

Statement of Purpose

The primary purpose of *The Future of Children* is to disseminate timely information on major issues related to children's well-being, with special emphasis on providing objective analysis and evaluation, translating existing knowledge into effective programs and policies, and promoting constructive institutional change. In attempting to achieve these objectives, we are targeting a multidisciplinary audience of national leaders, including policymakers, practitioners, legislators, executives, and professionals in the public and private sectors. This publication is intended to complement, not duplicate, the kind of technical analysis found in academic journals and the general coverage of children's issues by the popular press and special interest groups.

In this issue of *The Future of Children*, we examine divorce because of the large and increasing numbers of children in the United States who experience the divorce of their parents. Although our focus is on the process and consequences of divorce, the prevention of divorce through education and counseling before and during marriage would be of benefit to many children as well as their parents. Public policy related to divorce must chart a careful course between the Scylla of creating incentives for divorce, with its untoward effects on children and society, and the Charybdis of unduly restricting the freedom of individuals to determine for themselves when cohabitation should be terminated, because high-conflict marriage also may have untoward effects on children and society. We have tried to put divorce into the perspective of time and of trends, other than divorce, which have contributed to the diversity of family composition in this country, such as remarriage, cohabitation outside marriage, and single, never-married motherhood.

The articles presented here summarize knowledge and experience in selected areas that we believe are relevant to improving public policies in the United States which have an impact on the well-being of children who experience the divorce of their parents. We hope the information and analyses these articles contain will further understanding of the important issues and thus contribute to reasonable changes in policies which will benefit children of divorce.

We invite your comments and suggestions regarding this issue of *The Future of Children*. Our intention is to encourage informed debate about divorce and related issues. To this end we invite correspondence to the Editor. We would also appreciate your comments about the approach we have taken in presenting the focus topic and welcome your suggestions for future topics.

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Editor