

# 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

#### What determines quality in childcare?

This Research to Practice Note provides an overview of the key issues presented in the literature review *Determinants of quality in child care: A review of the research evidence*. It aims to outline what the research literature tells us about the factors that determine quality in child care for children of preschool age and the impact of quality of care on developmental outcomes.

<http://www.community.nsw.gov.au>

#### Prevention and Early Intervention update - trends in recent research

This Research to Practice Note provides an overview of the key findings of the 'Prevention and early intervention update - trends in recent research' report. This report builds on the 2005 'Prevention and Early Intervention Literature Review' and provides an overview of current research and early intervention research and implications for policy and practice.

<http://www.community.nsw.gov.au>

#### Early Intervention Strategies for Children and Young People aged 8-14 Years

This Research to Practice Note provides an overview of the key issues presented in the literature review *Early Intervention Strategies for Children and Young People 8 to 14 years*. The review examines the evidence supporting the effectiveness of parenting, child-focussed and multi-component programs as early intervention strategies for families and young people aged 8-14 years.

<http://www.community.nsw.gov.au>

#### Parental mental health and its impact on children

This Research to Practice Note presents the key findings of the literature review *Parental mental health and its impact on children*. It describes the potential impact of parental mental illness on children and young people and the effectiveness of early intervention programs.

<http://www.community.nsw.gov.au/>

### Early Intervention

#### Literacy in Early Childhood

Centre for Community Child Health Royal Children's Hospital, (2008). Policy Brief No. 13, Melbourne.

This policy brief focuses on the development of literacy skills related to reading and to a lesser extent writing in early childhood. It emphasises the need for children to develop literacy skills prior to school entry (birth to five). The brief also highlights the important role of early childhood professionals, services and communities in supporting families to provide the conditions and experiences necessary for all children to develop a sound literacy foundation prior to school entry.

<http://www.rch.org.au>

## **Parent-focused child maltreatment prevention: Improving assessment, intervention, and dissemination with technology**

Self-Brown, S., Whitaker, D. J. (2008). *Child Maltreatment*, (13) 4, 400-416.

This article examines how technology has been and can be utilised to enhance parent-focused child maltreatment (CM) prevention efforts. It begins with a brief discussion of the current state of the CM prevention field. It reviews studies that have examined the use of technology across three facets of prevention: identification of CM, administration/augmentation of CM prevention programs, and broad dissemination and implementation of evidenced-based CM prevention programs. It concludes with a discussion of limitations and problems related to the use of technology as a tool to enhance CM prevention and future directions.

<http://ejsccontent.ebsco.com>

## **The Safe Start Initiative: Building and Disseminating Knowledge to Support Children Exposed to Violence**

Kracke, K., & Cohen, E., P. (2008). *Journal of Emotional Abuse*, (8) 1/2, 155-174.

The Safe Start Initiative promotes community investment in evidence-based strategies for preventing and reducing children's exposure to violence in the home and the community. This article describes the implementation of practice innovation in 26 communities across the United States and provides information on the national research, evaluation, training, and technical assistance, resource development, and broad dissemination components of the

initiative. Evaluation of the initiative is expanding the knowledge of the elements needed to implement comprehensive service delivery systems and improve access to, delivery of, and quality of services both for children at high risk of being exposed to violence and for those who have already been exposed.

[Journal of Emotional Abuse](#)

## **Preparing Head Start personnel to use a curriculum-based assessment: An innovative practice in the "Age of Accountability"**

Grisham-Brown, J., Hallam, R. A., & Pretti-Frontczak, K. (2008). *Journal of Early Intervention*, 30 (4), 271-281.

The purpose of this investigation was to evaluate technical assistance and training of Head Start teachers and assistant teachers on the use of a contemporary curriculum based assessment. Many early childhood educators continue to rely on norm-referenced or general assessment practices that are difficult at best to translate into well-formulated progress-monitoring information and child outcomes. During the study, participating practitioners reliably scored assessment protocols and administered the curriculum-based assessment with fidelity within their classrooms.

<http://ejsccontent.ebsco.com>

## **Out-of Home Care**

### **"What doesn't kill you makes you stronger": Survivalist self-reliance as resilience and risk among young adults aging out of foster care**

Samuels G., & Pryce, J. (2008). *Children and Youth Services Review*, 30(10), 1198-1210.

This article reports on a study that applies a critical interpretive approach to explore the experiences

of 44 Midwestern young adults aging out of foster care. It highlights the degree to which they endorse self-reliance as they reflect on past experiences, offer advice to foster youth, and identify barriers to achieving their own life goals. Findings suggest that this identity must be understood in multiple contexts. It argues that vigilant self-reliance can be a source of resilience but also a potential risk in facilitating connections to supportive relationships that research suggests can produce positive outcomes in adulthood. The authors discuss current conceptualisations of independence and self-reliance in adulthood and recent ideals of interdependence promoted in child welfare policy and practice.

[doi:10.1016/j.childyouth.2008.03.005](https://doi.org/10.1016/j.childyouth.2008.03.005)

## **Outcomes in residential treatment for youth: The role of early engagement**

Smith, B., Duffee, D., Steinke, C., Huang, Y., & Larkin, H. (2008). *Children and Youth Services Review*, (30)12, 1425-1436.

The article reports on a U.S study that addresses youths engagement in court-mandated residential treatment for abuse, neglect, a variety of conduct disorders, and delinquency. Three waves of data from in-person interviews with adolescents in two Residential Treatment Centres were used to test hypotheses reflecting competing explanations for whether and how engagement may relate to self-view, school, and family outcomes. Findings showed that youths who are more engaged early in treatment tend to have more positive outcomes and lesser engaged youths show the greatest degree of positive change. The results suggest that early engagement is not as predictive of positive outcomes as are certain intake characteristics.

[doi:10.1016/j.childyouth.2008.04.010](https://doi.org/10.1016/j.childyouth.2008.04.010)

## Child Protection

### Improving outcomes for children living in families with parental substance misuse: What do we know and what should we do

Dawe, S., Harnett, P., & Frye, S. (2008). *Child Abuse Prevention Issues*, (29), Australian Institute of Family Studies, National Clearing House.

This paper provides an overview of the research literature on the outcomes of children raised in families with multiple problems including parental substance misuse. The authors argue that organisational change will be difficult to achieve until there are accurate mechanisms for estimating the extent of the problem and policies that include a focus on children and families within the drug and alcohol field. They highlight the importance of implementing 'evidence-informed' treatments in drug and alcohol services to improve outcomes for many children living in families with parental substance misuse.

<http://www.aifs.gov.au>

### Intergenerational transmission of internalising problems: Effects of parental and grandparental major depressive disorder on child behaviour

Pettit, J., Olino, T., Roberts, R., Seeley, J., & Lewinsohn, P. (2008). *Journal of Clinical Child and Adolescent Psychology*, 37 (3), 640-650.

The article reports on a study investigating the effects of lifetime histories (three generations) of grandparents and parents major depressive

disorder (MDD) on children's internalising problems. 267 children (ages 2-18 years), where diagnostic data was available on 267 biological parents and 527 biological grandparents, received Child Behaviour Checklist (CBCL) ratings. The results indicated that for grandparents MDD was characteristic of risk for parents MDD, but not for children's CBCL scores. Parents MDD predicted higher for children's Internalising and Anxious/Depressed scores. The findings showed an interaction between grandparents MDD and parents MDD in predicting higher child Anxious/Depressed scores such that scores were highest among children with both depressed parents and grandparents.

<http://ejsccontent.ebsco.com>

### Comparing physically abusive, neglectful, and non-maltreating parents during interactions with their children: A meta-analysis of observational studies

Wilson, S. R., Rack, J. J., Shi, X., & Norris, A. M. (2008). *Child Abuse and Neglect*, 32 (9), 897-911.

The purpose of this study was to clarify the nature and extent of differences in ways that physically abusive, neglectful, and non-maltreating parents communicate during interactions with their children. A meta-analysis of 33 observational studies comparing parent-child interactions was conducted. Parents with a documented history of physical abuse and neglect were distinguished from non-maltreating parents by levels of aversiveness, positivity and involvement. Implications for practice are that differences are more apparent for younger children, younger parents, and when the observations are in a home environment, over a longer time period and not structured by way of set activities.

[doi:10.1016/j.chiabu.2008.01.003](https://doi.org/10.1016/j.chiabu.2008.01.003)

## Reports

### Making progress: the health, development and wellbeing of Australia's children and young people

Australian Institute of Health and Welfare, (2008). Cat. No. PHE 104, Canberra, AIHW.

This report delivers current and reliable information on the state of child and youth health, development and wellbeing according to key statistical indicators. The report covers children and young people aged 0-19 years, and includes indicators for the 0-19 year age range as well as indicators for three different stages of development: 1) infancy and early childhood; 2) school age childhood; and 3) adolescence. Information is presented on important issues such as mental health, disability, risk factors for chronic disease, mortality, education, homelessness, crime, jobless families and family economic situation. Particular attention is given to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and youth, and how Australia compares internationally.

<http://www.aihw.gov.au/publications>

### Achieving outcomes for children and families from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds

Sims, M., Guilfoyle, A., Kulisa, J., Targowska, A., Teather, S., & Cowan, E. (2008). Australian Research Alliance for Children and Youth.

This paper reports on research (both primary research and a literature review), undertaken with the aim of demonstrating strategies for successful inclusion into Australian society of children and families from culturally and linguistically diverse (CaLD) backgrounds. The authors

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recognise that CaLD children and families are commonly disadvantaged through being part of a minority group in Australia, their experiences prior to migration (for example refugee trauma), the different values and practices they may encounter here, the difficulty of learning a new language, the problems they face having qualifications and experience ratified, and the varying forms of racism they may experience. It provides examples of a number of innovative and highly successful programmes that operate in different areas of Australia and are very successful in supporting CaLD families.

<http://www.aracy.org.au>

## Indigenous social exclusion: Insights and challenges for the concept of social inclusion

Brotherhood of St Lawrence, (2008).

This paper was presented at the Social Inclusion Down Under symposium, hosted by the Brotherhood of St Laurence at the University of Melbourne 26 June 2008. Indigenous people are among the most socially excluded in Australia and Indigenous disadvantage is multidimensional, differing from other forms of poverty in Australia in the incidence and depth of disadvantage experienced.

This paper attempts to illustrate some challenges of the notion of social inclusion from recent attempts to address Indigenous disadvantage and reviews some recent public debates. It also discusses disadvantage of cumulative or circular causation and provides concluding remarks.

<http://www.bsl.org.au>

## Resources

**Fact Sheet: Child protection in Australia. "Children see. Children do. Make your influence positive"**

Holzer, P. (2008). National Child Protection Clearinghouse, Australian Institute for Family Studies.

This Fact Sheet was prepared to coincide with National Child Protection Week, 7-13 September 2008. It presents an overview of child protection in Australia, including how child abuse and neglect is defined, its prevalence, the costs of child maltreatment, and prevention and early intervention strategies.

The Fact Sheet is available at: <http://www.aifs.gov.au/nch/pubs/sheets/fs1/fs1.html>

## 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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