

❖ ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Writing and compiling an edited volume, especially one as comprehensive as this, can be a complicated business. From conceptualizing and developing the prospectus for this revised edition, to identifying and inviting potential contributors, to the review and revisions of the chapters in various stages, and, finally, to the submission of the manuscript, is a lengthy journey. It is gratifying to complete these tasks and to know that others, especially social work students, will be able to develop their knowledge by using these chapters in their course work and hopefully keep it as a resource long after they complete their studies. One of the most gratifying aspects of the process is being able to acknowledge and thank those people who contributed to this effort and those who helped to sustain and encourage us along this journey.

Both of us began our social work careers in child welfare: Gary as a child welfare worker in St. Dominic's Home, working on the front line with children, youth, and families in Blauvelt, New York, and Peg as a social work intern at the Juvenile Protective Association of Chicago, an agency providing intensive family-centered, home-based placement prevention services. Much of Peg's work has subsequently continued to focus on placement prevention services as well as on the critical importance of visits, or family time, in the lives of children in care and their families, particularly as it relates to family reunification. Gary's work has emphasized the importance of developing an affirming lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) perspective in working with children, youth, and families. We have both been blessed with good colleagues and friends along the way as well as inspiring teachers, fine supervisors, and many, many children, youth, and families who have taught us much more than we ever could have imagined when we began our careers.

More recently, Gary's work at the Silberman School of Social Work at Hunter College in New York, where he is the executive director of the National Center for Child Welfare Excellence, has brought him in touch with federal, state, and tribal leaders in child welfare throughout the country. These valuable associations and dialogues have provided a stimulating context for the planning, coordination, and completion of this text. The ideas, discussions, and principles presented in this edition are those of the volume's coeditors and contributing authors. They do not represent the official position of the Children's Bureau or the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, nor were funds from any grant used in the development of this book.

While working on this edition, Peg has been involved in multiple reviews of case files of foster children in various states for Children's Rights, a national advocacy group working to reform failing child welfare systems. The findings of these reviews have served as reminders of the very troubling gap between what is currently known about effective child welfare practice and what many children and their families actually experience. Peg has also continued to consult with states and local programs concerning family visiting of children in care. In contrast to the serious shortcomings in some areas of the public child welfare system, the innovative programs and other resources designed to protect children's relationships with their parents, siblings, and extended family and to facilitate healing, exemplify the creativity, expertise, and tireless dedication of many child welfare professionals. They are making the kind of tangible difference in children and families' lives we all hope to make.

Both of us recognize and acknowledge how much we have benefited from others. We have learned from our interactions with countless social work practitioners, caseworkers, supervisors, out-of-home caregivers, and administrators in child welfare agencies across the country and with child and family advocates

as we have consulted, provided training, and studied a wide array of child welfare issues. We also acknowledge the equally important and profound lessons we have learned from the innumerable children, youth, and families who have touched our lives with their courage and resilience in the least desirable of circumstances.

The initial idea for this book came about ten years ago when Gary proposed working on this text with Peg; we met over coffee on Broadway near Columbia University in New York, where we had both worked as faculty and come to know each other as colleagues and friends. Now more than a decade into the twenty-first century, we have had the opportunity to identify and examine those areas in child welfare where new legislation and knowledge are resulting in needed change as well as those areas where needed change has not yet been realized. Our collaboration as coeditors has been rich, rewarding, and satisfying from start to finish on both editions.

Our debt to colleagues who contributed to this volume is inestimable. Both of us on many occasions have noted how fortunate we have been to have such knowledgeable and devoted child welfare professionals writing for this collection. Our contributors have been delightful to work with; but, more important, the depth of their knowledge and their willingness to share it with students and others who will use this handbook is quite remarkable. We are extremely grateful for their exceptional contributions to the field of child welfare and to the second edition of this volume.

It is also important to us to acknowledge the consistent strong support and encouragement provided by one of the finest people in academic publishing, our senior editor at Columbia University Press, the late John Michel, who passed away right before the publication of the first edition in 2005. As we have worked on this second edition, we have recalled how John, in his gentle and always humorous way, gave us wise counsel at every step in the process.

We remain deeply saddened by the loss of our colleague and friend and regret that John was never able to see the published work he jokingly called “the mammoth volume” or this second edition.

We gratefully acknowledge senior executive editor Lauren Dockett’s attentive and very skillful guidance, as she moved the proposal for this edition through reviews, and Jennifer Perillo’s final reviews and editing for publication as

well as the remarkably efficient and competent editing provided by Columbia University Press colleagues.

Our final thanks are extended to our partners Binho and Howard, our children and grandchildren, and our families (kin and fictive), who support, nurture, and sustain us in personal ways that, in turn, permit us to spend time away from them, immersed in professional endeavors that sustain us in different ways.

**CHILD WELFARE FOR THE
TWENTY-FIRST CENTURY**



