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978-1-107-09329-4 - Debating Early Child Care: The Relationship between Developmental Science and the Media

Robert Crosnoe and Tama Leventhal

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Debating Early Child Care

Throughout distressing cultural battles and disputes over child care, each side claims to have the best interests of children at heart. While developmental scientists have concrete evidence for this debate, their message is often lost or muddled by the media. To demonstrate why this problem matters, this book examines the extensive media coverage of the NICHD Study of Early Child Care and Youth Development – a long-running government-funded study that provides the most comprehensive look at the effects of early child care on American children. Analyses of newspaper articles and interviews with scientists and journalists reveal what happens to science in the public sphere and how children’s issues can be used to question parents’ choices. By shining light on these issues, the authors bring clarity to the enduring child care wars while providing recommendations for how scientists and the media can talk to – rather than past – each other.

ROBERT CROSNOE is the C.B. Smith, Sr., Centennial Chair at the University of Texas at Austin, where he is chair of the Department of Sociology and holds faculty appointments in the Population Research Center and the Department of Psychology. Prior to coming to Texas, he received his PhD in Sociology from Stanford University and completed postdoctoral fellowships at the Center for Developmental Science and Carolina Population Center, both at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. Crosnoe’s research focuses on the education and general development of young people, especially those growing up in poverty or who come from immigrant backgrounds. His books include *Healthy Learning: A Whole Child Approach to Disparities in Early Education* (with Claude Bonazzo and Nina Wu, Teachers College Press, 2015), *Fitting In, Standing Out: Navigating the Social Challenges of High School to Get an Education* (Cambridge

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University Press, 2011), and *Mexican Roots, American Schools: Helping Mexican Immigrant Children Succeed* (Stanford University Press, 2006). He has won awards for research and teaching from the Society for Research in Child Development and the American Sociological Association.

TAMA LEVENTHAL is Associate Professor in the Eliot-Pearson Department of Child Study and Human Development at Tufts University. She received her degree (with distinction) from Teachers College, Columbia University. Prior to her position at Tufts, she served as an associate research scientist at the Institute for Policy Studies and an assistant professor at the Bloomberg School of Public Health, both at Johns Hopkins University. She also worked as a research scientist at the National Center for Children and Families at Columbia University. Her research is at the intersection of child development and social policy, with a general focus on the role of neighborhood and housing contexts in the lives of children, youth, and families. Her research appears in numerous peer-reviewed publications in many top-tier disciplinary journals ranging from developmental psychology, human development and family studies, sociology, and psychiatry to public health. She is co-editor of the *Handbook of Child Psychology and Developmental Science: Ecological Settings and Processes in Developmental Systems, Volume 4* (2015).

Both Crosnoe and Leventhal joined the NICHD Early Child Care Research Network when the SECCYD children entered high school, and they helped to organize data collection as the sample moved from adolescence to young adulthood.

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This book is dedicated to all of the investigators on the NICHD Study of Early Child Care Network, including and especially the Phase IV investigators who had such influence on us: Jay, Cathryn, Bob B., Celia, Peg, Sue C., Beth, Martha, Sarah, Jim, Bonnie H-F, Bill, Kathy, Dan, Bonnie K., Kathleen, Vonnie, Fred, Phil, Marion, Margaret, Ross, Bob P., Kim, Vijaya, Glenn, Sue S., Larry, Liz, Deborah, and Marsha. And, in this group, we want to make special note of Alison, whom we all miss a great deal.

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