This project took root over the last decade as the editors, several of the contributors, and other colleagues engaged in practice with and research on children and youth. Some of us were struggling with the everyday dilemmas and contradictions in our practice and finding that the theoretical frames and intervention strategies we had in hand were insufficient for the challenges we faced. Others were exploring novel terrain of theory and practice and posing different questions. The pioneering work of Sharon Stephens (1952–1998) on the anthropology of childhood was a profound influence in our developing thought and practice, and we honor her memory here. Sharon Stephens inspired many of us with her teaching and generous personal encouragement, as well as her groundbreaking scholarly work. Her edited volume *Children and the Politics of Culture* (1995a) is a standard collection in this area, and her provocative introduction to the book (1995b) opens up the line of questioning pursued by many contributors to this volume. Her articles on children, risk, and the environment (1994, 1995c, 1996), children at risk (in Finn and Nybell 2001), and children and nationalism (1997a, 1997b) raise profound and still generative questions for social workers and researchers. Over the years we have kept the dialogue going, engaged a diverse group of scholars and practitioners, and learned about the creative and critical
work of others who were also grappling with these questions, several of whom agreed to contribute to this volume.

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CHILDHOOD, YOUTH, AND SOCIAL WORK IN TRANSFORMATION