



 International
Inequalities Institute

Parents, Poverty and the State

#LSECare

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Matthew Taylor

Chief Exec of RSA

Chair: Professor John Hills

Richard Titmuss Professor of Social Policy Department of Social Policy

Thursday 10th October 2019 6.30pm to 8.00pm, Hong Kong Theatre, Clement House

No Ticket Required

Parents, Poverty and the State

Government's role?

Naomi Eisenstadt and Carey Oppenheim

LSE 10th October 2019

Growing role of government in family life: supporting parents and parenting

Reduce pressures

Rights and legal protection

Financial support

Support in kind

Access to maternity and paternity leave

Flexible working and childcare

Targeted benefits

Enhance capabilities

Information and guidance

Skills and training

Intervention

All families

Before and after birth, midwife and health visitor support

early years provision

Some families who seek help

Parenting initiatives

Highest Risk Families

Troubled families programme

Family Nurse Partnerships

Changing landscape: economy

GDP (Average) per head, year on year growth rate CVM SA
%



Source:

Changing landscape: families

Family type with children	1997	2017
Opposite sex married couple	70%	62%
Cohabiting couple family	8%	16%
Lone parent family	22%	22%

Increasing but still small numbers of gay & lesbian parent families, increasing numbers of blended families

Changing landscape: growing employment

	1997	2017
Fathers in couple family in work	88%	92%
Mothers in couple family in work	68%	74%
Lone parents in work	45%	68%

Increasingly both parents working when children are under 5

Changing landscape: in work but still poor

% of poor children in households by economic status	1997	2017
At least 1 adult in work	44%	67%
Workless	56%	33%

Black and minority ethnic groups – higher rates of poverty and poorer employment prospects

Parenting



What do children need?

Focus is on children's cognitive, social-emotional development

Relationship between family resources (income, education, occupation, class) and child outcomes

***Early* childhood matters**

Inequalities in development by socio-economic group emerge early

Each phase of childhood/adolescence has key milestones, risks, opportunities

What makes a difference?

Income poverty – directly in terms of ability to buy goods, services & indirectly - low income increases stress

Parents matter at least as much as money. A good home learning environment is associated more strongly with child outcomes than income, education or class.

Parents' - especially mothers' - educational background and their mental health - particularly important for how children fare.

Relationships matter, not only parent – child – but between parents. Good relationships between parents in intact or separated families is a protective factor for children.

What has government done?

Labour

- **Childcare and Early Education**
- **Sure Start**
- **Every Child Matters**
- **Children's Fund**
- **Connexions**
- **Child poverty targets**
- **Tax credits**
- **Minimum wage**

Coalition

- Improvements in flexibility of parental leave
- Pupil premium
- Troubled Families
- Early Intervention Foundation
- Education Endowment Fund
- Universal Credit
- **Austerity**

Conservatives

- Expansion of childcare
- WW Centre-Children's Social Care
- Investment in CAMHs & relationship support
- Focus on workless families impact on child outcomes
- Universal Credit
- **Austerity**

Key features

- Labour:
 - reducing pressures & increasing capabilities
 - growing economy until 2008
 - focus on children & families
- Coalition & Conservatives:
 - increasing capabilities while increasing pressures
 - austerity
 - focus on pensioners, schools, health

Growing role of state in family life

- **Conservative 1997 Manifesto: minimize unnecessary interference in family life**
- **Conservative ex-Secretary of State for Education, Damian Hinds, 2019:**
‘If we are serious about social mobility ...we have to care about the home learning environment because it is going to determine the futures of a lot of those children.’

(Guardian 17th June 2019)

But different views on causes, measuring high risk – poverty + disadvantages

Social Exclusion Task Force: money, housing, mothers mental health

DWP: workless families, family breakdown, problem debt, substance misuse

Adverse Childhood Experiences: retrospective; experiences in childhood influence adult outcomes

Children's Commissioner vulnerability measures

Move from mix of systems and behavioural problems to greater emphasis on behavioural problems;

All useful for service planning but can be unhelpful for individual assessment.

Some policies do work.....

Consistent evidence on benefits of high quality early education

**Consistent evidence that mothers and fathers spend more time with their children
(although SES gap in time spent remains)**

Education attainment gap narrowing, but at a very slow rate

Most minority groups doing well at school but continuing employment penalty

Some effective early intervention programmes – challenge of replication

Income transfers reduced child poverty; benefit cuts increase child poverty

Tensions to be managed

Understanding a problem is not solving it; implementation is much harder than design

UK, National, local, neighbourhood? Top down or bottom up?

Targeting, open-access or universal services?

Behavioural interventions and/or systems reform?

Where next?

Reduce child poverty & grow capabilities

Key entitlements: what every child, family, individual can expect from the state

A public health approach: prevention, early intervention & tailored responses to high risk

Flexibility to respond to dynamic nature of family life over life course

Transparent & regular data collection to learn & respond

Where next?

Finding the right balance: service interventions, income transfers and employment/labour market

Solutions that address inequality as well as poverty

Understanding the new realities for today's children and young people

Creating a future as good for the next generation as was done for me

Join us for a drink at

Basement
LSE Garrick Café
Houghton Street





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