SAMUEL TOTTEN

Childhood

Resources for Addressing Childhood Concerns

Childhood should be a time for play, exploration, and discovery about one's self, one's society, and the world. For far too many youngsters today, however, childhood is a time of misery and despair. Poverty, broken families, drug and alcohol addictions, physical and mental abuse, prostitution, homelessness—these are everyday experiences for many youth. When their problems surpass their ability to cope, many young people take what seems to be the only way out: suicide.

Educators alone, of course, can't solve these complex problems, but we can contribute to their solutions by increasing our awareness and being more responsive to students' needs. The following are just a sampling of the many resources available for addressing these problems.

Organizations and Projects

Action for Children's Television (ACT), 20 University Rd., Cambridge, MA 02138. ACT advocates the improvement and expansion of children's television programs to meet the educational and informational needs of young people. ACT's publications include: *Fighting TV Stereotypes: An ACT Handbook*; *TV News Children*; *Community Cable for and by Children: An ACT Handbook*; and *The TV-Smart Book for Kids: Puzzles, Games, and Other Great Stuff*.

Children's Defense Fund (CDF), 122 C St., N.W., Washington, D.C. 20001. CDF's goal is to educate the nation about the needs of children (in particular, minorities, the poor, and the handicapped) and to encourage preventive investment in children before they become ill, drop out of school, or begin unlawful activities. *A Call for Action to Make Our Nation Safe: A Briefing Book on the Status of Children in 1988* describes a host of successful cost-effective programs.

Just Say No Clubs, c/o Oakland Parents in Action, 1404 Franklin St., Suite 610, Oakland, CA 94612, (800) 258-2766. These nationwide clubs are dedicated to combating and eventually eliminating drug abuse among children. Young club members—supported by parents, educators, police officers, and local officials—work through the schools to encourage children to "just say no" to drugs.

National Committee on Youth Suicide Prevention, 67 Irving Pl., S., New York, NY 10003. This volunteer network of parents, professionals, and government officials is working to acquire, organize, and disseminate information about youth suicide and to help develop prevention programs. Publishes a quarterly newsletter.

Curricular Materials

Curran, D.K. (1987). *Adolescent Suicidal Behavior*. New York: Hemisphere Publishing Corporation. This comprehensive review of adolescent suicide research, including assessment, treatment, and prevention, contains several case studies.

Davis, S., and M.D. Schwartz. (1987). *Children's Rights and the Law*. Lexington, Mass: Lexington Books. Free from legal jargon, this book provides an overview of the "proper interaction between parents, children, and the state," including protection from inadequate parenting and the right to education.

Day Care and Early Education. 72 Fifth Ave., New York, NY 10011. This journal publishes practical, insightful articles on child care programs, curriculum, staff development, family-school relationships, health, nutrition, infant/toddler programs, and child development.

Janus, M., et al. (1988). *Adolescent Runaways: Causes and Consequences*. Lexington, Mass.: Lexington Books. This text cogently analyzes the many reasons adolescents leave home, as well as the harrowing consequences, and offers guidelines for short- and long-term interventions for children and their families.

Joan, P. (1986). *Preventing Teenage Suicide: The Living Alternative Handbook*. Edison, N.J.: Human Science Press. This text provides information and suggests effective methods and resources for teaching adolescents about suicide and how to prevent it.

McGuire, P. (1988). *Putting It Together: Teenagers Talk about Family Breakup*. New York: Delacorte Press. This thought-provoking text probes the personal, emotional, and psychosocial dimensions of family breakup from the viewpoint of the adolescents affected. Interviews with children, social workers, psychiatrists, and school counselors offer insight.

Phi Delta Kappan. (1988). *Child Abuse*. Bloomington, Ind.: Phi Delta Kappan. According to the editors, this text includes "the best and most pertinent articles from research and practice on child abuse." Also available in this series are texts on teenage pregnancy, dropouts, and drug abuse.□

Samuel Totten is Assistant Professor of Secondary Education, University of Arkansas, 300 Graduate Education Building, Fayetteville, AR 72701.

Copyright © 1989 by the Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development. All rights reserved.