

DoCS Research to Practice **Update**

A regular update 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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Prevention & Early Intervention

High thresholds and prevention in children's services: The impact of mothers coping strategies on outcome of child and parenting problems--six month follow-up

Sheppard, M. (2009). *The British Journal of Social Work*, 39 (1), 46-46.

Over recent years high thresholds for the provision of Children's Services in the U.K have meant that high need families do not receive a service. This is despite a commitment, in policy and practice, to prevention as an underlying theme for services. When referral is followed by a failure to access services, the coping strategies of the parents, in particular the mother, who is generally the primary caregiver, become of particular practical importance. This article focuses on the coping strategies of families who were unsuccessful applicants for Children's Services, and asks: Which coping strategies were most effective in securing positive outcomes? It found that the direct actions of the mother, and avoidance strategies such as denial or acceptance had little effect. However, seeking social support was associated with more positive outcomes in child development and parenting, and denial and disengagement with an increase in depression symptoms. The findings discuss implications for policy and practice.

<http://ejsccontent.ebsco.com>

Patterns of Conflict Interaction in Mother-Toddler Dyads: Differences Between Depressed and Non-depressed Mothers

O'Brien Caughy, M., Huang, K. Y., & Lima, J. (2009). *Journal of Child and Family Studies*, 18 (1), 10-20.

This study examines the differences in conflict interaction between depressed and non-depressed mothers and their toddlers and whether maternal depression compromises child socio-emotional development.

The study analysed specific maternal responses to specific child behaviours and used bivariate comparisons and multivariate linear regression to report on the results. Depressed mothers showed higher rates of conflict, were more likely to respond destructively to child oppositional behaviour and had lower quality mother-child attachment. The findings have implications for the development of interventions to support mothers in dealing with the conflict common in the second year of a child's life.

<http://springerlink.com>



Out-of-Home Care

The social and family backgrounds of infants in South Australian out-of-home care 2000-2005: Predictors of subsequent abuse notifications

Delfabbro, P., Borgas, M., Rogers, N., Jeffreys, H. & Wilson, R. (2009). *Children and Youth Services Review*, 31 (2), 219-226.

The study examined the social and familial characteristics of 498 infants entering South Australian out-of-home care between 2000 and 2004 for respite and other formal placements. The analysis focused on the extent to which background characteristics, most notably a history of prior abuse, was able to predict subsequent child abuse notifications once children exited care. The results showed that most children entered care due to a clustering of significant background problems, including poverty, domestic violence, physical abuse, substance misuse, and neglect. Approximately half of the infants returned to homes where there were subsequent notifications of abuse. Prior abuse was a reliable predictor of ongoing abuse in both respite care and those formally entering care. In some models, prior abuse yielded a very high probability of some ongoing notifications suggesting that these statistical models could be used to enhance risk assessments conducted prior to reunification decision-making in South Australia.

[doi:10.1016/j.childyouth.2008.07.023](https://doi.org/10.1016/j.childyouth.2008.07.023)

Youth departing from residential care: A gender comparison

Griffith, K.A., Trout, A.L., Chmelka, M.B., Farmer, E.M.Z., Epstein, M.H., Reid, R., Huefner, J.C., & Orduna, D. (2009). *Journal of Family Studies*, 18(1), 31-38.

Although females represent almost half of all youth in residential care in the U.S., very little is known about this population. This study examined differences in characteristics of male (n= 308) and female (n= 180) youth departing from residential care. Data was collected on 488 youth from a large residential treatment facility in the Midwest aged from 8 to 19 years. This article challenges preconceived ideas that females would present with a greater level of need at the time of departure from residential care.

<http://springerlink.com>

The importance of friends among foster youth aging out of care: Cluster profiles of deviant peer affiliations

Shook, J., Vaughn, M., Litschge, C., Kolivoski, K., & Schelbe, L. (2009). *Children and Youth Services Review* 31, (2), 284-291.

The importance of friends during the developmental periods of childhood and adolescence is widely accepted and there is reason to believe that deviant peers play an important role in influencing the experiences and outcomes of young people aging out of foster care. This article explores the role that deviant peers play in the lives of a sample of young people aging out of care by examining the heterogeneity of deviant peer affiliations. The classes consisted of youth with low, medium, and high levels of deviant peer affiliations. The findings indicated that youth exhibiting high levels of deviant peer affiliations were more likely to be fired from a job, to possess a diagnosis of

antisocial personality disorder, to report higher levels of substance use, and to report being arrested than youth in the other two classes. Youth in the low deviant peer affiliation class exhibited higher levels of family support and lower levels of neighbourhood disorder than youth in the other two classes. The study discusses research, policy, and practice implications of the findings.

[doi:10.1016/j.childyouth.2008.07.024](https://doi.org/10.1016/j.childyouth.2008.07.024)

The impact of parental substance abuse on the stability of family reunifications from foster care

Brook, J., McDonald, T., (2009). *Children and Youth Services Review* 31 (2), 193-198.

This study examined the likelihood of re-entry into foster care following reunification for children whose primary reason at initial removal was based on the type of substance abuse of their primary caretakers. These were stratified into groups of those with alcohol only involvement, those with drug only involvement, those with both alcohol and other drug involvement, and those with no alcohol or drug involvement. Children whose reasons for initial placement in foster care included caretakers with both alcohol and drug involvement were much more likely to re-enter care following reunification than any of the other three groups. However, drug or alcohol involvement as the initial reason for removal was also associated with higher risk of re-entry.

[doi:10.1016/j.childyouth.2008.07.010](https://doi.org/10.1016/j.childyouth.2008.07.010)

Child Protection

Maternal depression, paternal psychopathology, and toddlers' behaviour problems

Dietz, L., Jennings, K., Kelley, S., & Marshal, M. (2009). *Journal of Clinical Child and Adolescent Psychology*, 38(1), 48-61.

Despite a large body of evidence illustrating maternal depression as a risk factor for negative developmental outcomes in older children and adolescents, less consistent findings have been demonstrated in studies of the effects of maternal depression on infant toddler outcomes. This article examined 101 mothers with their toddlers. It shows that maternal depression was significantly associated with toddlers' externalising and internalising behaviour problems only when paternal psychopathology was present.

<http://ejsccontent.ebsco.com>

A guide to effective child protection mediation: Lessons from 25 years of practice

Giovannucci, M., & Largent, K. (2009). *Family Court Review*, 47 (1), 38-52.

About 25 years ago three jurisdictions in the U.S started programs that brought together parents, child welfare agency staff, attorneys and others with a trained mediator to encourage family participation in the decision making about child protection cases, to resolve or narrow issues brought before the court, and to achieve timely and appropriate permanency planning for children. This article provides a 25-year perspective on key elements that have contributed to the success of child protection mediation programs.

<http://www3.interscience.wiley.com>

Chronic Child Abuse: The Characteristics and Careers of Children Caught in the Child Protection System

Devaney, J. (2009). *The British Journal of Social Work*, 39 (1), 24-45.

The introduction of the Quality Protects initiative in England and the focus on performance management has challenged social services departments to examine the systems, processes and outcomes for children who have their name on a child protection register. Research indicates that approximately one-quarter of the situations in which children are registered could be described as chronic—that is, they remain on the child protection register for significant periods of time, experience more than one period of registration or suffer a further incident of significant harm whilst subject to a child protection plan. In this article, the findings from a research study conducted into this group of vulnerable children are reported, focusing on the characteristics of the children and their families, and their careers in the child protection system. The paper concludes with observations about the weak conceptualisation of performance management and the need to recognise the complexity of the factors that influence children's careers in the child protection system.

<http://ejsccontent.ebsco.com>

Leading Practice Improvement in Front Line Child Protection

Wilson, S. (2009). *The British Journal of Social Work*, 39 (1), 64-64.

Front line child protection managers are a vital conduit for effective outcomes for children, young people and their families. However, little is

known about the change processes that they need to implement to effectively intervene in such a complex context to support improved practice. This article describes how organisational action research and Organisational Linkage Theory were used to establish an in-depth understanding of the inhibitors and facilitators of the implementation of an outcome-focused management model in three child protection offices in Queensland, Australia. The analysis identified five interrelated compensatory processes and their impact of offsetting implementation inhibitors which increased service staff capacity to undertake effective service activities. This article explores each of these compensatory processes and makes a number of suggestions for how child protection managers and their organisations might seek to embed them.

<http://ejsccontent.ebsco.com>

Other

Parenting moderates a genetic vulnerability factor in longitudinal increases in youths' substance use.

Brody, G.H., Beach, R.H., (2009). *Journal of Consulting and Clinical Psychology*, 77(1), 1-11.

The increase in substance use that some young people experience across late childhood and early adolescence contributes to developmental projectiles including affiliation with unconventional peers, lack of motivation, poor academic performance and school dropout. Most research has focussed on situational and intra-individual factors. This study focuses on the genetic factors which has been absent from much research and demonstrates that parenting processes have the potential to ameliorate genetic risk.

Reports

NSCAW Research on Child Welfare Populations

The National Survey of Child and Adolescent Well-Being (NSCAW) released four new research briefs analysing outcomes for different populations involved with child welfare including infants, adolescents and caregivers of young children. Each brief draws from the longitudinal data collected by NSCAW to study the safety, permanency, well-being, and receipt of services by children, youth, and families who have been investigated for maltreatment by child protective services.

From Early Involvement With Child Welfare Services to School Entry: Wave 5 Follow-Up of Infants in the National Survey of Child and Adolescent Well-Being examines outcomes for 962 children ages 5 to 6 who were younger than 1 year when they first came into contact with the child welfare system.

http://www.acf.hhs.gov/wave_five_followup

Adolescents Involved With Child Welfare: A Transition to Adulthood focuses on the needs of 620 young adults ages 18 to 21 who were involved in investigations of maltreatment when they were 12 to 15 years old.

<http://www.acf.hhs.gov/adolescents>

Depression Among Caregivers of Young Children Reported for Child Maltreatment explores the rates of depression among 1,244 mothers of children younger than 5 years old who were reported to the child welfare system.

http://www.acf.hhs.gov/depression_caregivers

Need for Adoption Among Infants Investigated for Child Maltreatment and Adoption Status 5 to 6 Years Later examines the characteristics of and length of time to adoption for 962 children ages 5 to 6 who were younger than 1 year when they first came into contact with the child welfare system.

http://www.acf.hhs.gov/infants_adoption

Measuring the social and emotional wellbeing of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples

Australian Institute of Health and Welfare: Jan 2009, Cat. no. IHW 24, Canberra.

Measuring the social and emotional wellbeing of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples provides a picture of the social and emotional wellbeing of Indigenous Australians using data from the 2004-05 National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Survey (NATSIHS) and a range of administrative datasets. The report also assesses the interim module that was developed to measure social and emotional wellbeing used in the 2004-05 NATSIHS, and makes a number of recommendations to improve measures of social and emotional well-being.

This report is a useful resource for policy makers, administrators of programs and researchers with an interest in issues affecting Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

<http://www.aihw.gov.au/publications/ihw/msewatsip/msewatsip.pdf>

On the move? Indigenous temporary mobility practices in Australia

Prout, S. (2008). *Centre for Aboriginal Economic Policy Research*.

Indigenous temporary mobility practices in Australia are largely 'uncaptured' by conventional statistical measures and regularly constructed as problematic for mainstream health, education and housing providers. This paper draws together the disparate body of existing research regarding Indigenous temporary mobilities to build a more comprehensive picture of these population dynamics and their policy implications.

<http://www.anu.edu.au>

Resources

Book Review - Barkley, R.A., Robin, A.L., & Benton, C.M. (2008). *Your defiant teen: 10 steps to resolve conflict and rebuild your relationship*, Guildford Press, N.Y.

Jackman, M.M. (2009). *Journal of Family Studies*, 18(1), 123-124.

The following book review provides coverage of a resource that provides worksheets, examples and activities in the form of a 10 step program for parents who are struggling with defiant adolescents. The book review can be seen via the link below.

<http://ejsccontent.ebsco.com>

Strategic Sharing: Telling your story in a way that is meaningful, effective, and safe

Casey Family Program & Foster Care Alumni of America (2009).

A resource booklet available for people involved in foster care who want to share their personal experiences or for those inviting others to share. The booklet is a valuable study guide for educators, trainers and facilitators to use with groups of people to educate and influence through the sharing of personal experiences.

<http://www.casey.org>

Returning children home safely and permanently

Child and Family Services Division, Iowa Department of Human Services, (2008).

This practice bulletin focuses on returning children home safely and permanently once they have been placed out of the home as a response to safety issues.

<http://www.dhs.state.ia.us>

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