Cultural and Cognitive Obstacles to Public Intervention

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Council On Contemporary Families Annual Conference
Research Background

- Linguistics, anthropology, cognitive science
- Communications strategy for NGOs
- Default thinking ("cultural models")
Topic Areas

- Child development in general
- Child maltreatment
- School readiness
- Out-of-school time
- Commercialization of schools
- Etc.
Multiple Methods

- In-depth interviews ("cognitive elicitations")
- Ethnographic observation
- "TalkBack" message testing
- Etc.
“Seeing As”

Culture
People don’t care?
“The Family Bubble”
“The Family Bubble”
“[W]ith all due respect, I am here to tell you, it does not take a village to raise a child. It takes a family to raise a child.”

Bob Dole, accepting Republican presidential nomination, August 15, 1996,
“Cognitive blindness”

- Social networks as protective factor against maltreatment
- Link between housing and educational outcomes
- Mental health system as determining factor
- General need for policy
“Cognitive blindness”

- Vs. “moral failure”
- Vs. prescriptive view
- Feels like common sense
Bursting the “family bubble”? 

- Concrete examples of cause-effect
- Successful interventions
- Benefits to community
- New “organizing idea”
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