

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:

- researchtopractice@community.nsw.gov.au, or
- 'Research to Practice' on the internal email.

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DoCS publications

Effective parenting capacity assessment: Key issues

This Research to Practice Note provides practitioners with an overview of the issues associated with effective parenting capacity assessment. Three key issues are identified: understanding the often multiple and inter-connected problems that impact on parental capacity; definitional clarity and the quality of parental capacity assessment reports.

It complements the Research to Practice Note, *Parenting capacity assessment: Improving decision-making*.

Parenting capacity assessment: Improving decision-making

This Research to Practice Note complements the above document. It serves to acknowledge the complexity of parenting capacity assessments and present some practical strategies that can enhance the quality and accuracy of the assessment process.

Both Research to Practice Notes have been developed from the Assessment of Parenting Capacity literature review (DoCS, 2005).

These can be viewed on DoCS Online under the 'Resources' section on the 'Research to Practice' page.

Early Intervention & Prevention Research

The effectiveness of parent education and home visiting child maltreatment prevention programs

This publication is the latest Child Abuse Prevention Issues Paper from the National Child Protection Clearing House. It provides an overview of the different types of prevention programs. Parenting education and home visiting program evaluations are critiqued to determine whether these programs are effective in preventing child maltreatment. The paper concludes by discussing the implications of the present findings and their applicability to practice.

This issues paper is available online at: <http://www.aifs.gov.au/nch/issues/issues24.html>

Peer reviewed research journal articles in early intervention & prevention:

Preventing Child Abuse: A Meta-analysis of Parent Training Programs

Lundahl B.W., Nimer J., and Parsons B. Research on Social Work Practice, Vol.16 No.3, May, (2006), 251-262

This article reports on a meta-analysis to evaluate Parent Training Programs in terms of their ability to reduce parent's risk of abusing a child. Inclusion of home visitors and conducting parent training programs both in a home and office setting were found to significantly enhance effectiveness. Outcomes were also found to be significantly enhanced through the inclusion of a behaviour component and delivering some of the parent training in an individual setting.

Conferences

2006 ACWA Conference: Positive Futures

14-16 August 2006

The 2006 ACWA Conference will bring together Australian and international practitioners, managers, carers, young people, researchers and policy makers committed to strengthening families and improving outcomes for children and young people at risk or in care.

The Conference program will present and debate the most up to date research, practice and policy in child, youth and family services.

The conference program and registration form can be found online at: <http://www.acwa06.com/>

Understanding Maternal Intentions to Engage in Home Visiting Programs

McCurdy K., Daro D., et al Children and Youth Services Review, Article in press

This article reports on a study of the factors that influence maternal intentions to engage in home visitation services and the link between these intentions and the receipt of a home visit. The sample consisted of a culturally diverse group of mothers identified as at-risk for parenting difficulties. The findings suggest lower infant birth weight and greater comfort with a provider in one's home are significant predictors of maternal intentions to utilize home visiting services.

The Nurse-Family Partnership: An Evidence-based Preventive Intervention

Olds D.L., Infant Mental Health Journal, Vol. 27(1), (2006) 5-25

This article summarizes a 27-year program of research to improve early maternal and child health and future life options with prenatal and infancy home visiting by nurses. The program is designed for low-income, first-time mothers. The program has been tested in three separate large-scale, randomized controlled trials. The results indicate that the program has been successful in improving parental care of the child, reflected in a reduction of child abuse and neglect indicators and enhanced infant emotional and language development. Improved maternal life course outcomes, such as fewer subsequent pregnancies and greater work-force participation, were also found.

Building successful home visitor-mother relationships and reaching program goals in two Early Head Start programs: A qualitative look at contributing factors

Brookes S. J., Summers J.A., Thornburg K. R., Ispa J.M., Lane V. J., Early Childhood Research Quarterly, 21, (2006), 25-45

This paper presents the results of two qualitative studies exploring the reasons given by mothers and home visitors for family success or lack of success in achieving program goals and for engagement in the mother-home visitor relationship. The studies indicate the importance of family factors such as the presence of mild to serious stressors, social support networks, and individual parent characteristics. Program characteristics such as home visitor conscientiousness and home visitor/mother match also appear influential.

Factors influencing the acceptance of volunteer home-visiting support offered to families with new babies

Barnes J., MacPherson K., and Senior R., Child and Family Social Work (2006), 11, 107-117

This article reports on an investigation of the characteristics of high risk families with a new baby, who did not take up the offer of home-visiting support from a community volunteer. Using logistic regression, background factors were compared with those families receiving support. Those not receiving support were found to be more socially, educationally and economically disadvantaged, living in more disadvantaged neighbourhoods. Practice, policy and research implications are explored.

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National – other agencies

Horizons

This research newsletter is produced by the Queensland Department of Child Safety. Published quarterly, Horizons offers practitioners and policy makers a snapshot of recent and relevant research into child protection.

The publication is available online at: www.childsafety.qld.gov.au/publications/horizons/index.html

Parenting partnerships in culturally diverse child care settings: A care provider perspective

This research paper uses information provided by 242 carers participating in the Australian Institute of Family Studies' Child Care in Cultural Context study. It focuses on the extent to which carers working in centre care and family day care, work with parents to understand their perspectives on childrearing, their reports of parental childrearing practices that differ from their own, and the issues that they confront in managing these differences.

This paper can be viewed online at: <http://www.aifs.gov.au/institute/pubs/rp36/rp36.html>

National Clinical Guidelines for the Management of Drug Use During Pregnancy, Birth and the Early Development Years of the Newborn

These nationally agreed clinical guidelines are intended to support a range of health care workers who care for women with drug and alcohol use issues, and their infants and families. They have been developed through a process based on evidence reviews and expert consensus. The drugs covered include: opioids, alcohol, tobacco, cannabis, amphetamines, cocaine, benzodiazepines, inhalants.

Other topics covered are:

breastfeeding, vertical transmission of blood-borne viruses, psychosocial aspects, obstetric implications, pain management in labour and early childhood development. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander issues are also addressed.

These guidelines can be viewed online at: www.health.nsw.gov.au/pubs/2006/ncg_druguse.html

Residential placement of intra-familial adolescent sex offenders

The Australian Institute of Criminology has recently released this publication focusing on the issue of removing the intra-familial adolescent sex offender from the family home. It describes an alternative model to relocation being used in Western Australia. As the paper reports, there has been little rigorous evaluation of all types of interventions to determine what works best and under what circumstances. The paper concludes that urgent evaluation of the efficacy and effectiveness of both community-based and residential treatment programs for young offenders should be a priority.

This publication is available online at: <http://www.aic.gov.au/publications/tandi2/tandi315.html>

Suicide Prevention

The latest issue of Auseinetter focuses on suicide prevention strategies and initiatives in Australia and internationally. The feature article, *Suicide Prevention Strategies, 2006*, outlines a range of areas in which suicide prevention efforts can be targeted and the evidence for their effectiveness.

Auseinetter Issue 26: Suicide Prevention is now available online at: <http://www.auseinet.com/resources/auseinet/netter26/>

National – other agencies cont.

Snapshots of Australian families with adolescents

The Australian Institute of Family Studies (AIFS) has prepared a Factsheet about families with adolescent children aged 12 to 18 years.

This resource provides a snapshot of statistics about these families such as: parents' employment circumstances, residential location and country of birth, and family type. Statistics about the adolescents include, education and work data and issues seen as important - now and in the future.

Parents' and adolescents' satisfaction with family relationships is also explored.

The factsheet can be located online at: <http://www.aifs.gov.au/institute/pubs/snapshots/adolescents.html>

International

A study of Placement Stability in Illinois

This report details the findings from the first stage of a study of placement instability in substitute care in Illinois.

The study found an increase in placement instability in the last 15 years. The causes for placement changes were found to include: moves to be placed with a sibling or other relative; foster parent's inability or unwillingness to continue fostering and children's mental health and behaviour problems.

Findings suggest stability could be enhanced by foster-family-centred intervention and placing children with relatives *at entry* to care.

This report can be viewed online at: http://www.chapinhall.org/article_abstract.aspx?ar=1423&L2=61&L3=130

Health and Well-being: Physical Health: Research and Practice Briefing

This publication, developed by Research in Practice UK, focuses on the physical health needs of children and young people in out-of-home care and what helps in addressing these needs. The perspectives of children and young people, practitioners and policy makers are outlined.

This briefing is available online at: <http://www.rip.org.uk/publications/researchbriefings.asp>

Improving services to meet the needs of minority ethnic children and families: Research and Practice Briefing

In the same series (as above) is this briefing which reviews efforts to take into account cultural diversity and incorporate an understanding of race and racism in service planning and delivery.

Drawing on practice-based literature and research studies this publication outlines what helps in the development of culturally competent practice. Issues for children and young people in out-of-home care and young people leaving care are explored.

This briefing is available online at: <http://www.rip.org.uk/publications/researchbriefings.asp>

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.

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