

curriculum is towards the workplace. Conversely, the “safe haven” approach places mothers in separate classes. This keeps them protected but supports and encourages their independence. Kelly concludes that aspects of both approaches best serve the mothers’ needs.

Kelly’s examination of the political construct of teen motherhood provides an understanding of the background on which the two approaches are based. We hear the mothers talking, their voices woven amongst the framework of authoritative and marginal discourses on teen pregnancy. Lack of public support for teen mothers is linked to the perceived public need to deter teen motherhood and the notion that teen pregnancy is linked to a cycle of poverty. Teen mothers are not seen as “good mothers”; they are not lauded for accepting responsibility for their children; and their decisions, even appropriate ones, are challenged constantly. Schools use teen mothers as role models for other students, both as “shining stars” and as “reality communicators.” Thus, the individual mother is made to shoulder the burden of change while the larger society is left unchanged.

Kelly juxtaposes media stories and statements from bureaucrats with stories of teen mothers. The individual stories describe challenges, frustrations, and successes and they push the boundaries of what “inclusion” might mean for all involved. As Kelly concludes, “an inclusive school is impossible to separate from an inclusive society.”

## **KidStress**

Witkin, Georgia.  
New York, Penguin, 1999.

### **Reviewed by Ruthe Thompson**

*KidStress* struck several vital chords in me. As the mother of a 17-year-old who announced shortly after transferring from a rural to an urban high school that she would have to start drinking coffee to sustain homework and extracurricular activities in her faster-paced city life, the book’s suggestions for helping children deal with daily stresses were enlightening. And as a parent living in the metropolitan United States amid daily news of anthrax deaths and exposures, the war in Afghanistan, and investigations of the Sept. 11 attacks on the World Trade Center and Pentagon, this slim handbook has reminded me to take numerous deep breaths while helping my daughter complete college applications and prepare to launch into an increasingly stressful world.

Written by Georgia Witkin, a Clinical Psychologist at the Mt. Sinai School of Medicine in New York City and author of eight books on women’s health, *KidStress* offers a compendium of useful strategies for teaching children

to cope with life today. Using the Internet to reach a broad audience, Witkin surveyed 800 children aged nine to twelve about their stress and compared their responses to the results of surveys taken by their parents. She discovered that children are more stressed than ever and due to a greater variety of issues: sibling rivalries, parental divorce and blended families, school expectations, peer pressures, exposure to violence in the media and fears about world conditions. Most surprising is Witkin's discovery that parents surveyed had not taken a full measure of their children's stress. Witkin reports that parents badly underestimate how much children worry, how alone many of them feel, how much sleep they lose due to stress, and how often they are fearful of confiding in their parents. The adults Witkin surveyed underestimated school stress and overestimated peer pressure, underestimated how often children's fears were realistic, and underestimated a deep altruism that made many children sad about problems afflicting family, community, and world.

While making clear connections between emotional stress, physical illness, and other problems over-stressed children may experience, *KidStress* focuses most heavily on how parents can teach children to combat anxieties and fears with useful lists of tips categorized by issue. Witkin takes note of gender differences in coping and points out that parental modeling, birth order, income and other factors can affect how well children manage. One drawback of the volume is that it has been carelessly proofread; small diction and other errors detract from readability in numerous places. In addition, the book could use an update to account for publications and events since its 1999 appearance. For example, Witkin cites two long-term studies of how divorce affects children by psychologist Judith Wallerstein but was not able to include a third published in 2000, *The Unexpected Legacy of Divorce*. As this third volume offers important insights about lessening stress for children when parents consider divorce, it would make an important addition to the information *KidStress* provides.

### **The Lost Daughters of China: Abandoned Girls, Their Journey to America, and the Search for a Missing Past**

Evans, Karin.  
New York: Jeremy P. Tarcher/Putnam, 2000.

#### **Reviewed by Andrea Riesch Toepell**

Karin Evans and her husband wanted to have a child. For most people, this desire is fulfilled easily through a pregnancy carried to term. For some, however, 10 to 25 percent of all couples (depending on age), it is not so simple. In *The*