

# A NEW DEAL FOR CHILDREN

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The background of the entire page is a repeating pattern of light gray handprints. The handprints are arranged in a grid-like fashion, with some appearing slightly larger or more prominent than others. The overall effect is a textured, symbolic background representing children and diversity.

# **REIMAGINING EQUALITY**

**A New Deal for  
Children of Color**

Nancy E. Dowd

# Children's Hierarchies

- **Universal:** Innocenti Report Card 13

- Fault lines: **race, gender, class**

- **Constructed** not “natural”





# 3 critical data points about Black Boys

- **Rate of poverty:** 1 in 3 (highest rate under 5, 34%)
- **High school graduation:** 50% (40% dropout rate)
- **Juvenile justice system** involvement: 1 in 3 (or higher)



# BLACKBOYSMATTER

USING THE LIFE COURSE OF BLACK  
BOYS TO CONSTRUCT A MODEL OF

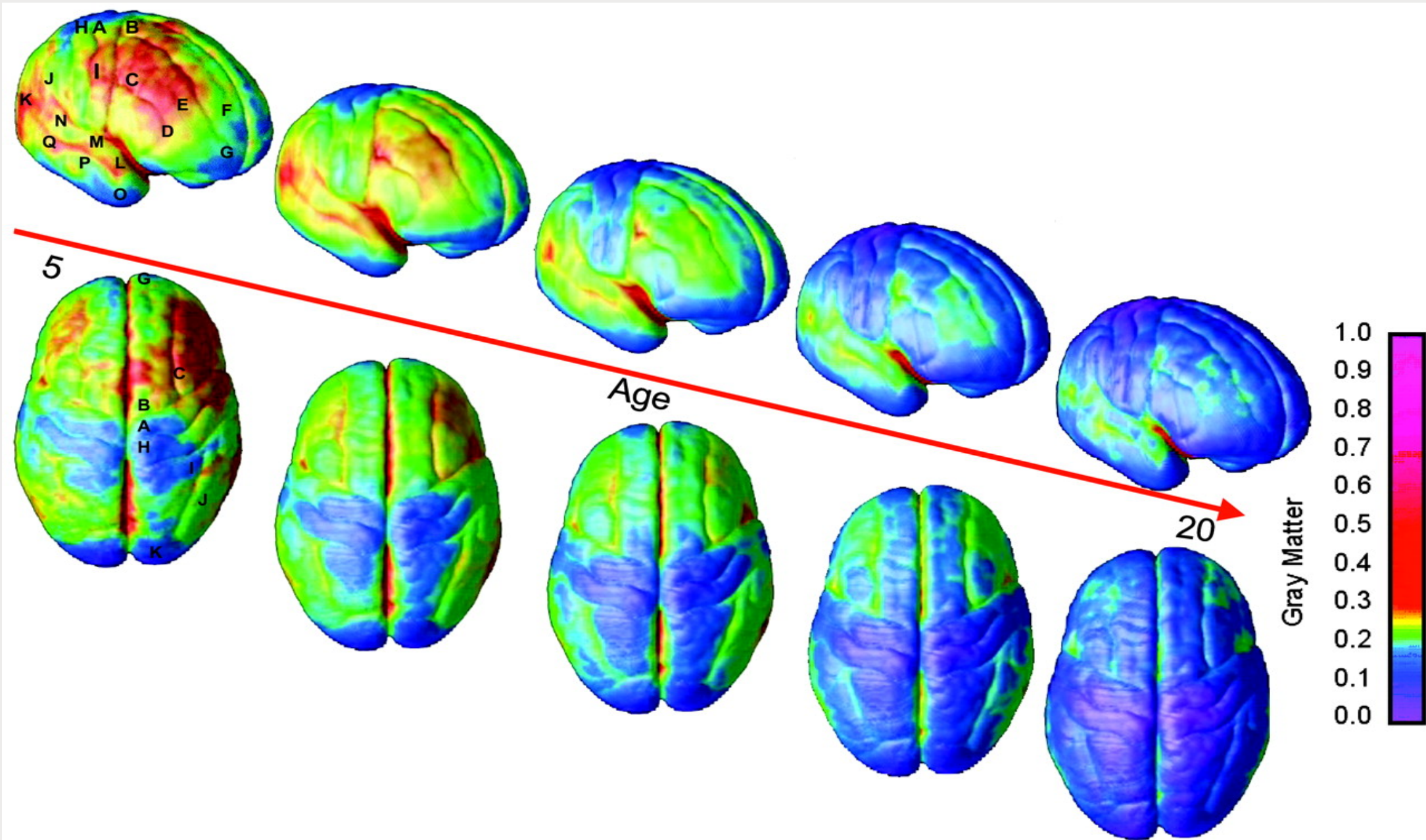
# EQUALITY FOR ALL



# Development: Linear Progression



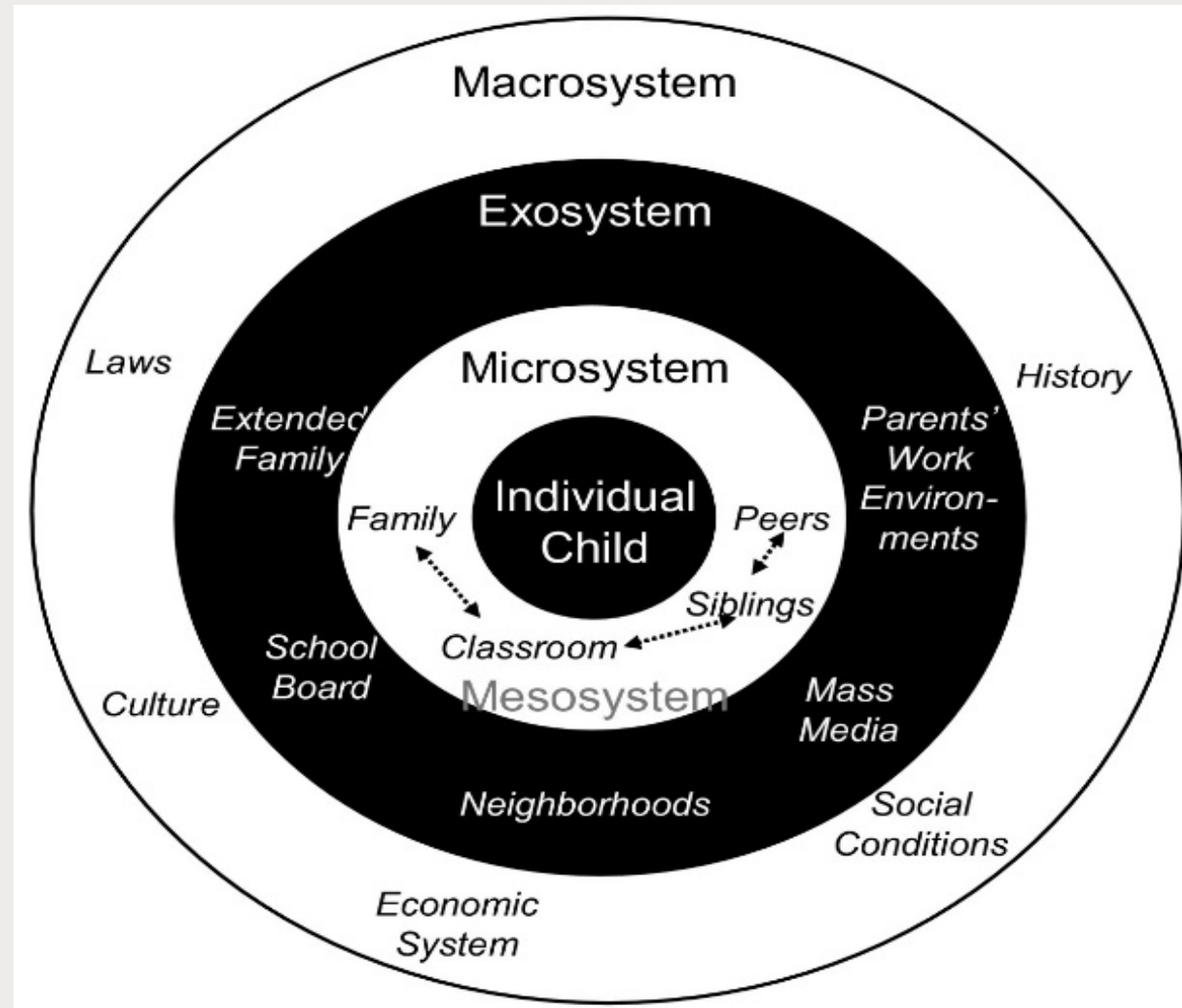




# Childhood Matters



# Urie Bronfenbrenner, Ecological Model



# CHILDREN'S HIERARCHIES

creating challenges and barriers

funnelling to **failure** v. supporting

**equality and equity**

# DEVELOPMENTAL EQUALITY

- DEVELOPMENT AS A  
**EQUALITY RIGHT** FOR EVERY  
CHILD
- Using DEVELOPMENTAL FRAMEWORKS  
**CRITICALLY**

# Developmental Equality: STATE RESPONSIBILITIES

- Use race and gender identities (and other markers of hierarchy) to monitor/correct/dismantle structures and policies that create developmental challenges
- A responsive, supportive state to enhance development

# Children's Rights

- **AFFIRMATIVE RIGHTS** based on dependency, vulnerabilities, needs, and preparation for equal social citizenship

# Strategies

- (1) Litigation: disability statutes
- (2) Constitutional rights: children's rights
- (3) Legislation: A New Deal for Children



# A “NEW DEAL” for CHILDREN

- Systemic reform of existing systems (education, health, juvenile justice)
- Constructing new affirmative systems (early childhood)
- Addressing overarching problems that require multisystemic responses (poverty, racism)

# System change

- **Health:** prenatal health, children's health, and family health, focusing on **health equity and the social determinants** of health
- **Education:** **high quality, equal/equitable schools**, beginning with early childhood education through post-secondary college or other training; mental health screening and early identification and support for learning disabilities and other disabilities;
- **Parental support:** **economic support, education, skills, services**, paid leave, work-family balance
- **Housing and neighborhoods**

# System change

- **Anti-poverty**, economic stabilization  
measures including cash transfers, in kind transfers, services and support;
- **Public safety**, including positive relationships between police and children, and peaceful neighborhoods.
- **Anti-racism**, structural and cultural
- **Resilience support** for sources of toxic stress or episodic stress to children, families, and communities;

# System Change

- Universal high quality **childcare and afterschool** programs
- **Adolescent youth services**, including work, skills, enrichment, and well being; fostering positive identities of race and gender; safety, non violence , positive sexuality; juvenile justice as a system of well-being and rehabilitation, not incarceration
- Prevention to the extent possible of **domestic violence and child abuse** and neglect by effective interventions after minimizing factors that contribute to these behaviors, and providing effective systems for children who go into **foster care**

# System creation: early childhood example

- Prebirth support\*
- Importance of the first 1000 days
- Healthcare\* (child and family)
- Work/family policy\*
- Income support\* linked to meaningful work
- Fostering parental care in development of children even if nonresident\*
- Early childhood developmental support for parents\*
- High quality childcare\*
- High quality early childhood education\*
- Resilience services for trauma\*
- Early identification of disabilities and support for disabled children and their families\*

# Challenges/questions

- 1. **avoiding domestication** of radical change
- 2. can the **intrusive state** become a **responsive state**
- 3. **justifying maximum support** versus a minimum or adequate level
- 4. supporting **families/parents** v. **privatizing** responsibility and explaining or **blaming** families for structural inequalities

“WE WANT A WORLD FIT FOR  
CHILDREN, BECAUSE A WORLD  
FIT FOR US IS A WORLD FIT  
FOR EVERYONE.”

The Children's Statement, UN General Assembly's Special Session on  
Children, 8 May 2002