

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:

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Early Intervention

Tailoring parenting to fit the child

Smart, D. (2007). *Australia Family Relationships Clearinghouse*, Australian Institute of Family Studies, Briefing no.4.

This paper draws on the notion that children are often seen as the product of their environment and their parents' child rearing skills. It argues that although children are greatly influenced by their family environment, they have very different characteristics and personalities. This can mean that strategies that work for one child may not work as well for another. This article provides an overview of evidence about the importance of synchrony between parenting methods and child characteristics.

<http://www.aifs.gov.au/afrc/pubs/briefing/briefing4.html>

Supporting children and responding to their families: Capturing the evidence on family support

Fernandez, E. (2007). *Children and Youth Services Review* 29 (10), pp 1368-1394.

Responding to vulnerable families through early intervention and family support is advocated as vital to children's well-being and interrupting patterns of maltreatment. This paper documents selected findings from a study of client outcomes from participation in family support services delivered through a network of Family Centres in NSW. Data from personal interviews with caseworkers, parents and children are analysed to profile family needs and change in the domains of child well-being, family safety, family interactions, parental

capabilities and environment. The implications for policy and practice discussed emphasise assessments and interventions that are multidimensional and the potentially valuable contribution of families and children to research and service planning.

[doi:10.1016/j.childyouth.2007.05.012](https://doi.org/10.1016/j.childyouth.2007.05.012)

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. (Aug 2007). *British Journal of Social Work*, (Advanced online access), Oxford University on behalf of The British Association of Social Work.

This paper 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 was 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 of maternal depression symptoms. The implications of these findings, for policy and practice, are discussed.

<http://bjsw.oxfordjournals.org/cgi/reprint/bcm088v1>

Preliminary construct and concurrent validity of the Preschool Self-regulation Assessment (PSRA) for field-based research

Smith-Donald, R., Raver, C., Hayes, T. & Richardson, B. (2007). *Early Childhood Research Quarterly*, 22 (2), pp173-187.

This study introduces a direct assessment of young children's self-regulation—the Preschool Self-Regulation Assessment (PSRA). The PSRA was designed to assess self-regulation in emotional, attentional, and behavioural domains by using a brief, structured battery of tasks in conjunction with a global report of children's behaviour. Analyses from a pilot sample of Head Start children revealed two self-regulation factors reflecting children's performance on tasks of impulse control and tasks of compliance/executive control.

[doi:10.1016/j.ecresq.2007.01.002](https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ecresq.2007.01.002)

Attachment and coping strategies in middle childhood children whose mothers have a mental health problem: Implications for social work practice

Walsh, J., Schofield, G., Harris, G., Vostanis, P., Oyeboode, F. & Coulthard, H. (2007). *British Journal of Social Work* (Advanced online access), Oxford University on behalf of The British Association of Social Work.

This study was designed specifically to investigate relationship issues in middle childhood children whose mothers had previously been hospitalised with mental health problems. Findings suggest that these children tend to be less emotionally open and secure, and generate fewer adaptive coping strategies than children whose mothers had never had mental health problems. It also suggests that an understanding of children's representations of attachment relationships and the different

coping strategies that may result is important for social work practice when offering support, not only to the children, but also other family members. Other themes also emerged from the interviews, such as a sense of trust in the parent-child relationship and the 'containment' of fears.

<http://bjsw.oxfordjournals.org/cgi/reprint/bcm090v1>

Mortality of children and parental disadvantage

Yu, P. (2007). Department of Families, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs.

This paper investigates the correlation between mortality risk of children and parental disadvantage at individual level. This paper suggests that mortality of children is significantly correlated with several indicators of parental disadvantage, including Indigenous status, low income, long duration on income support, teenage motherhood, disability, and living in remote or socio-economically disadvantaged areas.

http://www.sprc.unsw.edu.au/ASPC2007/papers/Yu_228.pdf

Child Protection

Parental drug and alcohol use as a contributing factor in care and protection applications: Follow-up study

Leek, L., Seneque, D. & Ward, K. (2007). Department for Community Development, WA.

This study is an extension of research undertaken in 2004 to identify parental drug and alcohol use as a contributing factor in care and protection applications. It explores the outcomes for children to provide further information on the long term impacts of both

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parental drug and alcohol use and other complex issues facing families. The overall aim of this follow up study was to examine whether there are differences in the patterns of experiences in care dependent on the reasons the children entered care.

The research showed that where parental drug and alcohol is a contributing factor, versus where it is not, there is a quicker Court outcome (within 12 months), children have greater numbers of placements and there are more children aged less than one year at apprehension. Implications for prevention and early intervention are discussed.

http://www.community.wa.gov.au/NR/rdonlyres/621FE673-822E-4887-8455-178AA617309F/0/DCPRPTParentaldrugandalcoholuse_followupreport_march2007.pdf

Out-of-Home Care

Factors associated with exiting and re-entry into out-of-home care under Community-Based Care in Florida

Yampolshaya, S., Armstrong, M. & Vargo, A. (2007). *Child and Youth Services Review* 29 (10), pages 1352-1367.

One of the major goals of the child welfare system emphasised by the Adoption and Safe Families Act (ASFA) has been to achieve permanency for children who are removed from their homes.

The goals of this study were to assess the ability of Community Based Care to meet (ASFA) requirements and examine factors associated with undesired child welfare outcomes for children with different legal status. Age, minority status, length of stay in out-of-home care and both emotional and behavioural problems were found to be significantly associated with re-entry into out-of-home care.

[doi:10.1016/j.chilyouth.2007.05.010](https://doi.org/10.1016/j.chilyouth.2007.05.010)

Foster children with an incarcerated parent: Predictors of reunification

Hayward, R. & DePanfilis, D. (2007). *Children and Youth Services Review* 29 (10), pages 1320-1334.

The authors argue that children with incarcerated parents have needs that are not easily met and when placed in foster care may be less likely to achieve permanency through reunification.

Prior research has not identified under what circumstances these children are more or less likely to reunify with a family member. This paper explores whether factors that predict reunification for children in foster care (e.g., child age, race, mental health, disability, family structure, placement history) also predict reunification for children who have at least one incarcerated parent. Practice and policy implications related to children of incarcer-

Transitioning from the state care system: the impacts of in-care experiences on post-care outcomes for young people leaving care

Mendes, P. & Moslehuddin, B. Paper presented at the Australian Social Policy Conference, 13 July 2007.

This paper reviews the experiences of young people leaving state care. It considers the multiple disadvantages resulting from their abuse or neglect, any negative experiences in care, and the lack of support provided to them as they transition from care. The authors argue that an affirmative action plan is necessary to assist all care leavers to overcome their earlier disadvantages, and achieve better outcomes. They recommend the provision of supports that a typical parent in the community would provide to young people leaving home up to the age of 25.

http://www.sprc.unsw.edu.au/ASPC2007/papers/Mendes_9.pdf

General

Juvenile Justice in Australia 2005-2006

Australian Institute of Health and Welfare, 2007.

The Australian Institute of Health and Welfare has released a report based on the latest data from the Juvenile Justice National Minimum Data Set (NMDS) developed by the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare (AIHW) and the Australasian Juvenile Justice Administrators (AJJA). The report includes information on the age, sex and Indigenous status, and patterns of supervision over time. The report also includes an analysis of trends in community-based supervision and detention over the six years since 2000-01.

<http://www.aihw.gov.au/publications/juv/jjia05-06/jjia05-06.pdf>

Listening, hearing and acting: approaches to the participation of children and young people in decision making - a review of the literature

Department of Child Safety: Queensland, 2006.

This paper reviews the literature on approaches to the participation of children and young people in decision making processes. It explores work throughout Australian jurisdictions, literature and research to identify models of engagement and participation that have been successful. The paper investigates the barriers to and benefits of participation, and ways to effectively engage with and involve children and young people in decision making processes.

<http://www.childsafety.qld.gov.au/research/documents/listen-hear-act.pdf>

Literature review: The experiences and effects of family homelessness for children

Noble-Carr, D. (2007). Institute of Child Protection Studies, ACT.

This report examines the experience and the effects of family homelessness for children in the ACT. It explores the issues confronted by children within families experiencing homelessness. The findings describe the effects and experiences in terms of children's health, emotional and behavioural issues, education, social exclusion, family relationships and overall long term effects. It also looks at the relationship between the child protection system and homeless families.

http://www.dhcs.act.gov.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0004/10300/Homeless_Children_LitReviewExperiences.pdf

Alcohol and other drug treatment services in New South Wales findings from the National Minimum Data Set (NMDS) 2005-06
Australian Institute of Health and Welfare, 2007.

This data briefing summarises the main findings from the 2005-06 Alcohol and Other Drug Treatment Services (AODTS) NMDS data for New South Wales. Throughout this briefing, data from New South Wales are presented along with 2005-06 national data.

<http://www.aihw.gov.au/publications/hse/aodtsia05-06-nsw/aodtsia05-06-nsw.pdf>

Mudaly, N. & Goddard, C. (2006). *The truth is longer than a lie: Children's experiences of abuse and professional interventions*. Jessica Kingsley Publishers: London

This book explores what young victims have to say about abuse and its effects on their lives. This includes their views on the abuse, their opinions of the abuser and the professionals who intervened, and their experiences of disclosure. The authors examine societal factors that increase children's vulnerability, and propose measures for preventing abuse.

New Books

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Munro, E. (2007). *Child Protection*. SAGE Publications: London

This book offers an overview of the core themes in child abuse and child protection. It looks at understanding both the theory and practice involved in child protection. It explores the key themes of child protection, neglect, physical abuse, sexual abuse and emotional abuse and offers suggestions on how to work to make children safer. Using research in child protection is also addressed, including what research to use and how to use it.