

The Raising of America

EARLY CHILDHOOD AND THE FUTURE OF OUR NATION

- 1** **A Six-part Documentary Series** that explores how a strong start for all our kids can lead to a healthier, safer, better educated and more prosperous and equitable America.
- 2** **A National Public Engagement Campaign** to reframe the debate about what we as a society can—and should—do to ensure a strong start for every infant.
- 3** **A Companion Website** with video clips, interactives, discussion guides, action toolkits, resources and more.

1 THE DOCUMENTARY SERIES | *Video Release Fall 2014, PBS Broadcast TBD*

Opening Episode: The Raising of America 60 minutes

We all want what's best for our children, so why is child well-being in the U.S. so much worse than the other rich nations? Why do we allow our most vulnerable children to fall so much further behind the median? How does the squeeze on young families and caregivers—the squeeze for time, money and resources—drip down on infants and young children and alter the wiring of their developing brains with potential long-term consequences?

This hour-long episode moves back and forth between the science of human development and the stories of families and communities struggling to provide the rich and responsive environments all children need to thrive—while too often hindered by social conditions and inequities that impede their every effort. It doesn't have to be this way. What initiatives and national priorities might enable all our children the opportunity for a strong start while building a more prosperous and equitable future for our nation?

Supporting Episodes 30 minutes each

ARE WE CRAZY ABOUT OUR KIDS?
The Cost/Benefit Equation

Investing in high-quality early care and education pays for itself in many ways and many times over. This episode brings to life the critical studies of Nobel laureate James Heckman, Art Rolnick and others which illustrate we can either invest for success now or pay more for failure later. So, what is holding us back?

DNA IS NOT DESTINY:
How the Outside Gets
Under the Skin

New scientific discoveries reveal how the fetal environment and early childhood experience quite literally 'wire' the rapidly developing brain and other bio-regulatory systems, changing not our genes but the epigenetic 'volume controls' which turn genes on and off. These epigenetic changes can influence not only cognitive function but the self-regulation of emotions and behaviors, even the susceptibility to chronic diseases as we age.

ONCE UPON A TIME:
When Childcare for All
Wasn't Just a Fairytale

Back in 1971 as more and more women entered the workforce, a bi-partisan Congress passed a bill providing high-quality childcare for all, along with other children's services. Pres. Nixon's surprise 11th hour veto marked a critical inflection point from our path towards a more inclusive nation to today's 'you're-on-your-own' society and was the first time 'family values' was invoked to undermine the needs of American families.

STRESSING OUT THE POOR?
Building Community Resilience

Poverty takes a special toll on the lives of families and their young children, appropriating scarce psychic as well as material resources. The result is a pile up of risk rather than an accumulation of advantage. Yet some poor communities are beginning to organize, not just to buffer the consequences of poverty, but for the resources and power to ensure access to opportunity structures that provide possibility and hope.

WOUNDED PLACES:
Confronting Childhood PTSD in
America's Shell-Shocked Cities

Too many of our children, especially children of color in neighborhoods of concentrated poverty, are exposed to adversity, violence, neglect and other forms of trauma and show symptoms similar to PTSD. Traveling to Philadelphia and Oakland, this episode asks not, "What's wrong with you?" but rather, "What happened to you?" and how can we help individuals and traumatized neighborhoods heal.

2 THE NATIONAL PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT CAMPAIGN

The success of *The Raising of America* will ultimately be measured by how effectively it can be used to intervene in public debate and advance the efforts of organizations that have long worked to tackle inequities and benefit all children in the U.S.

- Follow us on **Facebook**: www.facebook.com/RaisingofAmerica
- Receive the **eNewsletter**: www.raisingofamerica.org/join-raising-of-america-email-list
- Sign up as a **Campaign Partner**: www.raisingofamerica.org/partner

To date, more than 200 local, state and national organizations have joined the campaign.

How Can Your Organization Use the Series?

Organize Work-in-Progress Planning Events

SUMMER 2014

Screen work-in-progress (WIP) episodes with staff, leadership, boards, members, constituents and partners to plan a strategy around how your organization can use the series as a tool toward advancing transformative programs, initiatives and policies that can benefit all children.

The following work-in-progress episodes can be made available for streaming, download or as a file on a thumbdrive.

- *Are We Crazy about Our Kids? The Cost/Benefit Equation*
- *Once Upon a Time: When Childcare for All Wasn't Just a Fairytale*
- *Wounded Places: Confronting Childhood PTSD in America's Shell-Shocked Cities*

Available materials include:

- Onesheet Handout (Print or PDF)
- Postcard (Print)
- Poster (PDF file)

Host/Co-Host a "Sneak Preview" Launch Event

FALL 2014

Organizations across the country are invited to host or co-host 'Sneak Preview' Launch Events of the opening hour-long episode of *The Raising of America*.

These large events (250–750+ people) will happen prior to the national PBS broadcast (dates TBD) and bring together a diverse audience—community members, advocates, policymakers, educators, practitioners, researchers and more across a range of sectors—early childhood, health, education, business, government, etc.—to promote meaningful conversation and local action to improve conditions of families with young children.

Organize Screening Events

LATE FALL 2014
ONWARDS

The Raising of America documentary series is a tool that can help organizations change the conversation and contextualize how our individual aspirations for our children are inherently tied to the larger physical, social and political environments in which we live, work and play—for better or for worse:

- Science clearly demonstrates how the early years are crucial to life-long outcomes—learning, earning, and physical and mental health.
- Parents are increasingly squeezed for time, money and resources—up and especially down the socioeconomic ladder.
- As a society, what can we do to better ensure all our infants the opportunities for the safe, secure, nurturing relationships they need to thrive—and in doing so, raise a healthier, safer, better educated, more prosperous and equitable America?

*There are many possible ways to use the series.
Consider the following strategies to change the conversation:*

Internal screening with staff, students, or department heads

Develop a shared understanding of how early experiences shape the developing brain and how parents and communities can provide the safe, secure and nurturing environment all children need. How might we address the disproportionate 'squeeze' for time, money and resources that too often undermine the efforts of middle class and low-income families?

Workshop or staff training for members/constituents

Promote discussion of how the issues depicted in the film reflect societal inequities impacting our communities. How can we develop/renew an organizational commitment to working across silos to advance health and well-being for families with young children?

Dialogue with partners and allies

Take a leadership role in educating partners about how an equity framework applies to your combined efforts for early child health and development. Create a shared foundation and common language for discussing early childhood and aligning your priorities.

Mobilize partners

Work with existing allies and partners to build capacity and secure commitments to address a particular issue or set of issues that affect early childhood. Use the series to underscore the importance of this work.

Build new alliances

Demonstrate to potential partners in different sectors (labor, economic development, education, housing, criminal justice, etc.) how your work is intertwined and how these linkages represent a mutual opportunity to improve conditions for families with young children. Use the series to inform and validate new and unconventional coalitions.

Town Hall meetings and public dialogues

Convene public officials, health advocates and workers, community-based organizations, the press and other stakeholders to draw local attention to existing child health and well-being inequities, discuss promising initiatives, and generate an eagerness for change.

Briefings

Use one or two strategic clips in a forum for civic leaders, policymakers and other gatekeepers. Bring in issues that aren't usually considered early childhood topics—policies that reduce socioeconomic inequities, promote racial justice, and protect those lower on the pyramid from health threats. Discuss the distribution of power: who should be involved in decision-making and how can you make that happen?

Engage the media

Encourage the media to use an equity framework to report on early childhood issues, to cover innovative local initiatives, and to explore social and economic conditions in the United States that influence the life-course trajectories of young children.

Lift Up a Local Initiative

Use the series to help frame and raise the visibility of relevant local initiatives: a promising program, report, research agenda, or innovative partnership. The series can also help build public will and support for a policy or initiative at the local, regional, state or federal level that advances early child health and development.

PBS Broadcast & Twitter Launch Party

DATES TBD

Collaborate with your local PBS station

Contact the station relations person at your local PBS station to collaborate around local screening events or organize a viewer call-in program with a panel of local experts to air after the national PBS broadcast of *The Raising of America*. Panelists can bring the focus to local issues facing children and families and discuss local initiatives that can make a difference.

Join the Twitter Launch Party

California Newsreel will host a Twitter Launch Party in conjunction with the PBS broadcast to foster conversation around early childhood health and well-being. What can—and should—we do to give all infants a strong start? Join us and tweet your expertise, resources and experiences, and spread the word.

3 THE OFFICIAL COMPANION WEBSITE

The Companion Website will provide information about the series, interactives and resources on the issues along with toolkits to get the most out of screening events. All media, graphics and tools will be easily shareable, downloadable and embeddable. The site is currently in development and will feature:

Video Clips	Watch series clips, web-exclusive clips, and episodes available for individual streaming
Three Discover 'Magazines'	Explore a menu of multi-media interactives and articles that explore: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• What do babies remember?• The squeeze on parents and caregivers• Why, when we know so much, do we do so little?
Interactives	How much leave would you get if you live in X country? Where do childcare workers rank in terms of salary? How does the U.S. compete in the Child Well-being Olympics?
Discussion Guides	Pre-viewing activities, comprehension and engagement questions, and suggested opportunities for taking action for each episode
Action Toolkit	Step-by-step guide to help organizers tailor events and get the most out of each screening
ConnectUp! Database	User-driven directory of organizations working to improve conditions of children & families
Downloadable Resources	Videos, guides, handouts, backgrounders, promotional and media materials and more

ABOUT US

California Newsreel produces and distributes cutting edge social justice films that inspire, educate and engage audiences. Founded in 1968, Newsreel is the oldest non-profit, social issue documentary film center in the country, the first to marry media production and contemporary social movements. www.newsreel.org

CONTACT

info@raisingofamerica.org

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