



# Our Kids: The American Dream in Crisis

*Robert D. Putnam*

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## **Our Kids: The American Dream in Crisis** Robert D. Putnam

A groundbreaking examination of the growing inequality gap from the bestselling author of *Bowling Alone*: why fewer Americans today have the opportunity for upward mobility.

It's the American dream: get a good education, work hard, buy a house, and achieve prosperity and success. This is the America we believe in—a nation of opportunity, constrained only by ability and effort. But during the last twenty-five years we have seen a disturbing “opportunity gap” emerge. Americans have always believed in equality of opportunity, the idea that all kids, regardless of their family background, should have a decent chance to improve their lot in life. Now, this central tenet of the American dream seems no longer true or at the least, much less true than it was.

Robert Putnam—about whom *The Economist* said, “his scholarship is wide-ranging, his intelligence luminous, his tone modest, his prose unpretentious and frequently funny”—offers a personal but also authoritative look at this new American crisis. Putnam begins with his high school class of 1959 in Port Clinton, Ohio. By and large the vast majority of those students—“our kids”—went on to lives better than those of their parents. But their children and grandchildren have had harder lives amid diminishing prospects. Putnam tells the tale of lessening opportunity through poignant life stories of rich and poor kids from cities and suburbs across the country, drawing on a formidable body of research done especially for this book.

*Our Kids* is a rare combination of individual testimony and rigorous evidence. Putnam provides a disturbing account of the American dream that should initiate a deep examination of the future of our country.

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