



Child Maltreatment and the Law: Returning to First Principles

Roger J. R. Levesque

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Dramatic cases of child abuse and neglect are featured with tragic regularity in the news. The stories vividly demonstrate both the urgent need for improved child protection services and the unwieldiness and ineffectiveness of the systems charged with the task. To complicate matters further, the original intent of child welfare policy is becoming increasingly obscured as legal responses to child maltreatment become more complex, intrusive, and even contradictory.

Fueled by a consistent narrative and a lucid ethical stance, *Child Maltreatment and the Law* analyzes the increasing role legal systems play in family life and traces rapidly evolving legal concepts as they apply to child protection. This unique volume helps readers: (1) Navigate the various layers of legal regulation – federal and state – involved in child protection and family life. (2) Identify variations and discrepancies in definitions of maltreatment and legal responses. (3) Critique the relationships and boundary disputes between the criminal and civil justice systems and agencies dedicated to children’s welfare. (4) Analyze controversies (e.g., removing children from maltreating families) and other prime areas for possible reform.

Child Maltreatment and the Law is a must-read for psychologists, developmentalists, sociologists, social workers, criminologists, and researchers focusing on family life as well as policymakers and advocates working within the legal system. The book is particularly useful for courses relating to child welfare law or child abuse and neglect.

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