



Assessment Component 2 Written Essay

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Introduction

Inequalities in children, young people and families caused by social, economic, and environmental factors where the individuals live can impact their health such as, ethnicity, income, housing, and being looked after by societies. That is why it is important to deal with the issues before the problems increase. Since children are not able to express their emotions it is therefore, the parent or legal guardians responsibility to ensure that child is safe from harm, abuse and neglect. This is essay will discuss childhood social construction and compare there meaning among the United Kingdom and Bolivia as well as, discuss how social construction has changed from historical times to present day. Furthermore will explain some key elements of family life as well as the different structures of family raising their children also, will discuss interventions that have helped improve the well being of children and families.

Definition and Social Construction of Childhood

A social construct of childhood is a concept that is created by society that the child lives in not by referring to a child's age (My Tutor, 2013). In the united kingdom, it is the society that determines when the child reaches an age of legal requirements and that is once the child reaches each stage for example. Birth, toddler, pre-school, junior, adolescence then into adulthood. At the same time, a Child is seen as being innocent nerveless innocence makes the child vulnerable to the adult world therefore, laws of protection and protection showed by parents where their parents provide and care for them is a legal requirement by the society (social science pgce learning development, n.d.). Moreover, Children in the UK have very few responsibilities for example a child is expected to play which helps with their development and growth, and are considered part of a family, as well as to attend school and receive an education. In addition to this concept, in the UK there are legal restrictions that separate the child from adults to illustrate; a child under the age of 14 years should not be working unsupervised as the child is still developing and not yet responsible to take on big tasks. In addition to this to be legal to drive an individual needs to be aged 17 years, the legal requirement to drink alcohol is 18 years, and finally, the age of sexual consent is at 16 years (Thompson, 2015). On the other hand, across other countries such as, Bolivia the age at which a child transitions into an adult are different compared to children in the UK.

Bolivia is considered to be among one of the poorest countries in the world particularly in rural areas where poverty affects a child's quality of life, therefore, limits the child's fundamental rights such as access to education, clean drinking water, also, having the right to live in an environment that permits personal development. As a result, the laws of education in Bolivia see children in rural areas have only 2 years at school whereas, a child in the city can complete 14 years of education. Children as young as 5 years are expected to do some kind of tasks around the home to help their family such as preparing and serving food, cleaning the home, and feeding the farm animals whereas, a child of 10 years is expected to work more challenging and dangerous jobs for example, working in mines. Because of poor levels of poverty, children are forced into the labour market from an early age (Humanium, n.d.). In addition to this a child are expected to work more than play in rural areas of Bolivia. Punch, (2000) noted if the child did not complete his/her chores parents would discipline the child in the forms of smacking, smacking with an object such as a branch, and some cases the child has beaten additionally, the child is threatened by a superstition called the Duende (dwarf) a belief that the Duende are "rebellious souls of children who had died without being christened" and could only be seen by children (Punch, 2000) this was used as a control mechanism to persuade the children to work and play less.

Key elements of family life

The definition of family varies worldwide for instance, societies of some countries make it hard for social structures and relationships to happen. In the United Kingdom Family structure has changed considerably over the years meaning it is more diverse whereas, in old times and still in some countries today same-sex marriages were/are prohibited (Blessing, 2011). However, in current times a family is defined as two or more people related by marriage, birth, or adoption. The family is considered the prime agent of socialization of the child which means the family in the household must teach the child basic norms and values in addition families in the household must share care duties and tend to the care needs of the child and offer stability in a safe loving home (simple sociology, n.d.).

Overall, there are different types of family structures for example, a nuclear family consisting of two adults and their children is considered the most common structural family however, in current times family norms have extended the way families live and raise children together. Other structured families are single-parent families consisting of one parent and child or children however single-parent families can find living a struggle if they have no support or childcare which could affect their financial state, extended families consist of two or more adults related by blood or marriage such as aunts, uncles, cousins, and grandparents living

together working towards common goals such as raising children and home duties. Families without children (forgotten family), stepfamilies, and grandparent families (skipped generation family) (Blessing, 2011) are also within what makes a structured family. Evan, (2016) acknowledged there have been an increase in same-sex marriages by 40% since 2015 following the legalisation of same-sex marriage in England, Wales, and Scotland in 2014.

Social construction of childhood from historical times to current times

During historical times childhood did not exist after the stage of infancy and was referred to as 'it' rather than given a name. Children were not treated any differently from an adult they were exposed more to abuse, alcohol, sexual content, and hard labour. The lack of safeguarding and prevention impacted child abuse and some cases even death especially due to financial hardships where children are forced to work in dangerous situations. In addition, Children as young as 5 were forced into the labour market and were expected to contribute to the family just like an adult despite being paid less furthermore, children worked in dangerous and life-threatening conditions as a result, children developed many health conditions such as lung cancer, burn-out the children developed from working long hours therefore, causing accidental death from machinery. In addition to this young girls as young as 14 worked as a prostitute to help their families (Social science pgce learning development, n.d.). There was an early attempt to ban child labour however, this was not successful, but it did introduce the Factory Act 1802 the act required children to work fewer hours, and basic cleanliness, and clothing for the child (History of Western, civilization, n.d.).

Another social construction in early historical times was only the children of wealthy families attended school however, In 1870 a law was made mandatory for all children to attend school not just for the wealthy children. Although, some parents decided to keep their children at home as they were seen as money-makers (Victorian Children, 2014).

Gradually, in 1889 several social policies involved in child welfare protection such as the March of Progress established some laws to prevent child neglect this was 1889-The

prevention of cruelty towards children Act this Act gave police the entry rights to make arrests if a child was seen to be abused or neglected (Thompson, 2020). Moreover, NSPCC was also established in the same year.

In recent years children are now protected from hardships from adulthood, and social ideals, and cultural norms have, therefore, shaped how the social construction of childhood has changed. Additionally, there have been several changes since the early 19th century children of today are now protected from hardships, and social ideals, and cultural norms have shaped social construction on childhood. Nevertheless, there have been several changes since the 19th century. The March of Progress has helped changed how childhood is defined since the 19th century around the 20th century focused more on child-centred care. As a result, Factory Acts restricted children from working hard labour, today children are only allowed to work at 16 years. Furthermore, the 1880 Education Act made it compulsory for children aged 5-18 years to receive an education. Legislations that protect children from harm put into place restrictions that separate children from adulthood such as no paid work until aged 14, the age of sexual consent is 16 years, and alcohol restrictions at 18 years. In today's times, the rights of the child such as the United Nations Charter from 1989 gave rights to a child rights to be heard and rights to education, rights to an identity, and the right not to be exploited are just some examples (Thompson, 2020). Moreover, today's world has many child welfare policies such as social services which safeguard and protect children from harm and approach child-centred care on the child's well-being.

Factors which have contributed in changing the lives of children and reducing inequalities including policy and legislation.

There are various factors, including policy and legislations that have contributed to changing the lives of children as well as, reducing inequalities, like the UNCRC Convention on the rights of child which was published in 1989 and have worked with countries all around the world to make sure the government uses these child's rights and everyone who is involved with children (Department for Education, 2010). Rights of the child include, civil rights and freedom, violence against children, family environment as well as, alternative care, basic health and welfare, education, leisure and cultural activities and special protection measures additionally, The Children's Act 1989 and 2004- was introduced to change the welfare concerns on the child. The child's wishes and feelings must be taken into account when making decisions that affect them. The Children's Act 2004- every child matters (themj,n.d.), The equality Act 2010- protects children and young people from discrimination, harassment,

victimisation, The child poverty Act 2010- improve access to education, healthcare, and affordable housing to low income families (gov.uk,2010), CAMHS- reduces and protect children and adolescents with mental health inequalities (Khanal, et al, 2021). The sure start programme- offering a range of support services such as, health services, parenting support, access to childcare and early education (Institute for Fiscal Studies, n.d.).

There are several policies that have helped change how children are treated in society offering help and advice to improve the care and well-being of children such as, Education article 28 Education is a key aspect of a child's life, development, as well as, reducing poverty and child labour. Life skills such as, teaching a child how to make balanced decisions in life and how resolve arguments or conflicts without resulting to violence. Moreover, its important for a child to take on responsibilities and critical thinking and form healthy relationships which will help the child develop as they grow into adulthood (Rights Respecting Schools Award, n.d.).

Interventions and Support to help Children, Young people and Families

Early intervention

Early help highlights the importance to intervene to a problem which involves vulnerable children and their family before the situation escalates to improve outcome and inequalities for the child. Intervening early reduces the need for child protection to take charge additionally, early help supports children to reach their full potential which helps the child in their family and home life as well as to perform well at school, develops their skills and strenghts to prepare them for the life ahead (NSPCC, 2019).

Mentoring programmes: with reliable role models where a child can build trusting relationships with by offering support and a safe place to discuss the child's concerns positive behaviours can improve a child's self-confidence and mental well-being.

Parenting programmes: offers a positive long term affects to improve parents relationships with their children and offering support to enable parents to develop their nurturing skills to raise their child successfully (Incredible Years, n.d.).

Education and training programmes:

Learning programmes for parents boosts their confidence as well as, improve or learn new skills to help them become employable this can also, help them better financially to support

themselves and child as a result can reduce their loneliness, makes the parent and child happier, healthier, capable, overall a better loving family home.

Conclusion

Professionals in the care system should continue to offer early help to children and families because it can contribute to the children's and families' health and well-being. By offering programmes such as parenting programmes, mentoring programmes, education programmes, and learning programmes, we can help the parent be a better parent, have good relationships with the child, and teach them different parenting techniques to improve their parenting skills and overall outcomes in the home and the child's safety. This way, by providing early help, it can prevent child protection from being involved and the risk of the child being taken away from their families.

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