

SOCIAL WORK PRACTICE

Second Edition

SOCIAL WORK PRACTICE

Toward a Child, Family,
School, Community Perspective

By

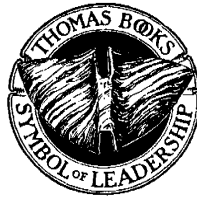
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CHARLES C THOMAS • PUBLISHER, LTD.
Springfield • Illinois • U.S.A.

Published and Distributed Throughout the World by

CHARLES C THOMAS • PUBLISHER, LTD.
2600 South First Street
Springfield, Illinois 62704

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ISBN 0-398-07309-0 (hard)
ISBN 0-398-07310-4 (paper)

Library of Congress Catalog Card Number: 2002018102
1988, first edition

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Printed in the United States of America
SR-R-3

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

Freeman, Edith M.

Social work practice : toward a child, family, school, community perspective / by
Edith M. Freeman and Marianne Pennekamp.-- 2nd ed.

p. cm.

Includes bibliographical references and index.

ISBN 0-398-07309-0 (cloth) -- ISBN 0-398-07310-4 (pbk.)

I. Social service--United States. I. Pennekamp, Marianne. II. Title.

HV91 .F68 2002

361.3'2'0973--dc21

2002018102

*To the Children, Youth, and Families . . .
whom the reader will encounter
within the pages of this book*

What is always needed in the appreciation of art, or life, is the larger perspective. Connections made, or at least attempted, where none existed before, the straining to encompass in one's glance at the varied world the common thread, the unifying theme through immense diversity, a fearlessness of growth, of search, of looking, that enlarges the private and the public world. And yet, in our particular society, it is the narrowed and narrowing view of life that often wins.

Alice Walker
IN SEARCH OF OUR
MOTHERS' GARDENS

FOREWORD

Social work began as a profession in the early twentieth century, marked by the scholarly writing of skilled practitioners. Mary Richmond, for example, chronicled her notions of psychosocial practice in *Social Diagnosis* as she described a “mind-on-mind” process of working with individuals. And Jane Addams described the work at Hull House as a cogent process of effecting change in the various social systems of individuals, families, groups and communities. Professional social work practice has been evolving ever since, with various forms of practice being observed or emerging from a felt need, tried out in the practice arena, presented to the professional community as initial ideas, refined and resubmitted time and time again as increasingly scholarly work.

Fourteen years ago, in a similar manner, Freeman and Pennekamp presented the first edition of their ambitious work. This book came as a result of their arduous efforts whereby they described and illustrated a particular process of social work practice. They dared to map out an approach to social work practice that encompasses “the larger perspective,” as Alice Walker spoke of in the excerpt selected by the authors in the frontispiece.

The profession has been pointing the way to this practice, perhaps, from the very beginning, since social workers have always considered the larger perspective. The adopted paradigm of “person-in-environment” requires that we do so. Nonetheless, all too often we simply deal with the smaller portions of that ecosystem that we consider to be manageable, or some portion that may come to us or be presented to us for some specific service. In some settings, such approaches are not only appropriate but also may be very effective ways to accomplish goals set by client and social worker. We could think in terms of a continuum within this paradigm, where assessment and intervention might occur on one end at one or maybe two or three points. Or, as Freeman and Pennekamp offer, we could think of the paradigm as a whole where assessment and joining with persons in the ecosystem would occur at any and all points on that continuum.

Social workers in schools and other settings that serve vulnerable and/or disadvantaged populations, such as children, persons who are seriously ill or elderly, must expand their practice protocols beyond a single unit of attention. School social workers have long known that one cannot simply take a teacher-referred child into the counseling or therapeutic environment and provide a cure for problems present in the child's natural ecosystem. Nor can the isolated in-service session with a group of teachers on techniques for classroom management effect lasting change for a child or group of children who may be suffering with various concerns from poor nourishment to severe abuse and neglect to personal losses with the family or any number of other biopsychosocial problems.

School social workers sometimes have the disquieting feeling that the work they have done, while received with enthusiasm and appreciation, just wasn't enough. It may have served a child or a family or a school, but implications for broader services were not addressed. So it is that Freeman and Pennekamp, having conceptualized and practiced in a larger perspective, presented their initial work and have now returned to update and clarify concepts and to expand their description of practice. In her foreword to the first edition, Carol Meyer highlighted the extraordinary contribution of the authors to the "grounding, explication and application" of practice within the ecosystems perspective. In the true sense of the never-ending cycles in the evolution of practice models, Freeman and Pennekamp have recorded on these pages a methodological process for assessing, planning, and joining with various parts of the ecosystem in ways to effect positive outcomes not only for individuals or groups who have been referred for service, but that which would benefit the ecosystem as a whole.

Meyer noted that the first edition of the book was about "the second generation of ideas about the ecosystems perspective." One of the outstanding features of such a groundbreaking work, that moved a conceptual perspective to actual practice approaches, is the authors' continued consideration of their initial efforts to the point that they come now with updated language and concepts, trends, and policies. Further, they have added two new chapters that apply their practice principles within communities and in integrated services program administration.

As with the initial work, these additions provide a guide for considering needs, strengths and resources of all elements of the ecosystem—including the social worker. Current-day possibilities for community development are presented in Chapter 15, taking into account local, state, federal and private funding sources for community planning and involvement. Chapter 16 presents an ambitious model for restructuring administrative systems. This chapter points the way to such restructuring, highlighting some of the differences between administrative approaches in social work and in education. The

authors identify key issues such as variations in how power and control are conceived and used within administrative units, and discuss potentials for conflicts as well as for power sharing. From this chapter, at a minimum, the social worker will garner tools to assess these systems as to current status and levels of functioning, to identify where potential collaborators are, and to identify ways and means of influencing their “joining” families and communities and service providers in delivering effective integrated services.

The authors have included new tables and maps that have immeasurable value in explicating how practice within this perspective might proceed. This text is titled *Social Work Practice*, and is obviously directed to the social worker as the chief architect in the delivery of much of the practice described. In addition, portions of this text—notably Chapter 16—contain important material to share directly or in consultation or training workshops, with school and community agency administrators. Any plan for collaboration among organizations for assessing, planning and implementing integrated services would be enhanced by beginning on such a common ground of understanding as is discussed in this text.

Freeman and Pennekamp have enriched the field of social work practice with this expanded version of their original work. When Meyer took the lead in her scholarly writing on the ecosystems perspective, it represented a form of practice familiar on some level to many social workers. Practice was happening or being conceived or wished for in just that way. These authors have moved this evolving practice to a new and higher level by describing actual processes for assessing, joining and implementing practice within the ecosystems perspective. They are leading the way to fully grounding this practice, and in the true sense of the evolutionary process of theory building, they acknowledge always that we are moving “*toward* a child, family, school, community perspective” for social work practice. This book advances our practice ever more.

Frances S. Caple, Ph.D.
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FOREWORD TO FIRST EDITION

The introduction in 1970 of the ecosystems perspective in social work did not meet with resounding applause. On the contrary, it was received with unending criticism in the professional community. Among the complaints was the fact that “it didn’t tell you what to do.” Although a perspective is never intended to be prescriptive of practice, in this case, the complaint was probably warranted. In retrospect, the major challenges of the ecosystems perspective were that it drew wide boundaries around practice, and forced one to recognize the connectedness of things. Thus, the case, or the unit of attention, turned out to be altogether too complex and intricate, causing anxiety and feelings of helplessness on the part of the practitioner. The fact is that cases were complex when viewed in the context of reality, as opposed to the perspective of only that which the worker was prepared to see and to do.

The persistent problem then, and through the ensuing 25 years or so, was that the ecosystems perspective needed grounding, explication, and application. As the person who first constructed that perspective and experienced the many years of criticism, I am particularly pleased to have read this book, *Social Work Practice: Toward a Child, Family, School and Community Perspective*. At last, wise and seasoned social workers have done the job. Freeman and Pennekamp have achieved exactly what the critics have demanded.

This book is about the second generation of ideas about the ecosystems perspective. It addresses exactly the kind of practical application that has been needed, and it does so with scholarship, clinical insights, and an engaging style. In the authors’ language, the purpose of the book is:

“To struggle with the absence of a well-developed framework, appropriate structures and competent processes for meeting the needs of children, adolescents and their families, by matching these needs with resources in the least restrictive environment.”

Using a well-developed knowledge base, explicated through case material, the authors have brought to life the ever extolled and often abstract notion of “social work at the crossroads.” They have done this through an inventive

mapping scheme and through a full-blown analysis of how mediating institutions like the school, as one example, can be used to support children, adolescents and families in the service of prevention.

There are rigorous conceptualizations here: for example, through the use of the ecomap, several difficult linkage problems are considered: the linkage of multiple bases of knowledge, the linkage of knowledge and practice skills, the linkage between direct and indirect services, and linkage of practice modalities, the linkage of fragmented services, and the linkage between practice and professional education. This is a tall order, of course, because conceptual clarity does not necessarily insure the integration of these things into actual practice. Perhaps a next step for these authors, or others who might have their courage and skill, would be to test out what they call the “shared theoretical map” in a more demanding political context. That is to say, it is insufficient to establish conceptual clarity and ideological commitment in areas such as integration of services. Lurking behind every perfect model are issues of power, turf, money, and conflicting ideologies. This book does not grapple with these realities, but does bring them to mind in bold relief. Thus, the next generation of workers in the ecosystems vineyards should be able to tackle those political issues so as to guarantee the utility of this excellent “shared theoretical map.”

This map is a “boundary spanner,” according to the authors, and its use has real practical as well as heuristic value. The authors show how practitioners can find patterns within cases and across institutional barriers, how social workers, the client, and the organization intersect in the processes of help, and how theories of human development, organizations, and community can be used for understanding practice directions. Not content with presentation of what is an approach to a model of unified practice, the authors use their “shared theoretical map” as a tool for learning, teaching, and supervision with students, staff and client groups. While this all appears to be a heavy dosage in one book, it cannot be emphasized enough that the intellectual rigor brought to the idea of the map, for example, has made its use relatively easy for the reader. The authors have done the necessary work of laying it all out and offering guidelines; the practitioner or teacher who takes advantage of this model, should find a great deal of relief in the fact that this expanded vision of practice with unerring specificity of focus is, at last, a theoretically based “how-to” book.

With full awareness that there can be no single practice text to govern all occasions, or to comply with the ideological requirements of all social workers, I think that this book will take its place as a solid, nonpedantic, and yet scholarly offering for those social workers who have been seeking a context

for their skills. They will not find a more honest, open or wise pair of social worker authors as their mentors.

Carol H. Meyer, DSW
Columbia University
School of Social Work

PREFACE

It has been 13 years since the publication of the first edition of this book. During this period, between the two of us, we have taught hundreds of students about ecological practice in the home-school-community arena. And indeed, these students have taught us more about the daily challenges and joys of such practice than perhaps, in retrospect, we anticipated. In their wisdom, these students have pointed out parts of the book that contributed to their success stories, and by their questions and the nature of their struggles, important areas that were missing from or were not addressed sufficiently in the first edition.

In fact, it may be that our ecosystems approach, by its very requirement that practitioners develop a holistic perspective, has facilitated students and colleagues in the range of helping professions to clarify some of these emerging gaps. Consequently, based on their insightful struggles, and the suggestion of a second edition from the publisher, we have attempted to address those gaps in this edition. We have added two completely new chapters, Chapters 15 and 16, focused on community development practice and social work administration. Those chapters have been written to highlight a range of new practice and social issues that have emerged in the last 13 years, or that were in existence then, but have changed significantly during that period.

For example, Chapter 15 provides social workers with knowledge about resource development through collaborative capacity-building practice at the community level, and demonstrates skills such as community planning, outreach to high-risk families and children, and obtaining funding for community- and home-based services to resolve substance abuse, family and community violence, economic, homelessness, health, and other problems. Chapter 16 describes how social work practitioners and administrators in the school and community can help to plan and implement integrated services programs for addressing such problems (with consumers as partners), while also managing the strain between empowerment practice at the clinical, administrative, and policy and systems change levels. We have also modified and updated some of the other chapters to enhance the second edition's util-

ity to students, practitioners, policymakers, and researchers in social work and other fields who are committed to effective practice in the school and community. We have maintained and added to the specific case, organizational, and community intervention examples that students have found to be so practical. Additional demonstrations of how practitioners can search for patterns and evaluate their practice through their journal entries and cognitive maps are included as well.

Carol Meyer and Frances Caple, authors of the foreword for the 1988 and 2002 editions of this book respectively, have characterized the first edition as representing a second generation of the ecosystems perspective. The first generation of this perspective includes Meyer's and others' conceptualizations of ecosystems theory, or the basic theoretical framework, while the second generation began with our practical applications of the theory to demonstrate mapping, joining, shared decision-making, and other key concepts in cases and programs. This new edition of the book may become a third generation of the perspective, because it addresses issues of long-term planning, institutionalization of systems changes, and how to further apply the client as expert concept.

This third reiteration of the ecosystems approach simply represents emerging ideas about best practices whose time has come. Those ideas have emerged because of our greater clarity about children and families' strengths and needs, and the interplay between those factors and the environment's capacity and commitment to match the needs with adequate resources and build on their strengths. All three generations of ideas anticipated future expectations, challenges, rewards, and the integrity required at the time they emerged. Hopefully, these ideas will continue to serve as a foundation for insights that current and future students will generate about best practices in the school and community arena, not as isolated practice wisdom and actions, but as part of a unified and consumer-driven holistic approach. As the authors of the second edition to this book, we hope this approach guides students' daily practice, and we anticipate and rejoice in the potential richness of their contributions to children and families, to the ecosystems and empowerment perspectives, and to school-community practice in general.

EDITH M. FREEMAN
MARIANNE PENNEKAMP

PREFACE TO FIRST EDITION

A mutual interest in practice with children and families brought us together in the writing of this book. Between us, we share many years of such practice in a variety of settings; our commitment to practice is, therefore, longstanding. As we became engaged in the teaching of practice and in consultation, we found that what we were teaching and what was being described in the literature did not mesh; apparently, we had moved beyond the focus of this literature to a different way of conceptualizing practice.

Historically, professional literature on work with children has been focused either in the child development context, or in the context of therapeutic work with children. The same pattern exists for work with families. Each of these areas in the literature has been a rich source of learning. What has been lacking thus far, however, is a way of conceptualizing such practice with sufficient breadth so that the view of events in childrens' and families' natural environments is not limited by the worker's point of access to those environments, as prescribed by his or her agency mission.

Our book, which emerged out of this process of thinking about practice, has the following purpose: To overcome the distance between workers and the natural environments of children and families, thereby enabling all of the stakeholders in the home/school/community arena to recognize and connect with each other in the task of enhancing childrens' development. It is our belief that such an approach leads to effective social work practice and occurs through four related processes:

(1) An exploration of the total ecological field involved in the lives of children, youth, and families.

(2) An understanding of the organizational regularities in human service agencies and of those processes which are characteristic of schools and other key agencies such as child welfare, probation, health and mental health, and family services.

(3) An analysis of the regularly occurring events—both developmental and crisis in nature—in the lives of children, youth, and families, which require effective communication between the various participants in the

home/school/community arena, including an analysis of the obstacles to such communication; and

(4) A search for approaches to practice which facilitate creative partnerships between all participants in this ecological field.

The ecological perspective encourages focus on all of the individuals and service systems in the child's life space, including parents, siblings, extended family members, peers, principals, teachers and other school staff, staff in social agencies, and individuals in churches, neighborhoods, and community organizations. The manner in which these individuals and systems are linked within the context of the child's current situation is essential knowledge for effective practice. The needs of children and adolescents will vary over time owing to developmental changes. Responses to their needs will also vary depending on the total environment's capacity to mobilize resources in a productive fashion. Such mobilization requires an active partnership to improve the needs/resources match for children. This partnership involves at the outset shared roles in defining the problems being faced. It proceeds through shared participation in assessment, planning, implementation, and monitoring. It pays attention to self-help and natural support networks as well as to professional helping in the child's life space.

Within that perspective, the dynamic qualities of all relevant organizations require careful attention. These organizations have a life of their own, and can be mapped ecologically to identify their interactive impact on all of the persons involved. This is in contrast to a more static view of organizations, which tends to address a narrow range of practical options for interventions. The regularities in organizations, particularly in the schools, can be better understood when viewed as part of the organizational environment. Work within these environments can benefit greatly from such awareness.

For the purpose of enhancing this type of awareness on the part of the reader, our book has been organized into three major sections: (1) "The Joining Process"; (2) "Reframing Daily Practice: Cases and Programs"; and (3) "Enhancing and Maintaining Oneself as a Resource: Focus on the Worker." Each section represents a step-by-step effort to give the reader a new perspective about this type of practice—from showing how to reposition oneself for effective joining, to the doing of practice by reframing referrals into opportunities for providing anticipatory guidance, to emphasizing how workers can maintain themselves as a resource to clients and to themselves. These three sections, which contain a total of twenty chapters, are preceded by an initial chapter that lays the foundation for some of our theoretical and practice assumptions. The book's conceptual material is integrated throughout all of the chapters but is summarized in the final chapter for each section, Chapters 8, 17, and 20.

In addition, specific case, organizational, and community-level examples are presented throughout the book to illustrate the conceptual and practice-related discussions. Another strength is the inclusion of several maps which demonstrate graphically various intra- and intersystem linkages that enrich the resources available to workers and clients. These maps help to highlight another significant asset: the book describes the real world of children, families, workers, agencies, and communities as it actually is, without oversimplification. But then it maps out effective ways of working in this world that do not overwhelm the reader.

Moreover, the worker's professional development and daily practice activities are carefully documented in the book's scenarios through log entries, the use of case and situation examples, and through a major section devoted to the worker's maintenance and growth (Section III of the book). The opportunities for self-guided learning that follow each chapter provide additional opportunities for the reader to experience, step by step, the same developmental processes which are described within each chapter.

Both these assets and the book's limitations are embedded in its perspective, in that it presents a new and challenging way of looking at practice. Thus, this book opens up new practice horizons as noted previously and sets the boundaries or outer limits of its perspective. For instance, it does not address the management of children's behavior problems in the traditional problem-oriented way. Similarly, while the book describes an approach to practice that is grounded in theories and their differential application in daily practice, it does not teach a particular theory or set of theories in an in-depth manner.

Nevertheless, we believe that this book is a useful tool for teaching students in graduate schools of social work. It may be particularly relevant to students in Family, Children, and Youth Specializations (see Chapter 18), and to courses on child welfare, juvenile justice, school social work, child guidance and mental health, family work, and practice with children and youth, as well as serving as a supplementary text for practice or methods courses.

Practitioners may also find this book to be useful: those "bridgers" who span the boundaries of the specialized practice areas listed above, and those who are skilled in one of these specialized areas. Although it has been written with the inexperienced and fairly new practitioner in mind, it can be equally useful to experienced practitioners who wish to rethink their way of practicing or who may be reaffirmed in their use of a practice stance not reflected in the current literature but presented in this book. It is appropriate for both informal use by practitioners and inservice education activities.

Finally, students and practitioners in related helping professions may find this book to be of practical value due to its focus across agency boundaries and its emphasis on interdisciplinary collaboration and practice. These professionals tend to be a part of the same stakeholder system as social workers

in their practice with children and families. They include psychologists, school counselors, psychiatrists, probation officers, nurses, and agency/school administrators.

For the two of us, writing this book has been an extremely creative and uplifting process because we have tried to do ourselves, basically, what we have asked the reader to do. This book is essentially about joining; so we ask the reader to join with us by adapting this perspective to his or her own personal style and needs . . . and then to go further.

EDITH M. FREEMAN
MARIANNE PENNEKAMP

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Many individuals supported and encouraged our work on this second edition to our book. First, we want to thank our publisher for continued support and patience regarding the completion of this edition. Dr. Frances Caple wrote the new Foreword for this edition, and with her insightful and historical commentary, has enriched this book immeasurably. We wish to acknowledge Howard Blousky and John DiCecco who provided creative stimulation for Chapters 15 and 16, which are new to this edition. Marla Sloop typed parts of the manuscript for this edition, and we thank her for that important contribution to our work.

We cannot conclude these acknowledgments without also expressing appreciation for our families; they are included last only because their influence on our work has been the most significant of all. Our love and thanks go to those who are no longer with us: Henk, Lynne, Ted, and David N.; as well as those who remain: Peter, Linda, Paul, Sean, Herb, David F., Meredith, Karen, and Gloria.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS TO FIRST EDITION

We wish to acknowledge many individuals who have contributed to the planning and completion of this book. Paula Meares and Paula Mintzies were initially involved in brainstorming ideas with us for an innovative text on practice with children and families. NASW, particularly Mark Battle and Isadora Hare, supported our efforts to utilize some of the research data which were also a primary source for that organization's *The Human Factor: A Key to Excellence in Education*. We are grateful to Sadye Logan and Antoinette Martin who read portions of the manuscript and provided us with invaluable feedback and encouragement in the process. Special thanks go to Carol Meyer for her reading of the manuscript and her enthusiastic, visionary comments. Margaret Smallwood patiently typed portions of the manuscript as well as helped in proofreading and editing the final draft. Chrystal Cunningham drew the tables and illustrations. The quotation by Alice Walker from *In Search of Our Mothers' Gardens* is reprinted by permission of Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, Inc.

Finally, we wish to especially thank our families for their support and forbearance during the writing of this book. This includes those who are no longer with us, Henk, Lynne and Ted, along with Peter, Linda, Paul, Sean, Herb, David, Meredith, and Karen.

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SOCIAL WORK PRACTICE

Chapter 1

TOWARD AN EXPANDED PRACTICE ARENA

Social workers, more than any other professional group, are positioned at the interfaces between persons and their environments. This book addresses the implications of this societal position for those choosing to practice in the home, school, and community arena. Currently, families and community members, as well as school and community agency staff, interact frequently on behalf of children and adolescents, but they may not be aware of how they influence each other or the children and adolescents they are concerned about. Such individuals and organizations can be called stakeholders due to their mutual involvement in meeting the needs of children and youth. This chapter explores ways to expand the vision of these stakeholders so that they can become more aware of each other and their shared responsibilities for the work to be done *with* children and youth. First, the nature of the current service network, which often does not include client-stakeholders, will be examined.

INSTITUTIONALIZED FRAGMENTATION OF SERVICES

The ecological perspective directs attention to common and uncommon human needs which surface in the natural environments of clients' daily lives (Meyer, 1976; Germain and Gitterman, 1980). It directs attention also to the mesosystems where those natural environments and the imposed environment overlap. Social workers, however, tend to encounter clients in the context of their practice settings (the imposed environment) around issues which these agencies typically address. Included are child welfare, child development, education, child guidance and mental health, pediatric issues, and issues of community control and juvenile justice. Even when potential clients are encountered in their natural environments, including their homes,

preschools and child care centers, schools, youth clubs and teen centers, their problems are usually viewed in terms of the agency's mission.

Agency outreach services, which typically extend further into the natural environments of the video parlor, shopping mall, informal recreation areas, and the streets, may still reflect the agency mission. This manner of viewing problems from the imposed environments of formal social agencies tends to fragment and distort workers' perceptions about needs, and can bias their decisions about how those needs should be addressed (Pincus and Minahan, 1973).

This book follows a number of publications which describe the ecological context of children's and families' lives (Constable, Flynn, & McDonald, 1996; Germain, 1985; Logan et al., 1986; Meyer, 1983; Winters and Easton, 1983; Meares et al., 1986). It addresses an issue which many struggle with: the absence of a well developed framework, appropriate structures and competent processes for meeting the needs of children, youth, and their families by matching those needs with resources in the least restrictive environment, i.e., as close as possible to the actual place where the needs exist, surface, and can be identified. The availability of resources close to the natural environments of children and families, in and of itself can promote preventive intervention (Spiegler et al., 1985; Nuehring et al., 1983; Hawkins and Salisbury, 1983). This is in contrast to the usual pattern in which a problem escalates until a referral for services is necessary. More accessible resources also facilitate the involvement of those directly affected by the potential problem as agents of prevention. Theoretically, such a formulation sounds very plausible. In practice, however, it may be very difficult to implement due to a paucity of related practice principles for guiding these actions, and due to the current structure of agency services (Apter, 1982; Whittaker et al., 1987).

There is a clear parallel between the situations of children, adolescents, and their families and the senior population and their families. Senior needs were highly fragmented also until seniors became spokespersons on their own behalf, used the vote, and organized. Children and adolescents cannot do any of these things, at least not without adult help. Adult help, for children and youth, means advocacy, legislative activity, and other organized interventions on behalf of their needs. Historically, for reasons to be discussed later in this chapter, the potential advocates for children and youth have often been, and continue to be, either unaware of each others' potential for cooperation or they actually blame each other for much of the trouble.

Moreover, there currently appears to be a fragmentation of concerns about children's problems-in-living and an inability to match resources with their needs as a result of that fragmentation. This includes the seemingly separate issues of child physical and sexual abuse, teen pregnancy and parenting, delinquency prevention, childhood and adolescent suicide, and substance

abuse by youngsters (Adams, 1976; Famiglietti et al., 1984; Spiegler et al., 1985; Matus and Reid, 1983; McCullagh, 1984) Equally important, issues such as the apparent inability of traditional education to prepare children of the poor and people of color for adulthood, the world of work, and full citizenship seem to have been pushed aside and fragmented. This struggle with fragmentation is apparent at all levels of society, and is frequently discussed as the stress of modern living which is experienced by all of those who are "under siege": beleaguered families with working mothers, single parent families, the child care establishment, schools that strive for excellence and an equitable standard for measuring what is appropriate education in a pluralistic society, and the public child welfare system and its counterpart in the private, nonprofit sector.

In this community context, the creation and coordination of services moves to center stage. This book, by focusing on the lives of children and youth in the total context of the home, school, and community in which their lives unfold, hopes, in a small way to direct social workers' attention to the possibilities of a nonfragmented service design and delivery.

The authors present ecomaps of the life spaces of children, adolescents, and their families (Meyer, 1983; Hartman, 1978) that include the home as well as the entire network of human service organizations involved, such as group day care for young children, schools, community agencies which formally and informally complement the home and school, and individual community members. These types of maps should assist interested professionals in gaining access to one another while also encouraging them to involve children, youth, and their families in a shared decision-making process around mutually-defined concerns.

Once these maps have been used to clarify the natural environments of clients, along with the imposed environment or the formal service network of agencies and helping professionals, it seems logical for those wishing to work in the world of children and their families to follow their potential clients into that world. This means following them into their routine life spaces where concerns surface, referrals may originate, potential resources may be located, and constraints and road blocks to effective services may become more obvious. In terms of constraints, for instance, the professional literature and much of popular journalism contain frequent reminders that the service delivery system to children, adolescents, and their families is a "nonsystem" or one without organized connections (Davidson and Rapp, 1976; McCullagh, 1984). Consequently, many individuals who are either currently or potentially in need may fall between the proverbial cracks. Institutionalized tensions exist between schools and families on the one hand, and schools and community agencies on the other hand. As a result, the typical home, school, and community agency relationship is a triangle with its problems of "who is with