

BANKRUPTING CHILDREN

During the first few years of life, parents and parent-substitutes in healthy societies make an attempt to fill up children with resources in the form of proper parenting and care. Parents and parent-substitutes attempt to give each child a bank of internal resources which can then be used by the child throughout the rest of his or her life. Most mental health experts agree that the quality of early parenting received can greatly influence a person's ability to function in adult society.

Schools are run by parent-substitutes. In a forward-moving system, all parent-substitutes should continue to build physical and psychological resources in a child and furnish each child with the kind of care that will continue to fill up the child's bank of resources. The current educational system in America, however, is so unnatural and hostile toward children that they receive no additional resources or support from the system at all. In fact, children are forced to consume their precious resources in just trying to survive life in the classroom every day. It takes everything a child has to sit in a hard wooden chair all day, studying subjects that have been ripped out of context and have no meaning in his or her life, and warding off the constant threat of failure and fear of public humiliation.

Our research indicates that by the time most children are halfway through the second grade, they have used up all of the resources in their banks. Even children who were fortunate enough to have received very high quality parenting and care are empty. All of the hard work and years of tending by parents has been consumed and the children are bankrupted of their resources.

Once bankrupted, the children have no choice but to draw on the resources of the parents and must tap into their parents' banks, otherwise they will not be able to survive and endure the remaining school years. Some parents are keenly aware of how schools have drained them and their children of all their resources. These parents can feel how tired, irritated, frustrated and depressed their families become during the school year. They can clearly see the difference between how their families functioned and thrived before their children were enrolled in school, and how stressful and difficult their lives became after their children were in school for just a few months or years. This is particularly true for parents who have more than one child in school. These parents can easily be permanently emptied of all their own resources by the time their children graduate from high school.

Politicians who want to "save the American family" should look closely at the educational system in this country if they truly want to uncover the source of the American family's destruction. People do not have unlimited resources. Once a family's resources have been drained away, it is more difficult for parents to get along with each other and their children. It is more difficult for people to solve everyday problems and survive losses and tragedies such as a death of a loved one or a sudden illness in the family. Without internal resources, people of all ages become more vulnerable to physical problems and disease. They are less stable mentally and emotionally, and are more vulnerable to stress. They are more prone to alcoholism and drug abuse--both of which have risen steadily in American society as people have become more and more invested in their idea that personal success can be achieved only through a "good education."

Afro-American Children

Children and parents of all backgrounds and financial means are negatively affected by the energy-draining, hostile educational environments. But the most serious harm has come to Afro-American families. In the decades following the Civil War, Afro-American families in America were slowly recovering from years of slavery. Many Afro-American families had been drained of their resources by slave owners who used them until they had nothing left to give. Just as Afro-American families were beginning to recover from the bankruptcy of slavery, they began to migrate to the cities and enter the formal educational system in America. Most Afro-American families, living on limited incomes, believed that through education their children could break out of the ghetto and its poverty, and find a better life. For a limited number of AfroAmerican children with good memories, who were willing to accept an education born out of the madness of white European clergy and industrialists and intended only as a pastime for the idle Roman youth, this has been true. However, the majority of Afro-American ghetto children have been destroyed and bankrupted beyond repair.

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Most Afro-American families begin with a more limited supply of resources, simply because as a group, Afro-Americans have not been able to recover from the bankruptcy incurred during the time of slavery. For many reasons, there are also more single-parent families among Afro-Americans. Once some of these children are bankrupted by the schools, they have only one full-time parent from whom they can derive the additional resources they need to survive classroom life. Because Afro-American families are more likely to have to survive on limited incomes, Afro-American children do not have expensive video games, team sports and summers at the beach that white middle class children have to cushion themselves against the violating experiences of school. The children of Harlem and other American ghettos must face the hostility and personal destruction of education head-on, every day, without cushions or buffers.

One of the reasons Afro-American families suffer economically is that education is designed to keep them bankrupted of their internal resources and financially poor. You could say that Afro-American children have two strikes against them. First, they are children, and children in American society have not yet been elevated to the status of human beings and therefore have no personal rights. Secondly, Americans have not yet been released from the idea of slavery. It is true that the slaves have been freed, but the idea of "nigger" or "slave" still remains intact in the American consciousness. Education in America is a system of prestige, one that is designed to keep the slaves impoverished. The way people can know this is that if educators and school officials had more positive ideas about Afro-American children, they would not be able to tolerate their own inferior results. These educators and school officials certainly would not be blaming ghetto children for the fact that, in some areas, forty percent of their own high school graduates cannot pass a literacy test.

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Since the United States government decided to send in money and manpower to "improve" the quality of education in the ghettos, educators and school officials have made "education" only more difficult for the children. They have become more "strict" (and in some cases more violent) in their disciplinary measures, and more demanding of children in every subject. They have implemented longer hours, more homework and "upgraded" their standards in every way. By demanding that Afro-American children, bankrupted and without sources of replenishment, respond to even "higher" educational standards, educators and school officials insure that these children will have very few choices beyond breaking down physically, mentally or emotionally, caving into drugs and/or becoming violent. In any and all of these cases, poverty is virtually guaranteed.

Afro-American children, and any children living in an inner city ghetto, are more likely to be exposed to reality than are middle class suburban children. Living in a neighborhood where alcoholism, homelessness, prostitution, robbery, rape, drug trafficking, physical violence and serious drug addiction are a normal part of everyday life is a very different experience from growing up on a quiet suburban street, dotted with trees and groomed front lawns. The more anyone is exposed to reality, the more painful and meaningless the non-reality of education becomes. Memorizing the Gettysburg Address is a minor inconvenience and annoyance to a middle class junior high school student who can go home and enjoy a video game or a movie on the VCR, or relax and enjoy his or her new record albums. To the ghetto child who may fear for his or her life just going to and from school, memorizing the Gettysburg Address is an assault on his or her consciousness. To the ghetto child, the gap between the reality of everyday life, which can be filled with hardship, and the non-reality and meaninglessness of education is just too much to bear.

The schools in Harlem and other inner city ghettos are filled with hurt, angry children. The children are hurt and angry because they have been stripped of all their resources trying to survive the hostile classroom environment, and they have depleted their parents' resource banks. These children have no hope of replenishing the resources that have been lost. They are being offered an "education" so meaningless and empty in light of their life circumstances that going to school is nothing less than a daily assault. Without cushions or buffers, these children cannot take the pounding. Drugs help to numb the pain, and violence is a way of telling educators and school officials how much their system hurts.

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Some inner city children, usually in Afro-American neighborhoods, are so angry and hurt that educators and school officials have had to hire police and security forces to monitor the hallways and classrooms to curtail the violence. Some inner city ghetto schools require students to pass through metal detectors in order to check for weapons, and others remain armed encampments. Yet, educators and school officials, dedicated to bankrupting Afro-American children and keeping them poor, do nothing to alter the very system that is destroying Afro-American society. They do nothing because they are getting exactly the results they are looking for. If the parents of the children of Harlem, Roxbury and Haight Ashbury knew what schools were doing to their children, they would organize themselves to shut down the educational system permanently.

