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Introduction:

This essay will define social constructed childhood. Also, it will bring forth an overview of the historic and present changes in childhood.

Additionally, this essay will discuss the social construction of childhood within the family in the UK.

Finally, it will investigate the current interventions to support vulnerable children in the UK and how inequalities among children from advantage and disadvantage background can be reduced.

Definitions of childhood

Childhood is defined as a stage of life that is associated with chronological age, located between infancy and youth and it also include adolescence. Childhood can also be defined as “the state of being a child.” A child means a form of human between the stage of birth, and it also mean a relationship that indicates a state of servitude. According to (Marks, 1996-2001), Childhood is defined as the circumscribed period of time from infancy to the onset of puberty.

Key element of family life and childhood

The key elements of family life and childhood focus on the programs and development which are intended to enhance the ability, cognition, and functioning activities in the development of the child. The key element of family life and childhood is.

Cognitive development: this area of child development involves how a child thinks, explore, and figure out things. Cognitive development involves the development of knowledge, skills, problem solving and dispositions, which help a child to think and comprehend the environment around. The benefit of healthy cognitive development is seen in the adult life of the child.

The cognitive development of a child also involves the ability to focus, the behaviour of the child and the language skills. The cognitive development is manifested in the following ways which include the child learning from experience and exposure, improvement in the academic process and educational skills, observation skills of the child and the growing base of knowledge of knowledge of the child. According to (Ginta & Robinson, 2018), the cognitive development of Piaget is divided into the following four stages, which are the sensorimotor, preoperational, concrete operational and formal operational.

Emotional development: this is an area in the child development that is difficult to measure. It gives the foundation of the well-being and the mental health of a child. It also includes the feeling of happiness, felling of power over the environment, emotional awareness, and emotional strength and stability. The emotional development of a child can also be observed

in the following areas in the child life. The areas include self-esteem, positive attitude, temperament control, and independence level of the child.

Social development: the social development of a child is the process by which the child learns to interact with other people around them. The child also develops skills to communicate with other people and process their actions. The social development also includes the ability to manage feelings and impulses that are needed for the child to grow and learn. The social development enables the child to function in different areas of life either in the house or outside the house.

Social development is based directly on the child ability to communicate, create awareness and bond with people, expand interactive environment and develop interaction with peers and other members in the family.

Physical development: this area of development of a child is the easiest to measure and track. Physical development in a child is shown by behaviours such as improved hand and eye coordination, controlled physical action, sensory development, dietary habits, and physical health development.

Development of the social construction of childhood from history to present

Social construction of childhood is defined as the theoretical viewpoint that explore the various ways by which reality is exchanged in the day-to-day life of a child through the interaction of people and set of dissertations (James & James, 2008). Social constructionism seeks to understand how children and childhood knowledge is constructed, by whom, why and most substantially what purpose it would serve. Social constructionism offers alternative ways to find out about children and childhood. Social construction of childhood is grounded in varying conceptions among different cultures, societies and at the different time period in history. Childhood is given more meaning and special place in the modern era than in the history.

According to history, the childhood notation as a phase of life do not develop not until the 16th centuries. (Aries, 1982) suggest that the childhood has undergone the process of social construction. Aries stated that the idea of childhood is related to awareness of specific nature of childhood. The awareness creates a distinction between a child and an adult.

The Dionysian views a child as 'little devils' that are born with unique sins and are also characteristically ill-disciplined, not socialised and not civilised beings while the Apollonian view represents a child as 'little angels' who are born good and innocent. Aries also consider childhood as time to play and being happy and enjoy and not time for work. Aries said that the

past view of childhood as time when childhood was considered as innocence and time to play. Children were also valued as a source of enjoyment for adults particularly for women.

However, according to (James, 2009), the perception about childhood changes in the 1970s and 1980 and it is termed break in tradition. The position of a child in the society changes with the launch of programs such as the international year of child in 1979, world children, child abuse and happy save protected innocent childhood.

According to (Mouritsen, 2002), the modern perception of childhood comes because of the excessive project of education and institutionalisation that the bourgeoisie created to ensure that children develop to useful and well-regulated adults. There was emphasis on the construction and implementation of law that pressures on children must stay at schools for certain time to learn the required skills. The law has been constructed from the interaction of parents' and teachers' and also with the idea that schooling is an important investment for the future of the nation (James & James, 2008). After the industrialisation, children are supposed to go to school and are viewed as financially dependent on their parents and this period of dependability helps to shape the notion of childhood in the societies.

The new notion about childhood also focused on the collective actions of children with adults and with each other. Even so, the focus was still on the perception of adults about childhood and adults were in control of every aspect of the child's childhood while the idea of a child as the active social actor and agent is left out.

The idea that childhood is socially constructed implies that childhood is not naturally process but the society decides the stages of life of a child i.e., the society decides when a child is a child and when the child status changes to adult.

Factors influencing changes in social construction of childhood and families from historical to present

The changes in the social construction of children are affected by various degree of factors. The factors that affect the social construction of childhood both in the present and in the past include the social factor, political factor, and economic factor.

Social factor: the social factor is one of the major factors that influence how the society views childhood. The social view of the society varies from one location to another. Some of the aspect of childhood that is being influence socially includes the length of childhood, i.e., a child can be stated to be different from an adult through the social perception. The society also gives the right and responsibilities, the limit of legal

protection and restriction to the child. The general perception of whether a child is innocent, in need of protection, in need of freedom is placed by the society. For instance children in the UK are protected by the Children Act 2010, which stated that every child is has a right to learn and a better life, (legislation.gov.uk, 2021).

Children in other part of the world are treated differently, due the social, religious, and cultural hence the definition of childhood is not universal.

Political factor: the political factor is a powerful tool that regulates social construction. The introduction of new law on child marriage, divorce, have brought changes to the social construction of childhood and families and differentiate it from the past in the UK and around the world. The political leadership and people in power at a particular time influence the degree and direction of social construction.

The relationship between political organisation and social construction is direct and the existence of different political agencies' influence changes on the social construction of childhood and the family (Cicchetti, 2013).

Economical factor: the economic factor of a society also influences the social construction of the society. The social construction of childhood and family is influenced by the economic changes. The government plays a great role in stimulating the rate of economic growth and how it relates to the social construction of childhood and the family.

The impact of industrialisation also affects the social construction of childhood and the family due to its effect on the way of life, institution, organisation, and community life. In the past history, the level of production is static due to the habitual and customary needs of the family while the modern industrial capitalism encourages the constant revision of the technology of production, a process that's necessary due to the continuous growth of the family. The impact of economic factors can be easily seen in the growth of the family.

Ideational factors: there are various cultural factors that affect the social construction in the present than in the history. Factors such as the development of science and secularisation of thought have made some important contribution to the development of the critical and innovative character of the new society. The influence of the factor has led to the neglect of old customs and habits, and it have improved the modern way of life.

Approaches and intervention supporting vulnerable children, young people, and families in the present time and how it reduces inequalities between them

Vulnerability is defined as a relative state that may range from resilience to hopelessness. It can also be defined as a group of children, young people and families that experience negative outcomes such as the loss of education, morbidity, and malnutrition at a higher rate than their peers (Brown, 2011). Vulnerability is caused by a lot of factors but the interaction of several other factors.

Inequalities can be reduced among the vulnerable children, families, and young people through the following policies.

Maximizing parenting support: vulnerable families should also benefit from access to a range of services to reduce stressors and build protective factors. Family based interventions, such as home visiting programs, improve children's home environment by helping parents enhance parenting skills, learn more about child development and access local resources. Parenting programs, delivered in group settings tailored to different age-groups, can also help parents work alongside each other to gain a better understanding of children's needs and learn more effective and consistent parenting approaches.

Neighbourhood based programs: Neighbourhood based programs also take a whole-community approach to early intervention and prevention and develop services that address family's multiple needs, e.g., parenting support, childcare, and employment advice. Whole-community approaches can reduce the stigmatisation attached to accessing support and build neighbourhood collective effectiveness to improve child well-being.

Children need to be able to access mental health information and intervention more easily at the school and neighbourhood level: Schools should build stronger relationships and collaborations with local mental health professionals, including psychologists and social workers and cultural mediators. Early intervention and open to all services should be accessible in communities to target children with emerging and mild to moderate mental health difficulties.

Policies should be put in place to support young people through the critical transition into mental health services: These policies need to be centered on the young person's needs, incorporate the inclusion of young people and families in care planning, and provide clear transition's guidelines.

Adolescent monitoring program Vulnerable adolescents exposed to high environmental risks and or behavioural problems benefit from having the opportunity to build relationships with supportive adults and role models.

Child protection services should be accessible to children and families in need: The key tenets of child protection legislation and policies include the safeguarding children from maltreatment, promoting children's best interests and family preservation (Ungar, et al., 2013).

Interventions Services: there are different services that intervene to children protect in the UK. Such as universal services (gp, school, nhs) targeted services free school meal, targeted intervention, specific services (specific to the child's needs in specific situation, children's at risk, these approaches are to help children and different families.

Some children in the UK are young carers to their parent, which deprive the the children from having a normal childhood from their peers.

Conclusion:

The childhood period is a state that is between birth and adulthood. The key element of childhood development includes the cognitive development, emotional development, social development, and physical development. The idea of social construction of childhood is socially constructed and it also implies that childhood is not a natural process, but the society decides the stages of life of a child. The different approaches stated the approaches and intervention that helps to eliminate the vulnerability of children, families, and young people.

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