

How Are Children Affected by Poverty?

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Introduction

Childhood period is distinguished by the transition from total dependency to autonomy and every person steps over it. The success of this transition depends on parental life, prenatal development and genetics among others. Only cohesive work of parents, health professionals and educators can reveal child's full potential and there are still many factors that can affect the quality of life and aggravate the process of moving into adulthood. Poverty is a serious problem that can immensely affect childhood development (Horgan, 2007). Of course, people of any age face this issue, however, its impact is the most damageable to children. Consequences of poverty are stress, parenting, housing and health and may cause predisposed developmental risk issues (Junn & Boyatzis, 2000). This paper studies the possible influence of poverty on children in their early development stage.

Stress affects all spheres of life of poor people

Lack of money and possibilities to satisfy basic human needs is stressful for parents and that ruins families. Parents are not able to fulfil their parental obligations and get involved in providing basic childhood needs. Stressful family situation causes damage to the process of coming on age, more than that, when put under extreme stress pressure, the neuron pathways of the child's brain impair (Kail, 2006). The consequences of such result are as follows: issues in education and misbalance in health and mental development. According to the studies, the reasons that may cause stress also include living in large families, with single parents or in the neighborhood with non-English residents. However, raising in English family also is not a guarantee that there will be no stress connected with poverty issues.

Negative impact of poverty on child's health

It starts from the very beginning: newborns of mothers suffering from poverty are born with low weight and for the most part are infected in mother's womb already. This leads to lifelong consequences – obesity, low immune level can cerebral palsy. In most cases poor parents smoke as smoking is the cheapest form of relaxation and the damage caused by smoking mother to unborn child includes higher rates of prematurity rates and respiratory diseases like asthma. Such mothers also often do not breastfeed their children, though it is crucial for children development (Maume & Arrighi, 2007).

Poverty negatively affects parenting

Chronic stress and frequently low literacy levels lead to poor parenting so poverty-affected parents fail to offer well-meaning and caring to their children. Pallid statistics state that the level of child abuse and accidents is much higher in poor families. It can be explained by the level of parents' depression caused by poverty (McCartney & Phillips, 2011). As a result, parental depression and poor way of living lead to bad relationship between parents and children.

Conclusion

Childhood is extremely important part of everyone's life and should be supplement with care and possibilities for health and mental development. Poverty causes lifelong consequences like misbalance in the childhood development and include stress, health and poor parenting that results in problems with health and lifestyle in later stages of life.