

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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DoCS

Parental alcohol misuse and the impact on children

This paper reviews the evidence on the impact of parental alcohol misuse on younger children and identifies interventions that can be used with families where alcohol misuse is a concern. Challenges for practitioners working with alcohol and substance abuse users and appropriate strategies to use with families are discussed.

Family group conferencing in a child welfare context

This paper reviews the evidence on family group conferencing (FCG), a method of resolving or attempting to resolve family issues concerning child protection matters. Four major areas looked at are the types of cases suitable for FCG; the roles and attitudes of participants; outcomes and long-term effects; and the overall effectiveness of FCG.

Parental empathy and child maltreatment

This Research to Practice Note highlights the important role empathy plays in the context of the parent-child relationship and the link between a lack of parental empathy and child maltreatment.

These research publications can be viewed online at:
http://www.community.nsw.gov.au/html/news_publications/research_practice.htm

Spotlight on Safety - community attitudes to child protection, foster care and parenting

This report was commissioned by DoCS to help gain an understanding of

community knowledge, attitudes, values, skills and behaviour in relation to child protection and well being. The findings highlight a range of community issues including what constitutes abuse and neglect, the reasons why people do and do not report suspected cases of abuse and neglect and their motivations for fostering.

The report can be viewed online at:
http://www.community.nsw.gov.au/html/news_publications/social_research.htm

Early Intervention & Prevention Research

Journal Articles

Is Sure Start an Effective Preventive Intervention?

Rutter M., (2006), *Child and Adolescent Mental Health*, 11 (3), 135-141.

This journal article seeks to summarise the preliminary results of the National Evaluation of the Sure Start Local Programmes (SSLP's) in the context of other similar research in the U.K.

Sure Start was established with the aim of eliminating child poverty and social exclusion. The level of child poverty and the rates of psychological problems amongst young people are high in the U.K. There is modest evidence that well planned interventions for young children in disadvantaged families can make a meaningful difference.

The findings are discussed in relation to their service, research and policy implications. The evaluation of Sure

Start is examined in the context of political constraints.

This article can be viewed online at: <http://www.blackwell-synergy.com/doi/full/10.1111/j.1475-3588.2006.00402.x>

Facilitating Access to services for children and families: Lessons from Sure Start Local Programmes

Garbers G., Tunstill J., Allnock D., Akhurst S., (2006), *Child and Family Social Work*, 11(4), 287-296

This journal article examines the way in which Sure Start Local Programmes (SSLP) in the UK have sought to facilitate access to services for their local communities and encourage community members to take up and continue using those services.

An overview of program activity in respect to access and a model of parental service use are discussed. The paper highlights implications of the SSLP implementation process and initiatives to expand the program to children's centres and extended schools.

This article can be viewed online at: <http://www.blackwell-synergy.com/toc/cfs/11/4>

Predictors of Early Engagement in Home Visitation

Ammerman R. T., Stevens, J., Putnam, F. W., Mekibib A., Hulsmann, J. E., Lehmkuhl H. D., Monroe, J. C., Gannon T. A., Van Ginkel J. B., (2006), *Journal of Family Violence*, 21 (2) 105-115

This journal article examines the engagement of mothers receiving home visitation in the first year of service. Home visitation was primarily developed as a strategy to prevent child abuse and neglect. Three areas of early engagement of prevention programs studied were 1) the length of time active in the program, 2) the number of visits received, and 3) the gaps in service between visits. The findings suggest

that increased adversity, such as increased psychosocial needs, promotes engagement in home visitation. The strengths, limitations, implications and future directions of home visitations are discussed.

Refocussing Children's Services Towards Prevention: Lessons from the Literature

Axford, N., Little, M., (2006), *Children and Society*, 20, 299-312

This journal article describes how children's prevention and early intervention services can be refocussed to give them a greater preventive thrust and why doing this is beneficial. Five sets of strategies for refocussing are described and five benefits of reforms are outlined. The article reports on guarding against risks and the need for practical methods that connect strategies and overcome obstacles in order to achieve the identified benefits.

Parental substance misuse and child care social work: findings from the first stage of a study of 100 families

Forrester, D., Harwin, J., (2006), *Child and Family Social Work*, (2006), 11, 325-235

The journal article is a study that examines parent's substance misuse (PSM) in long-term child welfare cases in four London Burroughs. The findings address issues of parent's substance abuse in social work case loads including the extent of PSM; the proportion of cases that involve drugs and or alcohol and issues social workers identify working with PSM. The paper suggests ways in which policy and practice with parental substance misuse might be improved.

This paper can be viewed online at: <http://www.blackwell-synergy.com/doi/full/10.1111/j.1365-2206.2006.00415.x>

Research Reports

Implementation of Home Visitation Programs: Stories from the States

This issue brief, produced by the Chapin Hall Centre for Children, looks at the experience of developing state U.S based home visiting systems. It is based on interviews with state and national representatives from four large national home visitation models: Healthy Families America, the Nurse-Family Partnership, Parents as Teachers, and the Home Instruction Program for Preschool Youngsters. Depending on various factors the characteristics of state-based home visiting systems vary from one state to another and one home-visiting program to another.

This brief can be viewed online at:
http://www.chapinhall.org/article_abstract.aspx?ar=1433&L2=61&L3=129

The Pathways to Prevention project: doing developmental prevention in a disadvantaged community

This paper by the Pathways to Prevention project team outlines the origins, objectives, design, program content and initial findings of the project. The project involves family, school and community in a set of planned interventions with four to six-year-old children aimed at preventing anti-social behaviour in their adolescence and early adulthood. The early results showed that boys, in particular, improved significantly in terms of being ready for school and showed a reduction in difficult behaviour.

This report is available online at:
<http://www.aic.gov.au/publications/tandi2/tandi323.html>

Practical child abuse and neglect prevention: a community responsibility and professional partnership.

This paper published by Australian Institute of Family Studies explores the factors that have led to success in a number of promising Australian community initiatives where responsibility is being taken for the well being of children and young people to prevent child abuse and neglect. It presents the case for child abuse and neglect prevention and discusses the features of effective prevention strategies and the benefits of improving the well being of children. The paper includes five case studies that demonstrate how effective strategies can operate.

This paper is available online at:
<http://www.aifs.gov.au/nch/pubs/nl2006/winter.html#practical>

Other Research

A family affair? Kinship care and parental substance misuse: some dilemmas explored

Brynna Kroll, *Child & Family Social Work Online Early*, September (2006)

This British paper examines some of the issues that can arise with kinship placements in parental substance misuse cases; the part that substance misuse may play within the wider family system; the impact of parental drug and alcohol use on attachment and child development, and the complex dynamics that can ensue.

Practice dilemmas are explored, drawn on themes emerging from parental substance misuse literature and kinship care research.

This article can be viewed at:
<http://www.blackwell-synergy.com/doi/full/10.1111/j.1365-2206.2006.00448.x>

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Practice Resources

Resources

Healthy Start is a website offering educational resources designed for parents with learning difficulties who have children under five years of age. It provides access to research about parenting and parents with learning difficulties. The Learning Hub network offers home-based training programs in these areas:

- Australian supported learning program (ASLP), focusing both on mothers' groups and individual learning goals.
- Child health & home safety kit.
- Parenting young children, a program in effective childcare skills and parent-child interaction.

The website address is www.healthystart.net.au

Strengthening Every Family

This DVD was produced by Victoria's Parenting Research Centre to promote a better understanding of parents with learning difficulties in the service system and hear of their experiences. The resource highlights factors considered important to parents with learning difficulties regarding the support they need and how they can best learn. The content is relevant to workers from a range of services.

This video can be ordered by emailing healthystart@parentingrc.org.au and costs \$9.95.

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.