

The Raising of America

EARLY CHILDHOOD AND THE FUTURE OF OUR NATION

The Raising of America, by the producers of *UNNATURAL CAUSES: Is Inequality Making Us Sick?*, is an ambitious documentary series and Public Engagement Campaign that seeks to reframe the way we look at early child health and development. It illustrates how a strong start for all our kids leads not only to better individual life-course outcomes (learning, earning, and physical and mental health) but also to a healthier, safer, better educated, more prosperous and equitable nation.

THE DOCUMENTARY SERIES | Video Release 2014, PBS Broadcast TBD

Opening Episode: *The Raising of America* 60 minutes

We all want what's best for our children, so why is child well-being in the U.S. so much worse than other rich nations? Why do we allow our most vulnerable children to fall so much further behind the median? How does the squeeze on young families and caregivers—the squeeze for time, money and resources—drip down on infants and young children and alter the wiring of their developing brains with potential long-term consequences?

This hour-long episode moves back and forth between the science of human development and the stories of families and communities struggling to provide the rich and responsive environments all children need to thrive—while too often hindered by social conditions and inequities which impede their every effort. It doesn't have to be this way. What initiatives and national priorities might enable all our children the opportunity for a strong start while building a more prosperous and equitable future for our nation?

Supporting Episodes 30 minutes each

ARE WE CRAZY ABOUT OUR KIDS? The Cost/Benefit Equation

Investing in high-quality early care and education pays for itself in many ways and many times over. This episode brings to life the classic economic studies of Perry Preschool and other initiatives conducted by Nobel laureate James Heckman, Arthur Rolnick and others which illustrate how we can either invest early for success or pay more for failure later. So, what is holding us back?

DNA IS NOT DESTINY: How the Outside Gets Under the Skin

New scientific discoveries reveal how the fetal environment and early childhood experience quite literally 'wire' the rapidly developing brain and other bio-regulatory systems, changing not our genes but the epigenetic 'volume controls' which turn genes on and off. These epigenetic changes can influence not only cognitive function but the self-regulation of emotions and behaviors, even the susceptibility to chronic diseases as we age.

ONCE UPON A TIME: When Childcare for All Wasn't Just a Fairytale

Just imagine how things might be different if, for the past four decades, all our children had access to high-quality early care and ed. It almost happened. Back in 1971, Congress passed a bill providing high-quality, universal childcare, home visiting and other services from birth to age five. Pres. Nixon's 11th hour veto marked the first time 'family values' was invoked to undermine pro-family and child initiatives. The veto marked a critical inflection point from our path towards a more inclusive nation to today's 'you're-on-your-own' society.

STRESSING OUT THE POOR? Building Community Resilience

Poverty takes a special toll on the lives of families and their young children, appropriating scarce psychic and material resources. The result is a pile-up of risk rather than an accumulation of advantage. Yet some poor communities are beginning to organize, not just to buffer the consequences of poverty, but for the resources and power to ensure access to opportunity structures that provide possibility and hope.

WOUNDED PLACES: Confronting Childhood PTSD in America's Shell-Shocked Cities

Too many of our children, especially children of color in neighborhoods of concentrated poverty, are exposed to adversity, violence, neglect and other forms of trauma and show symptoms similar to PTSD – except there is no 'post.' Traveling to Philadelphia and Oakland, this episode asks not "What's wrong with you?" but rather, "What happened to you?" and how can we help our traumatized children and neighborhoods heal.

The Raising of America developed out of a rigorous consultation with the field.

For a copy of the *Needs Assessment Report*, please visit: www.raisingofamerica.org/project#assessment

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Change the Conversation. It's Easier than You Think.

The Public Engagement Campaign

The Raising of America is being created in the context of a national Public Engagement Campaign to expand the debate about what we as a society can—and should—do to ensure every infant has an equal opportunity childhood.

Hundreds of Engagement Partners will use *The Raising of America* as a tool to change the conversation—because a strong start for all our kids leads not only to better individual life-course outcomes (learning, earning, and physical and mental health) but also to a healthier, safer, better educated, more prosperous and equitable United States.

Types of Screenings

Show *The Raising of America*:

- To staff, students, members, or constituents
- At trainings, workshops, or conferences
- To mobilize partners and build alliances across sectors
- As part of town hall meetings or policy briefings
- To lift up local initiatives and policies and engage media

Change the Conversation

Ask new questions:

- What do babies “remember”?
- How does the outside literally get under the skin?
- Why is it that some of the best parenting programs have nothing to do with parents at all?
- How might concentrated power and wealth harm children?
- Why, when we know so much, do we as a nation do so little?

The Companion Website

- Interactive Magazines:** Our Babies, Families, and Society
- Downloadable/Shareable** clips, interactives and resources
- The Action Toolkit:** Move beyond watching to using video as a tool
- Discussion Guides** for each episode
- Policy Guide** to advance early child health and development
- Promotional** templates
- Social Media:** 10 things to do in under 10 minutes

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- **Become a Campaign Partner:** www.raisingofamerica.org/join-campaign
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