H-Net Reviews
in the Humanities & Social Sciences

Edward Zigler, Sally J. Styfco. *The Hidden History of Head Start.* New York: Oxford University Press, 2010. xiii + 384 pp. $39.95 (cloth), ISBN 978-0-19-539376-7.

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Published on H-Education (July, 2011)
Commissioned by Jonathan Anuik

Personal Perspective and Labor of Love: Nearly Fifty Years of Head Start

In *The Hidden History of Head Start,* readers are taken on a journey "down memory lane," led by the preeminent developmental scientist Edward Zigler. An accessible and informative book that will be of interest to an audience of policymakers, historians of early childhood education, and an interested lay public, this volume's contribution to the field of the history of education may be more as a memoir and narrative than as a scholarly analysis. Indeed, the book frequently reads as a reminiscence told with love and pride, while at other points dipping into moments of frustration and regret over missed opportunities on the landscape of U.S. social policy. This first-person narrative is written with Sally J. Styfco, who has collaborated with Zigler as an editor and writer for decades from her vantage point as director of Yale University's Head Start Unit, located in the Edward Zigler Center in Child Development and Social Policy.

Initiated in 1965 as a program of the Johnson administration's War on Poverty, Head Start was, in its early years, financially and ideologically linked to the anti-poverty activist efforts of the federal government's Community Action Program. While these ties ended under Zigler's authority during the Nixon administration, Head Start gained much of the identity that it maintains today in the first summer of its existence: a federal program that takes a holistic and community-based view of child development, emphasizing the broad development of physical, social, emotional, and cognitive skills, as well as the important role that parents play as a child's first teachers, and the interaction between children, families, and society. Additionally, Head Start is unique in that throughout its long life, it has managed to remain a federal program that grants funds directly to the local level rather than disbursing them through the state governments.

Deeply involved in Head Start's development from its early days, Zigler joined the Head Start Planning Committee as a young scholar in 1965 at the request of Sergeant Shriver, a leader in the Johnson administration's War on Poverty. In 1970, Zigler temporarily left his position in Yale University's child development program to become the first director of the Office of Child Development in the Nixon administration, leading both Head Start federal and regional offices and the U.S. Children's Bureau. In the decades since then, Zigler has counseled every succeeding presidential administration on Head Start and early childhood policy from his position as a Yale academic and has played a leading role in the creation of a new subfield of psychology: child development and social policy. Zigler and Styfco devote the second half of the book to the role that Zigler played as an advisor and advocate for Head Start after his return to Yale.

Zigler's story begins with the "pre-dawn" of Head Start, that is, with a brief history of early childhood education and child care in the United States. Readers may be surprised to learn that "[b]y 1840, 40% of all 3-year-olds in Massachusetts were enrolled in" an out-of-home care or educational setting (pp. 3-4). While programs of this type were initially established to meet the child care needs of working mothers in this time period, they also provided young children with enriched early learning opportunities that they might not otherwise have experienced. Within a few years, however, such programs disappeared as a view took root that young children's development would be weakened if they received too much mental stimulation at a young age.

Thus readers encounter, in the Industrial Revolution, the United States' most basic and unresolved struggle with the notion of child care and early childhood education: "the premise," held by a conservative constituency, "that young children are best raised by their mothers at home," a premise that has not disappeared with the passage of time, with the second wave of feminism, or with

numerous studies which document the developmental benefits of preschool experiences for both low-income and middle-class children (p. 4). Zigler holds this conservative constituency responsible in large part for one of the great disappointments of his career: the failure to achieve passage of the 1971 Comprehensive Child Development Act, which would have joined Head Start with a proposed nationwide child care system, thus ensuring high standards and availability of child care for families of all income levels. "The right-wing's opposition to child care was and remains a smokescreen for their opposition to the phenomenon that makes child care a necessity, namely mothers leaving the home to join the workforce," Zigler posits. "Their strategy is to oppose any legislation that will make it easier for women to join the labor market" (p. 176).

The lost opportunity for passage of the Comprehensive Child Development Act resulted, Zigler confides earnestly, in "a heavy heart that weighs on me to this day. We had come so close" (p. 175). Wistfully, he seeks to pass the torch: "I have continued my battle for quality child care for all of America's children, but I have not been very successful. I can only trust in my students to continue the good fight" (p. 177). Like many who spend their lives alongside the very young, he may be a perennial optimist: "Realizing that progress comes in waves often followed by a period of backsliding, I remain optimistic that our nation will eventually accomplish what many other industrialized nations have already achieved to promote their children's well-being" (p. 242).

As the chapters unfold, readers repeatedly hear Zigler's regret that a singular program objective was not set clearly at Head Start's inception. While the Head Start Planning Committee's initial recommendations in 1965 included seven objectives focused on "optimal child development, resulting in improved school readiness," the objectives "were not specific enough to be well understood or soundly evaluated," according to Zigler (pp. 38, 52). Additionally, he argues that the Johnson administration overpromised what Head Start could deliver from the outset, even suggesting that the program would eradicate poverty. Without clearly measurable outcomes, "early assessments targeted increases in IQ scores as the measure of Head Start's success," although this criteria had never been a program objective (p. 38). When assessments (many of which were methodologically flawed, Zigler argues), including the infamous 1969 Westinghouse Report, began to find that such gains were not sustained over time, a decades-old question emerged, "Does Head Start Work?" This question, the title of a concluding chapter, began to plague the program. One of Zigler's career-long struggles has been that of refocusing assessments of Head Start's effectiveness to school readiness–that is, kindergarten readiness, which is measurable in terms of physical, social, emotional, and cognitive skills. When school readiness was finally legislated as the primary objective of Head Start by Congress in 1998, it finally "freed Head Start from the burden of unrealistic goals that had shadowed the program since its inception" (p. 284).

The Hidden History of Head Start is not alone among histories of this federal program; indeed, Zigler himself is the co-author, with Susan Muenchow, of the similarly titled *Head Start: The Inside Story of America's Most Successful Educational Experiment* (1994). Yet no other author could bring to this subject Zigler's conversational and personal perspective. Rich with anecdotes, this volume offers the unique and irreplaceable perspective of one of the "fathers" of Head Start and serves simultaneously as a memoir, a love letter of sorts, a thank-you note to those colleagues and friends who toiled alongside him for decades, and also, perhaps, as a chance to get the last word in and set the historical record straight.

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Citation: Brigitte E. Dubois. Review of Zigler, Edward; Styfco, Sally J., *The Hidden History of Head Start.* H-Education, H-Net Reviews. July, 2011.
URL: http://www.h-net.org/reviews/showrev.php?id=32342

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