



Nowhere to Grow : Homeless and Runaway Adolescents and Their Families

Les B. Whitbeck, Dan R. Hoyt



Les B. Whitbeck and Dan R. Hoyt begin their report on street children in the Midwest with the statement, If you live in or have visited even a medium-sized city recently, you have seen runaway and homeless young people. They congregate in certain downtown areas and hang out in malls during inclement weather ...Mostly, they look like the other kids...The difference is that they won't be going home tonight. This book draws on a study of over six hundred runaway and homeless adolescents and over two hundred of their caretakers from cities in four Midwestern states. It focuses on the family histories of these young people and on the developmental impact of early independence. Street social networks, subsistence strategies, sexuality, and street victimization are all considered, as well as their effect on adolescent behaviors and emotional health. Relying on interviews and data from survey research, and working in partnership with street outreach agencies, Whitbeck and Hoyt lead the reader through the various risk factors associated with precocious independence, beginning in the family and extending to external environments and behaviors. Nowhere to Grow is an emotional account of the cumulative consequences for young people with few good options at the outset and even fewer once they are on their own.

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