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# Hardwired to Connect

## *The New Scientific Case for Authoritative Communities*

LARGE AND GROWING numbers of U.S. children and young people are suffering from depression, anxiety, attention deficit, conduct disorders, thoughts of suicide, and other serious mental and behavioral problems. Why? What can be done to reverse this trend?



In this pioneering report, the Commission on Children at Risk, a panel of 33 leading children’s doctors, neuroscientists, research scholars and youth service professionals, draw upon a large body of recent research showing that children are biologically primed (“hardwired”) for enduring connections to others and for moral and spiritual meaning. The authors introduce a new public policy and social science term — *authoritative communities* — to describe the ten essential traits across social institutions that produce better outcomes for children. The report proposes three major social goals and makes 18 recommendations for social and public policy change.

Authors include: T. Berry Brazelton, Robert Coles, James P. Comer, Thomas Insel, Kathleen Kovner Kline, Alvin Poussaint, Allan N. Schore, Linda Spear, Stephen J. Suomi, and Judith Wallerstein. The Commission on Children at Risk is an independent, jointly sponsored initiative of YMCA of the USA, Dartmouth Medical School, and the Institute for American Values.

“A major report...” —William Raspberry, nationally syndicated columnist, 9/22/03

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