

*Healthy Schools/Healthy People VIII  
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## Promoting Healthy Adolescent Sexual Behavior: A Youth Development Perspective

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## Adolescence

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A transitional period composed of a series of passages - biological, psychological, social, economic - from immaturity into maturity.

- Early adolescence (ages 11-14)
- Middle adolescence (ages 15-18)
- Late adolescence (ages 19-21)

from: Hill, J. (1983) Early Adolescence: A Framework. *Journal of Early Adolescence*, 3, 1-21.

## Key Transitions of Adolescence

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- **Biological** : puberty
- **Cognitive**: more sophisticated thinking gradually develops\*:
  - *Hypothetical thinking (possibilities)*
  - *Abstract thinking rather than concrete*
  - *Metacognition (thinking about thinking)*
  - *Multidimensional rather than single issue*
  - *Relative thinking rather than absolute*
- **Social**: new roles [rights, respect, and responsibilities - ideally]

\*from: Keating, D. (1990) Adolescent Thinking. In S. Feldman & G. Elliot (Eds.)  
*At the Threshold: The Developing Adolescent*. Harvard University Press.

## Key Contexts of Adolescence

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- Families
- Peer Groups
- Schools
- Work and Leisure Settings
- Cultures
- Society

## Key Developmental Issues of Adolescence

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- Identity - self-discovery and self-understanding
- Autonomy - establishing a healthy sense of independence
- Intimacy - forming close and caring relationships with others
- Sexuality - expressing sexual feelings and enjoying physical contact with others
- Achievement - being successful and competent members of society

from: Hill, J. (1983) Early Adolescence: A Framework. *Journal of Early Adolescence*, 3, 1-21.  
and Steinberg, L. (1998) Adolescence. McGraw Hill.

## Two Fundamental Aspects of Adolescence

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Intertwined with all of these key issues (identity, autonomy, intimacy, sexuality, achievement) are two fundamental aspects of adolescence:

**(1) experimentation**

**(2) risk taking**

## Difficulties and Stress in Adolescence

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- Although it is commonly believed that adolescence is an inherently difficult time, this is little scientific support for this idea.
- Adolescent is a period of change, but not necessarily stress.
- However, some individuals experience more difficulty and stress than others.

## Exceptional Circumstances, Additional Risks

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- All adolescents need to protect themselves, while some youth need additional help
- They are faced with *poverty, racism, sexism, homophobia, stigmatization*
- Many are out of school, lack health care access, and/or are exploited by adults

## Unhealthy Sexual Outcomes: Pregnancy and STD's

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- Nearly 1 million U.S. adolescents become pregnant each year
- 3 million STD's acquired by U.S. adolescents per year
- One in four sexually active U.S. adolescents acquires an STD each year

## Unhealthy Sexual Outcomes: HIV

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- Young people age 13-24 constitute 16% of the population at large, but 50% of the 40,000 new HIV infections per year in the U.S
- Three-quarters of infections:
  - young women infected through heterosexual sex
  - young gay men
- African-Americans make up 15% of American adolescents but 49% of AIDS cases and 67% of HIV infections reported
- Latinos make up 15% of American adolescents but 20% of AIDS cases
- Most infected young people don't know it

## Pattern of Infection Among Adolescents

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The pattern of infection among American youth is consistent with the evolving global epidemic:

*“in each society, those people who are **marginalized, stigmatized, and discriminated against** -- before HIV/AIDS arrived -- have become over time those at highest risk of infection.”*

- Mann and Tarantola

## Risk Factors for Adolescents

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- Socially-based vulnerability, including homophobia, sexism, poverty, homelessness, and stigmatization
- The need to find acceptance, respect, and love through sex
- The discovery phase of sex, gay and straight
- Power dynamics with older partners
- Coercion and force
- Difficulty in communicating personal needs
- Sex work

-from: Chris Collins, *Dangerous Inhibitions*, 1997, CAPS

## Promising Intervention Approaches

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- Small group or classroom
- Individualized counseling
- Social marketing
- School-based health clinics
- Youth development: service learning
- Youth development: youth-driven policy change

***(Youth development = rights, respect, and responsibilities)***

## Recommended Classroom Strategies

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- Focus clearly on one or more specific risk behaviors
- Goals, teaching methods, and materials appropriate to the age, sexual experience, and culture of the students
- Based upon demonstrated theoretical approaches
- Last a sufficient length of time
- Use interactive strategies and approaches
- Provide basic, accurate information about risks and protection
- Include activities that addressed social pressures on sexual behavior
- Provide modeling and practice of communication, negotiation, and refusal skills
- Committed and well trained teachers and/or peer leaders

*from: Kirby, D. Journal of School Health, 1999, 69(3):89-94.*

## Teaching Self-Respect

Teaching self-respect, particularly to those young people in the most vulnerable groups, is just as important as demonstrating condom use. ... Part of achieving personal satisfaction in sexual experiences is being able to navigate the many motivations involved in sex. If love is your goal in being sexual, then you need to think about distinguishing love from being forced to risk your health for someone else's pleasure. ... Young women need to be urged to think clearly about satisfying their own needs. ... Young gay men need to be taught they are not pariahs. ***All young people need to be encouraged to make personal choices based on valuing themselves, and to understand and anticipate the risk involved in not valuing their own needs.*** from: Chris Collins, *Dangerous Inhibitions*, 1997, CAPS

## How do you spell respect?

(from the National Campaign to Prevent Teen Pregnancy Sex Has Consequences series)





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## Insert to PDF Version:

(about the National Campaign to Prevent Teen Pregnancy [Sex Has Consequences](#) series)

Because the fine print prevention messages up the left side of the six postcards above are not readable in the PDF versions of these slides, they are presented below. In the original PowerPoint version, and when projected on a wall screen, these messages are clearly visible.

- 1. *Condoms are CHEAP. If we'd used one, I wouldn't have to tell my parents I'm pregnant.*
- 2. *I want to be out with my friends, instead I'm changing DIRTY diapers at home.*
- 3. *I had sex so my boyfriend wouldn't REJECT me. Now I have a baby, and no boyfriend.*
- 4. *No that I'm home with a baby, NOBODY calls me anymore.*
- 5. *My scholarship is USELESS now that I need a job to support my baby.*
- 6. *All it took was one PRICK to get my girlfriend pregnant. At least that's what her friends say.*

## Respect .... ?

(about the National Campaign to Prevent Teen Pregnancy [Sex Has Consequences](#) series)

*"Click here to set one of these images as your wallpaper"*

-from the National Campaign to Prevent Teen Pregnancy website

*"Vote here for your favorite ad"*

-from the National Campaign to Prevent Teen Pregnancy website

*"... These ads are purposely edgy, they are intended to be cutting edge. We need to get their attention."*

-Sara Brown, President, National Campaign to Prevent Teen Pregnancy

*"... I believe that your good judgment has been clouded by an advertising 'creativity' that is simply trying to be too clever, too arch, and comes out as quite misguided."*

-Rev. John Buehrens, President Unitarian Universalist Association of Congregations

## Respect .... ?

(about the National Campaign to Prevent Teen Pregnancy [Sex Has Consequences](#) series)

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“While the rest of the field increasingly embraces a youth development approach that values young people not as problems to be fixed but as vital school and community resources, the Campaign takes a big step backwards with their new strategy based on blame, shame, and flame. ***There are healthier and more effective ways to send the message of high expectations for responsible sexual behavior, and the complementary message of respect for self and others.***”

- Norm Constantine and Bonnie Benard, WestEd

## Respect .... ?

(about the National Campaign to Prevent Teen Pregnancy [Sex Has Consequences](#) series)

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“Our concern for these ads is not that they are cutting edge or provocative; rather we agree that cutting edge advertising resonates with young people. ***Our concern is that the campaign reinforces negative stereotypes of youth and compounds the damaging belief that young people alone are the cause of the teen pregnancy problem and that they have no significant role in the solution.***”

- James Wagoner, President, Advocates for Youth

## Respect .... ?

(about the National Campaign to Prevent Teen Pregnancy [Sex Has Consequences](#) series)

“I’m sure your campaign will capture people’s attention. That’s precisely why I bothered to submit my comments. My concern is the unintended effects that may occur for certain youth when you stigmatize sexually active adolescents. ...**your stigmatization of sexual active teenagers could have serious unintended consequences (e.g., promote sexual experimentation among some at-risk youth; increase promiscuity among sexually active youth)** ... I humbly suggest you hold off on this campaign.”

*-Joel Moskowitz, Ph.D., Director, UC Berkeley Center for Family and Community Health*

## Respect .... ?

(about the National Campaign to Prevent Teen Pregnancy [Sex Has Consequences](#) series)

“I think this campaign is appalling and should be discontinued or significantly rethought as soon as possible. I think it will not have the hoped for benefits, and more alarmingly, it may have very destructive and damaging effects on teenagers’ developing self-esteem and capacity to negotiate important developmental tasks. ... I strongly encourage the developers to rethink this campaign, examine the research on adolescent development, teenage pregnancy, developmental psychopathology, prevention and early intervention, impact of media messages. ... I work with children and adolescents who are so vulnerable to media messages, and the harsh criticism that is often waged at them within their families, schools, and from peers. **I think we need to work together to create an environment that is supportive and encouraging of adolescents and their developing and often fragile self-esteem, and not promote attitudes that are likely to disrupt this process.**”

*-Karen Steinberg, Ph.D. Clinical Psychologist, University of Connecticut Health Center*

## Respect .... ?

(about the National Campaign to Prevent Teen Pregnancy [Sex Has Consequences](#) series)

“... Disappointed, because the campaign seems to use fear and shame as methods of motivation. Shocked, because the disproportionate use of youth of color in the ads, with such negative words across their images, can only reinforce negative racial stereotyping. Today's youth are bombarded with messages that promote unhealthy body images and low self-esteem. ... Earlier this year, I joined with nearly 2000 religious leaders of many denominations and faith traditions in signing "A Religious Declaration on Sexual Morality, Justice, and Healing." The opening lines of the declaration read as follows: "Sexuality is God's life-giving and life-fulfilling gift. We come from diverse religious communities to recognize sexuality as central to our humanity and as integral to our spirituality. We are speaking out against the pain, brokenness, oppression, and loss of meaning that many experience about their sexuality." ... **The "Sex has Consequences" ad campaign seems to me to only add to the pain and sense of brokenness. Not only does unwise and premature sexual activity have negative consequences. So do ads that shame, that reinforce negative stereotypes, that degrade.**”

*-Rev. John Buehrens, President Unitarian Universalist Association of Congregations*

## Respect .... ?

(about the National Campaign to Prevent Teen Pregnancy [Sex Has Consequences](#) series)

“... An excellent resource for teens as well as adults, the NCPTP gives accurate and comprehensive information about teenage sexuality. However, this ad campaign threw positive and healthy attitudes towards sexuality out the window. The NCPTP provides our youth with various resources to be responsible, healthy, happy and sexual, however these ads continue to stigmatize sexually active youth with stereotypical name-calling. In the “Sex has Consequences” campaign, teens are labeled “Prick”, “Nobody”, and “Dirty”.

While these ads generate attention, they also reinforce the negative messages youth often hear about sexual activity. Our response demonstrates the impact of positive messaging, as we believe “Honest”, “Educated” and “Valuable” are more appropriate labels for youth to wear. Planned Parenthood of the Columbia/ Willamette’s peer educators created their own ‘labels’, and then wrote the sentence that went along with their word. When contrasted with the NCPTP ads, the differences are stunning. Positive messages can be made to resonate with young adults. Healthy, positive sexuality is more than a theory. Let’s celebrate the responsible choices our teenagers make each and every day.”

*-Planned Parenthood of the Columbia/Willamette (Oregon)*

## Cutting Edge ... Without the “Dis”

Some examples:

- Planned Parenthood of the Columbia/Willamette Sexuality is a Gift series
- Coalition for Positive Sexuality Girl Germs series
- Office of National Drug Control Policy Anti-Drug Media Campaign
- German Gib AIDS Keine Chance campaign
- French Regional Center for the Prevention of AIDS (CRIPS)
- Mouvement Français pour le Planning Familial
- Dutch Safe Sex or No Sex series

## Responsible Sexuality

(from [Planned Parenthood of the Columbia/Willamette](http://Planned Parenthood of the Columbia/Willamette), [www.ppcw.org/teens](http://www.ppcw.org/teens))



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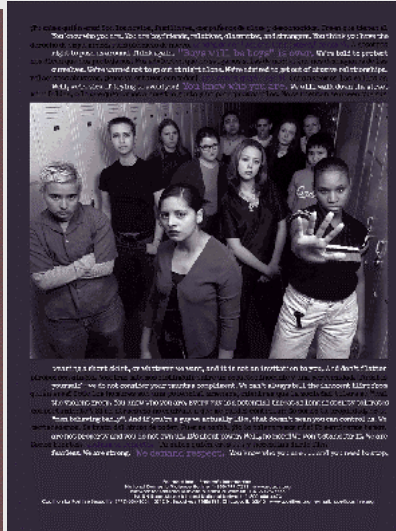
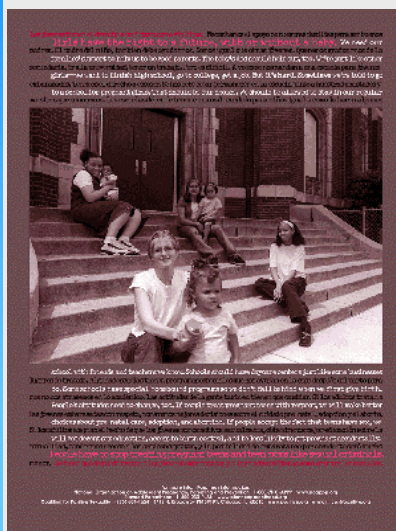
(about the [Planned Parenthood of the Columbia/Willamette](#), Sexuality is a Gift series)

Because the fine print prevention messages up the left side of the six postcards above are not readable in the PDF versions of these slides, they are presented below. In the original PowerPoint version, and when projected on a wall screen, these messages are clearly visible.

- 1. I take contraception seriously because my future is **VALUABLE**.
- 2. I discuss **TOUGH** safe sex issues with my partner.
- 3. I am **CONFIDENT** in my ability to tell my partners to use protection.
- 4. I was **HONEST** with my partner about my **STI** and they love me for it.
- 5. My partner and I think of **CREATIVE** ways to make safer sex fun..
- 6. Sex is **HAPPNEING** so its important that kids know how to protect themselves.

## Empowerment

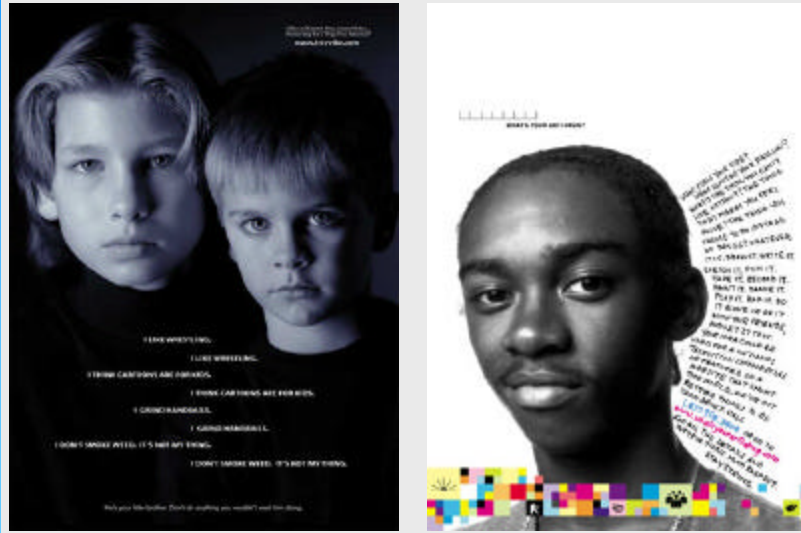
(from the Coalition for Positive Sexuality [Girl Germs](#) series, [www.positive.org](http://www.positive.org))





# Directness and Intensity

(from the ONDCP [National Youth Anti-Drug Media Campaign](http://www.mediacampaign.org), [www.mediacampaign.org](http://www.mediacampaign.org))



# Humor

(from the German [GIB AIDS KEINE CHANCE](http://www.gib-aids-keine-chance.de) series)



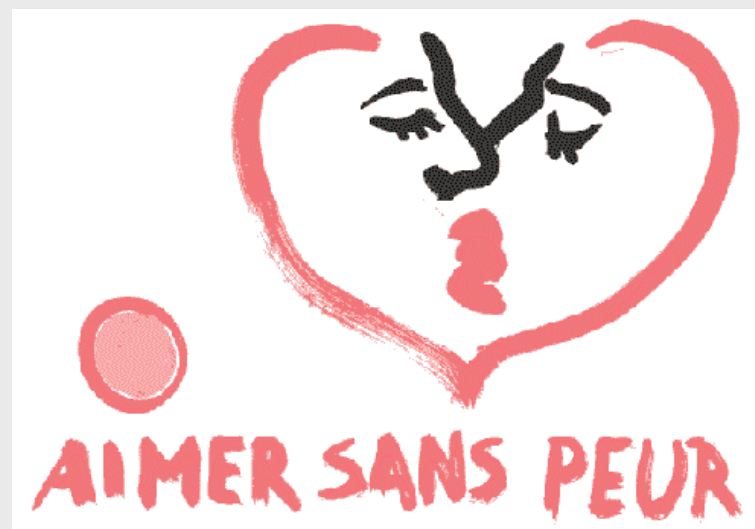
## Design Creativity

(from the German [GIB AIDS KEINE CHANCE](#) series)



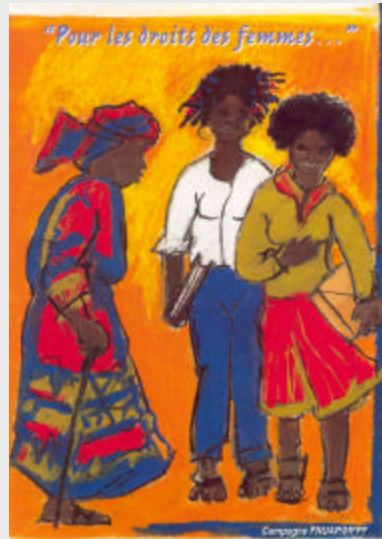
## Simplicity

(from the French [Regional Center for the Prevention of AIDS \(CRIPS\)](#))

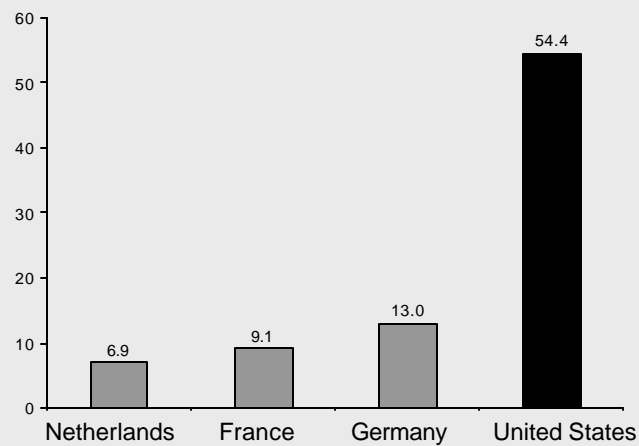


# Rights, Respect, and Responsibility

(from the French [Mouvement Français pour le Planning Familial \(MFPF\)](#),  
and the Dutch [Safe Sex or No Sex](#) series)

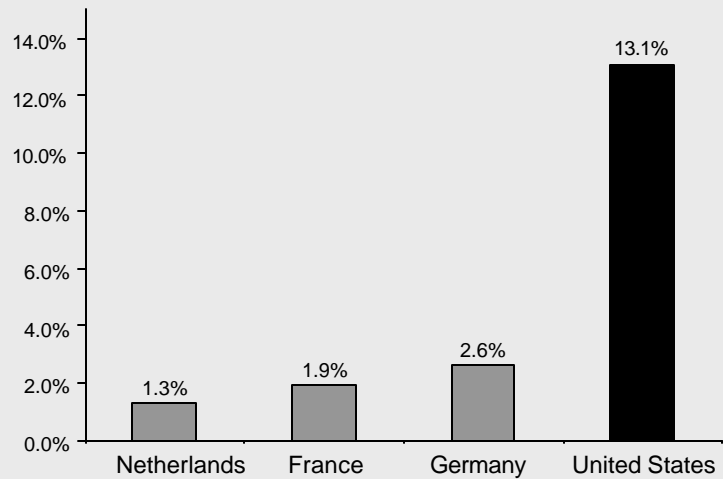


## Live Birth Rate per 1,000 Women Ages 15-19



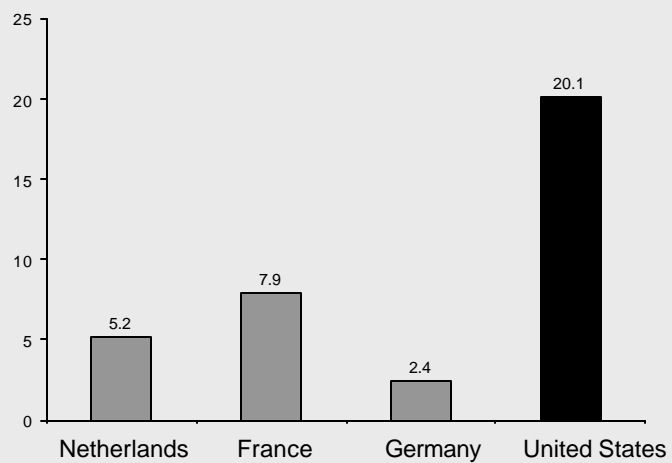
Source: World Health Organization, 1997

## Percentage of Births to Mothers Under 20 years old



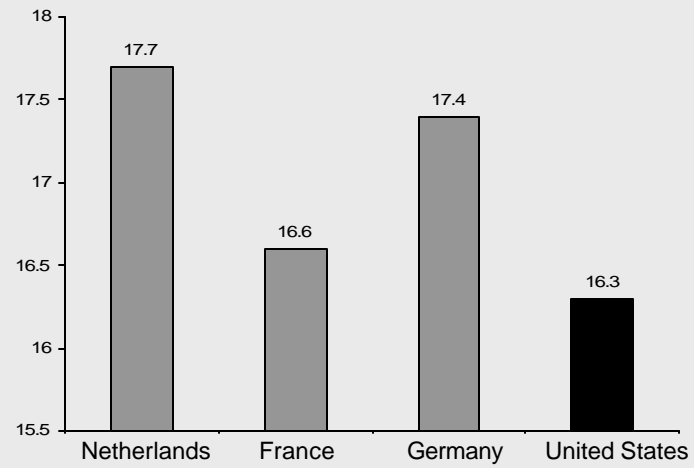
Source: United Nations 1999 Human Development Report

## Abortions per 1,000 Women Ages 15-19



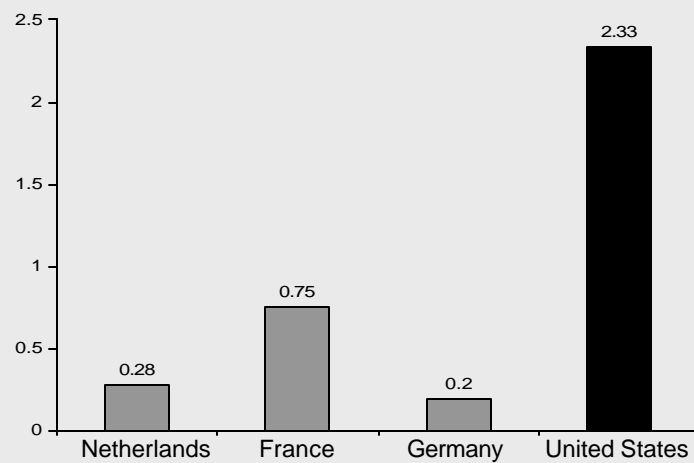
Source: World Health Organization, 1997

## Average Age at First Intercourse



Source: Durex Global Sex Survey, 1999

## AIDS cases per 1,000



Source: World Health Organization, 1997

## So Where's the Silver Bullet?

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“Unfortunately, there is no single silver bullet solution. The mass media campaigns, the public health systems and policies, have their part in the Dutch, German, and French successes. Yet success doesn't rest on programs and services alone. It is the societal thinking - the norms - that make the Dutch, German, and French successes possible. It is the openness and acceptance that young people will have intimate sexual relationships without being married and that these relationships are natural and contribute to maturing into a sexually healthy adult. It is the refusal to brand the expression of sexuality as deviant behavior or to cast it solely in a negative light. It is the determination to present sexual expression as a balance - a normal part of growing up, *and* a responsibility to protect oneself and others. **It is the *respect* these societies have for adolescents, valuing them as much for who they are as for the adults they will become.**”

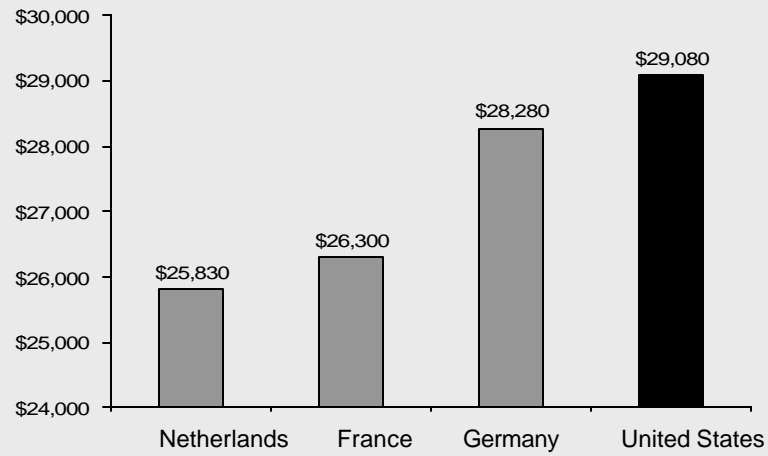
*- James Wagoner, President, Advocates for Youth*

## How Do You Spell Respect?

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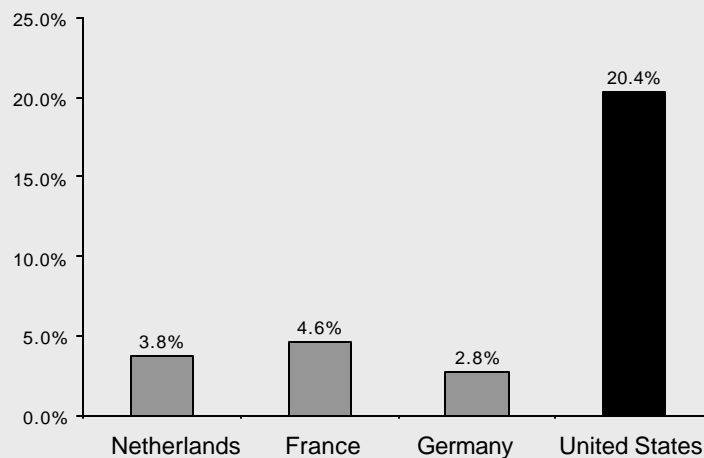
- Per capita GNP
- Percent of children in poverty
- Income disparity
- Incarceration rate

## U.S. vs. Northern Europe: Per Capita GNP (1997) in U.S. Dollars



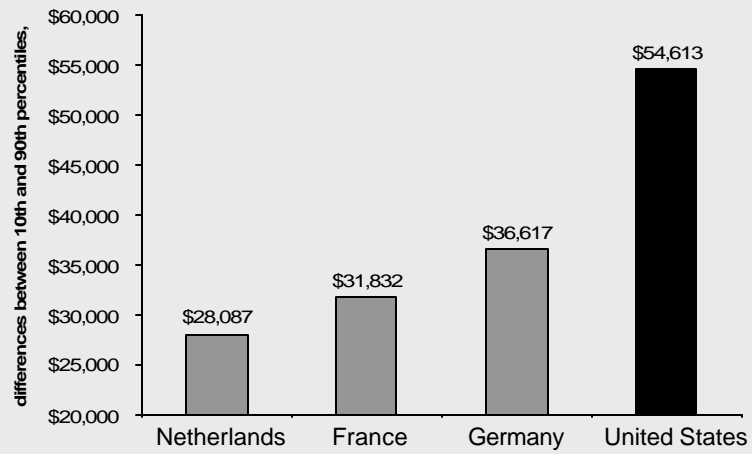
Source: United Nations 1999 Human Development Report

## U.S. vs. Northern Europe: Children in Poverty



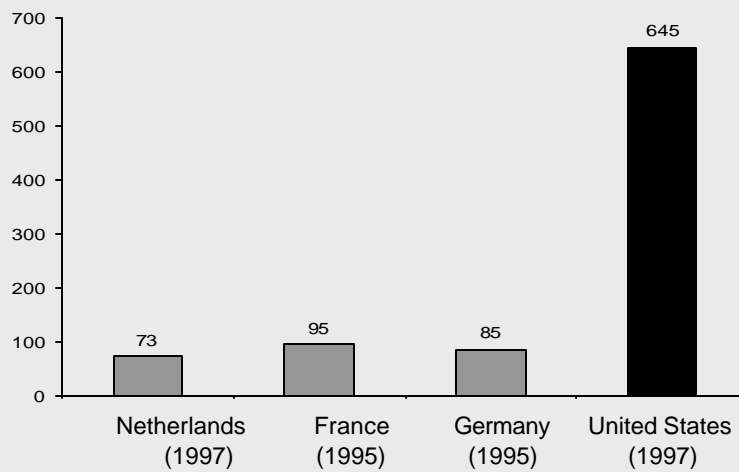
Source: Luxembourg income study (1992) reported in Bronfenbrenner, et al. (1996) *The State of Americans*

## Rich and Poor Families are Furthest Apart in the U.S.



Source: Luxembourg income study (1992) reported in Bronfenbrenner, et al. (1996) *The State of Americans*.

## U.S. vs. Northern Europe: Incarceration Rate per 100,000



Source: Bronfenbrenner, et al. (1996). *The State of Americans*.



## The Context of Poverty

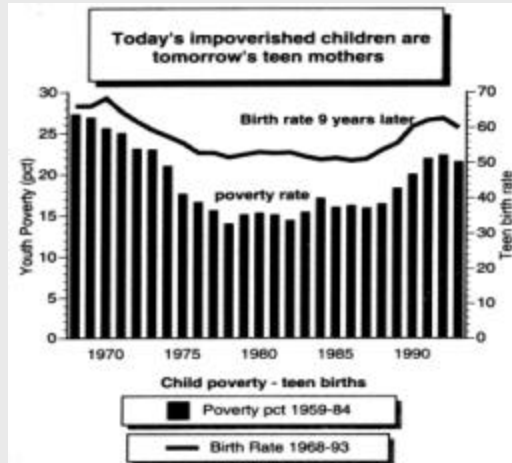


Figure 3.2  
Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census, *Poverty in the United States, 1992*; National Center for Health Statistics, *Vital Statistics of the United States 1991* and advanced data. See Table 3.1.

from: Males, M. (1996). *The Scapegoat Generation*. (p. 81). Common Courage Press.

## The Context of Poverty

Early childbearing doesn't make young women poor; rather, poverty makes women bear children at an early age. Society should not worry about some epidemic of "teenage pregnancy" but about the hopeless, discouraged, and empty lives that early childbearing denotes. Teenagers and their children desperately need a better future, one with brighter opportunities and greater rewards. ***Making the United States the kind of country in which - as in most European countries - early childbearing is rare would entail profound changes in public policy and perhaps even American society as a whole.***

from: Luker, K. (1996). *Dubious Connections: The Politics of Teenage Pregnancy*. (p. 192). Harvard University Press.

# CONCLUSIONS

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- Rights
- Respect
- Responsibilities
- Research

## 1. Rights

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Every young person has the right to the information and services necessary to make responsible decisions about his or her reproductive and sexual health.

- Right to complete, honest, and accurate reproductive and sexual health information
- Right to accessible, affordable, and quality health care services
- Right to privacy and confidentiality
- Right to caring and supportive relationships with parents and other adults

- from Linda Berne and Barbara Huberman, 1999

## 2. Respect

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### All adolescents deserve respect as valuable individuals

- Every adolescent is a valuable individual who deserves respect and support of family, community, and society
- Adults must view young people as assets, not as problems
- Each adolescent has a unique contribution to make
- Society demonstrates that it values young people by providing them with good quality education, economic security, and the promise of fulfilling futures.

- from Linda Berne and Barbara Huberman, 1999

## 3. Responsibilities

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### Rights entail responsibilities

- Families, communities, and society have the responsibility to provide young people with the support they need to create healthy, fulfilling lives.
- Adolescents in turn, have the responsibility to act upon the information and services available to them
- The right to information and health services comes with the responsibility to protect oneself and one's partner against unintended pregnancy and STDs, including HIV

- from Linda Berne and Barbara Huberman, 1999

## 4. Research

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### Research must dictate public policy

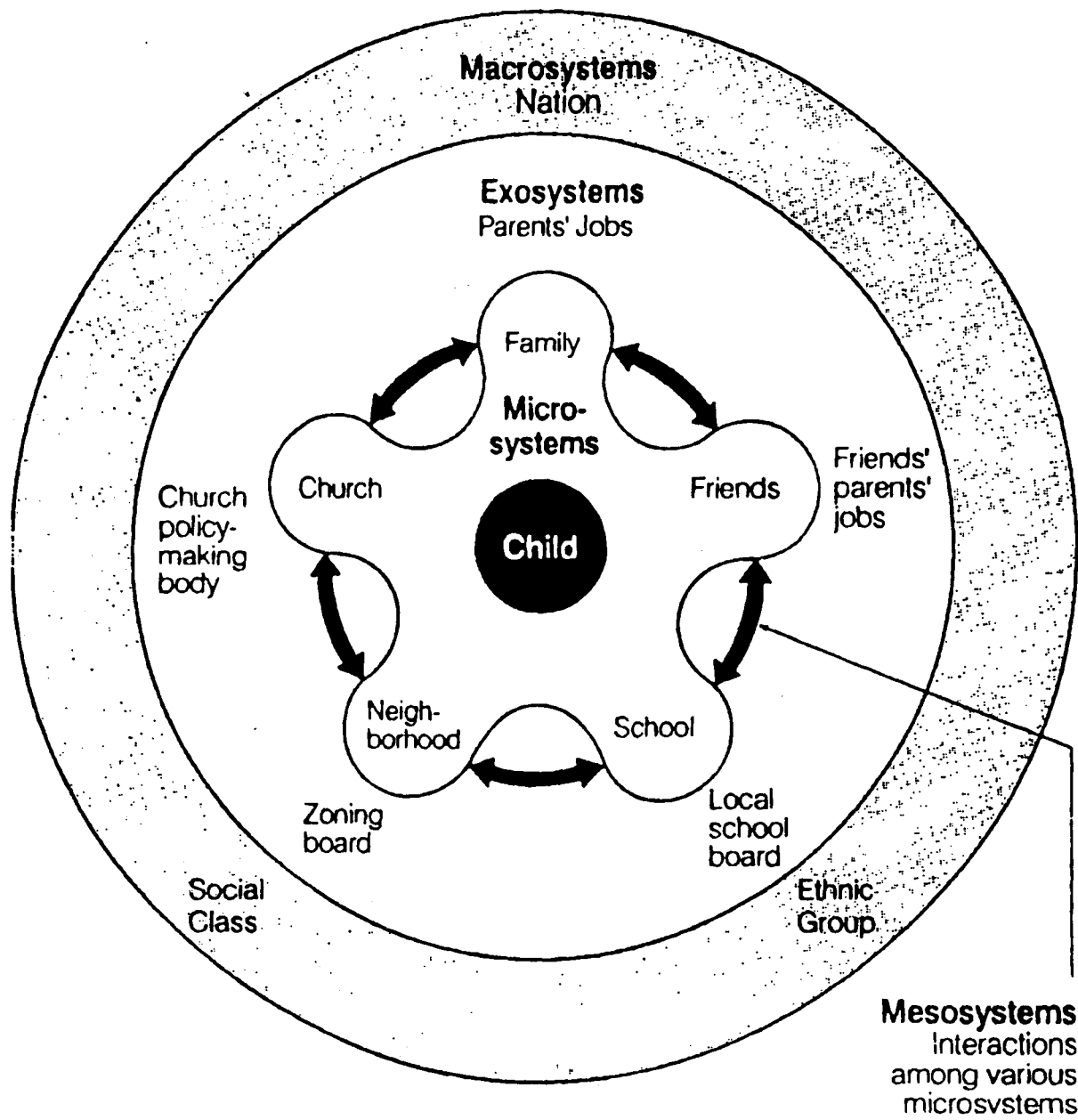
- Public policies that impact the health and the well being of young people should rest securely on scientific research
- Adolescents deserve sexual health strategies based upon best practices as determined by evaluation and research
- Science - not politics or religion - should drive public health programs and policies

*- from Linda Berne and Barbara Huberman, 1999*

## For More Information

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Bronfenbrenner's Developmental Ecology

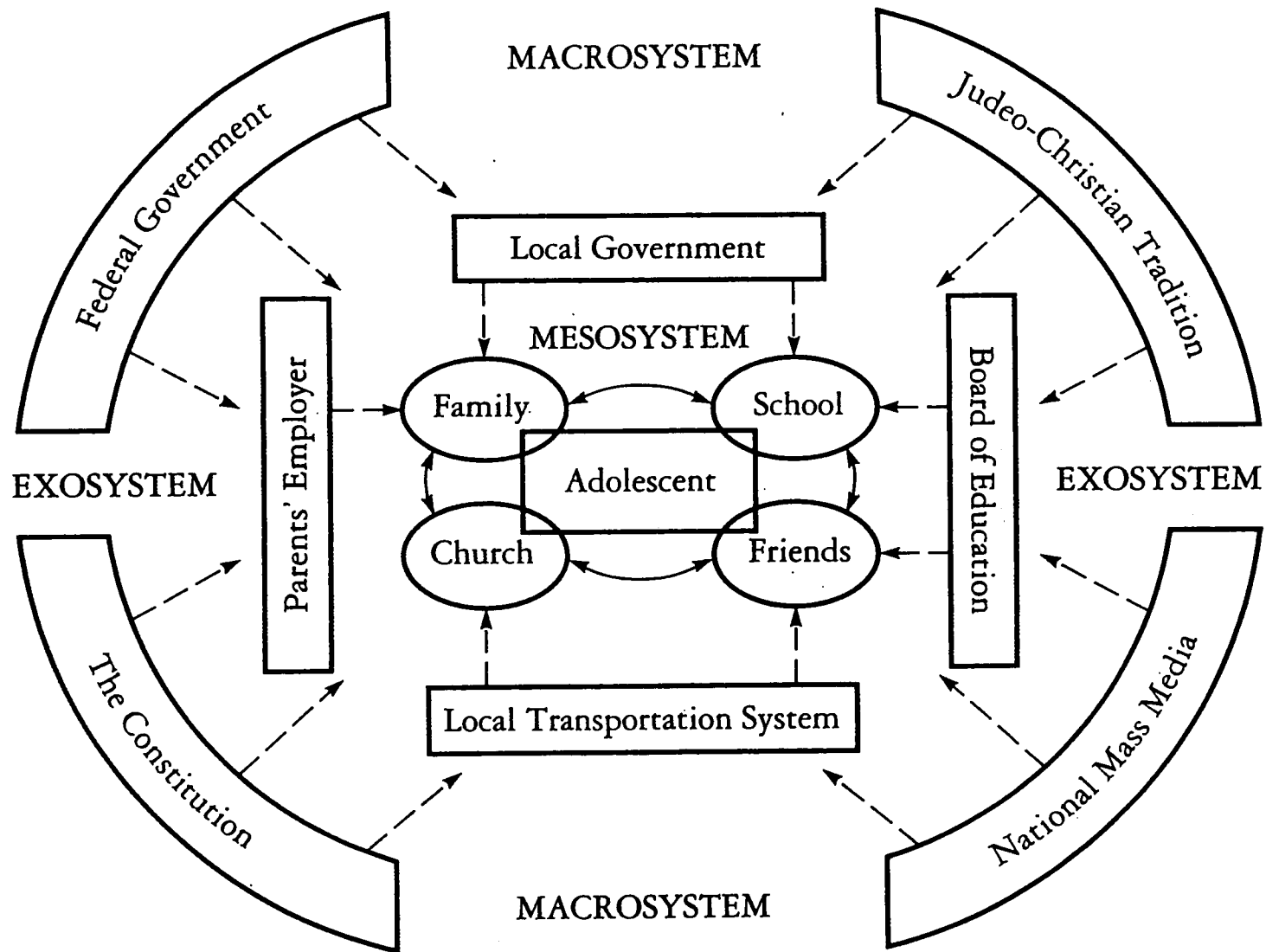


FIGURE 15.4 The macrosystem. The individual is part of several microsystems, and several microsystems form the mesosystem. Interactions at the mesosystem level are personal and direct. The mesosystem is embedded in the exosystem and the more general social cultural macrosystem; effects at this level are impersonal and often indirect.

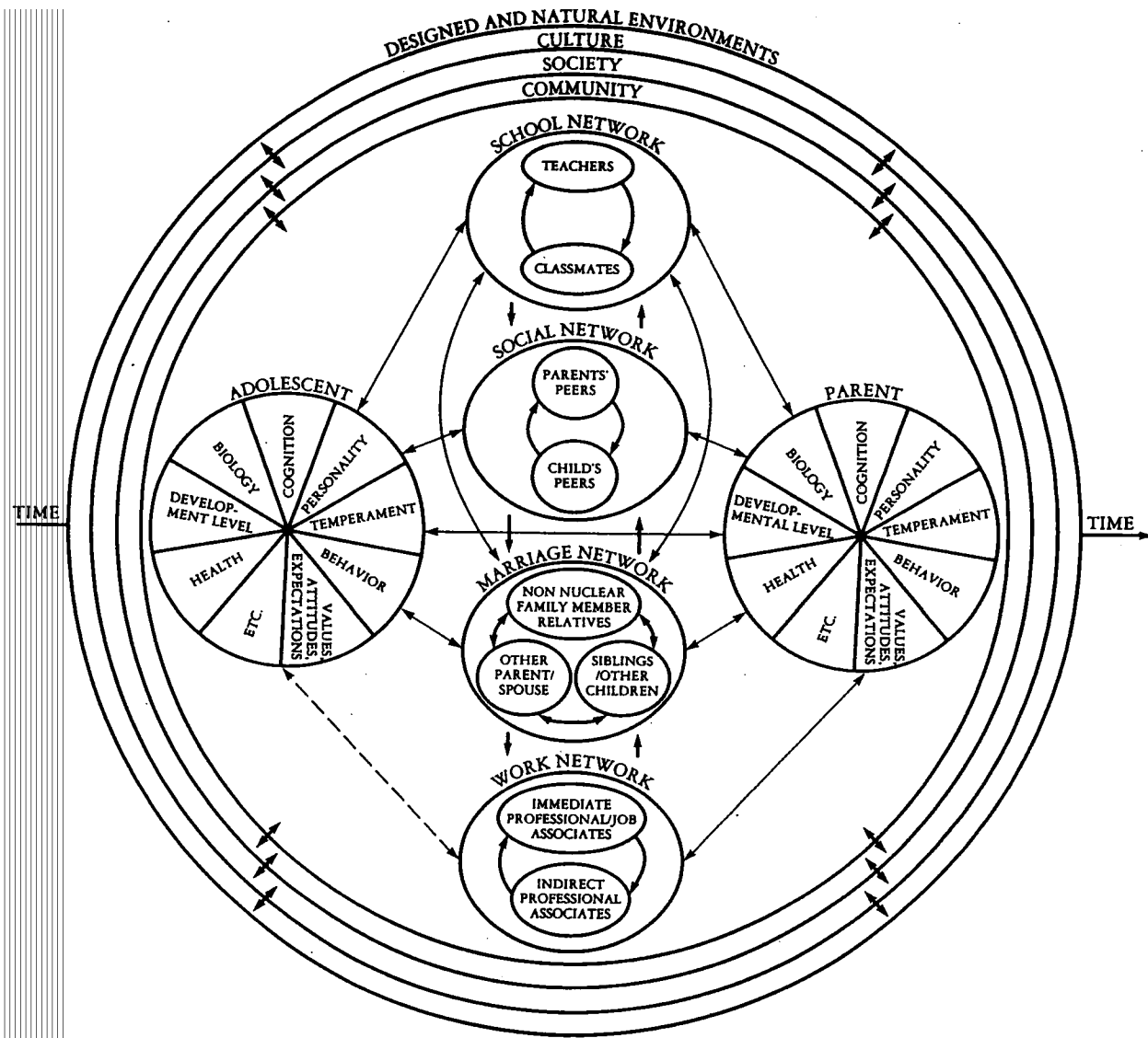


FIGURE 16.1 Lerner's dynamic interactional model of adolescent development. (From R. Lerner, *America's Youth in Crisis*, page xx, copyright © 1995 by Sage Publications, Inc. Reprinted by permission of R. Lerner and Sage Publications, Inc.)