"At Risk" or "At Promise"? From Deficit Constructions of the "Other Childhood" to Possibilities for Authentic Alliances with Children and Families

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Abstract

This article is taken from the Rethinking Childhood Series book: Díaz-Soto, L. (Ed.), (2000). The Politics of Early Childhood Education. NY: Peter Lang. In the specific text reprinted here Swadener challenges the deficit label "at risk" and argues that we should adopt a more diverse construction of children and families. The reader is referred to the complete book for further discussions from reconceptualist scholars such as Marianne Bloch, Henry Giroux, Shirley Stienburg and Joe Kincheloe on topics ranging from ECE's over-reliance on child development to Disney's influence on modern day children.

Full Text:
PDF

This promise means that all children by virtue of their own efforts, competently guided, can hope to attain the mature and informed judgement needed to secure gainful employment, and to manage their own lives, thereby serving not only their own interests but also the progress of society itself. Our Nation is at risk. Part of what is at risk is the promise first made on this continent: All, regardless of race or class or economic status, are entitled to a fair chance and to the tools for developing their individual powers of mind and spirit to the utmost.