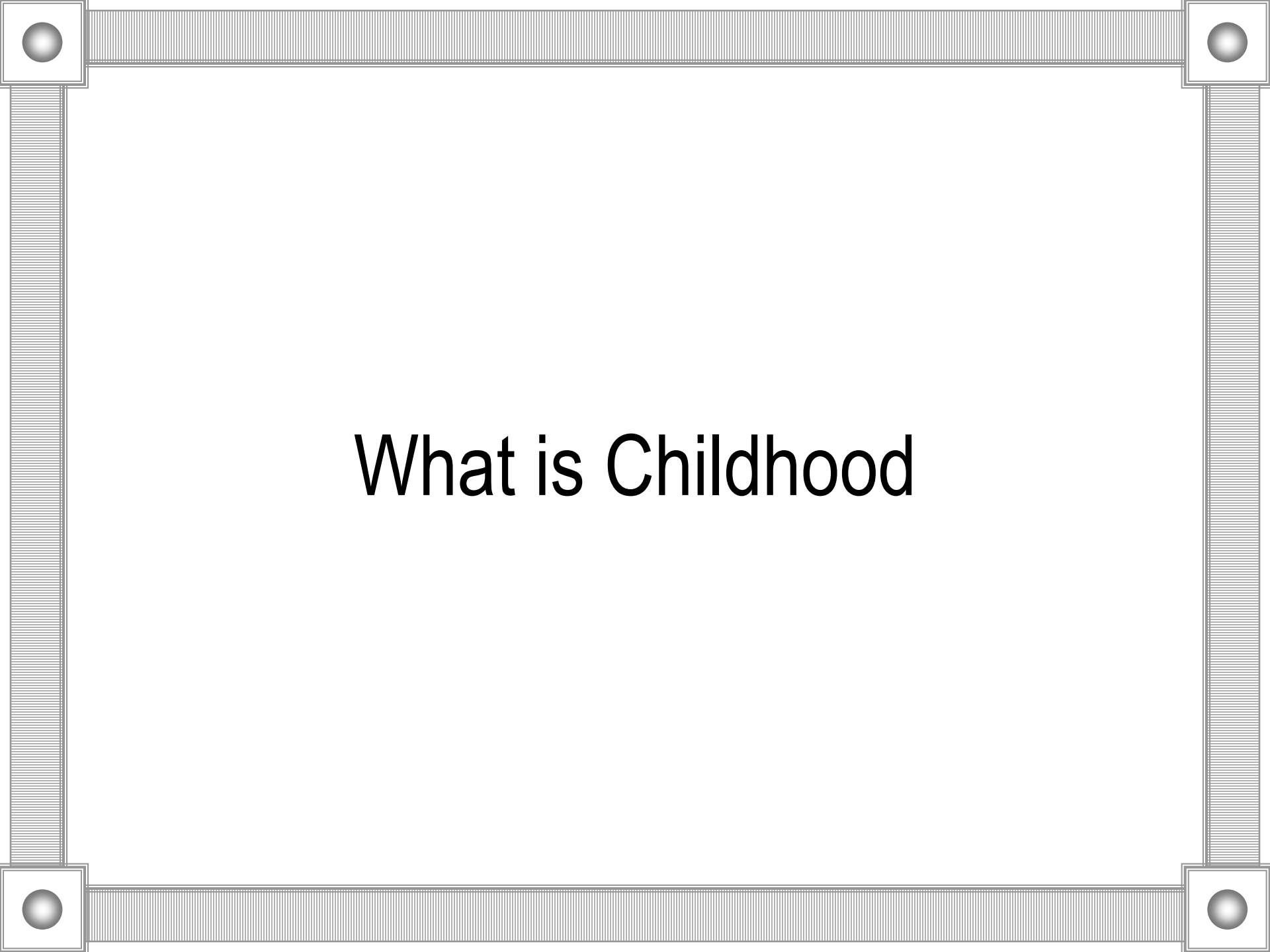
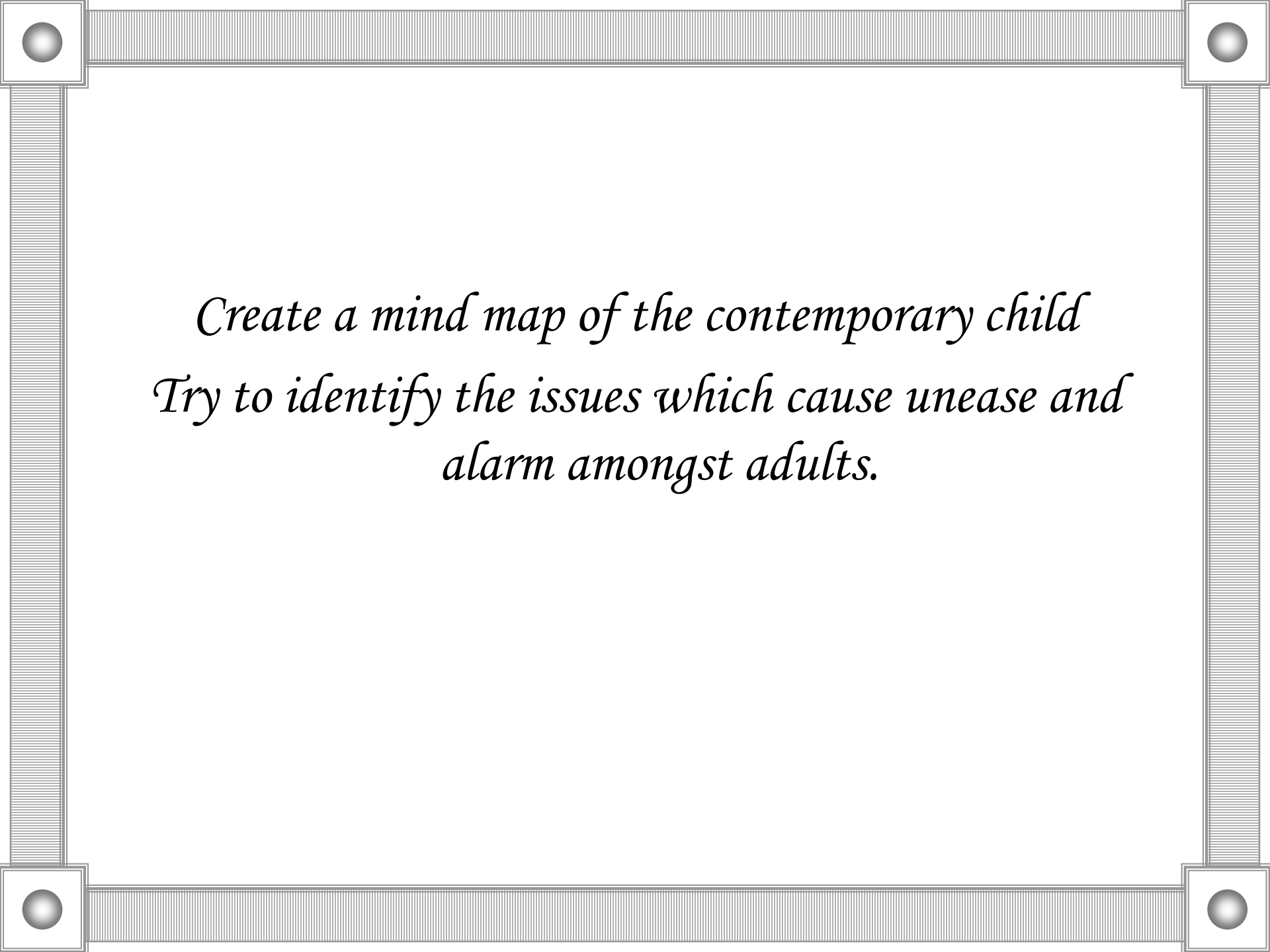
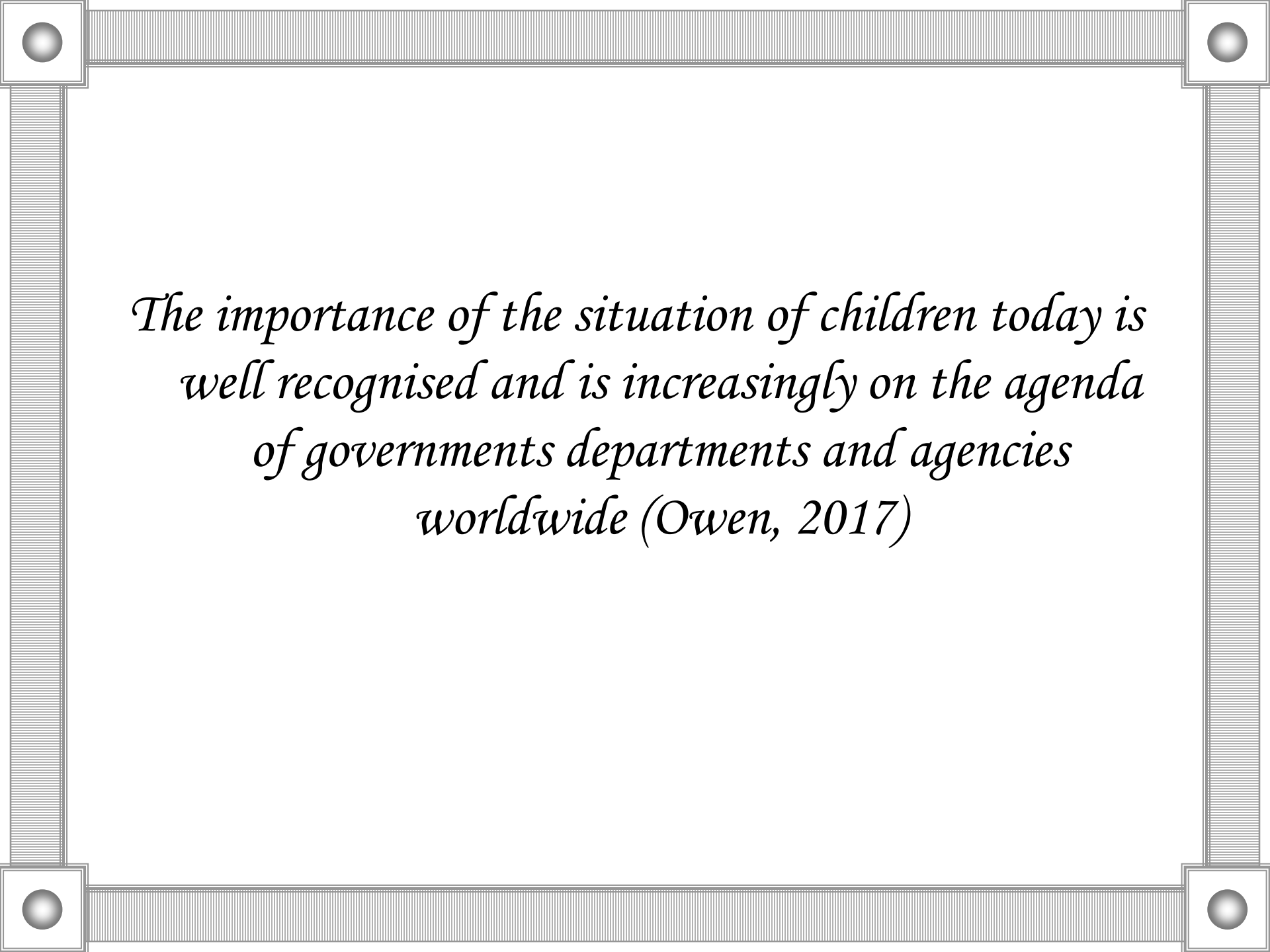




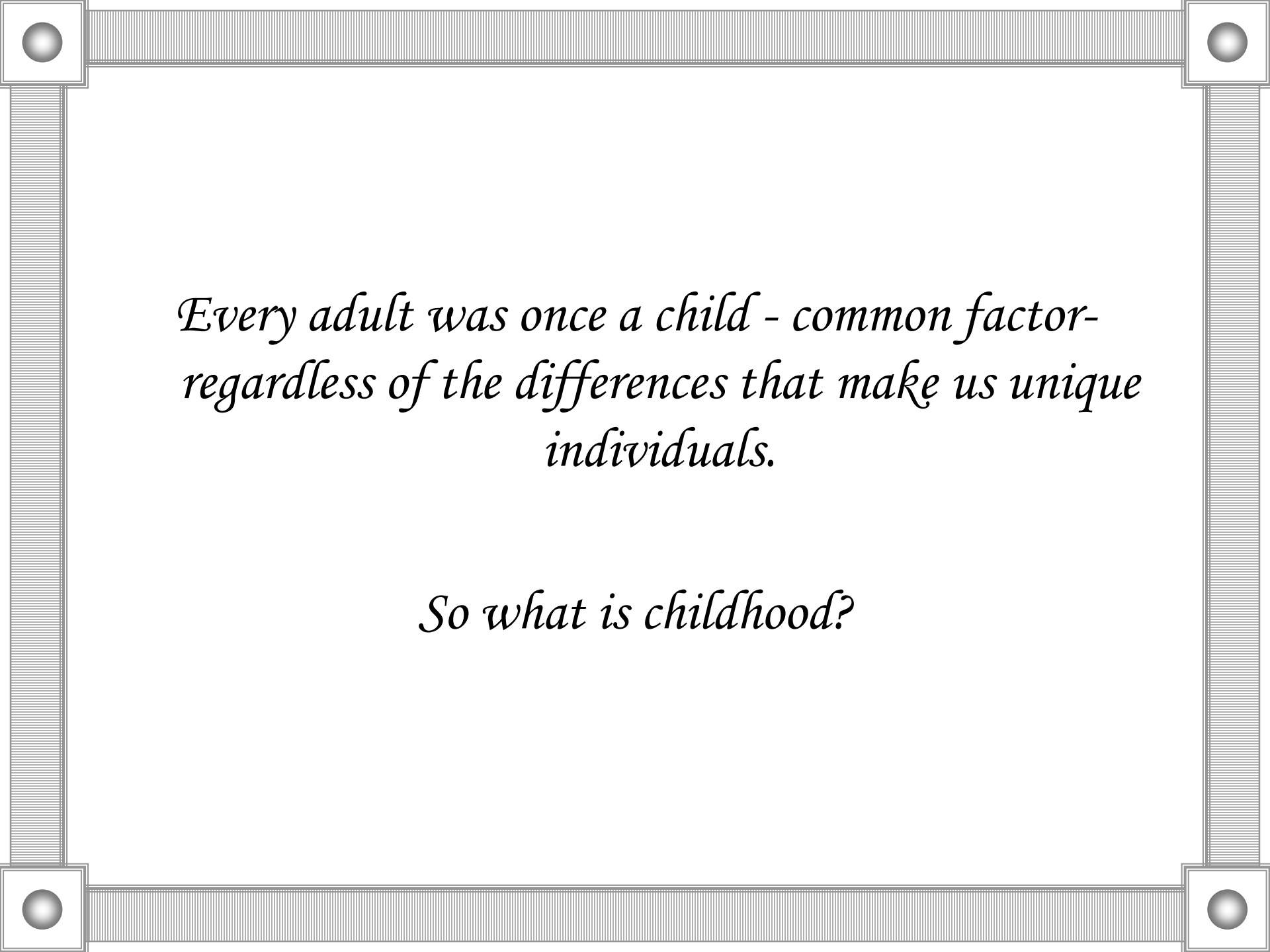
What is Childhood



*Create a mind map of the contemporary child
Try to identify the issues which cause unease and
alarm amongst adults.*

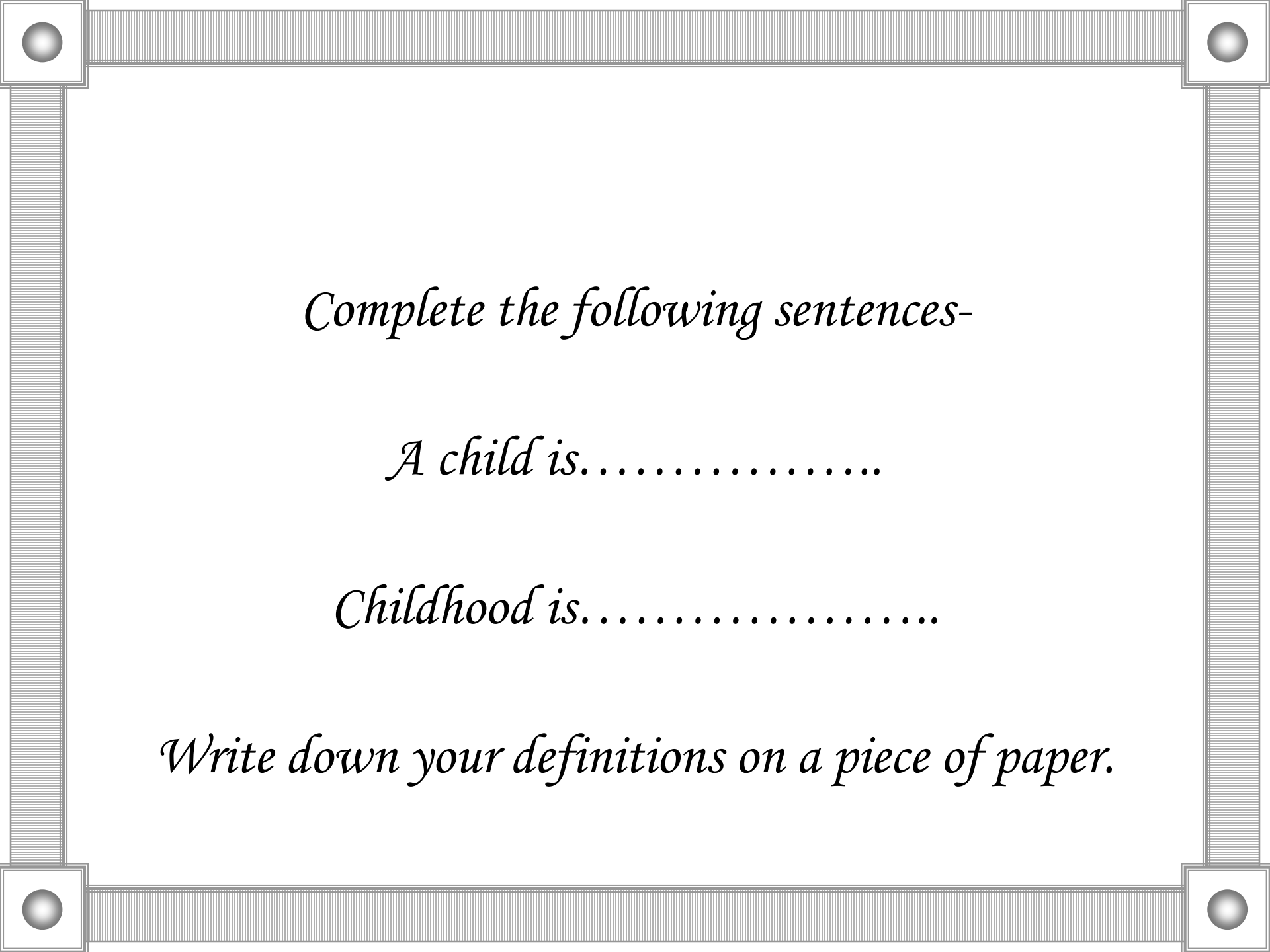


The importance of the situation of children today is well recognised and is increasingly on the agenda of governments departments and agencies worldwide (Owen, 2017)



*Every adult was once a child - common factor-
regardless of the differences that make us unique
individuals.*

So what is childhood?



Complete the following sentences-

A child is.....

Childhood is.....

Write down your definitions on a piece of paper.

Common responses are:

A child is a small being who is not yet fully grown.

A child is someone who is still learning.

*A child is a young person who is developing socially,
emotionally, physically and cognitively.*

*A child is someone in the vulnerable stage of life when they
are still developing*

Child grows - regarded as adult not a child.

When are they grown?

Are there discrepancies?

When are they able to look after themselves?

Key Personal Milestones

Think about:

- 1) You were given consent to walk to school independently*
- 2) You were allowed to stay home or had the 'key to the door'*
- 3) You learned to drive, left school, left home*
- 4) You began to socialise more with friends outside the family*

(Oliver and Pitt 2011)

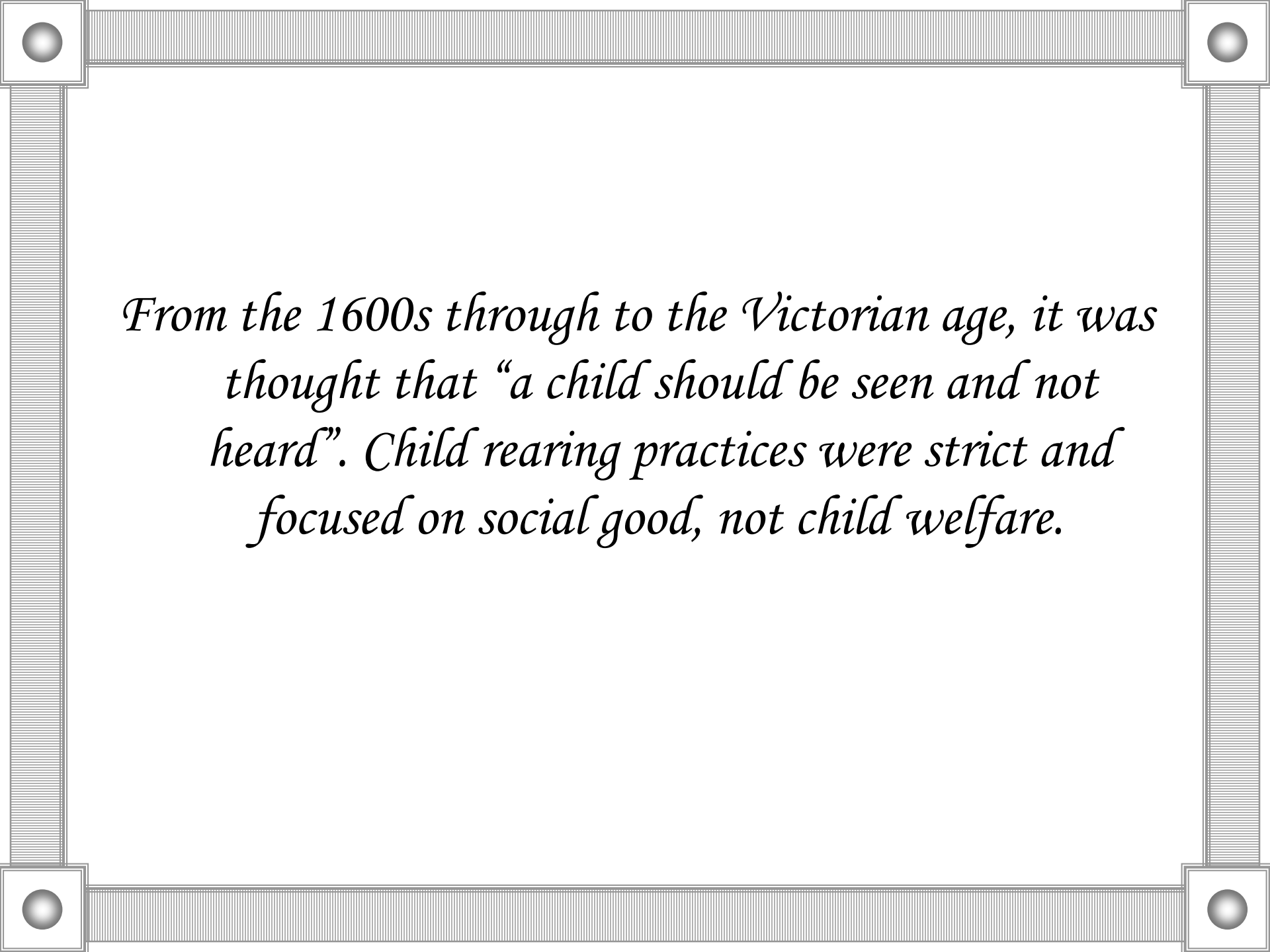
Childhood as a social construction

Hard to determine what we mean when we use the word 'child', even more difficulty occurs with an attempt to define 'childhood'.

Look in a dictionary - find something along the lines of- childhood: the state of being a child (Chambers dictionary)

*Wagg (1992:10)cited in Clark (2010) explains
‘Childhood like so many other vitally important
aspects of social life-gender, health, youth and so
on [is] socially constructed. It [is] in other words,
what members of particular societies, at particular
times on particular places, say it is’.*

*Aries (1962) cited in Oliver and Pitt (2011)
investigated the construct of childhood and argues
that babies and infants were cared for in terms of
their biological needs, but once they were able to
look after themselves they were quickly treated as
adults.*



From the 1600s through to the Victorian age, it was thought that “a child should be seen and not heard”. Child rearing practices were strict and focused on social good, not child welfare.

In the 1920s the scientific method of child rearing was popularized by self-styled child development experts like Myrtle Meyer Eldred who advised children be taught to “self-sooth” left to cry in a cot and not held.

The post war boom created the nuclear family. A generation of children was showered with material goods as substitute for actual time and attention.

By 1970s child development experts like Dr Benjamin Spock advocated a relaxed disciplinarian style where children would find their own moral values and learn things in their own time.

Aries argued that words such as 'child' would be used for any age and that the term adolescent did not exist in pre modern times.

De Mause (1974) cited in Oliver and Pitt (2011) would concur with this arguing that levels of childcare can be seen as progressively worse the further you look in history. He discussed periods such as infanticide followed by abandonment and ambivalence toward children.

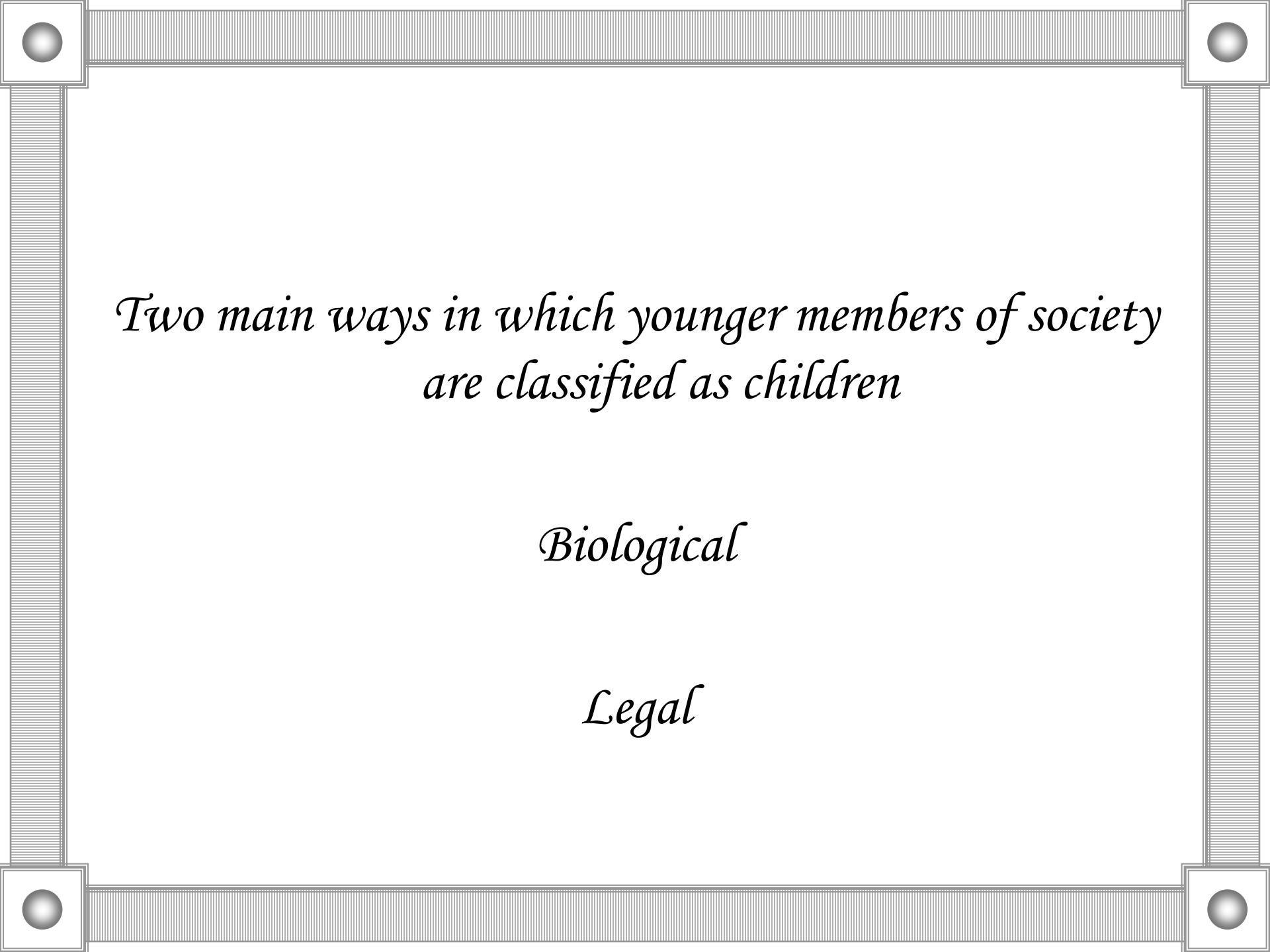
Due to high mortality rates parents did not risk the emotional damage that occurs as a result of infants and babies dying so were emotionally neutral

Classifying the social category of childhood

No universal agreed definition of childhood.

Who is regarded as a child depends upon

Social, cultural and economic factors.



*Two main ways in which younger members of society
are classified as children*

Biological

Legal

Many events in life are age dependant.

*Think of as many activities as you can that are governed by
age*

*Is there any logical development between these different
ages?*

*Do they represent things that you gradually develop the
appropriate skills and judgment to undertake? Or do they
seem to be arbitrary decisions?*

*2001 age consent applied to all young people.
Prior to this was an offence gay men to have sex
until age 21 years.*

*Victorian belief was that young men were more
vulnerable to unwanted attention of older men
than young girls.*

*View stemmed ideas class and gender outdated to
contemporary minds.*

*Law challenged by a 16 year old who took case
European Court Human Rights claiming a right to
enjoy a sexual relationship without fear of
criminal prosecution.*

Result was age consent equalised for all.

*END OF WEEK ONE TO BE CONTINUED
NEXT WEEK*

Please consider for next week

Is modern society ruining childhood?

Discuss the issue of 'disappearing' childhood with your peers?

Compare the lifestyle of a child you know well today with your own experiences as a child.

Watching television used to be a family event nowadays there is a tendency for individuals to watch on their own individual devices, How do you think this affects information children receive?

Do you think it reasonable to claim that children no longer experience childhood? Or are they just growing up in different circumstances?

Who is it that wants the child to remain 'childlike'?

Why might this be?

Childhood in context

Protection: is childhood a garden where children frolic and play or a prison a social space within which children are confined and restricted and from which they cannot escape until they grow up

(Holt, 1975 cited in Clark 2010)

Adults are the gatekeepers who hold the keys to adulthood and full participation in society

Historical context

Aries (1996) and Postman (1994) cited in Clark (2010) both suggest that childhood is a modern phenomenon that has only come into being in recent times.

*Is this nonsense? Always reproduced and given birth.
Reproduction not the same as a social category of
'childhood'*

Aries and Postman argue that in the past the young were not understood as children in the way we now understand them.

Medieval society the idea of childhood did not exist children lived and worked alongside adults, wearing same clothes and undertaking the same activities.

Religion has always had a great influence on how children are viewed.

Why?

Modern standards sanitation and medicine a quarter of children were likely to die before their first birthday

(Cunningham, 2006)

Adults made little emotional investment in their children because of the possibility of their loss at any time.

Throughout the seventeenth century childhood began to be recognised with special clothing, books and playthings produced for children.

Common theme that children were innately bad and needed careful correction

Industrialisation

Factories and Mills: child labour cheap and small hands nimble fingers enabled them to undertake tasks of tying in threads easily.

Education

Compulsory education by end of the Victorian era

20th Century

More legislation passes in respect children in the 20th century than in all previous centuries combined.

Brought children increasingly under the regulation of the state to prescribe what childhood should be.

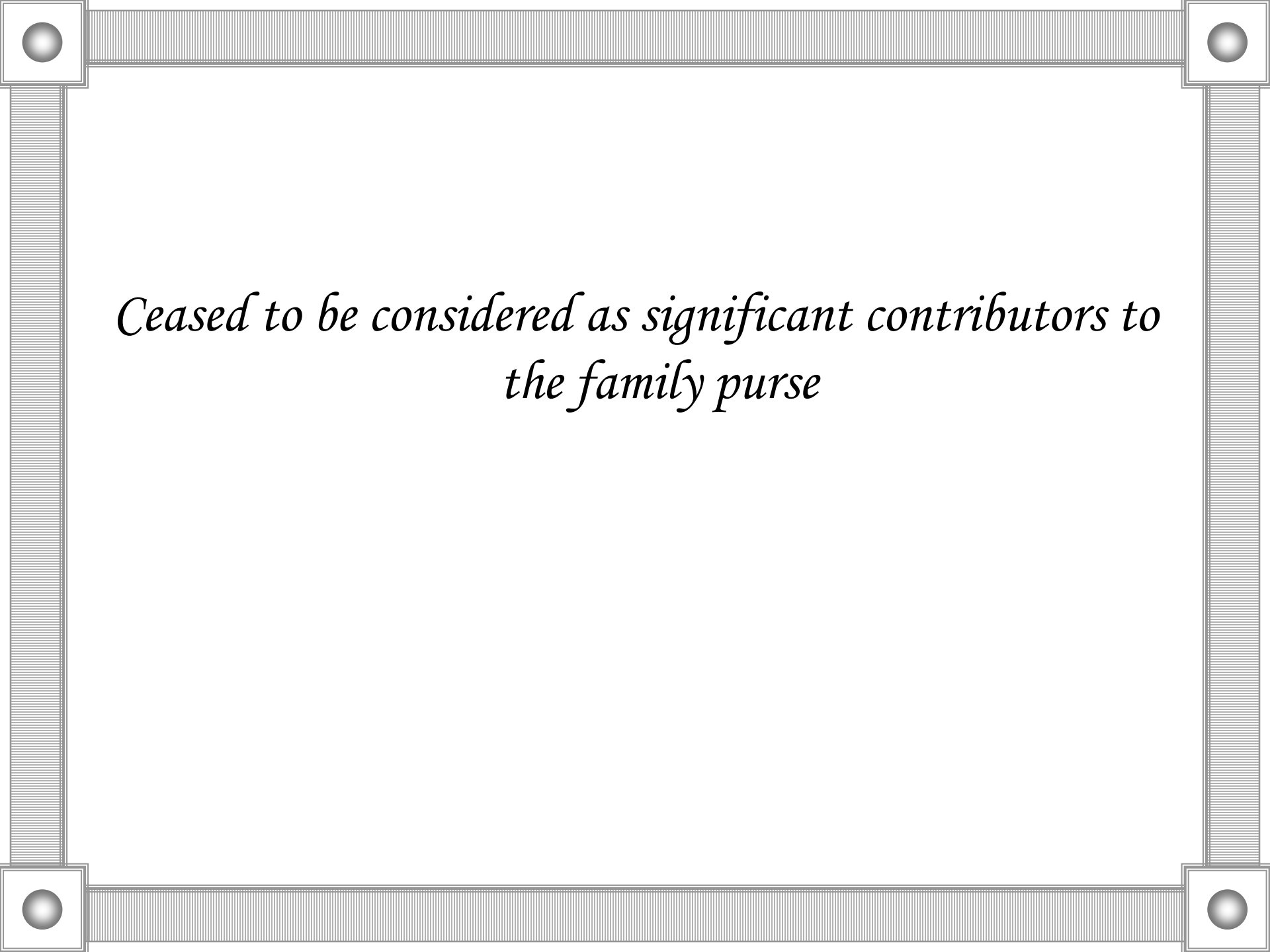
*Improved medicine and public health measures
infant mortality dropped*

Child clinics

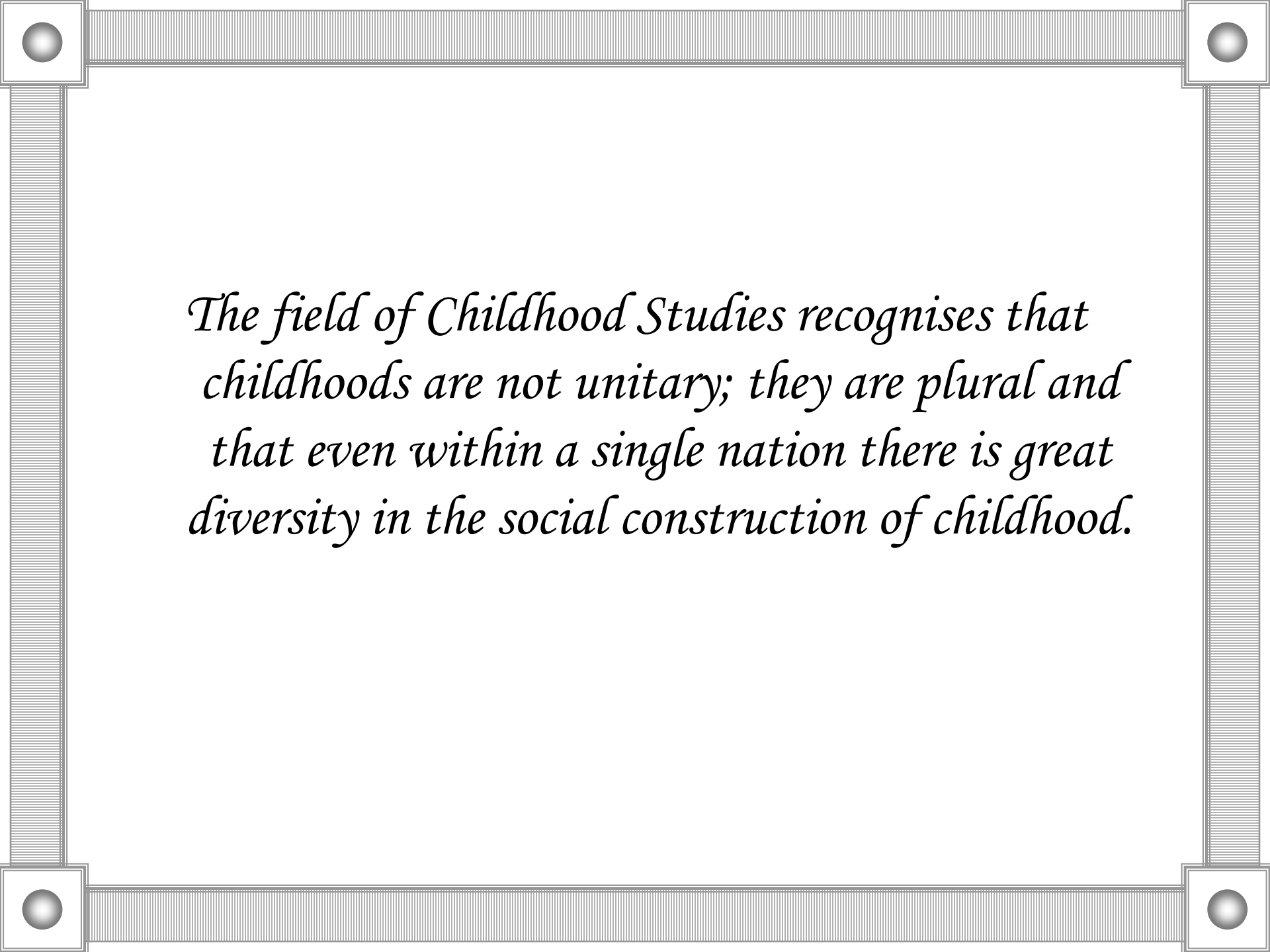
Experts available to give advice

*Expectation children's contribution to the family
economy once taken for granted gradually
disappeared.*

School leaving age 15 in 1944 to 16 in 1973.



*Ceased to be considered as significant contributors to
the family purse*



*The field of Childhood Studies recognises that
childhoods are not unitary; they are plural and
that even within a single nation there is great
diversity in the social construction of childhood.*

Children are now recognised as social actors and informants in their own right (Hendrick 2008)

Childhood is recognised as a special phase of life rather than simply a preparation for adulthood and children themselves are seen as being competent and capable (Christensen and Prout 2005)

*For many children today the realities of modern life
can be challenging at worst distressing.*

*Childhood is complex and whilst many children grow
up in stable environments that prepare them for
adult life many do not (Macblain et al 2017)*

*NSPCC statistics estimate that in 2010 19,500 infants under 1 year old were living in a home with a parent who was a user of class a drugs
93,500 infants under age of 1 year lives in a home with a parent who was a problem drinker.*

These are worrying statistics and challenge the assumption that that childhood is a time characterised by freedom and fun, security and stability and a carefree existence (Macblain et al 2017).

Impact of devolution

Children at fore national policy.

*Nobody in position authority to champion their
interests*

*Now have an advocate to speak on behalf of children
and their welfare has been developed.*

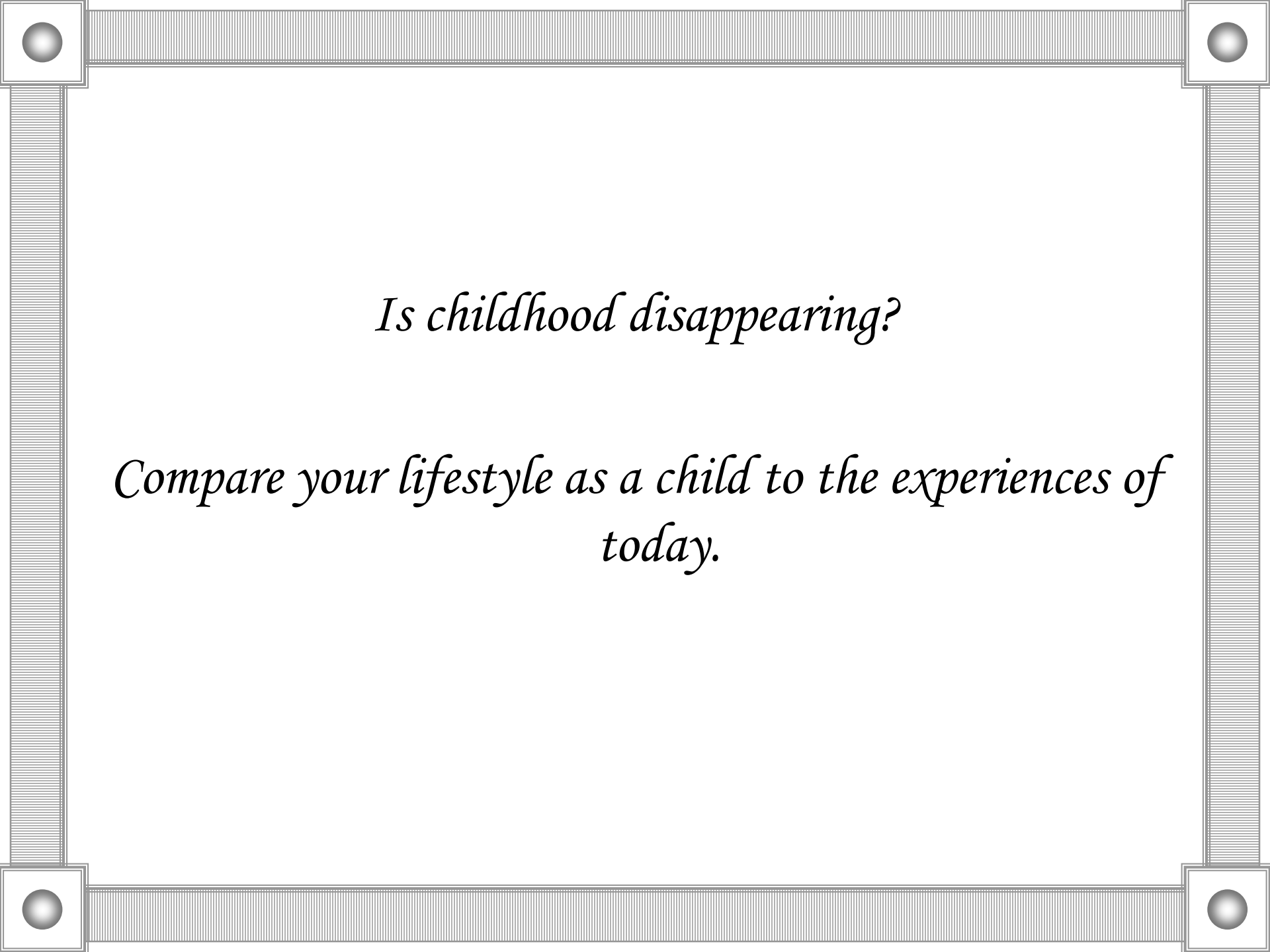
*Children's Commissioner Wales appointed
2001 Northern Ireland 2003, Scotland 2004,
England 2005 (although commissioner for
England has a weaker role).*

*Wales places a particularly strong emphasis on the
importance of play and National Assembly Wales
first country in world to produce a policy
specifically related to play (Clark, 2010)*

Twenty-first century

*Create a mind map of the contemporary child
Identify the issues that cause alarm and unease
among adults.*

*Can you identify any connections or contradictions
between the different ideas you have identified.*

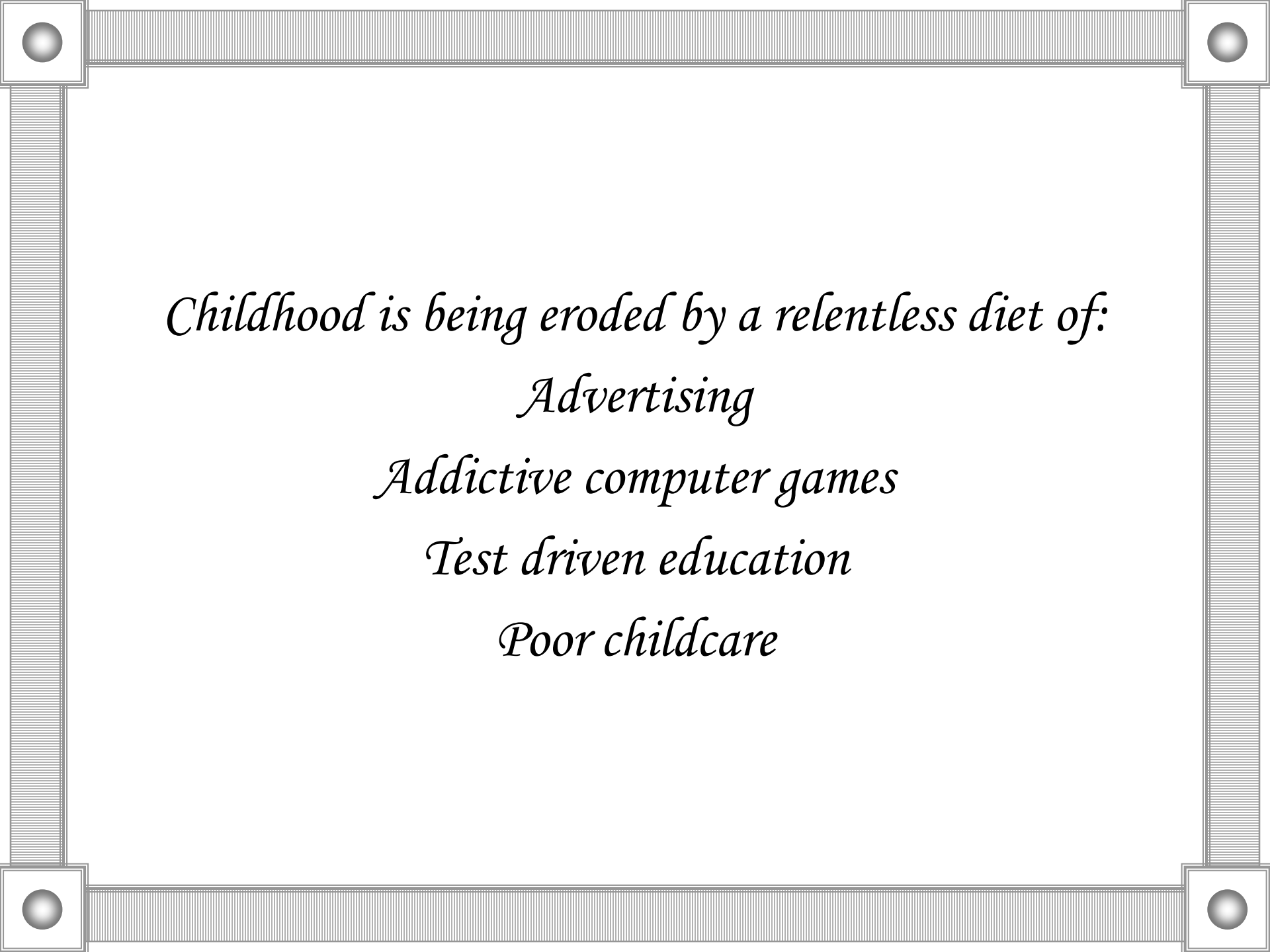


Is childhood disappearing?

*Compare your lifestyle as a child to the experiences of
today.*

Discussion

*Is modern society ruining
childhood*



Childhood is being eroded by a relentless diet of:

Advertising

Addictive computer games

Test driven education

Poor childcare

The construction of childhood is changing and the rate of this change is unprecedented.

Advancement in technology has allowed children based in the United Kingdom to 'walk' through rainforests to communicate with astronauts in space and compete in real time in mathematics challenges with children in South Africa (Owen, 2017)

The changes in the social atmosphere that children inhabit have produced a construction of childhood for the 21st century that is profoundly different. The UNCRC clearly articulates that this legally-binding international agreement affords all children civil, economic, social and cultural rights for the first time in history revealing how the social construction of childhood has evolved
(Owen, 2017)

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