

A chance for children

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Around the world, every few seconds a child is being born. Each and every one of these children are given a life full of opportunity, a chance to obtain happiness, hope to light the path to the future, and imagination to shape the world; however not all are given that chance. Perhaps the most virulent issue in this world is the sickness of poverty into which more than half of our population is born. The families in poverty, supported by the welfare system, have numerous problems which inevitably are passed on to their children. While some might claim that supportive adults in a child's life can counteract the negative effects of a poverty stricken childhood, it is clear that poor children are more often neglected than their richer counterparts; therefore, they may end up with many medical as well as psychological problems that—along with a neglected education—may cause them to fall into the same devastating habits as their parents. The children who are born to parents in the welfare system suffer in numerous ways, not only in psychological, emotional, and health aspects, but in educational aspects as well.

Children, who live off of the welfare system, are usually born to parents who have low incomes and often did not graduate from High school. In fact about 22.3% children under 18 live in households with an income of less than \$23,834 (Child Health USA), a consequence of their parent's failure to obtain at least a high school diploma. These children -born to parents without and high school/college education- sadly are more likely to fall into the same behavioral patterns as their parents, and will not complete high school as well. Children in the welfare system and children born in poverty fail to realize that education is the key to escaping the gruesome reality that they live every day; escaping their homes with uncaring parents, drugs, sickness

and abuse that haunts them forever. In fact children who live in these conditions are 1.

3 times more likely to be diagnosed with learning disabilities and other developmental delays (Smith and Ashiabi 13). Education plays an important role in obtaining a successful career later in life. Someone with an education level higher than high school diploma makes up to \$9, 245 more per year than high school dropouts (Economic impacts). In addition to the fact that children on welfare who drop out of high school do not earn nearly as much money compared to children who completed high school; they will also live a shorter life span. Children who have an education fewer than 12 years live about 6-9 years shorter than children who had an education of more than 12 years (Child Health and Economic Impacts). High school dropouts are also more prone to illness as well because of stress of trying to keep up with expenses.

Overall children born to welfare families do not have the opportunity to obtain a quality education, whether it is because of low family income, lack of emotional support in school, opportunity or simply a guide to steer them through the twist and turns of the education system. This is because parents on welfare do not possess the emotional intelligence and empathy for their children; their parents are blind to the fact that education is crucial to obtain a quality job, and that education gives them the wings to ascend from the cage of poverty. Many people claim that there are programs available for people on welfare that will give children aid in school if they do not have a high income. Although it is true that children can receive support from their teachers, and schools through supplementary academic support and school <https://assignbuster.com/a-chance-for-children/>

programs they do not meet all of the essential educational needs for children. For instance some of these programs include the school lunch program, and food stamps program, and after school program (Current issues).

However these programs do not provide funding for higher education such as college. In addition these programs can not encourage kids to go and learn right away, they need the emotional support of their families otherwise the children will see school as a waste of time. Besides suffering from educational neglect, children on welfare often succumb to health problems and neglect (physical/medical). Families on welfare often do not have the funds or insurance to acquire the correct medical treatment for their children. They frequently suffer from a variety of medical/physical neglect ranging from abandonment, nutritional neglect, delay in health care, denial of health care and sexual assault because their parents are either too poor or spend their income on substances (drugs).

According to Child Health USA about 78.3% of children under 18 suffer from neglect, 18.3% from physical abuse and 9.3% from sexual abuse in poor families. Usually children who suffer from physical abuse or medical neglect are found to have lower cognitive abilities including: low IQ scores, decline in academic performance, and smaller brains in extreme cases; which can make difficult for children to obtain an education.

Various studies have also shown that children, who have experienced trauma or neglect in their lives, whether early on or later on, have impaired brain development as well. Moreover the most common medical problems for

children on welfare are asthma, autism, aids, diabetes, ADHD, Down's syndrome, heart problems, hypertension, depression etc. and suffer from many disabilities and deformities as well. Some may include mental retardation, socio-emotional deficits and poor impulse control (Child Neglect, 23). No child should have to suffer through these kinds of problems, because of their parent's irresponsibility. Children should be able to live healthy, happy, carefree lives; they should not live every day wondering when their suffering will end, or when their parents will take them to the doctor.

Nevertheless there are programs, such as Medicare, and Medicaid which do provide medical care for families. For example Medicaid helps fund healthcare for the poor; about 74% of their patients are on public assistance/programs (Current issues). However programs like Medicare and Medicaid do not necessarily improve the frequency of (some) welfare parents to take their children to the doctor, since a majority of the parents in the welfare system have substance abuse issues which makes them more likely to spend their money on drugs or abuse drugs prescribed to them, which eventually leads to medical neglect of the child. Childhood is remembered by most as a time of bliss and ignorance; the few years when there are no worries and many joys. For a child living in poverty, however, this time can be soiled because parents have to work long hours to get by, and physical or emotional abuse.

This can have a shocking effect not only upon the child's short-term happiness, but their long-term emotional health as well. The Department of Health emphasizes that emotional neglect can affect a child for far longer than even physical neglect (Department of Health). Emotional neglect can <https://assignbuster.com/a-chance-for-children/>

range from a child not getting enough parental attention, to seeing parents fighting. Emotional trauma can have such life-long ramifications as leaving children with, "...a limited ability to feel remorse or empathy..." (Department of Health 25). Sadly, the one thing nurtured when empathy is lacking is not a child, but the life of crime they will likely fall into.

Therefore, it is terrible for a child to be forced into this vicious cycle by association. Some experts say that the presence of a positively influential adult can counteract any emotional abuse (Department of Health 25) but it cannot be depended upon that every child will have a person like that in their lives. Many children simply do not have that kind of support. The only way to solve this is to have children with other families while their own is being assisted by social workers into recovery. It is true that many programs and institutions have been established to assist children and families in need. One example is the Free and Reduced Lunch program which provides children with a way to get food while at school.

However, it appears that many people believe that it is unethical to remove children from their homes without ample proof of neglect, because it would be a violation of parent's constitutional rights and rights as parents. Many families, though poor, are actually very supportive and good to their children. It is not right to take children away from their families haphazardly just because they are momentarily on welfare. Along with government services, social workers are available to assist in a family's recovery from debt. However true this all may be, too many children in this world are forced to grow into adults and take on responsibility far too quickly in order to fight the struggles of their childhood. Because of this, the clear option to <https://assignbuster.com/a-chance-for-children/>

insure the happiness of the next generation is to have at risk children raised in safer environments.

Children should be able to live their lives as they were meant to be lived, with happiness, love, imagination and beauty. Children should not be exposed to the cruelty of the world or the brutality of mankind. They must not be shackled in the shadows of poverty, but instead be allowed to blossom in the radiance of happiness, love, knowledge and health; to bloom into successful, healthy educated individuals who can change the world around them. We believe that if we prohibit people on welfare to have children then as a community/society we can end this vicious cycle of poverty and suffering for future generations. Let us take this step so that every second when a child is born, they are brought into a world of hope and opportunity where everyone can have a childhood as it should be: carefree and full of love.