



Adolescent frontal lobe brain development: Disproportionality effects of social and economic deprivation and implications for juvenile court case disposition, child welfare reform, and education remediation

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Abstract

Neuroscience has documented the substantive growth of frontal lobe gray matter during the adolescent years, similar to the brain growth spurt in early childhood – both precursors of preparation for quantitative and qualitative adaptive learning. Several United States Supreme Court decisions (Roper v. Simmons; Graham v. Florida; JDB v. North Carolina; Miller v. Alabama) have affirmed the historical chronological age of ‘majority’ being 18 years old, is inconsistent with what it means to be an adult. Mature cognitive processing is more appropriately characterized by the “Jean Piagetian” formal operations stage, i.e., abstract thinking, logical thinking, decision-making, and long-term planning. Formal operations is now acknowledged to be achieved during a young adult’s mid-20’s years of age.

Not yet answered is what are the effects on ethnic minority young adults (mid -20’s), who have social, economic, academic, and/or educational deprivation? This chapter will explore these issues.

Keywords: brain, adolescent, judges, child welfare, ethnic minority youth, juvenile justice reform.



science from Johnson C. Smith University (Charlotte, N.C.). His Masters degrees were earned at the University of Louisville (teaching), and the University of Alabama (clinical-correctional psychology). Dr. Lindsey’s legal studies were completed at Villanova Law School (Villanova, Pa), his doctorate in clinical psychology was awarded at Hahnemann University (Philadelphia, Pa.). Currently an adjunct professor in the department of psychology, at Southern Methodist University in Dallas, TX; adjunct professor at the University of Nevada – Reno; and adjunct faculty for The National Council of Juvenile and Family Court Judges, in Reno, Nevada. He is a past member of the Juvenile Justice Committee of the American Bar Association, and the American Psychological Association and serves as a consultant to numerous juvenile and judicial organizations. Nestor Consultants, Inc. (founded 1985 by Dr. Lindsey), is the primary consulting organization for the work which he performs providing these and related services since 1976.

Speaker Publications:

The Dropout Epidemic in Dallas County, Dallas Commission on Children and Youth: The Community Council of Greater Dallas, January, 2012.

“The Impact of *Gault* on the Representation of Minority Youth” (Criminal Law Bulletin 2008).

“The Impact of Waivers to Adult Court, Alternative Sentencing, and Alternatives to Incarceration on Young Men of Color” (Joint Center for Political and Economic Studies 2006).

Cultural diversity strategies to reduce disproportionate minority confinement in secure juvenile detention facilities (Nestor Consultants Inc April 2000).

“Culturally competent psychological assessment of African American children and adolescents” (Journal of Personality Assessment 1998).

Biography:

Dr. Lindsey is a lawyer and clinical psychologist. He received his B.A. degrees in psychology and political



“Ethical issues in interviewing, counseling, and the use of psychological data with child and adolescent clients”
(Fordham Law Review March 1996).

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