

Examine the sociological views

[Life](#), [Childhood](#)



There have been many changes in society that have affected children over the last 50 years, however there are several different sociological views on whether these changes have been beneficial to children or not. Functionalist sociologists have the 'march of progress' view, as they believe that the experience of childhood has massively improved over the last 50 years. They believe that society is more child-centred today than ever before.

The introduction of contraception has led to couples having smaller families, therefore meaning that children now tend to receive more attention from their parents. Similarly, parents are also able to care for their children better due to the introduction of the welfare state and child benefits. Climbié's case and 'Every Child Matters' has led to the improvement of social services and child protection, meaning childhood is much safer now than it was 50 years ago.

Children are also in better health due to the NHS, meaning more children survive childhood now than ever before. All children can now receive state education up until the age of 18, meaning they are better educated and can achieve much higher in adulthood, whilst experiencing a longer period of youth. All of these changes have improved the experience of childhood and cause Functionalists to believe that things are getting better. However, Marxist and Feminist sociologists disagree, claiming that the march of progress view is too positive.

They believe that a child's experience of childhood depends on their class, ethnicity and gender, and that Functionalists overlook the inequalities between these factors. This is called the 'conflict' view. Class has an effect

on childhood as generally if a family is poor, the children are more likely to have a poor upbringing. Ethnicity is found to have an effect as Asian parents have been found to be much stricter on their kids.