concern which led to compulsory schooling. This caused a new big institution being set up to revolve around children. Conflict sociologists would argue that because children were seen as useless adults needed to segregate and oppress children to give them less status.

The conflict view on childhood is that it is there to create inequalities amongst children and amongst adults, causing the position of children to decline as they are oppressed by adults. Firstly they view that childhood reinforces different status’ amongst adults, they state that ‘protection’ from adults is just a source of control by making children dependent on them. This control can come from neglect and abuse from their adults, for example 31,400 children were on child protection registers from physical or sexual abuse, this dark side of the family causes children to be victims and have no status as they can’t obtain help as they are dependent on their parents. Another form of control is over children's movements as certain places are regulated such as shops not allowing children in, they are also forbidden to play in other areas by adults as adults have the power. In the Western world especially rules by parents restrict the child more and more throughout time as children’s independence has gone down due to ‘stranger danger’, in 1970 up to 80% of 7-8 year old children were allowed to walk to school with supervision and in 1990 this had decreased to 9%. This shows that the position of children has fallen and they now have less control over their independence. Parents also have control over children’s bodies and activities, for example they tell the child when to play, eat, sleep and also parents also choose when to cuddle their child or smack them and how their child should look. Conflict sociologists argue that even if children want to gain independence by gaining their own income there is little they can do as they rely on pocket money and their parents passing money down from the state, lastly they would not be able to work by laws restricting it. Gittins calls this ‘age patriarchy’ where male figure within the household has control over the child and has all of the power. Hockley and James state that children want to get away from being oppressed by modern childhood by ‘acting up’, this is where the child acts older and doesn’t meet the norms expected of them, for example they smoke and drink; or they act down by acting younger to resist control for example putting on a baby voice. Some sociologists argue that children cannot make rational decisions and are unable to safeguard their interests themselves.

Overall all sociologists agree that childhood is socially constructed as its changed overtime. However the conflict view is that it has been changed to give children lower status in society and to be oppressed by society, however the march of progress argue that their status has improved. But both views are culturally bias as they look at only the western view of children’s status and ignore other cultures for example Punch found that in suburban parts of Bolivia children at a very young age are expected to do adult chores, this shows that overall children’s status’s are very dependent on the society and culture where they are contrasted.