

Summaries

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Enlightenment, revolution and child images in the Netherlands; the period around 1800 as a turning point

A. Baggerman and R. Dekker

In the history of childhood the decades around 1800 were a turning point. A new concept of childhood emerged with more emphasis on spontaneous and irrational aspects, and above all greater appreciation for this phase of life. This development was part of a greater cultural and political change, which included the French and Batavian Revolutions. Children became a concern of the state, and the foundation was laid for a modern system of education. Childhood became a symbol of political renewal, and children often participated in revolutionary festivals. Revolutionary catechisms were published to teach the children the ideals of liberty, equality and fraternity. A diary started in 1791 by a ten years old boy, Otto van Eck, gives, for the first time, a child of this period a voice. His diary allows us to look at the new practices of an education in this formative era.

On child images in policy and society

C. Brinkgreve

The image of the innocent unspoiled child exists beside that of the cruel and dangerous child. Today the negative image of children and youngsters dominates the discussion. In this article this trend is seen in its social context. Nowadays children increasingly tend to take part in the parental decision making process. This entails that children are held responsible for their actions at an earlier age than before. This selfdetermination requires an earlier development in matters of conscience and in morals. Sometimes this means asking too much of them, which can lead to social and psychic problems. This influences the child image: the modern child has, so to speak, lost its innocence

and it is more often than before looked upon as a threat or as a creature that ought to be disciplined and curbed.

Child images and their impact on judicial policy

J.A. Nijboer

The conceptualization of youth criminality and young offenders in policy documents underwent significant changes in the past twenty years: youth criminality is now seen as a serious threat to social order and a clear distinction is made between normal, rational juvenile offenders and serious, violent, habitual juvenile offenders. At the same time, two distinct responses can be noticed: a trend towards more accountability of young offenders and their parents, and a focus on prevention of serious youth criminality by early detection of children at risk and implementation of parent support programs. Changes in the juvenile justice system are not just shifts from a more pedagogical to a more juridical approach, but they imply intensifying of both. In daily practice however this is only manageable, if their assumptions are compatible. As a consequence, a 'pedagogy of justice' has emerged that emphasizes the importance of early, swift and consistent punishment but tends to neglect the importance of moral education by asking youngsters critical questions about their (criminal) behaviour, their attitudes and their identity.

Developmental psychologists looking for causes of juvenile delinquency; new ways to knowledge

W. Koops and B. Orobio de Castro

Research into the development of aggressive and delinquent behaviour has long been limited in two ways. First, the assumption that antisocial behaviour needs to be learned has limited our knowledge of early development of aggressive behaviour and has only recently been challenged by evidence that certain antisocial behaviours are already evident in very young children and are unlearned by most children rather than learned by some. Second, research has mainly described how individual differences in aggressive and delinquent behaviour develop over time, but has generated relatively little evidence for the causal mechanisms driving this development. Recent advances in theory and methodology may make it possible to overcome both these limitations by means of longitudinal-experimental studies of developmental trajectories starting in early childhood.

Mature children

I. Weijers

This article focusses on the concept of the 'mature child'. This is a contradictory term. Education means that children are supervised *towards* maturity. The article sketches the historical development of the concept of the 'mature child'. It is a typical modern concept. It can be found in the writings of Montaigne, Locke, Rousseau and Kant and in the twentieth century in the writings of the Dutch pedagogue Langeveld and of the critical sociologist Adorno. The concept changes in the middle of the 1970's. Then, maturity is no longer seen as an educational goal but (also) as a social fact: modern children are 'mature'. It is shown that this development is caused for a large part by the discovery of the child by the market. The child has become an interesting new source for selling products. The author favours an active role of the state to resist this development and to help parents to bring up their children.

The kid as consumer

P. Sikkema

In the past couple of years the interest of companies in kids (from about 4 till 12 years) has increased strongly. More and more companies develop products, services and campaigns for kids. The most important reasons for this increasing interest are: kids are up-growing consumers who already learn a lot about products and brands at a young age; kids live in a 'household-participation' and have an important vote in the commercial decisions made by the households; kids pick up innovations relatively quickly and spread these, also among adults; kids become a more and more prosperous target group. Companies consider the kids market as a difficult market. In the States, more than 90% of the products developed for kids fail. Nowadays, companies communicate to children directly, in a serious and somewhat equal way. Moreover, the angle of 'the household' or 'the family' is being chosen more often. Currently, companies are forced by the authorities and consumer organisations to tune their activities better to the interest of kids and their parents. It is not going cordial, but it is (if we look at the increasing amount of children who is too fat for example) strongly needed.

The child as communication partner

C. van Nijnatten

In normal pedagogical situations, the significance of communication with children is generally acknowledged. Yet, in problematic pedagogical situations, especially when children have been confronted with traumatic events, parents and professional helpers often avoid to talk with them about these events. Exclusion of communication with adults about problematic life conditions, gives children the wrong message that these might better not be discussed. It makes it harder for children to cope with these problems, since they are not helped in putting their experiences into words.

The child image in the Convention on the Rights of the Child

J.C.M. Willems

Children are actors, but they are dependent on others as well. They are actors within their family, school, neighbourhood and society, but they are also dependent on their parents, their school, their neighbourhood and their state. They have rights, and also some duties, in a *Trias pedagogica* of children, parents and the state. In this *Trias pedagogica*, the state has two sets of duties based on the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC). The first set consists of duties in relation to child rearing, school education and child protection. The state has duties to prevent, intervene and repair (to promote the healthy development of children and create an integrated system of pro-active youth care and child protection). It also has duties in relation to youth participation and school curricula (to empower and teach children to become democratic citizens and responsible parents). The second set of state duties relates to parents, parenthood and parenting. On the one hand, it has a duty of 'responsibilisation' of parents (what society can expect from parents), and on the other hand, a duty to empower parents (what parents can expect from society). Children's rights are empty shells unless the state lives up to these duties. The CRC provides children with the possibility of a powerful self-image, based on the promise of rights which in many states, including The Netherlands, is still waiting to be translated into laws and concrete policies.