

DoCS Research to Practice Update

A regular update for staff on the latest national and international research

Issue 7, August, 2006

Research Publications – What's New!

Research to Practice

The Research to Practice Program provides an essential link between the latest research and DoCS staff. As part of this important initiative, the Research to Practice Update encompasses a broad range of research publications and resources to reflect the diversity of DoCS staff.

If you have any comments or suggestions about how we could improve this Update to make it more useful or relevant to your work, please email the Research to Practice team at:

researchtopractice@community.nsw.gov.au, or

'Research to Practice' on the internal email.

Produced by
The Research to Practice Team
Centre for Parenting & Research
NSW Department of Community Services
Old Bidura House
357 Glebe Point Road
GLEBE NSW 2037
DX 23904
Ph 02 9209 6222
Fax 02 9209 6233
researchtopractice@community.nsw.gov.au



DoCS

Research Agenda 2006-2009

The DoCS Research Agenda reflects the Department's commitment to research as one of its core activities. It is designed to provide the evidence base to inform policy, practice and program development.

The Research Agenda can be viewed on DoCS Online under 'Strategic Documents' on the 'Research to Practice' page.

Attachment: Key issues

This Research to Practice Note is based on the research article, *The importance of attachment in the lives of foster children*. It provides a brief overview of the key issues surrounding attachment, including a definition of attachment and discussion about the different types of attachment.

Attachment and the role of foster carers

This Research to Practice Note presents the key issues discussed in the research article, *The importance of attachment in the lives of foster children*. It complements the Research to Practice Note, *Attachment: key issues*. It focuses specifically on issues for children entering care and building relationships in foster care.

Making decisions about contact

This Research to Practice Note draws on the major issues raised in the discussion paper, *Is all contact between children in care and their birth parents 'good' contact?* It aims to provide staff with guidance about the issues to consider in decision-making around contact between children in out-of-home care and their birth parents.

The importance of attachment in the lives of foster children: Key messages from research

This research article is intended to help those who work with children in care to understand the key messages from attachment theory and research. The article is intended to help foster caregivers and others close to foster children use attachment theory to understand children's needs and challenges and to build productive, new relationships that can safeguard their future.

Early years program evaluations: The UK evidence base

This seminar note provides an overview of a presentation by Professor Ted Melhuish on the evaluation of two early years programs in England - Sure Start and Effective Provision of Pre-School Education (EPPE). Key findings from this work and their relevance to New South Wales are discussed.

These research publications can be viewed on DoCS Online at [home>resources>research to practice](#).

Early Intervention

Journal Articles

Parent-Training Programs in Child Welfare Services: Planning for a More Evidence-Based Approach to Serving Biological Parents

Barth, R., Landsverk, J et al, Research on Social Work Practice, Vol.15 No.5, September (2005), 353-371

This article brings together evidence about the most promising programs from child service sectors such as mental health, special education

and juvenile justice with information about the current parent training approaches in child welfare. A range of proposals about next steps to enhance the capacity of parent training are discussed.

Responsive Parenting: Establishing Early Foundations for Social, Communication, and Independent Problem-Solving Skills

Landry S., Smith K. and Swank P. (2006) *Developmental Psychology*, Vol. 42, No. 4, 627-642

This article reports on a study to determine whether the learning of responsive behaviours by parents would facilitate infant development. The study found that increased maternal responsiveness facilitated greater growth in infants' social, emotional, communication, and cognitive competence, supporting a causal role for responsiveness on infant development.

Early childhood home visiting programme: factors contributing to success

Heaman, M., Chalmers, K., Woodgate, R., & Brown, J. (2006) *Journal of Advanced Nursing*, 55(3), 291-300

This paper reports a study of the factors that public health nurses, home visitors and parents consider important for the success of an early childhood home visiting program. The research was a descriptive, qualitative evaluation involving in-depth interviews with 58 participants.

Red flags during home visitation: Infants and toddlers

Vasquez, E., & Pitts, K. (2006). *Journal of Community Health Nursing*, 23(2), 123-131

The purpose of this article is to describe red flags, that is, any physical, developmental, or psychosocial findings identified

during a home visit that require further evaluation or referral. The red flags were developed to increase the community-based provider's ability to assess the health status of children and to support efforts to provide home intervention services for children at risk for abuse and neglect.

Early Intervention

Research Reports

Families at risk: the effects of chronic and multiple disadvantage

The Families at Risk study has produced local evidence drawing attention to the strengths and challenges for parents living in situations of chronic and multiple disadvantage with children aged 0 - 7 years. The study found that life for the majority of these parents and young children is under-resourced, stressful and isolated and interventions are required that open up pathways out of disadvantaged life situations. This project involved collaboration between the Government of South Australia; the Women's and Children's Hospital; Flinders University and the University of Adelaide.

This report can be viewed online at: <http://ehlt.flinders.edu.au/education/FamilyNeeds/index.htm>

What makes parenting programmes work in disadvantaged areas? The PALS trial

This UK study examines factors which influence parenting program effectiveness in poor, ethnically diverse areas. It reports on the proportion of families who enrol in parenting programs, and addresses the issue of universal provision versus targeted provision for those at risk of not doing well. It examines whether programs developed in western cultures can work for families from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds.

This report can be viewed online at: <http://www.jrf.org.uk/knowledge/findings/socialpolicy/0386.asp>

Towards a Better Future for Children

This research paper, commissioned by NAPCAN Queensland, outlines models of prevention and describes some of the issues underpinning our understanding of child abuse prevention. The implications of recent research on prevention and possible future directions are explored.

This paper can be viewed online at: <http://www.napcan.org.au/>

Smoking and pregnancy

This report, by the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare, is one of a series of initiatives commissioned by the National Advisory Group on Smoking and Pregnancy as part of an overall strategy to reduce smoking in pregnancy in Australia. It presents data on pregnancy and births according to the mother's smoking status during pregnancy for the period 2001 to 2003, using the National Perinatal Data Collection. Prevalence, maternal characteristics and baby outcomes are reported on.

Copies of this report can be viewed on line at: <http://www.npsu.unsw.edu.au/smoking2006.htm>

Practice Resources

Practice resources for promotion, prevention and early intervention

The Centre for Community Child Health has developed eleven Practice Resources. Each Practice Resource provides professionals with an introduction to the topic, a summary of the latest research, and practical strategies to support their daily work with young children and their families.

These Practice Resources are designed to assist professionals understand the issues and the range of strategies available to address the concerns of parents. Types of topics include: breastfeeding, literacy, language and behaviour.

These resources are available online at:

http://www.rch.org.au/ccch/research/index.cfm?doc_id=9739

National

2006 NSW young people on community orders health survey

This report presents the findings of a survey of the physical and mental health of young people serving community orders, undertaken by a collaborative team comprising the NSW Department of Juvenile Justice, NSW Health and the University of Sydney. The report provides evidence about the wide-ranging health and welfare needs of young people on community orders.

The report can be viewed online at:

<http://www.djj.nsw.gov.au/publications.htm#research>

Predicting after-care outcomes: the importance of 'felt' security

Cashmore J., and Paxman M., *Child and Family Social Work* 2006, 11, pp232-241

This journal article reports on a study examining the links between stability, perceived or 'felt' security and later outcomes for young people after leaving care. It is based on a longitudinal study over 5 years of 47 young people leaving care in New South Wales. Felt security in care, and continuity and social support beyond care were the main significant predictors of young people's outcomes.

This article can be borrowed from the DoCS library.

Contact the Research to Practice Team

Alison Faure-Brac 02 9209 6210
Manager, Practice Research
Email: alison.faure-brac@community.nsw.gov.au

Katherine Furst 02 9209 6211
Senior Research Officer
Email: katherine.furst@community.nsw.gov.au

Kate Flannery 02 9209 6227
Senior Research Officer
Email: kate.flannery@community.nsw.gov.au

Email your questions & ideas to:

- [research.to.practice \(on the internal email\), or](mailto:research.to.practice@community.nsw.gov.au)
- researchtopractice@community.nsw.gov.au

Ending family violence and abuse in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities - Key issues

The Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Social Justice Commissioner has produced an overview paper of research and findings by the Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission, 2001 - 2006. This paper demonstrates how violence relates to almost every aspect of policy making and service delivery to Indigenous communities. It is argued that a holistic approach to address the causes and the consequences of family violence in Indigenous communities is needed. If these issues are treated as simply a law and order, legal compliance or health matter, lasting improvements to the lives of Indigenous peoples will not be achieved. Much of the work presented in this paper is the result of consultation with Indigenous peoples and it is argued that addressing family violence will also require partnerships with Indigenous peoples and communities.

This paper can be viewed online at:

http://www.humanrights.gov.au/social_justice/familyviolence/family_violence2006.html

Crime Facts Info no. 128: Child protection and Indigenous status

The Australian Institute of Criminology has released a fact sheet examining child abuse and Indigenous status in 2004/05. The paper shows that in 2004-05 Indigenous children in all age groups were much more likely to be the subject of substantiated child abuse than non-Indigenous children. The rate of child abuse or neglect substantiations was greatest in the age group 0-4 years for both Indigenous and non-Indigenous children (3,236 and 881 per 100,000, respectively), declining with increased age.

This fact sheet can be viewed online at:

<http://www.aic.gov.au/publications/cfi/cfi128.html>

A toolkit of interventions to assist young people to negotiate transitional pathways

This research reviews available techniques, interventions and prevention strategies used to reduce the likelihood of young people engaging in problematic drug use. Prevention efforts that are particularly relevant to this research are those that address the needs of young people in transitional life periods, from primary to secondary school and from secondary school to adult life.

This resource can be viewed online at: [http://](http://www.nationaldrugstrategy.gov.au/internet/drugstrategy/publishing.nsf/Content/toolkit-interventions)

www.nationaldrugstrategy.gov.au/internet/drugstrategy/publishing.nsf/Content/toolkit-interventions

Poverty and disadvantage among Australian children: a spatial perspective

This paper from the National Centre for Social and Economic Modelling describes the results of using the 2001 Australian census microdata, to construct a composite index of child social exclusion risk at a small area level. Regional differences in risk and specific indicators of social exclusion are then analysed. Substantial differences in child social exclusion, and in specific characteristics related to social exclusion, are found across local areas. The extent of correlation between a more traditional income-based measure of economic wellbeing and the composite index is also examined.

This paper is available online at:

http://www.apo.org.au/linkboard/results.chtml?filename_num=89023

Poverty Lines: Australia

This is a quarterly newsletter produced by the Melbourne Institute of Applied Economic and Social Research. The Poverty Lines are standard reference material for those concerned with social welfare policy in Australia. Poverty lines are presented for a range of family sizes, giving the minimum income required by a family in order to avoid a situation of poverty. The updated Poverty Lines take into account changes in the average income level of all Australians, reflecting the idea that poverty is relative. Each issue includes a table indicating changes in the purchasing power of the poverty line.

This newsletter can be accessed online at: <http://www.melbourneinstitute.com/labour/inequality/poverty/>

Sexual violence offenders: Prevention and intervention approaches

This issues paper examines how theoretical explanations of sexual violence have shaped intervention and community responses. Prevalence and definitions of sexual violence are examined. The paper also analyses the different treatment paradigms used in Australia and examines ways in which both treatment and prevention strategies can better address the widespread occurrence of sexual violence. It is proposed that a more comprehensive, intersectorial approach to treatment and prevention is required, including greater collaboration between victim services, offender treatment programs, prevention initiatives and the criminal justice system.

This issues paper can be viewed online at: <http://www.aifs.gov.au/acssa/pubs/issue/i5.html>

Resources

Babies and Young Children in Care: Life Pathways, Decision Making and Practice

Ward, H., Munro, E., and Dearden, C. (2006) Jessica Kingsley, London

The study that forms the main focus of this book explores the outcomes of placing children in the care of the state. It focuses on 42 babies who entered care in six English local authorities before their first birthday, and who were still looked after 12-24 months later. It traces their life pathways from birth until they were five or six years old. Issues such as instability of placements, delays in decision-making and babies' needs are explored. Practice issues and policy implications are discussed.

Safer Lives, Better Health - Understanding and responding to domestic/family violence

This DVD was produced by NSW Health and the Education Centre Against Violence to promote better understanding and support for people affected by domestic/family violence. This resource aims to assist workers to undertake intervention and prevention strategies, such as safety planning and domestic violence routine screening. Viewers will hear from people who have personal experiences of domestic or Aboriginal family violence, as well as from health and interagency workers. The content is relevant to workers from a range of services.

Disclaimer

This Update has been compiled by DoCS' Centre for Parenting and Research as part of the Research to Practice Program. It has been developed to facilitate access to research publications and resources.

The content contained within these publications is provided for your information only and should not be seen as a directive or endorsement by DoCS.