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Foreword

Diane G. Cluxton-Kremer

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FOREWORD

All of us bring to our adult lives different memories of childhood. Many readers of this Symposium undoubtedly had the advantages of a supportive family and a good education. Others may not have been so fortunate. Whatever our childhood experiences, we should use them to benefit today's and tomorrow's children.

It would be inappropriate to suggest that today's children face problems greater than those faced by children in the past. We may have forgotten that yesterday's children confronted death caused by diseases now preventable by vaccines and debilitating injuries now treatable by modern medical expertise. In the past, children also suffered inhumane working conditions and often early deaths of siblings and parents. As quickly as these problems were solved, they were replaced with new problems. Today's children confront threats of fetal addiction to drugs, alcohol and exposure to AIDS. They face ever-increasing early exposure to drugs and alcohol, danger from their classmates' lethal weapons and the realities of one-parent homes or both parents working outside the home. In addition, many children have long braved neglect, abuse, poverty, hunger and homelessness.

The problems today's and tomorrow's children face are not so much greater or lesser than those of yesterday's children, rather they are different. Today's problems present new challenges for the adults who attempt to make childhood fulfilling, carefree and a solid preparation for adulthood, as childhood should be. Children need supportive home environments and intellectual challenges to develop their bodies and minds in preparation for the rest of their lives. These goals can hardly be achieved when children must struggle daily merely to survive. We must look closely at children's current realities and needs and adjust our perceptions and support of those who raise the new generation.

This Symposium consists of two parts. The first part is a compilation of articles and student-written pieces on topics that touch children's lives. Congresswoman Schroeder's article introduces this part and the entire Symposium. In it, she outlines the challenges encountered by children and families in the United States and suggests means by which the Congress and other representative bodies can help meet those challenges.

The second part is a compilation of pieces written by scholars, practitioners and judges who attended the American Bar Association's April 1991 conference, "Family Law and the 'Best Interest of the Child.'" Judge Marianne E. Becker's article explains the genesis and goals of the conference. Conference attendees' contributions address how we can better serve children's developmental needs, especially when children come into contact with the legal system.

It is my hope that today's children will someday reflect on this Sym-

posium and observe the progress forged through the recognition of problems and the suggested solutions set forth in these pages.

I thank Mary Zuchegno, University of Denver College of Law Class of 1991, for suggesting children as the topic for this Symposium and Professor Timothy B. Walker, University of Denver College of Law, for referring me to Judge Becker. I would also like to thank the contributing authors and the members of the *Review* for the considerable efforts that went into this Symposium. The conference pieces were particularly challenging as we and the authors strived to reach a middle ground between the multi-disciplinary and traditional law review writing and citation conventions. Finally, I extend a special thanks to the members of the *Review* who continued to work on this Issue after final examinations and graduation.

Diane G. Cluxton-Kremer
Symposium Editor