Contents

List of Figures and Tables x
Acknowledgements xi
Introduction 1

PART ONE CHILDHOOD AND THEORY 5

1 The Social Meaning of Childhood 7
Introduction 7
The 'Playing-Child' Construction 8
The Historical Development of Modern Childhood 11
Radical Social Constructionism 17
Limits to Social Constructionism 20
Archard's Synthesis 23
Conclusion 26

2 Childhood and Social Structure 27
Introduction 27
Positioning Children and Childhood 28
Feminism and Childhood 36
Marxism and Childhood 40
Children's Needs and Interests 45
Conclusion 48

3 Children and Childhood in Late Modernity 50
Introduction 50
Childhood and Individualisation 51
Children and the Family in Late Modernity 56
The Global Child 61
Individualisation and New Inequalities 66
Globalism: Understanding Inequality 69
Conclusion 70

PART TWO CHILDHOOD AS A SOCIAL PROBLEM 73

4 Childhood in Crisis: Social Disorder and Reconstruction 75
Introduction 75

The Problem of 'Youth' 76
Street Children 78
Children and Play: Lost on the Net 81
Reconstituting Childhood 84
Case Study 1 – Child Soldiers 86
Case Study 2 – Child Carers 89
Conclusion 93

5 **Children, Family and the State: Policing Childhood** **95**
Introduction 95
The Privatisation of Childhood 96
Modern Protectionist Strategies: The Problem of Child Abuse 98
Child Protection and the Criminal Justice System 102
Childhood, Agency and the State 106
Conclusion 112

PART THREE REGULATING CHILDREN AND CHILDHOOD 115

6 **Theories of Growing Up: Developmentalism and Socialisation Theory** **117**
Introduction 117
The Dominant Framework 118
Developmentalism 122
The Story of Socialisation 126
Moving outside the Frame 132
Conclusion 139

7 **Schooling Childhood** **141**
Introduction 141
Mass Schooling and the Production of Childhood 142
Locating Children 144
Reforming Schooling, Reforming Childhood? 150
Deschooling Childhood: Truancy 154
Deschooling Childhood – Home Schooling 155
Conclusion 160

PART FOUR CHILDREN AS SOCIAL AGENTS 163

8 **Children's Social Worlds: Culture, Play and Technology** **165**
Introduction 165
Children's Cultures and the 'Dominant Frame' 166
The Importance of the Social 167
Children, New Technologies and Social Relations 175

Children, Technology and Agency 177
Technology, Consumerism and Social Exclusion 181
Conclusion 183

9 Researching Children and Childhood: Methods, Ethics and Politics 185
Introduction 185
Researching Children's Social Worlds: Methodological Issues 186
Ethical Considerations 194
Children as Researchers 199
Conclusion 203

10 Children: Their Rights and Politics 206
Introduction 206
Children's Rights 207
Children and Politics 215
Case Studies of Political Participation 221
Conclusion 228

Conclusion 230
Childhood and Ambiguity 231
Children's Agency 236

Notes 238

References 242

Index 254