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Nota di contenuto	Losing Generations -- Copyright -- Contents -- Preface -- Summary -- FINDINGS: DETERIORATED SETTINGS -- CONCLUSIONS: GOOD PRACTICE AND NEW RESEARCH DIRECTIONS -- 1 Adolescents at Risk -- SETTINGS AND INDIVIDUALS -- THE ROLE OF FAMILY INCOME -- REFERENCES -- 2 Earnings and Employment -- TRENDS SINCE 1970 -- JOB OPPORTUNITIES FOR YOUNG WORKERS -- Sectoral Shifts in Employment -- Technological Change -- Rising Unemployment -- Immigration -- INSTITUTIONAL FACTORS INFLUENCING JOB AVAILABILITY AND EARNINGS -- Minimum Wage and Unions -- Isolation from Jobs -- Discrimination -- CHANGES IN THE SUPPLY AND QUALIFICATIONS OF YOUNG WORKERS -- Supply of Young Workers -- Adequacy of Basic Skills -- Crime -- DEMOGRAPHIC CHANGES -- CONCLUSIONS -- REFERENCES -- 3 Families -- FAMILY ECONOMICS AND FAMILY STRUCTURE -- Family Structure -- Single-Parent

Households -- Two-Parent Households -- FAMILY STRUCTURE, PARENTING STYLES, AND ADOLESCENT OUTCOMES -- Children of Single-Parent Families -- Children of Divorce -- Adolescent Mothers and Their Children -- Parenting Style -- Violence in Families -- CONCLUSIONS -- REFERENCES -- 4 Neighborhoods -- CHANGES IN METROPOLITAN NEIGHBORHOODS -- Poverty Concentration and Racial and Ethnic Stratification -- Social Composition of Poor Neighborhoods -- Racial and Ethnic Composition of Schools -- Regional Differences -- POOR NEIGHBORHOODS AND ADOLESCENT DEVELOPMENT -- Educational Attainment -- Teenage Pregnancy -- Employment -- Delinquency and Violent Crime -- CONCLUSIONS -- REFERENCES -- 5 Health and Health Care -- HEALTH STATUS OF ADOLESCENTS -- THE HEALTH CARE SYSTEM AND ADOLESCENT HEALTH -- Evolution of Adolescent Health Care -- Health Services Organization and Delivery -- Mental Health Services -- HEALTH INSURANCE -- Private Coverage -- Medicaid Coverage -- Consequences for Adolescent Health.

SPECIAL PROBLEMS: CONFIDENTIALITY AND CONSENT -- CONCLUSIONS -- REFERENCES -- 6 Academic Schooling -- STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT -- DIFFERENCES BETWEEN LOW-INCOME AND MORE AFFLUENT SCHOOLS -- Financial Resources -- Resource Availability and Instruction -- ORGANIZATIONAL AND INSTRUCTIONAL STRATIFICATION -- Ability Grouping ("Tracking") -- Grade Retention -- PREVENTING SCHOOL FAILURE -- Chapter 1 Programs -- Dropout Prevention and Student Motivation -- CONCLUSIONS -- REFERENCES -- 7 From School to Work -- THE DIFFICULT TRANSITION TO THE LABOR MARKET: LACK OF A SYSTEM -- VOCATIONAL EDUCATION -- Effects on Occupational Success -- Effects on School Achievement and Attainment -- EMPLOYMENT AND TRAINING PROGRAMS -- Program Effectiveness -- Studies of YEDPA Programs -- JTPA -- Post-YEDPA Field Demonstrations -- CONCLUSIONS -- REFERENCES -- 8 Juvenile and Criminal Justice -- CRIME, MINORITIES, AND CONCENTRATED POVERTY -- LAW ENFORCEMENT AND NEIGHBORHOODS -- THE JUSTICE SYSTEMS -- Processing -- Punishment -- Consequences -- CONCLUSIONS -- REFERENCES -- 9 Adolescents in the Child Welfare System -- EVOLUTION OF THE SYSTEM -- Early Reforms -- Recent Trends -- Community-Based Services -- Foster Care -- THE CHILD WELFARE SYSTEM FOR ADOLESCENTS -- Structure and Problems -- Places of Service -- At Home -- Foster Care -- Independent and Residential Homes -- In Custody -- On the Street -- Exclusion of Adolescents -- Adolescent Outcomes -- ISSUES IN PROVIDING SERVICES TO ADOLESCENTS -- Stable Care and Independence -- Short-Term Services and Long-Term Needs -- CONCLUSIONS -- REFERENCES -- 10 Good Practice: Community-Based Interventions and Services -- STRENGTHENING FAMILIES AND NEIGHBORHOODS -- Supporting Parents -- Mobilizing Neighborhoods -- IMPROVING INSTITUTIONAL SERVICES -- New Settings for Health Services -- New Academic Approaches.

Vocational Education and Employment and Training Programs -- KEY ELEMENTS OF COMPREHENSIVE SERVICE -- Sustained Adult Support -- Community Learning and Service -- Developing Emotional Strengths and Life Skills -- Demonstrating Trust and Respect for Adolescents -- Choice and "Voice" for Adolescents -- Issues of Race, Ethnicity, and Culture -- CONCLUSIONS -- REFERENCES -- 11 Conclusions and Research Directions -- DIRECTIONS FOR CHANGE IN THE 1990S -- Supporting Families -- Rebuilding and Strengthening Low-Income Neighborhoods -- Health and Mental Health Services -- Education -- Transition from School to Work -- FACING RESPONSIBILITY -- Issues of Discrimination -- Encouraging Change -- AN AGENDA FOR RESEARCH

-- General Framework -- The Social Context of Adolescence -- Families -- Family Support Systems -- Schools -- Neighborhoods -- Health Care -- School-To-Work Transition -- Juvenile and Criminal Justice -- Child Welfare and Foster Care -- Individual Differences in Adolescence -- Adolescent Risk Behavior -- Comprehensive Intervention Programs -- Monitoring the Status of the Adolescent Population -- Biographical Sketches of Panel Members and Staff -- Index.

**Sommario/riassunto**

At least 7 million young Americans--fully one-quarter of adolescents 10 to 17 years old--may be at risk of failing to achieve productive adult lives. They use drugs, engage in unprotected sex, drop out of school, and sometimes commit crimes, effectively closing the door to their own futures. And the costs to society are enormous: school and social services are overwhelmed, and our nation faces the future with a diminished citizenry. This penetrating book argues that the problems of troubled youth cannot be separated from the settings in which those youths live--settings that have deteriorated significantly in the past two decades. A distinguished panel examines what works and what does not in the effort to support and nurture adolescents and offers models for successful programs. This volume presents an eye-opening look at what millions of the nation's youths confront every day of their lives, addressing How the decline in economic security for young working parents affects their children's life chances. How dramatic changes in household structure and the possibilities of family and community violence threaten adolescents' development. How the decline of neighborhoods robs children of a safe environment. How adolescents' health needs go unmet in the current system. Losing Generations turns the spotlight on those institutions youths need--the health care system, schools, the criminal justice, and the child welfare and foster home systems--and how they are functioning. Difficult issues are addressed with study results and insightful analyses: access of poor youths to health insurance coverage, inequities in school funding, how child welfare agencies provide for adolescents in their care, and the high percentage of young black men in the criminal justice system.