

# DoCS Research to Practice **Update**

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

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## 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:*

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### DoCS

#### **Mental health of children in OOHC in NSW, Australia**

This Research to Practice Note is based on a 2005 study of the mental health of children in court-ordered foster and kinship care in NSW. Children in care were found to have multiple and complex mental health problems. Placement insecurity was found to independently predict poorer mental health. Practice issues and implications are discussed.

#### **DoCS Research Report 2006/2007**

This report outlines current internal research projects being undertaken by DoCS' Centre for Parenting and Research as well as reporting on external projects that are either being funded or supported by DoCS. The report reflects DoCS' four core business areas: Prevention and Early Intervention, Child Protection, Out-of-Home Care, and Community Development and Capacity Building.

These and other Centre resources can be accessed via the research section of the News and Publication page on the NSW DoCS Internet.

### Early Intervention

#### **Challenges faced in implementing school readiness program**

Lyons, S., Karlstrom, M. & Haywood, T. (2007). Chapin Hall Centre for Children at the University of Chicago

To improve the school readiness of low-income children, Palm Beach County, Florida, launched a program to identify children's needs and provide early intervention services to support physical, cognitive, and emotional health and development. This Chapin Hall report examines the

challenges of implementing the program, its progress in engaging key stakeholders, and its impact on the school readiness of children enrolled in the program.

This report is available at:  
[www.chapinhall.org/article\\_abstract.aspx?ar=1461](http://www.chapinhall.org/article_abstract.aspx?ar=1461)

#### **Building collaboration among early intervention service providers**

Lyons, S. & Winje, C. (2007). Chapin Hall Centre for Children at the University of Chicago

The Family and Community Partnership initiative was created to strengthen the functioning of and collaboration among programs providing prevention and early intervention services to families in Palm Beach County, Florida. A new report from Chapin Hall examines the features of the program and its progress toward meeting goals.

This report is available at:  
[www.chapinhall.org/article\\_abstract.aspx?ar=1460](http://www.chapinhall.org/article_abstract.aspx?ar=1460)

#### **Monitoring outcomes of preventive services**

Wulczyn, F. (2007). *Child Welfare Watch* 14, Summer.

In this essay, Chapin Hall Research Fellow, Fred Wulczyn, suggests steps needed to meet the challenging task of monitoring preventive services delivered by private providers. In the case of New York, he urges a clear focus on outcomes, with attention to both the process and quality of care. Monitoring success, he argues, depends in part on understanding performance within the context of the communities they serve.

This essay is available at:

[www.chapinhall.org/  
article\\_abstract.aspx?ar=1459](http://www.chapinhall.org/article_abstract.aspx?ar=1459)

## Building relationships between parents and carers in early childhood

Wise, S. (2007). *Briefing Paper No 5*, Australian Institute of Family Studies

Harmony between the way that parents and early childhood professionals raise children is an important dimension of child care quality aimed at enhancing child wellbeing. The foundation for this harmony is positive and trusting relationships between the two parties. Yet, research conducted at the Australian Institute of Family Studies and elsewhere suggests that carers do not always initiate practices to share caregiving information with parents, and that conflict with parents in matters of children's care are commonplace, particularly in culturally diverse early childhood settings. The current paper outlines several strategies that professionals may employ to support and strengthen parent/carer partnerships.

This briefing paper is available at: [www.aifs.gov.au/afrc/pubs/  
briefing/b5pdf/b5.pdf](http://www.aifs.gov.au/afrc/pubs/briefing/b5pdf/b5.pdf)

## The effects of the *Nobody's Perfect* program on parenting resourcefulness and competency

Chislett, G. & Kennett, D. (2007). *Journal of Child and Family Studies* 16, pages 473 - 482.

This article reports on the evaluation of a Canadian program, *Nobody's Perfect*, which involved 71 participants. Self report measures pre and post program and at two month follow up are analysed. Parents left the program with increased levels of parenting resourcefulness, better parent-child interactions and more effective child management skills. A number of recommendations are suggested to help facilitators of the program

enhance service delivery and improve parental outcomes.

This article is available at: [http://springerlink.com/  
content/76026t22112jp467/  
fulltext.pdf](http://springerlink.com/content/76026t22112jp467/fulltext.pdf)

## Child Protection

### Re-referral to child protective services: the influence of child, family, and case characteristics on risk status

Connell, C., Bergeron, N., Katz, K., Saunders, L., & Kraemer Tebes, J. (2007). *Child Abuse & Neglect* 31 (5), pages 573-588.

This study examines child, family and case characteristics that impact rates of re-referral to Child Protective Services using data on all closed investigations for the state of Rhode Island between 2001 and 2004. The initial six-month period following case closure was found to be the period of greatest risk of re-referral. Approximately 13% of cases experienced a recurrent allegation during the first six-month period; an additional 14% experienced a re-referral over the following 12-month period; 7% during the next 12-month period. Family poverty was the strongest predictor of re-referral, though a number of child and case characteristics were significantly related to recurrence.

This article is available at: [http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/  
j.chiabu.2006.12.004](http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.chiabu.2006.12.004)

## A procedure for assessing parents' capacity for change in child protection cases

Harnett, P. (2007). *Children and Youth Services Review* 29, pages 1179-1188.

Whilst a cross-sectional assessment of families provides important information about family functioning at one point in time, it is of limited usefulness when the results are equivocal. The assessment of a family's capacity-to-change provides additional information not possible in a cross-sectional assessment, including an evaluation of the parent's motivation and capacity to acquire parenting skills. This paper provides a detailed description of the capacity-to-change assessment procedure.

This article is available at: <http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.chilyouth.2007.04.005>

## Out-of-Home Care

### Child protection and child outcomes: measuring the effects of foster care

Doyle, J. Jr., Forthcoming, *American Economic Review*

Data gathered by Chapin Hall on foster children in Illinois was used in a recent study that explored long-term outcomes of children placed in protective care. The study results suggest that children on the margin of placement, where investigators may have disagreed if the child should be removed from the home, were likely to have better outcomes when they remained at home than when placed in care.

This paper is available at: [www.mit.edu/~jjdoyle/doyle\\_foster1t\\_march07\\_aer.pdf](http://www.mit.edu/~jjdoyle/doyle_foster1t_march07_aer.pdf)

## Assessment of factors influencing the adequacy of health care services for children in foster care

UCLA Centre for Healthier Children, Families and Communities

This United States study examines the readiness of state and local child welfare, child health, mental health and Medicaid agencies to promote children's well-being by more systematically meeting the health needs of children in foster care. The study evaluates the gaps between current agency performance and best practices for health and mental health services for children in foster care.

This report is available at: [www.healthychild.ucla.edu/Publications/ChildrenFosterCare/AssessmentFactors.asp](http://www.healthychild.ucla.edu/Publications/ChildrenFosterCare/AssessmentFactors.asp)

## General

### Intergenerational reliance on income support: psychosocial factors and their measurement

Berry, H., George, E., Butterworth, P., Rodgers, B., & Caldwell, T., (2007). *Social Policy Research Paper* 3, Dept of FACS & Indigenous Affairs

This paper identifies nine psychosocial factors that explain reliance on income support from one generation to the next. Each of the nine factors is discussed in turn, including the relationship between the factor and income support reliance of parents and children. The paper draws together the connections between the factors in five core themes, followed by an examination of policy and program development implications.

This paper is available at: [www.facs.gov.au/research/prp31/srp31.pdf](http://www.facs.gov.au/research/prp31/srp31.pdf)

## Population distribution, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians, 2006

Australian Bureau of Statistics

The five-yearly Census of Population and Housing is one of the most important sources of information about Australia's Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander population, providing a wide range of socioeconomic indicators, particularly for small areas. It is also the basis for calculating the Indigenous estimated resident population (ERP). This publication presents information on the Indigenous ERP at the state/territory level, and the unadjusted sub-state geographic distribution of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander population as counted in the Census.

This report is available at: [www.abs.gov.au/AUSSTATS/abs@.nsf/mf/4705.0?OpenDocument](http://www.abs.gov.au/AUSSTATS/abs@.nsf/mf/4705.0?OpenDocument)

## Australian social trends, 2007

Australian Bureau of Statistics

This is the 14th edition of an annual series that presents information on contemporary social issues and areas of public policy concern. By drawing primarily on a wide range of statistics from the Australian Bureau of Statistics, and statistics from other official sources, Australian Social Trends describes aspects of Australian society, and how these are changing over time.

This report is available at: [www.abs.gov.au/AUSSTATS/abs@.nsf/mf/4102.0?OpenDocument](http://www.abs.gov.au/AUSSTATS/abs@.nsf/mf/4102.0?OpenDocument)

## Alcohol and other drug treatment services in Australian 2005-06: findings from the National Minimum Data Set

AIHW bulletin no. 52, July 2007  
This bulletin presents data on publicly funded alcohol and other drug treatment services and their clients, including information about the types of drugs for which treatment is sought and the types of treatment provided.

This report is available at:  
[www.aihw.gov.au/publications/aus/bulletin52/bulletin52.pdf](http://www.aihw.gov.au/publications/aus/bulletin52/bulletin52.pdf)

## Resources

### Success stories in Indigenous health

This booklet is produced by Australians for Native Title and Reconciliation. It outlines success stories in Indigenous health and shows that Indigenous-led health care initiatives often get the best results. The stories demonstrate that progress in improving Indigenous health is achieved when there is significant engagement with the Indigenous communities concerned and appropriate funding and support provided.

This booklet is available at:  
[http://www.antar.org.au/images/stories/PDFs/SuccessStories/success\\_stories\\_final.pdf](http://www.antar.org.au/images/stories/PDFs/SuccessStories/success_stories_final.pdf)

### Family relationships practice profiles

The Australian Family Relationships Clearinghouse (AFRC) is developing a collection of profiles on family relationships practices. By providing this collection the Clearinghouse aims to improve understanding of family and relationship issues and responses to these issues.

This resource is available at:  
<http://www.aifs.gov.au/afrc/practice/practiceprofiles.html>

## Books

### Child protection: Using research to improve policy and practice

Haskins, R., Wulczyn, F., & Bruce Webb, M. (eds) (2007). Brookings Institution Press: Washington, D.C.

The National Survey of Child and Adolescent Well-Being is the first nationally representative study of children who have been reported to authorities as suspected victims of abuse or neglect and the public programs that aim to protect them. This new book is the first to report the results of the survey, interpret the findings, and place them in a broader policy context.

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## Disclaimer

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