

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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Early Intervention & Prevention Research

Pathways to Prevention: A Training and Technical Assistance Initiative to Increase Program Capacity to Address Infant Mental Health Issues in Early Head Start

Mann, T., Boss, J. & Randolph, S. (2007). *Infant Mental Health Journal* 28 (2), pages 106-129

This article provides an overview of a training and consultation program aimed at enhancing the capacity of Early Head Start and Migrant and Seasonal Head Start programs to address infant mental health issues from a promotion, prevention and treatment perspective. The article gives a description of the consultation program, evaluation activities, and key lessons learned.

This article is available at:

<http://www3.interscience.wiley.com/cgi-bin/jissue/114131643>

The Early Promotion and Intervention Research Consortium (E-PIRC): Five Approaches to Improving Infant/Toddler Mental Health in Early Head Start

Beeber, L., Chazen-Cohen, R., Squires, J., Harden, B., Boris, N., Heller, S. & Malik, N. (2007) *Infant Mental Health Journal* 28 (2), pages 130-150

This article describes five projects designed to strengthen existing Early Head Start (EHS) programs for infant/toddler mental health, development, behaviour and parent-child interactions. Two of the projects tested the effects of offering enrichment for EHS staff, and the other three tested the effect of services offered directly to parents

and children. A common set of measures was used in order to understand more fully the elevated risk factors in these families and the consequences for mental health in their infants and toddlers. Data was used to explore the common threats to mental health and factors that moderate the impact on infants and toddlers.

This article is available at:

<http://www3.interscience.wiley.com/cgi-bin/jissue/114131643>

Infant Mental Health and Family Support: Contributions of Early Head Start to an Integrated Model for Community-Based Early Childhood Programs

McAllister, C. & Thomas, T. (2007) *Infant Mental Health Journal* 28 (2), pages 192-215

This paper analyses the experience of an Early Head start program in adopting and implementing an infant mental health approach in its work with community families. An examination was undertaken on the strategies used and challenges faced by program staff when applying infant mental health principles in their home visiting interventions with families whose lives involve significant economic, social and psychological stressors. The study identifies four elements crucial to an infant mental health initiative.

This article is available at:

<http://www3.interscience.wiley.com/cgi-bin/jissue/114131643>

Accessing journal articles

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- DOCS.Library@community.nsw.gov.au or,
- Fax (02) 9716 2085.

Prevention and Social Exclusion: New Understandings for Policy and Practice

Morris, K., & Barnes, M. (2007), *British Journal of Social Work*, published 18 April 2007

This article considers the changing landscape for child welfare provision in a practice and policy context. It builds on the analysis of data gathered during the National Evaluation of the Children's Fund (NECF) and suggests that new and different understandings of prevention can be explored when located within a contemporary context of social exclusion. The article suggests a framework based on the work of NECF. It provides a useful way forward for the development of preventative policy and enables practitioners to reflect on their activities and roles.

This article is available at: <http://bjsw.oxfordjournals.org/cgi/reprint/bcm029v1>

Journal Articles

Attributing responsibility for child maltreatment when domestic violence is present

Landsman M, J. & Hartley, C. C., *Child Abuse and Neglect*, (2007), 31 (4), pages 445-461

This study examined factors that influenced how child welfare workers attribute responsibility for child maltreatment and child safety in cases involving domestic violence. The findings suggest that the presence of co-occurring domestic violence significantly affects workers' assessments of the degree of responsibility for caregivers for child maltreatment and safety concerns, more so than for variables related to child maltreatment. The study reported on workers differential expectations for females and males in cases involving domestic violence. It recommends greater attention be paid to the dynamics of domestic violence during child protective investigations, ongoing case

management and permanency planning. Implications for practice are discussed.

This article is available at: <http://www.sciencedirect.com/science>

Predictors of resilience in abused and neglected children grown-up: The role of individual and neighbourhood characteristics

DuMont, K. A., Widom, C. S. & Czaja, S. J. (2007), *Child Abuse & Neglect*, 31 (3), pages 255-274

The article discusses the prevalence of resilience amongst maltreated children. In a study individual, family, and neighbourhood level predictors of resilience in adolescence and young adulthood are examined. It describes changes in resilience over time from adolescence to young adulthood, in grown up abused and neglected children. The findings suggest that individual characteristics as well as the fit between an individual and his or her environment are important in understanding resilience.

This article is available at: <http://www.sciencedirect.com/science?>

How important is Prevention? High Thresholds and Outcomes for Applicants Refused by Children's Services: A Six-Month Follow-Up

Sheppard, M. *British Journal of Social Work*, published 18 April 2007

This article examines the high thresholds for families refused children services. It explores the lack of access for families who have a considerable need for services and reports on the outcome of a six month follow-up of service applicants who only receive an initial assessment with no further assessment. It suggests the absence of social support may be a key indicator in targeting vulnerable families. The report highlights the significance of the findings and implications for policy.

This article is available at:
<http://bjsw.oxfordjournals.org/cgi/reprint/bcm019v1>

Caregiver commitment to foster children: The role of child behaviour

Lindhiem, O. & Dozier M., (2007) *Child Abuse and Neglect* 31 (4), pages 361-374

The Child Behaviour Checklist (CBCL) was used in this study to assess child behaviour problems over time. The results showed that caregiver reported child behaviour was significantly associated with caregiver commitment after controlling for factors including age of entry into foster care and time in placement. The study discusses future directions in promoting stability in placements.

This article is available at
<http://www.sciencedirect.com/science>

Length of service for foster parents: Using administrative data to understand retention

Gibbs, D. & Wildfire, J., (2007), *Children and Youth Services Review*, 29 (5), pages 588-599

This study used longitudinal analyses methods to produce unbiased estimates of foster parents' careers in three American states. It examines the extent to which foster parents' characteristics and the amount and type of care provided are associated with varying length of service. The findings may help inform our understanding of the factors that influence foster parent retention rates and make better use of foster parent resources.

This article is available at
<http://www.sciencedirect.com/science?>

The Assessment Checklist for Children – ACC: A behavioral rating scale for children in foster, kinship and residential care

Tarren-Sweeney, M. (2007), *Children and Youth Services Review*, 29 (5), pages 672-691

The Assessment Checklist for Children (ACC) was used in the Children in Care Study (CICS), a prospective epidemiological study of children in long-term foster and kinships care in NSW. It contains a 120-item carer-report psychiatric rating instrument that measures behaviours, emotional states, traits, and manners of relating to others. The ACC was designed to measure problems manifested by children in care which are not adequately measured by standard parent-report checklists. It also can be used in clinical assessments of children in care. The article describes the ACC's development and initial validation.

This article is available at
<http://www.sciencedirect.com/science?>

Dating violence among emancipating foster youth

Jonson-Reid, M., Scott (Jr), L.D., McMillen, J.C., Edmond, T. (2007) *Children and Youth Services Review*, 29, pages 557-571

This study reports on the dating violence experiences of foster care youth. It explores the associations between foster care placement history, maltreatment history, mental health substance abuse and self-reported dating violence. The study found that foster care youth had a higher prevalence of dating violence than those of the general population. Self reported post traumatic stress disorder symptoms and drug use were associated with higher likelihood of dating violence victimisation. The report discusses the implications for policy and practice and emphasises the need for prevention strategies and targeting programs.

This article is available at:
<http://www.sciencedirect.com/science?>

Unravelling Emotional, Behavioural and Educational Outcomes in a Longitudinal Study of Children in Foster Care

Fernandez, E., (University of NSW), (2007), *British Journal of Social Work*, published 18 April 2007

This article highlights the interactive contribution of carers, teachers and children to the fostering experience. It reports on a strand of a longitudinal study of children in long-term foster care and focuses on emotional, behavioural and educational outcomes. The findings draw attention to the adversities reflected in children's experience and highlight positive outcomes of care. The paper recommends resilience oriented interventions and target interrelated systems of service delivery. The findings have broad implications for practitioners concerned with psycho-social outcomes for children in care and for researchers interested in integrating multiple perspectives in longitudinal research.

This article is available at:
<http://bjsw.oxfordjournals.org/cgi/reprint/bcm028v1>

Study Groups as Professional Development for Advanced Caseworkers

Costello, S. & Tehan, C. (2007) *Children Australia* 32 (1), pages 16-23

This paper offers an overview of study groups used by Anglicare in Victoria for their advanced caseworkers. The study groups aimed to provide senior practitioners with peer support, education and discussion. Evaluation indicated that a study group reduced participants' isolation, increased their confidence in engaging family members, including fathers, and broadened their conceptualisation of family problems. Things learnt and proposed changes to future study groups are identified.

This article can be requested from the DoCS library

Research Reports

Social exclusion in Boroondara: Stage Two: identifying the issues for children who experience social exclusion in Boroondara

Stanley, J., Ng, C., W. & Mestan, K, published by the Brotherhood of St Laurence, March 2007

This report builds on stage one of the study and aims to gain a greater understanding of the issues surrounding the social exclusion of children living in the city of Boroondara, a region encompassing a number of Melbourne's inner and middle-eastern suburbs. The study draws on the knowledge of local welfare agencies and a group of parents. It identifies the various causes of social exclusion that extend beyond income poverty and discusses why people may find it difficult to fully participate in society. The study found that more resources are needed to address shortfalls for the individual, agency and community. The report provides recommendations on how to address social exclusion in Boroondara and promotes a combined Government (federal, state and local levels) and community effort approach.

This report is available at: <http://www.apo.org.au/>

Wards Leaving Care: four to five years on - A Longitudinal Study

Cashmore, J., & Paxman, M. (2007), Social Policy and Research Centre, University of NSW

This report commissioned by DoCS presents the findings of the fourth interviews with young people involved in the longitudinal study of "Wards Leaving Care"

The focus is on the circumstances and outcomes of the young people 4 to 5 years after leaving care. A comparison of their circumstances and experiences to the general population is made. The report discusses the implications for policy and practice to assist improve young peoples in-care and after-care experience.

This report is available at: <http://docsonline.dcs.gov.au/>

What is working in good schools in remote indigenous communities?

Storry, K., The Centre for Independent Studies, April 2007

This analysis reports on school-side and community-side interventions implemented in remote indigenous communities to help break the cycle of low attendance, achievement and retention. It compares how different jurisdictions in Australia fare and provides information on effective evidence-based remedial skills programmes in good schools. It also discusses what initiatives are working with parents and communities to support children's school education. A combined school-community effort approach is promoted and an encouragement to learn from what is working. Although educational focused the paper provides techniques that can be utilised in case management to support the educational needs of children in care.

This report is available at: <http://www.cis.org.au/IssueAnalysis/IA86/ia86.pdf>

Drug use in the family: impacts and implications for children.

Dawe, S., (2007) published by the Australian National Council on Drugs

A report commissioned by the Australian National Council on Drugs (ANCD) estimates that as many as 13% of Australian children live in households where there is alcohol or substance misuse. This is three percentage points higher than estimates based on international surveys. The ANCD says one of the report's most important findings is that families with parental substance abuse are also families that have many other complex life problems including mental illness, a history of abuse, neglect and poverty and child behaviour problems. The report makes a comprehensive range of recommendations addressing the need for more systematic collection of data, the content of treatment programs and policy and practice.

This report is available at: www.ncnd.org.au/publications/research_papers.htm

Resources

Two Topical Papers commissioned by ARACY in 2006 deal with the Impact of Drug and Alcohol Misuse on Children and Families.

The papers are available at: www.aracy.org.au/AM/Template.cfm?

[Section=Evidence into Action Topical Papers](#)

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New Books

Working with Denied Child Abuse: The Resolutions Approach

Turnell, A. & Essex, S. (2006), Open University Press, England

This book provides an alternative practical approach for responding to parents who dispute professional allegations of serious child abuse. The model named Resolutions uses a safety-focused partnership-based approach and aims to assist professionals build constructive relationships with families. The book describes each stage of the model and demonstrates the approach through many case examples of therapists, statutory social workers and other professionals working in Europe, North America and Australasia. The book is key reading for legal, health and social care professionals working in the area of child protection.

Child Abuse and Culture: Working with Diverse Families

Fontes, A., L. (2005), The Guildford Press, New York, London

This book provides a framework for culturally competent practice in child maltreatment cases. It offers vital knowledge and tools to help child welfare professionals play a more positive and effective role in the lives of children and families from diverse cultures. It can also be of assistance to students and trainees in child protection and welfare fields.

These books are available from the DoCS Library

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