

Formerly entitled American Birthright

# The Raising of America

EARLY CHILDHOOD AND THE FUTURE OF OUR NATION

## OVERVIEW

*The Raising of America*, by the producers of *UNNATURAL CAUSES: Is Inequality Making Us Sick?*, is an ambitious documentary series and public engagement campaign which seeks to reframe the way we look at early child health and development and illustrate how a strong start for all our kids leads not only to better individual life course outcomes (learning, earning and physical and mental health) but also to a healthier, safer, better educated and more prosperous and equitable America.

What infants and toddlers need to thrive is no mystery: a safe, stable, caring and stimulating environment. But the middle class is increasingly squeezed for time, money and resources and a quarter of our children are born into poverty. 69% of those are children of color. As families face multiple adversities, the resulting stress “drips down” on infants and as recent scientific research tells us, threatens to “short-circuit” the wiring of their developing brains with potential cumulative, long-term consequences.

It doesn't have to be this way. Recent scientific research also suggests how changing public policies and strengthening communities can better protect and transform life prospects for all our children, especially our most vulnerable, while providing additional society-wide payoffs in lowered health care costs, crime, welfare, substance abuse and increased productivity.

## THE DOCUMENTARY SERIES

National PBS Broadcast and  
DVD Release in 2013

- **THE RAISING OF AMERICA** (60 min) interweaves the latest neuroscience findings on why the early years are so crucial with personal stories that explore how parenting choices are often constrained by larger social and economic arrangements. It lifts up how policies can help or hinder efforts to create environments in which all our children can thrive and build the foundations for life-long personal wellbeing as well as a healthier, more prosperous and equitable nation.

Additional 20-30 minute episodes:

- **BODY POLITIC: A Brief History of Child and Family Policy**
- **DNA IS NOT DESTINY: How the Outside Gets Under the Skin**
- **HEALING THE HURT: A Trauma Informed Approach**
- **NATIONAL SECURITY: The Cost and Benefits of Investing in Early Childhood**
- **PLAY! Building Blocks to Healthy Development**
- **STRESSING OUT THE POOR? Building Community Resilience**

The specific content and formats for *The Raising of America* were developed through rigorous consultation with the field in a process we call “user-centered design”. For a copy of the Needs Ascertainment Report, please visit: [www.raisingofamerica.org/project](http://www.raisingofamerica.org/project).

## THE PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT CAMPAIGN

Linking Early Child Health and Development to a  
More Prosperous and Equitable Nation

*The Raising of America* aims to expand the debate about what we as a society can – and should – do to ensure every infant has an equal opportunity childhood. We invite you to join hundreds of other Engagement Partners and use *The Raising of America* to:

**Educate:** Raise awareness about the latest scientific research and the urgency of investing in our youngest children and those who care for them.

**Organize:** Generate dialog and build alliances among the many stakeholder organizations – child advocates, service providers, community organizations, business, labor, hospitals, educators and others.

**Advocate:** Build public will and advocate for the local, state and national changes needed to give every child the opportunity for a strong start.

**The Raising of America Official Companion Website** will be a rich source of Toolkits, Discussion Guides, Social Media Tools and other resources to help you convene launch events, community dialogs, policy forums, trainings, town halls and other events to engage your staff, constituents, allies, volunteers, policy makers and the general public.

*The Raising of America* is a project of California Newsreel with Vital Pictures.

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