameliorate the effects of poverty on children's development. Further, we have tried to capture some of the most important changes in theory, research, programs, and policies over the 4 decades of Zigler's work in this emerging field. What lessons can we take away from the last 40 years that will serve us well as we and our students (and our students' students), Ed's intellectual and professional grandchildren (and great-grandchildren), prepare to face the challenges of the next 40 years? Like our mentor, we'll try to keep those lessons brief and to the point.

1. Our theoretical and scientific understanding of poverty, deprivation, impacts on development, and program and policy strategies to enhance development will continue to undergo rapid transformation. New generations of scientists willing and able to mount creative studies and rigorous evaluations will play an invaluable role in helping to develop the knowledge base needed to help guide effective action.
2. The knowledge base will never be wholly adequate to guide action. In the end, there will be a sizable gap between what researchers know with confidence and what policymakers need to know to act with confidence. Consequently, the field will usually be in the position that it needs to move beyond the information given. This will be a great challenge. It will be important to honestly and dis-

passionately pursue and represent the truth about how poverty affects children and about whether and how well antipoverty programs and policies improve the life chances of low-income children, families, and communities. But researchers and policymakers will also need to make decisions that extend beyond what is known with certainty. Said a different way, Head Start and welfare reform would never have been started if anyone waited for the knowledge base needed to fully inform their design. At the same time, both were influenced by the knowledge base that prevailed at the time and were probably better for it. Theory and research will necessarily and could productively compete with power, values, and money to guide intervention efforts. Thus, we must develop our capacity in the field of child development and social policy for discriminating judgment to find our way among these competing influences on program and policy decisions.

3. Mistakes are most likely to be made in child development and social policy if (a) sound research never effectively engages or informs practical program and policy decisions or (b) program and policy decisions are made solely on the basis of ideology and political power without being queried by the knowledge base emerging from sound research.

Zigler's work on poverty and child development—together with the work of many of his students and colleagues—have generated these lessons that we expect to be very important to us as we move into an uncertain future.

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