

CHAPTER TWO

GOVERNMENT PROGRAMS TO SUPPORT FAMILIES AND CHILDREN

Competencies

Students will demonstrate competency in describing or explaining:

1. The characteristics of Americans most likely to be poor and the extent and effects of poverty among the families of children and youth.
2. The historical background, the purpose and the primary provisions of today's income security program (TANF).
3. The major federal government programs to support work and family in the U.S.
4. The effectiveness of today's work and family support programs in reducing welfare, reducing poverty, and improving the quality of life for poor families
5. The purpose of the Head Start program, and its effectiveness
6. The major types of day care for children of working parents, and assessment of their quality and availability.
7. The purpose of The National Indicators of Child Well-Being reports.

Key Concepts

Define and explain the significance of the following (short answer questions):

- Poverty line index
- Working poor
- Mothers' Pensions
- Earned Income Tax Credit
- Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP)
- Aid to Families with Dependent Children
- Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF)
- Time Limits
- Supplemental Security Income
- Head Start
- The Family and Medical Leave Act
- Day Care Regulation
- National Indicators of Child Well-Being

Multiple Choice Questions

1. The latest report from the Interagency Forum on Child and Family Statistics on the well-being of America's children:
 - a. Shows that infant mortality has declined significantly.
 - b. Shows that American children do better than children of any other country.
 - c. Is limited to reports on children in the foster care system though plans are in place to provide reports on other children in the future.
 - d. Shows that children seem to grow up earlier than they did 100 years ago, when the reports first started.

2. All of the following are federal funding programs for day care except:
 - a. WPA
 - b. The Child Care and Development Block Grant
 - c. The Dependent Care Tax Credit
 - d. Head Start

3. Research on Head Start programs shows that:
 - a. they can prepare children to enter school ready to learn
 - b. they have no effect
 - c. they can permanently raise children's IQ levels
 - d. those located in a school are superior to those located in other community settings

4. All of the following are public assistance programs except:
 - a. Medicaid
 - b. Child Well-Being Initiative
 - c. WIC (Woman-Infant-Children program)
 - d. Food Stamps

5. The Poverty Line Index is intended to be:
 - a. Only for U.S.citizens
 - b. Comparable to what a middle income family makes.
 - c. What a person uses when he/she wants a loan.
 - d. The amount of income required for a minimally adequate standard of living.

6. All of the following statements are true about the causes of poverty EXCEPT:
 - a. Increased job opportunities for high school graduates, thus discouraging people from going to college.
 - b. Stagnation of wages.
 - c. Those who work experience less poverty than those who do not.
 - d. The minimum wage has eroded in value.

7. Which of the following programs provides income for disabled children?
 - a. Medicaid
 - b. Child Support Enforcement
 - c. CHIP
 - d. SSI

Short Answer

1. Identify one concern or criticism of TANF.

Essay Questions/Student Reports

2. Discuss trends in the extent of poverty among the families of children and youth. What factors, both institutionally and individually, contribute to the growth of poverty?
3. Discuss the major provisions of TANF. Do you believe that this legislation is likely to help or harm families. Support your position.
4. Describe the range of government programs to support work and families, including day care. Identify the strengths and the gaps in this range of programs. What else is needed to help families obtain work and live decently if they do work?
5. Use the following resource as a starting point for learning about the well-being of children in a foreign country: The Clearinghouse on International Development in Child, Youth, and Family Policies www.childpolicyintl.org Compare the U.S. and the foreign country you have chosen. Identify disparities and try to find out the reasons for them. A variation of this assignment is to do a comparison of child well-being between your state and the country as a whole. Use the National Indicators of Child Well-Being, as presented by the Interagency Forum on Child and Family Statistics.
6. Study the issues in providing or withholding income supports for non-citizens, and identify the likely consequences to the U.S. and to non-citizens of each option.