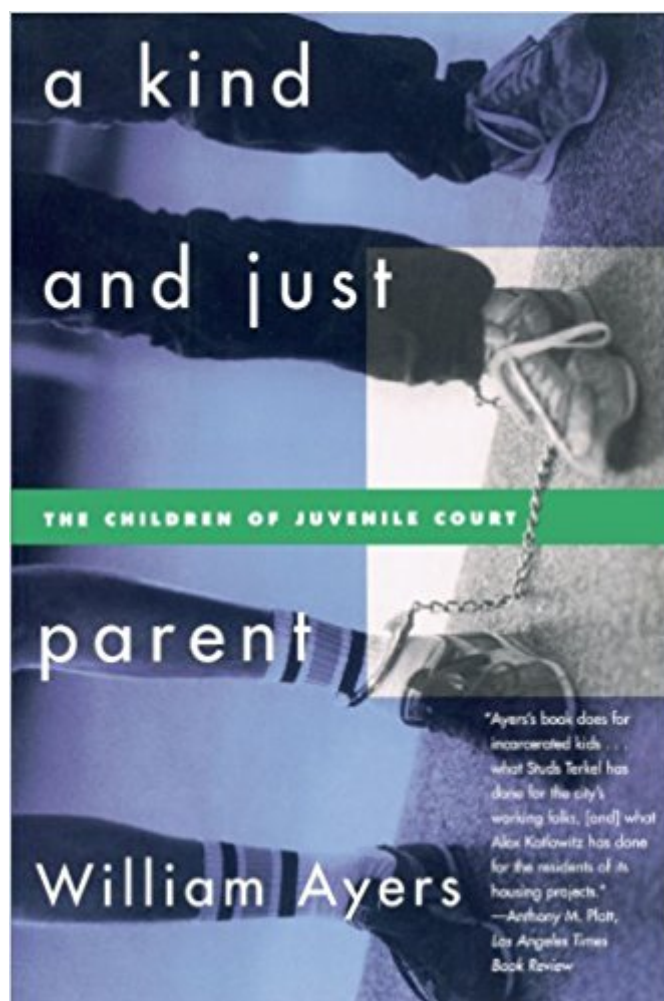


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# A Kind And Just Parent: The Children Of Juvenile Court



## Synopsis

Most people know juvenile offenders only from daily headlines, and the images portrayed by the media are extreme and violent: predators and even "superpredators." Distorted and incomplete, these pictures shape the way Americans think and feel about city kids, poor kids, children of color. *A Kind and Just Parent* gives us a transformative view of kids caught up in the justice system that we could never get from nightly news and newspaper stories. William Ayers has spent five years as teacher and observer in Chicago's Juvenile Court prison, the nation's first and largest institution of juvenile justice, founded by legendary reformer Jane Addams to act as a "kind and just parent" for kids in need. Today, immensely confused and confusing, it serves as a perfect microcosm of the way American justice deals with children. Through brilliant storytelling, Ayers captures the lives and personalities of young people caught up in the juvenile justice system. The book follows a year in the life of the prison school. Its characters are three dimensional: funny, quirky, sometimes violent, and often vulnerable. We see young people talking about their lives, analyzing their own situations, and thinking about their friends and their futures. We watch them throughout a school year and meet some remarkable teachers. From the intimate perspective of a teacher, Ayers gives us portraits, history, and analysis that help us to understand not only what brought these kids into the court system, but why people find it hard to think straight about them, and what we might do to keep their younger brothers and sisters from landing in the same place. Unsentimental yet wrenching, *A Kind and Just Parent* is a riveting look at kids and crime. It will change the way Americans think about juvenile crime and juvenile justice.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

William Ayers brings a reporter's eye and an activist's heart to this well-written and profoundly disturbing book, *A Kind and Just Parent: The Children of Juvenile Court*. Ayers, who teaches offenders in Chicago's juvenile court system, is a brilliant storyteller, the damning fly on the wall. His book portrays the lives of his students--both within the juvenile temporary detention center and on the "outside." Ayers puts their stories into historical context; argues passionately about the roles of media, poverty, and neglect; refutes the idea of teenager as "superpredator"; and challenges parents--all of us--to ask the question, "Is this good enough for my child?" when determining the standard to use when we think of justice for kids. --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

Headlines regularly depict juvenile criminals as extreme and violent "superpredators"--a distorted and incomplete picture that shapes the way Americans think and feel about poor (and mostly minority) city kids. For five years, Ayers, a former member of the radical 1960s Weathermen organization, acted as a teacher and an observer in Chicago's Juvenile Court prison, the nation's first--and largest--institution of juvenile justice. Founded by the legendary Jane Addams to act as a "kind and just parent" for children in need, the court today epitomizes the confused and confusing way American justice deals with children. In Ayers's book, an account of one year in his classroom there, students describe their lives, analyze their situations, and think about their futures. Like Jonathan Kozol in *Amazing Grace* (LJ 10/1/95), Ayers shows that we must overcome our preconceived notions of these children and learn to deal with the realities of their lives. Ayers is a born educator and communicator, with a voice of hope. Recommended for general collections. --Sandra K. Lindheimer, Middlesex Law Lib., Cambridge, Mass. Copyright 1997 Reed Business Information, Inc. --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

A Must-Read for anyone involved (professionally) in the child welfare system!

This book really finds the humanity in an otherwise demonized demographic (juvenile delinquents). Everyone going into education should read this book.

Book came in great quality.

This book was an old library book so I expected the wear. One page was torn but it wasn't one that

was necessary. The book was excellent and worked just fine for the class I needed it for. Product was true to description.

This is a story of children, real children, still soft inside, and yet with a force field that can put off both the kindest and the most brutal attacks one can inflict. It is a story of a justice system long gone amuck, but often with good intentions, and some surprisingly good people lighting up the corners. Ayers is a good tale-teller, and catches students at the juvenile detention "home" in Chicago - it could just as well be many other places - in moments of anger, despair, humor, joy, self-deception and learning, along with the teachers that carefully try to offer regularity, challenge and choice. For those many to whom juveniles and juvenile detention facilities are not real, this book is a must. For those who know, it will be a renewed inspiration and challenge.[...]

Ayers book should be read by all educators who work with young people forgotten by the system. His case studies are brilliantly drawn and teach us a great deal about "juvenile justice". It has provoked discussion of poverty, violence, and social change. It has changed the thinking of many of my students for its clarity, insight, and hope.

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