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**Review of *Behind from the Start: How America's War on the Poor is Harming Our Most Vulnerable Children*. Lenette Azzi-Lessing.
Reviewed by Kristen Ravi.**

Kristen Ravi
University of Texas at Arlington

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disabled and nondisabled people, but there is variation among disabled people as well" (p. 277). She also reinforces the startling notion that "ablebodied is a temporary state" (p. 275). These narratives serve to inform presently ablebodied people, as well as those already familiar with living with an impairment. They will serve a broad and multi-faceted audience.

Iain Hutchinson
University of Glasgow

Lenette Azzi-Lessing, *Behind from the Start: How America's War on the Poor is Harming Our Most Vulnerable Children*. Oxford University Press (2017), 248 pages, \$29.95 (hardcover).

The number of people in poverty in the United States is among the highest of the developed nations. Children are the largest group affected and often remain invisible. Presently, 21% of children live in families with incomes below the poverty line, with the highest rates among Black, Latino, and Native American families. Despite decades of anti-poverty programs, the proportion of children in poverty remains unchanged. *Behind from the Start* explores the issue of child poverty in detail. Azzi-Lessing exposes the interconnected circumstances that keep children in poverty. She aids readers in understanding why the poverty rate in the United States remains highest among similarly developed but less wealthy countries, the detrimental effects of poverty on children under six, and of how our responses to families in poverty are often harmful, perpetuating the cycle of poverty.

The book opens with a heart-wrenching story about Azzi-Lessing's own experience cuddling a severely neglected and affection-starved three-year-old boy in a rundown local shelter. The following chapters then set the context by providing an overview of poverty in the United States. Azzi-Lessing discusses the relationship between structural racism and poverty that contributes to higher rates of poverty among African Americans and Latinos, and she provides a comparison between the poverty levels of United States and other developed countries. Azzi-Lessing then debunks common myths about

existing antipoverty policies, traces the history of American political discourse on poverty, and highlights how this discourse shames and blames parents.

The middle section of the book provides a thorough examination of the consequences of stress and neglect that frequently occur in families experiencing poverty, specifically on the negative impact this has on cognition, ability to learn, and social and emotional well-being. Azzi-Lessing describes how these consequences may contribute to school failure, unemployment, mental health problems, teen pregnancy, and juvenile crime. She devotes a full chapter to discussing the child welfare system, highlighting areas in which reform is needed.

The latter portion of the book presents an in-depth analysis of current policies and programs that are consistently ineffective for families experiencing poverty. Azzi-Lessing challenges the use of inflexible, one-dimensional evidence-based practices, such as home visiting programs and universal preschool. She instead favors comprehensive programs that focus on the needs of the entire family. Azzi-Lessing provides specific programmatic suggestions to improve outcomes realistically and effectively for children in poverty. Recommendations include using 'extra strength' family support programs that target the physical, mental, employment, and educational needs of the whole family. She recommends assessing each family's strengths, focused on building relationships between families and service providers. Furthermore, she suggests maximizing resources in the family's community and emphasizes adapting programs to meet the needs of individual parents within a variety of cultures and backgrounds. Azzi-Lessing argues for the importance of implementing policy changes that include increasing the minimum wage, restoring and enhancing the economic safety net, improving oversight and funding to the child welfare system, and providing high quality early childhood care and education to vulnerable children in poverty. The book ends with a strong action call to educate policymakers, elected officials, the media, and fellow citizens about child poverty.

Throughout the book, Azzi-Lessing weaves together the relationship between failed program and policy initiatives to address poverty, an ineffective child welfare system, and the

harmful rhetoric that often surrounds conversations about alleviating family poverty. Her extensive experience and first-hand knowledge from her diverse roles as a clinical social worker firmly cement her credibility as an expert in child poverty. Azzi-Lessing synthesizes relevant research from the fields of neuroscience, economics, developmental psychology, political science, and environmental sciences in a manner that is easy for lay people to understand. Her policy recommendations are concrete, tangible, and would not require additional funds, but rather only the reallocation of existing resources. This book is highly recommended to anyone interested in a reader friendly yet comprehensive book about child poverty.

Kristen Ravi
University of Texas at Arlington

Angela Stroud, *Good Guys with Guns: The Appeal and Consequences of Concealed Carry*. The University of North Carolina Press (2016), 159 pages, \$24.95 (paperback).

In this book, Angela Stroud primarily examines the ways in which the intersection of gender, race, and class produces a desire to have permits to carry concealed firearms in public. Through in-depth interviews with concealed handgun license (CHL) holders and field observations at licensing courses, the author utilizes a critical perspective to explain how social and cultural discourses shape respondents' understandings of obtaining a CHL.

After an overview of the rise of CHLs in the United States, the author presents the finding that masculinity plays an important role in shaping the cultural meanings of having CHLs. The framing of gun use as masculine has been embedded in men's hunting experiences with fathers during childhood, by participation in male-dominant institutions, and by the commodification of guns. The hunting stories not only demonstrate male-centered experiences, but also signify emotional connections between fathers and sons. The institutional influence of the military, police, and Boy Scouts reinforces the male sense