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The Ripple Effect: Exploring the Lived Experiences of Single Mother Raised by their Single Mother

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Article Info

Abstract

This research explored the intergenerational dynamics of single motherhood by examining the lived experiences of single mothers who were raised by single mothers. Using a qualitative, phenomenological approach, in-depth interviews were conducted with a diverse group of participants to uncover how their upbringing influenced their identities, values, and parenting practices. Participants described the resilience, independence, and adaptability they developed while navigating financial hardships, emotional stress, and societal stigmas during childhood. At the same time, they highlighted inherited challenges, such as feelings of isolation and struggles with financial stability, which continue to impact their roles as mothers. These reflections revealed a heightened self-awareness of their efforts to balance their own aspirations with the responsibilities of single parenting. The study emphasized how intergenerational experiences shape personal identity, parenting styles, and family dynamics, pointing to the long-term ripple effects of single motherhood. Furthermore, it underscored the importance of targeted social support systems, policies, and community programs to alleviate inherited burdens and build resilience across generations. By highlighting these interconnected influences, this research contributes to a deeper understanding of the challenges and strengths in single-mother families, offering actionable insights for breaking cycles of adversity and fostering well-being.

Keywords: Ripple Effects, Single Mothers, Resilience, Adaptability, Support Parenting Style, Independence

1. Introduction

Solo parents face unique challenges as they assume the role of both mother and father, essentially becoming a 'NayTay' (nanay at tatay), De Castro (2023) [5]. Parenting encompasses various aspects of childrearing, including meeting children's needs and parental styles, providing food and care, teaching, developmental guidance, and affectionate communication. Families adapt uniquely, influenced by cultural, socioeconomic, and individual circumstances, aiming to create healthy, nurturing environments for their children (Agnafors *et al.*, 2019) [1]. Becoming a parent is a significant life transition that presents new challenges.

The United States has the highest number of children living in single-parent households, according to a Pew Research study (May 2021). In contrast, countries like Mali, Afghanistan, Turkey, Vietnam, and Japan recorded only single-digit percentages in single-parent households.

However, in the Philippines, the number of solo parents is currently estimated at 14 million to 15 million, with 95 percent being women, according to a World Health Organization-funded study by the Department of Health (DOH) and the University of the Philippines-National Institutes of Health. Consequently, the government and private sector must promote policies and programs that support and help solo parents in the country.

According to The Republic Act (RA) 8972, or the Solo Parents' Welfare Act of 2000 provides a comprehensive package of social welfare benefits from different government agencies such as the Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD), Commission on Higher Education (CHED), and Technical Education and Skills Development Authority (TESDA).

The law aims to ensure that solo parents are given equal opportunities, rights, and privileges under the law.

Single motherhood is increasingly common, with the number of single mothers steadily rising due to various factors, including giving birth outside of marriage, separation, divorce, annulment, the death of a spouse, or women opting to have a child while remaining single (Ramos & Tus, 2020) [10]. Each single mother's journey in raising children is unique, with challenges that impact their ability to meet financial, emotional, and psychological needs. Single mothers face more significant challenges in raising healthy and well-adjusted children due to economic hardship, ineffective parental control and supervision, and a lack of other support systems (Ramos & Tus, 2020) [10].

Living with a single parent may be very stressful for both the adult and the kids, as managing childcare, a job, paying the bills, and keeping up with domestic duties can make a single parent feel overburdened. After a breakup, family finances and resources are often substantially diminished, leading to additional demands and potential issues that other families might not experience (APA, 2019)

The ripple effect of economic instability transcends generations among single mothers raised by single mothers, as financial hardships shape financial behaviors and attitudes toward employment in subsequent generations (Wilson & Grant, 2019) [11]. The psychological toll on single mothers raised by single mothers can be profound, with these women more likely to experience higher levels of stress and anxiety, affecting their parenting styles (Anderson & Collins, 2021) [2]. A single mom is a person who has multiple children to perhaps several men without being considered in a long-term or stable relationship, according to Phillip,

K. (2024). In contrast, a solo parent is a person who has been in a relationship or marriage, had children with their husband or partner, and for reasons out of their control, the partner has left the relationship, or the mother has left for protection or future happiness.

One of the most difficult aspects of solo parenting is overcoming financial challenges and working with budget constraints. Solo parents are those parents who are alone, whether by abandonment, death, choice, or other reasons (Brimley, M. 2021) [4]. Despite the commonality of single parenthood, the pressures can lead to feelings of being overburdened and financially strained (APA, 2019). This study focuses on single mothers' experiences, challenges, and coping with mechanisms. It significantly contributes to addressing the real and severe needs and challenges faced by single mothers. The study aims to engage them in the process, drive action in adequate directions, and encourage support for single parents.

2. Methodology
A. Research Design
This study employs a qualitative research design, specifically utilizing the phenomenological approach. The qualitative method is chosen as it allows for an in-depth exploration of the lived experiences of individuals, focusing on the unique perspectives of single mothers who were also raised by single mothers.

According to Neubauer, B., Witkop, C., & Varpio, L. (2019) [7], phenomenology is a form of qualitative research that centers on studying an individual's lived experiences within the world. This approach provides a comprehensive understanding of the participants' realities by capturing their emotions, perceptions, and interpretations of their experiences. The phenomenological method is well-suited for this study as it seeks to delve into the personal and social challenges faced by single mothers, offering valuable insights into their journey, struggles, and coping mechanisms.

To gather rich and detailed qualitative data, this study employs methods such as in-depth interviews and surveys. The interviews are structured to encourage participants to share their stories openly, ensuring that their experiences are documented with authenticity and depth. Additionally, surveys with open-ended questions are utilized to further explore themes and patterns that emerge from the participants' narratives.

Through this research design, the study aims to provide a deeper understanding of the lived experiences of single mothers raised by single mothers, contributing to existing literature and offering perspectives that may inform policies and support systems for single-parent households.

B. Research Locale
Cabuyao, Laguna serves as the primary research locale for this study. Located in the province of Laguna, Philippines, Cabuyao is a rapidly developing city known for its diverse community and economic opportunities. The city provides an ideal setting for gathering firsthand accounts from single mothers who have navigated the unique challenges of raising children independently.

The study focuses on single mothers residing in Cabuyao, Laguna, as they represent a significant demographic affected by socio-economic, emotional, and psychological factors. By conducting research in this area, the study aims to explore how single motherhood influences personal growth, resilience, and coping strategies. The city's accessibility and the willingness of participants to share their experiences contribute to the feasibility and depth of this research.

Data collection methods include structured interviews and surveys, designed to capture qualitative insights. The participants are selected through purposive sampling to ensure that the study includes individuals who can provide meaningful perspectives on the subject matter. These approaches will help researchers gain a comprehensive understanding of the personal and societal challenges faced by single mothers in Cabuyao, Laguna.

C. Population and Sampling
The study focuses on individuals who have been raised by single mothers. Participants were selected using a purposive sampling method to gain insights into their experiences. According to Kassiani N. (2022), purposive sampling is a non-probability sampling technique where units are chosen based on specific characteristics relevant to the research. This method ensures that the selected participants possess the necessary attributes to contribute valuable perspectives.

The sample aims for diversity in terms of age, gender, and academic performance to capture a comprehensive range of viewpoints. Inclusion criteria require participants to have been raised solely by their mothers, while exclusion criteria eliminate individuals who have had significant paternal involvement. The study will seek to recruit approximately 5 participants, ensuring a manageable and meaningful dataset.

D. Research Participants
In this study, the inclusion criteria for participants are clearly defined to ensure specificity and relevance. Participants must

be single mothers who were raised by single mothers themselves. This demographic focus allows for an in-depth exploration of generational experiences and the unique dynamics this group faces, providing a clear and consistent scope for the research.

Exclusion criteria include individuals who do not meet this specific profile, such as those who are not single mothers or were not raised by single mothers. Additionally, participants who are unable or unwilling to provide informed consent or those who may be at risk of significant psychological distress from discussing their personal experiences will be excluded. This precaution is taken to protect participants' well-being and adhere to ethical research standards.

The researchers will select five (5) single mothers aged 18 to 35 to capture a range of experiences and generational perspectives. The study employs purposive sampling to ensure that the participants meet the study's specific requirements. All participants must voluntarily agree to participate and satisfy the predetermined criteria outlined in the study protocol.

E. Research Instrumentation
The researchers will use semi-structured interviews as the primary research instrument to gain a deeper understanding of the lived experiences of single mothers raised by their own single mothers. These interviews will include open-ended questions designed to encourage participants to share their personal stories and insights. After obtaining informed consent, the interviews will be conducted in Cabuyao, Laguna, providing a comfortable and familiar environment for participants. The data collected from these interviews will serve as the foundation for analyzing and understanding the unique perspectives and challenges faced by the respondents.

F. Data Gathering Procedure
The data gathering process for this study was conducted in several stages to ensure a comprehensive exploration of the lived experiences of single mothers raised by single mothers in Cabuyao, Laguna. The first step involved the selection of participants through purposive sampling. Researchers approached potential participants who met the inclusion criteria, specifically single mothers aged 18 to 35 who were raised by single mothers themselves. These participants were identified within the community to ensure a relevant and contextually grounded study sample. Before initiating data collection, participants were thoroughly briefed on the study's objectives, procedures, and ethical considerations, including their rights to confidentiality and voluntary participation. Informed consent was obtained from each participant, ensuring that they were fully aware of their rights to withdraw from the study at any point without any consequences.

Following the selection and consent process, semi-structured interviews were conducted to capture the participants' personal narratives and insights. These interviews were carried out in person within comfortable and familiar settings in Cabuyao, Laguna, ensuring a safe and conducive environment for open communication. The interviews, lasting approximately 60 to 90 minutes, employed open-ended questions to encourage participants to freely share their experiences, perspectives, and challenges. This approach allowed for in-depth exploration while maintaining consistency in data collection. All interviews were audio-recorded with the explicit consent of the participants to preserve the authenticity and accuracy of their narratives. In addition, detailed field notes were taken to capture non-verbal cues and contextual information that could enhance the interpretation of the data.

After the interviews, the audio recordings were transcribed verbatim to ensure the accuracy and integrity of the participants' statements. To validate the authenticity of the data collected, participants were given the opportunity to review and verify their transcripts. This member-checking process helped maintain the credibility and reliability of the findings. Throughout the data collection process, the confidentiality and anonymity of participants were strictly maintained. Personal identifiers were removed, and all collected data were securely stored, accessible only to the research team. This procedure not only safeguarded the privacy of the participants but also ensured compliance with ethical standards, including the Data Privacy Act of 2012. By adhering to these structured and ethically sound procedures, the study aimed to provide an accurate and respectful representation of the lived experiences of single mothers raised by single mothers.

G. Treatment of Qualitative Data
In this study, the qualitative data collected through semi-structured interviews will be analyzed using thematic analysis to explore the lived experiences of single mothers raised by single mothers. The process begins with data familiarization, where the researchers will thoroughly read and re-read the transcribed interviews to immerse themselves in the participants' narratives. This step ensures a deep understanding of the context and meaning behind each response.

Following this, coding will be conducted by categorizing the data into meaningful segments. Each segment will be labeled to represent recurring ideas, phrases, or emotions expressed by the participants. These codes will be carefully examined to identify patterns and commonalities, which will then be grouped to form subthemes and superordinate themes. This approach allows the researchers to capture both explicit statements and underlying meanings, providing a nuanced interpretation of the participants' experiences.

To ensure the accuracy and credibility of the findings, the study will employ member checking, a validation technique where preliminary results are shared with participants to confirm that their views have been accurately represented. Triangulation will also be used by comparing data from multiple sources, including interview transcripts, field notes, and audio recordings, to enhance the reliability and validity of the study.

Throughout the analysis, the researchers will maintain the confidentiality and anonymity of all participants by assigning pseudonyms and securely storing all data. Only the research team will have access to this information, ensuring strict adherence to ethical standards. Finally, the identified themes and patterns will be synthesized into a comprehensive narrative, offering a detailed exploration of the generational experiences and social dynamics that shape the lives of single mothers raised by single mothers.

H. Ethical Consideration
This study, The Ripple Effect: Exploring the Lived Experiences of Single Mothers Raised by Their Single Mother, adheres to strict ethical guidelines to ensure the rights, dignity, and privacy of participants. Since the study delves into personal and generational experiences, ethical

considerations such as informed consent, confidentiality, and participant well-being are of utmost importance.

To protect the participants, all identifying information will be kept strictly confidential in compliance with the Data Privacy Act of 2012. Informed consent will be obtained before participation, ensuring that individuals are fully aware of the study's purpose, methods, and any potential risks. Participants will have the right to withdraw at any stage without consequence. The study will also be reviewed and approved by the appropriate ethical board to safeguard participant welfare and uphold research integrity.

Additionally, measures will be taken to minimize any psychological distress that could arise from sharing personal experiences. Researchers will maintain transparency, avoid harm, and provide debriefing opportunities to ensure participants feel safe and respected throughout the process. By adhering to these ethical standards, this research aims to foster trust, uphold integrity, and produce credible and responsible findings.

3. Results and Discussions
1. Results

This chapter presents the results of findings, analysis and interpretation of data gathered parallel to the order of how the statement of the problem is presented in Chapter 1 of the study. This presents the statements of the participants. Moreover, this chapter provides the analyzed background of the participants.

The results and discussion of the findings are presented in two parts. The first part deals with the Demographic Profile of the Single Mothers that are raised by their Single Mothers. The second part contains the superordinate themes and the subordinate themes from the themes that will emerge based on the study results.

Table 1: Demographic Profile of Participants

Participant Code Name	Age	Address
Participant 1	35	San Isidro
Participant 2	32	Mamatid
Participant 3	34	Marinig
Participant 4	30	San Isidro

Table 1 presents the demographic profile of the Single Mothers that are raised by their Single Mothers. There were five (5) participants in total, as shown in the table. Since the target respondents were single mothers, most ages fell between the range of eighteen (18) to thirty- five (35) years old. All the participants are residing in Cabuyao, Laguna.

Table 2: Superordinate themes and Constituent Subthemes

Superordinate	Subordinate
Learning Resilience Through Observation	• Modeling Strength and Determination • Developing Independence
Resilience as a Foundation for Positivity	• Providing Stability Amidst Challenges • Being a Role Model of Strength
Balancing Tradition with Change	• Carrying Forward Key Lessons • Promoting Open Communication
Resilience as a Generational Legacy	• Emulating Strength and Determination • Applying Learned Values
Family Support and Personal Independence	• The Role of Family vs. Self-Reliance • Family Support and Personal Strength
Need for Practical Support Programs	• Financial and Childcare Support • Social Support Networks and Community Resources

In this research, there are six clustered superordinate themes that discuss the following emerging concepts that have been identified to illustrate how single mothers develop resilience through observation, personal experiences, and support systems. The findings highlight the ways in which their upbringing, financial struggles, and emotional strength shape their ability to navigate the challenges of single parenthood. The discussion of this research illustrates the emerging themes resulting from the participants' narratives and lived experiences. Through a thorough review of their responses, the researchers identified key themes that highlight the intergenerational transmission of resilience, parenting approaches, and support systems among single mothers raised by their own single mothers, namely (1) Learning Resilience Through Observation, (2) Resilience as a Foundation for Positivity, (3) Balancing Tradition with Change, (4) Resilience as a Generational Legacy, (5) Family Support and Personal Independence, (6) Need for Practical Support Programs.

Table 3: Descriptions for Learning Resilience Through Observation

Categories	Emerging Concepts	Themes
Mentorship	*"Yung pagiging*	Modeling
Circles: Pair	*matatag ng*	Strength and
participants	*nanay ko, kahit*	Determination
with	*anong*	
successful	*problema,*	
single	*nalalampasan*	
mothers who	*niya."*	
share real-life	"Lagi kong	
stories,	sinasabi sa	
strategies,	kanila na	
and practical	mahalaga	
tips.	maging	
	masipag,	
	matiyaga, at	
	may lakas ng	
	loob."	
	"Ang tibay ng	Developing
	loob ng aking	Independence
	ina ang naging	
	gabay ko sa	
	pagharap sa	
	mga hamon	
	bilang isang	
	ina."	

This table highlights how participants learned resilience by watching their mothers handle challenges. Themes like Modeling Strength and Determination and Developing Independence emerged, showing that observing their mothers' perseverance directly influenced their coping strategies and independence as single mothers.

Table 4: Descriptions for Resilience as a Foundation for Positivity

Categories	Emerging Concepts	Themes
Emotional	"Ang katatagan	Providing
Resilience	ang naging	Stability
Training:	pundasyon ko sa	Amidst
Organize	pagiging positibo	Challenges
workshops on	kahit planado ko	
stress	na magka-anak,	
management,	kinakaya ko	
mindfulness,	lahat."	
and emotional	"Sinisigurado	
regulation.	kong	
	nararamdaman	
	nila na may	
	maaasahan	
	silang nanay na	
	hindi	
	sumusuko."	
	"Napakalaking	Being a Role
	tulong ng	Model of
	pagiging matatag	Strength
	bilang	
	magandang	
	halimbawa para	
	sa kanila na	
	maging kasing	
	tatag ko o higit	
	pa."	

This table focuses on how resilience helps single mothers maintain a positive outlook despite hardships. Participants shared that resilience allows them to provide stability for their children and serve as role models. Themes such as Providing Stability Amidst Challenges and Being a Role Model of Strength emphasize the importance of emotional strength in fostering a nurturing environment.

Table 5: Descriptions for Balancing Tradition with Change

Categories	Emerging Concepts	Themes
Intergenerational Dialogue Sessions: Discussions on adapting traditional values to modern challenges.	"Yung pagiging mapagmahal at maalaga ng nanay ko, yun din ang ginagawa ko sa mga anak ko." "Ang pagtitiyaga,	Carrying Forward Key Lessons
	pagmamahal, at pagsusumikap ng nanay ko ang inspirasyon ko para manatiling matatag."	
	"Hindi ko	Promoting Open Communication
	ikukumpara	
	ang anak ko sa	
	iba, hayaan	
	silang gawin	
	ang mga bagay	
	na alam kong	
	ikakabuti nila."	
	"Gusto kong	
	maramdaman	
	ng mga anak ko	
	na safe sila	
	makipag-usap	
	sa akin tungkol	
	sa kahit anong	
	bagay."	

This table explores how single mothers balance traditional values with modern parenting. While they uphold values like hard work and discipline, they also encourage open communication with their children. Themes include Carrying Forward Key Lessons and Promoting Open Communication, highlighting the blend of old and new parenting styles.

Table 6: Descriptions for Resilience as a Generational Legacy

Categories	Emerging Concepts	Themes
Generational Resilience Projects: Document family resilience stories through creative mediums.	"Yung pagiging matatag ng nanay ko, kahit anong problema, nalalampasan niya." "Ang tibay ng loob ng aking ina ang naging gabay ko sa pagharap sa mga hamon bilang isang ina."	Emulating Strength and Determination
	"Ginagamit ko ang natutunan ko sa kanya para maging matatag din sa harap ng mga pagsubok bilang ina." "Ang tibay ng loob ng aking ina ang nagbigay sa akin ng lakas upang magpatuloy at mapalaki ng tama ang mga anak ko."	Applying Learned Values

This table highlights how resilience is passed down through generations. Participants discussed how they apply lessons from their mothers to their own parenting, focusing on Emulating Strength and Determination and Applying Learned Values. This shows how resilience becomes a family trait, shaping future generations.

Table 7: Descriptions for Family Support and Personal Independence

Categories	Emerging Concepts	Themes
Family Support and Personal Independence	"Ang suporta syempre sa pamilya makukuha at ang natutunan ko sa aking ina ay yung pagpapalaki sa mga anak."	The Role of Family vs. Self-Reliance
	"Sa sarili ko lang, dahil ako lang din ang sumusuporta sa aking sarili. Kailangan maging matapang,"	Family Support and Personal Strength

This table examines the balance between seeking family support and striving for self-reliance. Themes such as The Role of Family vs. Self-Reliance and Family Support and Personal Strength reveal the complexity of single motherhood, where some participants rely on family networks while others emphasize personal independence.

Table 8: Descriptions for Need for Practical Support Programs

Categories	Emerging Concepts	Themes
Resource Referral Network: Partner with organizations to provide access to financial aid, childcare, and other services.	"Financial assistance, makakatulong ito para sa mga pangangailangan ng mga bata."	Financial and Childcare Support
	"Childcare support program, lalo na para sa mga single mothers na tulad ko na nagtatrabaho."	Social Support Networks and Community Resources

This table identifies the practical needs of single mothers, including financial aid, childcare, and community support. Themes like Financial and Childcare Support and Social Support Networks and Community Resources highlight the participants' desire for external assistance to ease the challenges of single motherhood.

4. Discussion
After analyzing the results of this study, the following emerging concepts have been identified to illustrate how single mothers develop resilience through observation, personal experiences, and support systems. The findings highlight the ways in which their upbringing, financial struggles, and emotional strength shape their ability to navigate the challenges of single parenthood.

Table 9: Thematic Map of Superordinate and Sub-themes

Superordinate	Subordinate
Learning Resilience Through Observation	• Modeling Strength and Determination • Developing Independence
Resilience as a Foundation for Positivity	• Providing Stability Amidst Challenges • Being a Role Model of Strength
Balancing Tradition with Change	• Carrying Forward Key Lessons • Promoting Open Communication
Resilience as a Generational Legacy	• Emulating Strength and Determination • Applying Learned Values
Family Support and Personal Independence	• The Role of Family vs. Self-Reliance • Family Support and Personal Strength
Need for Practical Support Programs	• Financial and Childcare Support • Social Support Networks and Community Resources

The discussion of this research illustrates the emerging themes resulting from the participants' narratives and lived experiences. Through a thorough review of their responses, the researchers identified key themes that highlight the intergenerational transmission of resilience, parenting approaches, and support systems among single mothers raised by their own single mothers. The following major themes emerged from the participants' narratives: (1) Learning Resilience Through Observation, (2) Resilience as a Foundation for Positivity, (3) Balancing Tradition with Change, (4) Resilience as a Generational Legacy, (5) Family Support and Personal Independence, and (6) Need for Practical Support Programs. To further support the study, subordinate themes were also identified: for Learning Resilience Through Observation, (a) Modeling Strength and Determination and (b) Developing Independence; for Resilience as a Foundation for Positivity, (a) Providing Stability Amidst Challenges and (b) Being a Role Model of Strength; for Balancing Tradition with Change, (a) Carrying Forward Key Lessons and (b) Promoting Open Communication; for Resilience as a Generational Legacy, (a) Emulating Strength and Determination and (b) Applying Learned Values; for Family Support and Personal Independence, (a) The Role of Family vs. Self-Reliance and (b) Family Support and Personal Strength; and for Need for Practical Support Programs, (a) Financial and Childcare Support and (b) Social Support Networks and Community Resources.

Learning Resilience Through Observation
This study found that single mothers develop resilience by observing their own mothers' struggles and coping strategies. Growing up in a single-parent household exposed them to hardships early on, teaching them perseverance, sacrifice, and endurance. Watching their mothers juggle responsibilities and make difficult decisions instilling in them a strong work ethic and determination, which they now apply in their own parenting.

Resilience as a Foundation for Positivity
This research found that resilience plays a crucial role in maintaining a stable and optimistic environment for children despite financial struggles and the absence of a co-parent. Single mothers prioritize shielding their children from hardships while fostering hope and long-term goals. Their ability to remain positive and provide emotional security strengthens their children's well-being and sense of stability.

Balancing Tradition with Change
This study identified that single mothers balance traditional values with modern parenting approaches. While they uphold discipline, hard work, and responsibility, they also recognize

the need for open communication and emotional support. By fostering closer relationships and encouraging self-expression, they merge the strengths of past generations with a more nurturing parenting style.

Resilience as a Generational Legacy
This research found that resilience is intentionally cultivated and passed down through generations. Single mothers strive to instill in their children the same perseverance and strength they learned from their own mothers. They emphasize problem- solving, emotional strength, and determination in education, work, and relationships, ensuring resilience remains a defining family trait.

Family Support and Personal Independence
This study discovered that single mothers navigate the balance between family support and personal independence. While many rely on extended family for emotional and financial help, others strive for self- sufficiency. Some seek independence due to strained relationships, while others value a supportive network. This balance highlights the complexity of single motherhood—appreciating external support while ensuring they remain capable providers for their children.

Need for Practical Support Programs
This research found that single mothers emphasize the need for financial aid, childcare services, and job training to ease their struggles. Many faces limited opportunities due to inaccessible childcare, while financial instability remains a major challenge. Practical programs such as subsidized daycare, employment assistance, and economic empowerment initiatives would provide crucial support, helping them secure stable livelihoods while focusing on their children's future.

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