



Children First: What Society Must Do--and is Not Doing--for Children Today

Penelope Leach

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Children First is the most important and urgent book on childcare we have yet had from the internationally admired author of the classic *Your Baby & Child*.

In it Penelope Leach calls on us as individuals and as a nation to make good on the promise of our endless rhetoric about the importance of family by creating the indispensable economic and social supports for children that are now so tragically missing.

She asks us -- in our legislation, in our policy-making, in our industrial might -- to think of children first and thereby let a new rush of sanity and health into our society.

She presents us with the paradox that after spending spectacular millions and employing the most sophisticated medical science to help children come into the world, our society turns its back on them in the very years during which they are developing. She shows us how, while paying constant lip service to family, we fail to acknowledge the difficulties of parenting in the nineties and to make sure that conditions essential to the raising of children are available to parents.

It is Penelope Leach's contention that what parents do for their children -- what they are able to do -- depends on what society actually wants, approves and encourages. And, in a powerful argument against complacency, she presents specific steps by which we, as members of society, can move to fashion a new economic priority for all children; to make the child central in the fight against poverty and inequity; to achieve a rational standard of human rights for our children; and to find, in our own lives, effective new approaches to positive parenting.

Provocative, passionate, courageous, *Children First* is a groundbreaking book. It has the extraordinary potential to affect the lives not only of our own children but also of the children that they themselves will have in years to come.

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