



The Reading Matrix
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Supporting Children in Their Home, School, and Community

by Dorothy Holin Sailor (2004)

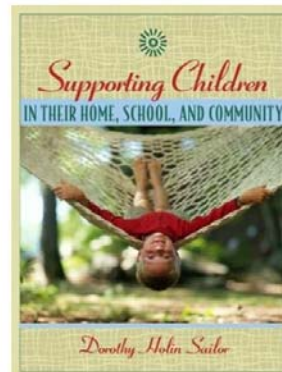
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Raising and educating children has become more complicated and more complex because of the challenging circumstances of our times. Therefore, the book, *Supporting Children in Their Home, School, and Community*, by Dorothy Holin Sailor is a book that everyone who has an interest in the welfare of children from all cultures will want to have not only on his bookshelf, but will want to have readily available as a continual reference.

Sailor's in-depth, comprehensive approach gives readers a deep understanding of the many factors that are affecting and influencing the lives of the children in our pluralistic society. Her use of a narrative style in writing the text makes it very readable as she has taken theory and research and translated the concepts into practical implementation.

The fact that Sailor addresses diverse background issues including race, ethnicity, socioeconomic class and their influence on child-rearing patterns and parenting styles as well including information on issues related to teen parents, adopted children, grandparents as parents, children of parents in prison, and children of single parents because of death or divorce makes her work that much more beneficial to a varied audience.

Parents, mothers and fathers, from all cultural backgrounds will find useful information on characteristics of healthy and unhealthy families. There is also helpful information on how to choose quality child care as well as information on sibling and peer relationships.

Educators at every level from Pre-K to university faculty that educate in-service teachers could benefit from not only reading this book, but referring to it again and again. There is a chapter devoted specifically to early education and child care including how to provide quality child care. There is also a chapter specifically on schooling in which Sailor describes among other items the function of schools, the role of teachers, and what constitutes parental involvement. She also gives facts on different kinds of schooling—private, home, and charter—without passing judgment. The information provided on

peers and friends which also includes information on teasing and bullying can be helpful to educators.

Policy makers and child/family advocates will want a copy of this book as a resource. Not only would policy makers and advocates benefit from the information that would be of interest to parents and educators, there is also information about combating violence in the lives of children, the effects of the media, and health care. Then there is, also, a chapter targeted specifically towards government and social policies as well as a section in another chapter that focuses on how to be an effective advocate.

The section of the book on advocacy is of particular interest to me in my professional work as three other educators and I are in the process of developing a plan based on effective principles that can be implemented to benefit our diverse learners. Therefore, not only will all the valuable information Sailor provides in her book be beneficial as we do this, but the specific steps she outlines on how to be an advocate such as finding support, contacting those in power to make changes, and where and how to express our concerns will be helpful guideposts.

The book is divided into three parts. The first part gives the reader an understanding of society and the family within that society. The second part explores the role of different factors that influence and affect the development of children such as schooling practices, peers, and siblings. The third part addresses the role of the broader community and society and their influence on children such as the media and technology as well as policies related to such issues as health care.

The author uses effective pedagogy in her writing. She starts each chapter with a thought provoking quote and a preview of what will be covered in the chapter. She then concludes each chapter reviewing the chapter with key points and “critical thinking questions.” A list of resources, references, and relating readings are also included at the end of each chapter. Throughout the chapters the author’s knowledge, expertise, and insights are presented in an appealing manner as she incorporates pictures, charts, graphs, tables, and stories to reinforce concepts.

The message of this book is that we can make a difference for children by working and advocating together in order to provide them with the necessary support they need to be healthy and happy children who can grow up to be happy, healthy adolescents and adults who are productive, contributing members of society.

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