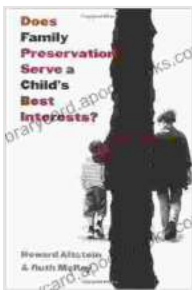


Does Family Preservation Serve Child Best Interests? Controversies In Public Policy

Family preservation is a set of policies and practices that aim to keep children in their homes with their families, even when they are experiencing difficulties that could lead to child abuse or neglect. Family preservation services typically include home-based counseling, parenting education, and case management.



Does Family Preservation Serve a Child's Best Interests? (Controversies in Public Policy series)

by Howard Altstein

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The goal of family preservation is to prevent children from entering the foster care system, which can be traumatic and disruptive. Family preservation services can also help to strengthen families and improve the well-being of children.

However, there is some controversy about whether family preservation always serves the best interests of children. Some critics argue that family

preservation can put children at risk of harm if their parents are not able to provide a safe and nurturing environment.

This article will examine the controversies surrounding family preservation policies in public child welfare. It will explore the arguments for and against family preservation, including its potential benefits and risks to children, and discuss the role of evidence in informing policy decisions.

Arguments For Family Preservation

There are several arguments in favor of family preservation policies. First, family preservation can help to prevent children from entering the foster care system, which can be traumatic and disruptive. Children who enter foster care are more likely to experience abuse and neglect, have lower educational attainment, and have more mental health problems than children who remain in their own homes.

Second, family preservation can help to strengthen families and improve the well-being of children. Family preservation services can provide parents with the support and resources they need to improve their parenting skills and create a more nurturing home environment for their children.

Third, family preservation is often more cost-effective than foster care. The cost of providing family preservation services is typically lower than the cost of placing a child in foster care.

Arguments Against Family Preservation

There are also some arguments against family preservation policies. First, some critics argue that family preservation can put children at risk of harm if their parents are not able to provide a safe and nurturing environment.

Research has shown that children who remain in homes with their abusive or neglectful parents are more likely to experience further abuse or neglect than children who are placed in foster care.

Second, some critics argue that family preservation can be too lenient on parents who have abused or neglected their children. They argue that family preservation services should focus on holding parents accountable for their behavior and protecting children from harm.

Third, some critics argue that family preservation is not always effective in preventing children from entering the foster care system. Research has shown that family preservation services can be effective in reducing the number of children who enter foster care, but they are not always able to prevent children from being placed in foster care.

The Role Of Evidence

The evidence on the effectiveness of family preservation is mixed. Some studies have shown that family preservation services can be effective in preventing children from entering the foster care system and improving the well-being of children. However, other studies have shown that family preservation services are not always effective and can sometimes put children at risk of harm.

The mixed evidence on the effectiveness of family preservation makes it difficult to draw definitive conclusions about the benefits and risks of these policies. More research is needed to determine the effectiveness of family preservation services in different contexts and for different families.

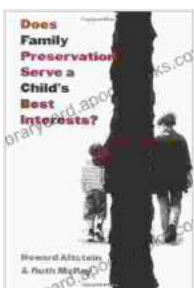
Policy Implications

The controversy surrounding family preservation policies has important implications for public policy. Policymakers need to carefully consider the evidence on the effectiveness of family preservation services when making decisions about how to allocate resources for child welfare services.

Policymakers should also consider the values that they prioritize when making decisions about family preservation. For example, some policymakers may prioritize the goal of keeping children in their homes with their families, while other policymakers may prioritize the goal of protecting children from harm.

Ultimately, the decision of whether or not to support family preservation policies is a complex one that should be made on a case-by-case basis. Policymakers should carefully consider the evidence on the effectiveness of family preservation services and the values that they prioritize when making these decisions.

Family preservation is a controversial set of policies and practices that aim to keep children in their homes with their families, even when they are experiencing difficulties that could lead to child abuse or neglect. There are several arguments for and against family preservation policies, and the evidence on their effectiveness is mixed. Policymakers need to carefully consider the evidence and the values that they prioritize when making decisions about how to allocate resources for child welfare services.



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