Contents

Preface xi

About the Author xvii

PART ONE: THE SOCIOLOGICAL STUDY OF CHILDHOOD 1

1. Social Theories of Childhood 5

Sociology's Rediscovery of Childhood 5

Traditional Theories: Socialization 7

The Deterministic Model: Society Appropriates the Child 7

The Constructivist Model: The Child Appropriates Society 9

Interpretive Reproduction: Children Collectively Participate in Society 18

Language and Cultural Routines 19

From Individual Progression to Collective Reproductions: The Reproductive Nature of Children's Evolving Membership in Their Culture 23

The Orb Web Model 24

Children's Two Cultures 26

Summary 27

2. The Structure of Childhood and Children's Interpretive Reproductions 29

Assumptions of the Structural Perspective 29

Childhood as a Structural Form 30

Effects of Societal Forces on Childhood 30

Children's Activities and Contributions to Society 33

Childhood, Children's Activities, and Interpretive Reproduction in Peer Culture 43
Three Kinds of Collective Action 44
Summary 46

3. Studying Children and Childhood 47
Macrolevel Methods 48
Demographic Studies 48
Large-Scale Surveys 49
Historical Methods 51
Microlevel Methods 52
Individual and Group Interviews 52
Ethnography and Sociolinguistic Analysis 53
Nontraditional Methods in Studying Children 58
Ethical Issues in Researching Children's Lives 62
Summary 63

PART TWO: CHILDREN, CHILDHOOD, AND FAMILIES IN HISTORICAL AND CULTURAL CONTEXT 65

4. Historical Views of Childhood and Children 67
Philippe Ariès's Centuries of Childhood 68
The Debate Regarding Grand-Stage Theories of the Family and Childhood 70
The New History of Childhood 73
Barbara Hanawalt's Growing Up in Medieval London 75
Slave Children in the Pre–Civil War South 78
American Pioneer and Immigrant Children at the Turn of the 20th Century 81
Summary 88

5. Social Change, Families, and Children 91
Examining Changes in Families From the Children's Perspective 91
Children's Everyday Lives in Families 92
Studies of Families in Western Societies 93
Studies of Families in Non-Western Societies 100
The Effects of Recent Socioeconomic Changes on Families, Children, and Childhood in Western Societies 103
The Rapid Decline of Two-Parent Farm Families and Rise of Father Worker–Mother Homemaker Families 104
The Decline in Family Size 105

The Rise in Mothers' Labor Force Participation 106
The Rise in Single-Parent Families 110
Changing Perspectives of the American Family 111
Racial and Ethnic Diversity of the Population of Children and Youth 113
The Lives of Immigrant Children 114
The Effects of Recent Socioeconomic Changes on Children and Childhood in Developing Societies 119
Summary 121

PART THREE: CHILDREN'S CULTURES 125

6. Children's Peer Cultures and Interpretive Reproduction 127
Examining Peer Culture From Children's Perspective 127
Central Importance of Peer Culture in Interpretive Reproduction 128
Parental Versus Peer Effects on Children's Development 129
Children's Transition to Initial Peer Cultures 129
Symbolic Aspects of Children's Cultures 133
The Media 133
Literature and Fairy Tales 137
Mythical Figures and Legends 139
Material Aspects of Children's Cultures 145
Historical Studies of Children's Material Culture 147
Marketing Studies of Children's Material Culture 149
Children, Parents, and Consumer Culture 151
Summary 154

7. Sharing and Control in Initial Peer Cultures 157
Central Themes in Children's Initial Peer Cultures 158
Friendship, Sharing, and Social Participation 159
Play Routines Among Toddlers 160
The Protection of Interactive Space and Children's Early Friendships 164
Language, Sharing Routines, and Rituals 169
Autonomy and Control in Peer Culture 174
Sociodramatic Role-Play 174
Challenging Adult Authority 182
Confronting Confusions, Fears, and Conflicts in Fantasy Play 186
Summary 194

8. Conflict and Differentiation in the Initial Peer Culture 197
Conflict and Peer Relations 197
Discussion, Debate, and Peace in Italian Preschools 198
Oppositional Talk in a Head Start Center 202
Conflict and Friendship in an American Upper-Middle-Class Preschool 205
The Contextual Nature of Conflict and Community 207
Social Differentiation in Initial Peer Cultures 207
Gender Differentiation 208
Race and Race Differentiation 215
Status Differentiation 216
Summary 224

9. Preadolescent Peer Cultures 225
Peer Cultures in Preadolescence 226
Friendship Processes in Preadolescent Peer Cultures 226
Social Participation and Friendships 227
Social Differentiation and Friendships 228
Social Differentiation, Friendships, Gender, Race, and Ethnicity 229
Autonomy and Identity in Preadolescent Peer Cultures 235
Verbal Routines, Games, and Heterosexual Relations 236
Disputes, Conflict, Friendships, and Gender 244
Verbal Disputes and Conflict in Peer Relations 246
Borderwork in Cross-Gender Relations 250
Challenging Adult Authority and Norms 254
Generation M: Electronic Media in the Lives of Preadolescents and Adolescents 255
Patterns in Media Use 255
Effects and Process of Media Use in the Lives of Preadolescents and Adolescents 260
Summary 271

PART FOUR: CHILDREN, SOCIAL PROBLEMS, AND THE FUTURE OF CHILDHOOD 275

10. Children, Social Problems, and the Family 279
Changing Family Structures and Children's Lives 279
Work, Families, and Childhood 280
Working Mothers and Young Children 280
Social Policy Regarding Maternity and Family Leave 282

Social Policy Regarding Child Care and Early Childhood Education 284
Divorce and Its Effects on Children 286
Patterns in Divorce and Economic Consequences for Women and Children 287
Social and Psychological Effects of Divorce on Children 291
Child Abuse in the Family 297
Summary 303

11. Children, Social Problems, and Society 305
Poverty and the Quality of Children's Lives 305
Problems and Progress in Developing Countries 305
Poverty and Child Labor in Developing Countries 312
Child Poverty in Industrialized Countries 315
Variations in Child Poverty and Quality of Life in Industrialized Countries 320
The Human Faces of Poverty: The Story of Nicholas 324
Teen Pregnancy and Nonmarital Births 327
Trends in Teen Nonmarital Births 328
Possible Causes of Trends in Teen Nonmarital Births 331
Consequences for Teen Parents and Their Children 338
Violence, Victimization, and the Loss of Childhood 340
The Profound and Inspiring Resilience of Children and Youth in Highly Challenging Life Circumstances 352
Summary 354

12. The Future of Childhood 357
The Major Challenges 360
Confronting Child Poverty in the United States 360
Combating Child Poverty in Developing Countries 367
Some More Modest Proposals to Enrich Children's Lives 369
Enhancing the Lives of Families and Children 369
Supporting Families and Children at Risk 386
Acting Right Now 392
Conclusion 393

Glossary 395

References 403

Index 457