



RESEARCH DIGEST

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Prepared by

Harriet Bretherton, Research Co-ordinator
Steve Huzzard, Service Manager, Rochdale
Peter Little, FCA, Shropshire

Research studies and articles based on research

Author	Chand A
Title	Child Protection, The Courts and Minority Ethnic Families
Book	From <i>Hearing the Child</i> Ed Rt Hon Lord Justice Thorpe and Cadbury J
Date	2004
Publisher	Jordan Publishing
Key words	Diversity (Ethnic minority), Child protection, Family law
Summary	<p>This article concentrates on research studies with respect to the experience of minority ethnic families in the Child Protection and Family Proceedings Systems</p> <p>The paper reminds us that children from minority ethnic communities are more quickly placed before the Family Courts than more troubled white families. It goes on to demonstrate that emergency powers and even 'voluntary' arrangements result in the disproportionate presence of minority ethnic children within the care system.</p> <p>Ashok Chand provides a stimulating paper that addresses weighty questions that continue to challenge professionals in family proceedings to demonstrate that the interests of children from minority ethnic groups are paramount.</p>
Reviewed by	Glen Hagen

Author	Cobley C
Title	'Working together?' – admissions of abuse in child protection proceedings and criminal prosecutions
Journal	Child and Family Law Quarterly
Date	2004
Volume/issue	Vol 16, No 2
Subject (key words)	Child protection (Child abuse)
Summary	<p>This article examines how the two systems interact when admissions are made, arguing that the tension between the systems increases as cases progress, with care proceedings providing a potential 'sanctuary' for the would-be confessor. The article includes follow-up research on the social and legal consequences for the same group of children who sustained non-accidental sub-dural haemorrhages used in the medical research of Karandiker. See also Cobley and Sanders</p> <p>In 25 of the 68 cases involved, people were charged with criminal offences.</p> <p>The author argues that the two systems create a Catch 22 for abusers because an admission was more likely to result in prosecution in the criminal courts, but less likely to result in care proceedings because the abuser was perceived to be accepting responsibility for their actions and cooperating with professionals.</p> <p>The author suggests that the criminal law system could provide an incentive to abusers to confess by expressly recognizing a confession will be taken into account in deciding whether a prosecution should proceed. Similarly at any sentencing stage credit could be given for confessions accompanied by genuine</p>

	remorse.
Reviewed by	SH

Author	Cobley C and Sanders T
Title	'Shaken Baby Syndrome': child protection issues when children sustain a subdural haemorrhage
Journal	Journal of Social Welfare and Family Law
Date	2004
Volume/issue	25/2
Key words	Child protection (Shaking injury)
Summary	<p>Aim To investigate the evidence recorded when a subdural haemorrhage (SDH) is found; to evaluate the use made of this evidence in subsequent decision-making; to determine the social and legal consequences for the victim and family.</p> <p>Methodology The records were studied of 68 children who had sustained SDH aged under 2 years between 1992 and 1998 in South Wales and the West of England. The sample was limited to children where there was a clinical suspicion of non-accidental head injury.</p> <p>Findings</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The profile of the children and their families is described. 25% of the children died as a result of the injury. Most were under 4.5 months and boys were twice as likely to be victims. Most of the children lived in two parent families. The presence of mental illness, substance abuse and economic deprivation were common amongst the parents. • 14 of the 68 cases were not referred for CP investigations because plausible medical or accidental causes were identified • Of the remaining 54 cases where a referral was made, half the children had been previously admitted to hospital • In 47 cases a CP conference was convened (in 6 cases the child had already died). 38 cases were placed on the CP Register • Only 4 parents admitted causing the injury. Many parents' explanation of the injury changed over time. Cases where the carers cooperated with the SWs were less likely to result in care orders • Both parents were usually suspected of having caused the injury at the start of the investigation. 6 fathers and 2 mothers were convicted of criminal offences • Following a risk assessment, most children were either placed with their parents or with temporary foster parents • In 16 cases, a care order was applied for and it was granted in 13 cases. <p>The authors argue that risk is assumed to diminish with the age of the child. Given the multiple injuries suffered by many of the babies, they question this assumption. They suggest that parents especially fathers should be made aware of the danger of shaking babies.</p> <p>See also Cobley and Karandiker</p>
Reviewed by	HB

Author	Farmer E
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Title	Patterns of Placement, Management and Outcome for Sexually Abused an/or Abusing Children in Substitute Care
Journal	British Journal of Social work
Date	2004
Volume/issue	34/3
Key words	Child protection (Child sexual abuse), Looked after children
Summary	<p>The study was funded by the DOH.</p> <p>Aim To examine the management, interventions and treatment provided for sexually abused or sexually abusing children in residential or foster care.</p> <p>Methodology Fieldwork was conducted in two LAs between 1994 and 1995. A sample of 40 sexually abused or sexually abusing young people over 10 was drawn from a wider sample of all children who had been looked after in a six month period. 19 were in foster care and 21 in residential care. Children and key professionals were interviewed. 17% were African-Caribbean or of mixed parentage. 90% had been sexually abused and 45% had shown sexually abusing behaviour.</p> <p>Findings</p> <p>Four groups of young people emerged.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Children showing no problematic sexual behaviour (13)</i> – outcomes for these children were only good in a quarter of cases. Their wider needs tended to be ignored because they were not causing difficulties. • <i>Sexualised young people with weak interpersonal boundaries (13)</i> – The management provided for most of these young people was inadequate, not meeting their needs and leaving them at risk. Some examples of good practice were however found. • <i>Young people who were involved in prostitution (4)</i> – the outcomes for these young people was the worst in the sample, as their needs were not met, they continued to be at risk and they had the worst effect on other residents. Placement away from their home area seemed to be one way of intervening positively. • <i>Young people who had or were sexually abusing others</i> – These were divided into those who sexually abused others but who were not aggressive (6) and those who were sexually abusive and were also aggressive (4). For those who were not aggressive, the outcomes were relatively positive but little therapeutic help was available or specific support to the carers. The young people who were aggressive as well as sexually abusing received high levels of supervision but little therapeutic attention to their abusing behaviour. <p><i>Reactions of carers and professional staff</i> –Denial, normalisation, helplessness on the part of staff prevented effective interventions being made available and mirror the experience of abused children.</p>
Reviewed by	HB

Author	James A and James A L
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Title	Constructing Childhood: Theory, Policy and Social Practice
Date	2004
Publisher	Palgrave Macmillan
Key words	Psychology (Child development), Children's views/participation, Family Court Advisor
Summary	<p>Constructing Childhood is an attempt to uncover 'the cultural politics of childhood.' In the first four chapters the authors arm themselves with their theoretical model. This sets out the traditional view of childhood, exemplified in developmental psychology, of children as the 'passive output of child rearing practices;' as objects; a social category defined by adults in relation to adulthood, occupying a social space without rights, recognition, power or influence.</p> <p>To this is contrasted the progressive perspective which owes much to James and James. It listens to the voices of children and acknowledges 'the diversity of children's childhoods and of children's own part as social agents in shaping their childhood experiences.'</p> <p>This section of the book challenges us to think about the concept of childhood, its historical genesis and its relationship to our understanding of social change. The authors regard the Law, broadly defined as 'a centrally important mediating influence in the social construction of childhood, the influence of which is neither temporally nor conceptually static. The authors chart the UK government's hesitating and uneven approach to implementing the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, illustrative, in their terms of the process of the cultural politics of childhood. The UNCRC is seen, along with the 1989 Children Act as progressive, at least potentially. The rights of children are spelt out in terms which seem, at first sight unequivocal. But the problems that have beset the implementation of the UNCRC, both in the UK and internationally lead to the pessimistic conclusion that in spite of all the political rhetoric, both the UNCRC and the apparent emphasis in recent UK legislation on children and their rights is so much window dressing – 'little more than an artifice which conceals the real nature of the way in which mechanisms for retaining and increasing the control of children are being sustained and extended.'</p> <p>This theme is picked up in the four 'case studies' which follow. Aspects of UK social policy under New Labour in four areas considered critical to the cultural politics of childhood – education, health, crime and the family are the subject of a withering critique. This demonstrates that New Labour's policies have served almost nowhere to advance the cause of children's participation in society. Rather they ensure that in more and more areas of their lives children are being subject to greater and greater control by the state. The authors refer to many examples of this, the most obvious being the patchwork of children's curfews which we now see being imposed upon deprived communities.</p>
Reviewed by	Charles Place

Author	Karandiker S, Coles L, Jayawant S & Kemp A
Title	The neurodevelopmental outcome in infants who have sustained a subdural haemorrhage from no-accidental head injury
Journal	Child Abuse Review
Date	May – June 2004
Volume/issue	Vol 13, Issue 3
Subject (key words)	Child protection (Child abuse) Child protection (Shaking injury)
Summary	<p>The paper examines the physical and educational outcomes of 65 children in South Wales and SW England who suffered subdural haemorrhages (SDH) under the age of 2, most commonly caused by shaking. Readers of the popular press may have gained the recent impression that doubt existed about whether 'shaken baby syndrome' existed. In the study of case records, some years later, 16 of the children had died as a result of the SDH, 3 were in a persistent vegetative state, 11 severely disabled, 6 moderately disabled, whilst 25 (38%) fortunately had a good outcome. Of the 29 children of school age, on whom data was available, 12 of the children had a statement of educational needs. Even where children had good physical outcomes, behavioural and cognitive problems could emerge with time. The authors argue for sustained follow up by a multi disciplinary team.</p> <p>Previous research in this field has confirmed the high level of harm to children from SDH, but has not usually examined the long-term consequences which the children and their carers face. The study does not take into account the effect of the original caring environment at the time of the injury, or subsequent care arrangements.</p>
Reviewed by	SH

Author	Malley, M & Tasker, F
Title	Significant and Other: Systemic Family Therapists on Lesbians and Gay Men
Journal	Journal of Family Therapy
Date	May 2004
Volume/issue	26(2); pp 193 – 212
Subject (key words)	Diversity, Families (Same-sex relationships)
Summary	<p>The authors conducted a questionnaire survey of UK systemic psychotherapists examining their training in, attitudes to and experience of working with lesbians and gay men. The questionnaire included the well-researched Index of Attitudes to Homosexuals (IAH) devised in 1980.</p> <p>Findings:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Therapists generally reported receiving little formal training in how to work with lesbians and gay clients. • Many respondents expressed anxiety about their ability to work competently with this group. • Therapists' attitudes to homosexuals were significantly more positive if they had direct experience of working with

	this group or if they had personal contact with this group out of work.
Reviewed by	PL

Author	Masson J, Winn Oakley M and Pick K
Title	Emergency Protection Orders: Court orders for child protection crises
Date	2004
Publisher	School of Law, Warwick University
Key words	Case practice, Child protection (EPO)
Summary	<p>Aim To gain an understanding of how EPOs are used to protect children</p> <p>Methodology 1. A national telephone survey of magistrates' courts 2. A study of all EPO applications (86) in 6 LAs over 12 months relating to 127 children 3. A study of LA decision making through interviews with 27 SWs, 14 LA legal department staff and reading 56 files.</p> <p>Findings</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • EPO applications are generally made in relation to young children (62% were aged less than 6) • At the time the emergency intervention was sought 70% of families had the child living with them • Almost all the children were known to SS when the application was made • Neglect was a major feature in nearly half the cases and child abuse in a third. • Police protection was often used prior to an application for an EPO (45% of cases) • Courts varied in their willingness to hear an application without notice. Where courts were reluctant, the LA would rely on police protection as an interim measure to protect children • In 60% of cases no CG was present at the hearing. In 2 court areas there was no system in place to alert CAFCASS to EPO applications. • There was considerable variation between the areas in the extent to which a CG was present at the EPO hearing, from 79% in one area to 10% in another. Where hearings were held without notice, only 12% had a CG present • EPOs were most commonly followed by care proceedings • Most appeared to be appropriate applications <p>The authors make recommendations for changes in practice within the existing legal framework which would protect children while ensuring that notice is not abridged. They suggest that the government should issue a circular on the removal of babies at birth. They also suggest legal changes giving LAs the power to remove children for a limited period rather than the police removing children at the request of the LA..</p>
Reviewed by	HB

Author	Morgan, R (Children's Rights Director for England)
Title	Safe from Harm – Children's Views Report Summary Factsheet
Date	July 2004
Publisher	Commission for Social Care Inspection
Key words	Children's views/participation, Child protection
Summary	<p>Aim This report gives the views of children and young people, aged 10 to 18 years, about 'safeguarding'. Keeping children and young people safe from harm is one of the government's five main outcomes for children and young people.</p> <p>Methodology Fourteen consultation groups, in which 110 children participated, were set up specifically for the purpose of discussing this subject. Children and young people's views were included from 11 other groups who gave opinions on this subject as part of a wider consultation.</p> <p>It is the policy of the Commission for Social Care to select at random children who wish to be consulted for every specific consultation, thus avoiding the production of a 'reserve army' of young consultants who are consulted about everything. In this particular exercise the children and young people were drawn from children's homes, a secure unit for children, a children's hospice, boarding schools, independent fostering agencies, council fostering agencies, further education colleges and residential special schools. Also included were children and young people with experience of adoption.</p> <p>Findings</p> <p>The safety issues that concerned children included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Kidnapping and abduction – but children were reassured by the presence of CCTV cameras and wanted more. • Road traffic and the actions of young motorists worried many of the children. • Most children were very aware of staff safety checks (such as Criminal Records Bureau checks) for people working with children – they wanted them done effectively. • Abuse was a concern, and whilst most felt relatively well protected against abuse from adults, many felt that more needed to be done to protect them against abuse by other children and young people. • There were concerns that not enough focus was placed on the risk of abuse for older children and boys – abuse doesn't just happen to little girls. • Boys and girls were both concerned about the possibility of being mugged or attacked for money or mobile phones. • Most of the children consulted for this report would be happy to see Internet chatrooms closed down. Children were aware and wary of the dangers of chat rooms <p>The children and young people advocated the following precautions against the risks that they identified:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The provision of mentors specially to help with issues of bullying and letting children report bullying confidentially. • A real choice of people to go to with worries and problems • In boarding schools, treating boarders' concerns with more priority than day pupils' concerns because they don't have their parents

	<p>immediately on hand.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Much more teaching about how to stay safe. • Trusting people once they are properly checked and trained. • Ask teachers to demonstrate a couple of lessons before being offered a job – with feedback from pupils. • Colleges to synchronise lecture times to fit when students can get there and back by public transport. • More talking between different professionals. • More nurses and better first aid in schools. • Provide a healthier but attractive diet. • Have more school counsellors with direct access to them. • Mix age ranges in boarding houses in schools and give carefully selected older pupils clear responsibilities and training for care of younger ones. • Give 'anti-pressure breaks'. • Provide personal individual advice on health and personal safety. • Don't mix building work and use by children <p>The children and young people advocated the following strategies for protection against the risks that they identified:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Actually practise your counter-bullying policy. • Be clear about not letting younger children out alone. • Be clear about staying in groups. • More checking at school of exactly how children got any bruises. • In schools, select senior pupils to have a duty of pastoral care – but they need to be scared of serious action if they turn out to be bullies themselves. • Make sure police checks are done properly on everyone working with children. • Be clear about the rules on whether staff can touch children or be alone with them. • Keep fairness and equality between children and adults. • Have both female and male staff working together and checking on each other. • Have more staff around at risky times and in risky places • Be clear how you go about countering drug abuse. • Be consistent between staff on issues like smoking – don't end up with some staff. <p>This report contains much that is of pressing concern to all professionals working directly with children and young people.</p>
Reviewed by	Dave Merrick

Author	Mount J, Lister A and Bennun I
Title	Identifying the Mental Health Needs of Looked After Young People
Journal	Clinical Child Psychology and Psychiatry
Date	2004
Volume/issue	9/3
Key words	Mental illness (Child mental illness), Case practice (Assessment), Looked after children
Summary	The paper starts with a reminder that there are very high levels

	<p>of mental health problems amongst looked after children but that at the same time few are seen by CAMHS. It explores the reasons why LAC fail to access the appropriate mental health services and notes the short and long term damage to children if appropriate intervention is not available.</p> <p>Aim of the research To compare the intuitive assessment of mental health problems in LAC with responses to a mental health screen.</p> <p>Methodology 50 LAC aged between 10 and 18 and their carers were interviewed. The participants were self-selected. 22% were not white. The measures used were a semi-structured interview schedule and three standardised tests.</p> <p>Findings</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Carers assessed a high proportion (70%) of the young people as having high mental health needs whereas only about a quarter of the young people themselves assessed their needs as high • Comparing intuitive judgement and the scores on one of the tests (Strength and Difficulties Questionnaire - SDQ) 65% of carers accurately identified the mental health needs of the young person but a quarter failed to perceive high need in the young person they were caring for • Fewer than half of young people identified by the screening as having high mental health needs were being seen by a CAMHS team • The report by carers that the young person was a burden was predictive of high mental health needs. <p>Limitations The small and self-selected nature of the sample may limit generalisability.</p> <p>The authors suggest that the findings indicate that looked after children should be routinely screened for mental health needs using the SDQ. However, as the authors themselves acknowledge, if young people do not see themselves as having mental health needs, they are unlikely to use CAMHS provision. They call for more “creative, flexible youth-friendly services” acceptable to young people. The reasons for the discrepancy between carer and young person assessment of need is discussed.</p>
Reviewed by	HB

Author	Plant M, Miller P & Plant M
Title	Childhood and adult sexual abuse: relationships with alcohol and other psychoactive drug use
Journal	Child Abuse Review
Date	May – June 2004
Volume/issue	Vol 13, Issue 3
Subject (key words)	Child protection (Child sexual abuse), Alcohol dependence, Drug dependence
Summary	Just over 2000 people were interviewed on a selective basis in order to be representative of the UK population as a whole, as part of an international study on gender, alcohol and culture.

	<p>The design of the sampling methodology looks sound, but its reliability depends on the quality of the work of the 267 interviewers involved. This paper looks at the links between sexual abuse and addictive or problem behaviours in the survey results.</p> <p>12.5% of women, and 11.7% of men reported being sexually abused before the age of 16 [Interview question: "Did someone try to make you do sexual things or watch sexual things?"] Almost as many men and women declined to answer the question. Of those women and men who reported abuse, 39% reported abuse within the family. 10.5% of the women reported sexual abuse <u>after</u> the age of 16, but only 3.2% of men.</p> <p>It was found that women who reported sexual abuse at any age reported higher levels of drinking. Men who reported abuse as a child had higher drinking levels, but not men abused over the age of 16. Experience of sexual abuse was generally linked to reported current alcohol problems.</p> <p>Illicit drug use was strongly associated with sexual abuse at any age for both men and women, although not curiously with current problems with the use of illicit drugs.</p> <p>Reported problems with alcohol or drugs do not seem to have been less if the abuser was outside the family.</p> <p>Experience of past sexual abuse was linked generally to now being single or cohabiting.</p> <p>Seeking causes and explanations is complicated by cross-generational effects – the abusive experience or behaviour of parents, linked or not to their own drink and drug consumption.</p>
Reviewed by	SH

Author	Rhoades H and Boyd S
Title	Reforming Custody Laws: A Comparative Study
Journal	International Journal of Law, Policy and the Family
Date	2004
Volume/issue	18/2
Key words	Family law (International), Evidence based practice (Research)
Summary	<p>The authors track the process by which changes in the private family justice system and family law have occurred since 1995 in Australia and Canada.</p> <p>They argue that the reform process was influenced by the political weight of stake holders on the one hand and evidence from research on the other. The impetus for reform in both countries started primarily with the claims of fathers' groups that the family justice system was discriminating against fathers and with the call for shared parenting. More recently empirical evidence from research has been used in the reform process to provide a more balanced view of the complexity and variety of family life and of some of the serious problems which have to be addressed by the family courts such as ensuring safety when domestic violence is an issue. The result is an anomalous situation in both countries where the 'one size does not fit all' principle and the importance of safety have been accepted, but at the same time pro-contact principles make individually</p>

	tailored solutions difficult to achieve. The authors conclude that empirical research has had an effect on the family law reform but that the political influence of interest groups has negated some of the clear messages from the research.
Reviewed by	HB

Author	Stalker K and Connors C
Title	Children Perceptions of Their Disabled Siblings: 'She's Different but it's Normal for Us'
Journal	Children and Society
Date	2004
Volume/issue	18/3
Subject (key words)	Families (Siblings), Disability (Children with disabilities)
Summary	<p>Aim To examine children's views and experiences of having a disabled brother or sister</p> <p>Methodology The article reports on part of a small scale qualitative study of 26 children disabled children and their siblings. 15 sisters and 9 brothers aged 6 to 19 from 14 families were interviewed. All the siblings lived in Scotland and were white.</p> <p>Findings</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Children were aware of their sibling's disability but understood it in different ways depending on their age and the explanations they used to account for the impairment • They were aware of negative reactions to their disabled sibling (disablism) such as name-calling, staring and misplaced sympathy and some reported being bullied themselves about having a disabled sibling • Most of the children did not see their sibling's impairment as making them different and they described their relationships in 'ordinary' terms • Some children did identify difference due to impairment some seeing this neutrally but others in a negative way • Some children noted their sibling's negative experience of disability occasioned by negative treatment and hostility from others. • The children did not view either their disabled siblings or their own experience in terms of 'tragedy'
Reviewed by	HB

Author	Stanley, J. & Goddard, C.
Title	Multiple forms of violence and other criminal activities as an indicator of severe child maltreatment
Journal	Child Abuse Review
Date	July – August 2004
Volume/issue	Vol. 13, Issue 4
Subject (key words)	Child protection, Case practice (Assessment), Family problems

Summary	<p>This research is based on a small sample of 50 children from Victoria, Australia who had been severely abused – defined as having been placed on court orders after evidence of abuse – and who were on current child protection caseloads. The authors conclude that the severe maltreatment of children: -</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Was often associated with other criminal and antisocial behaviour, both inside and outside the family. • Often occurs with partner violence and particularly male violence • Was associated with ‘verbal partner violence’ in 82% of families, • Was associated with physical partner violence in 62% of families <p>In addition, within the families: -</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A third had family members who had engaged in at least one episode of sexual violence towards at least one family member other than the surveyed child • Nearly half had at least one member who was involved in at least one incident of theft • In 20% there had been at least one incident of a personal crime (other than associated with maltreatment of the child) where a weapon was used <p>The paper emphasises that the link is not between single isolated acts of criminal activity and child abuse. Rather, it is the frequency and severity and combinations of crimes, both inside and outside the family that may be an important indicator identifying severe and often intransigent child maltreatment. They emphasise the prominence of men in the family violence and criminal activity, but fail to quantify this in their research.</p> <p>The authors conclude that child protection needs to see child maltreatment in the context of often wider breakdown within a family of boundaries between behaviour within, and behaviour outside societal standards and norms. Trying to alter one form of violence, child abuse, in such a multi-factorial situation is therefore unrealistic.</p>
Reviewed by	SH

Author	Stanley L
Title	Children’s guardians and the local authority: Managing disagreement
Journal	Family Court Journal
Date	2004
Volume/issue	2/2
Key words	Family Court Advisor (Children’s Guardian), Case practice
Summary	<p>The article draws out the key themes from the literature review in particular the ‘inherent tension within the role’ and the ‘need for conflict management skills’.</p> <p>The study was small scale. Six Guardians (5 employed) were interviewed in 2001/2.</p> <p>Findings</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Major conflict and overt disagreement were rare • Differences of opinion as between CGs and LA SWs tended to be explored and negotiated positively • The development of a positive relationship with the SW was seen as important. This could be promoted or jeopardised by a number of factors such as the CG's personal style, and the knowledge and experience of the SW • In some cases CGs had a role in identifying LA shortfall and poor practice • The Guardians valued access to support systems and networks.
Reviewed by	HB

Author	Such E and Walker R
Title	Being Responsible and Responsible Beings: Children's Understanding of Responsibility
Journal	Children and Society
Date	2004
Volume/issue	18/3
Subject (key words)	Children's views/participation (Child competence)
Summary	<p>Aim of the study To explore and analyse the concept of responsibility from children's perspectives in the context of the family</p> <p>Methodology This was a qualitative pilot study in which 17 girls and 12 boys from an East Midlands primary school were interviewed. They were predominantly middle-class. 27 were white and 2 were from a South Asian background. All had at least one sibling.</p> <p>Findings</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The children had experience of responsibility in their daily lives for example in contributing to household tasks • Children's definitions of responsibility were moral, included 'fairness' and 'honesty' and were placed in the context of their relations with adults and other children • The assumption of responsibility could be used to increase power and autonomy within the family • 'Being responsible' was an aspect of identity which children developed in part independently of their parents • The negotiation of child and parent responsibilities was an aspect of the child-parent relationship. <p>Limitations The narrow class and ethnic background of the children may limit the generalisability of the findings. The article would have more impact if it were written in a more accessible style.</p>
Reviewed by	HB

Author	Thoburn J
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Title	Involving Children in Planning and Review Services
Book	From <i>Hearing the Children</i> ed Rt Hon Lord Justice Thorpe and Cadbury J
Date	2004
Publisher	Jordan Publishing Ltd
Key words	Children's views/participation, Family law
Summary	<p>The article is based on two DOH funded studies of the involvement of children and parents in the safeguarding process and Your Shout (PRD Jan 04).</p> <p>Thoburn distinguishes between:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rights (to be consulted about how they understand their situation – UNCRC, CA 89) • Wishes – these have to be set in the context of a full assessment of present and future needs. They should only be disregarded where there is “clear evidence that it is absolutely necessary to do so.” • Needs – for their welfare to be secured in the present and future. <p>Thoburn stresses the importance of negotiating with parents the involvement of children and understanding the way culture affects the parents' view of the role of the child within the family.</p> <p>Research has shown that children value the opportunity to be involved in review meetings. However they are concerned about:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of confidentiality • The reduction in contact with their SW between formal meetings • The highjacking of the review meeting for purposes other than consideration of the child's future. <p>Research evidence suggests that some children would like to be involved in the court process itself.</p>
Reviewed by	HB

Author	Tiffin P and Kaplan C
Title	Dangerous Children: Assessment and Management of Risk
Journal	Child and Adolescent Mental Health
Date	2004
Volume/issue	9/2
Key words	Case practice (Assessment), Mental illness (Child mental illness), Risk assessment
Summary	<p>The authors work in a CAMHS in Newcastle. The paper:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Describes an in-house history taking check-list used when a young person is thought likely to pose a risk to others • Reviews the literature on the assessment and management of children who pose a risk to others. It was on the basis of the literature review that the check-list was drawn up. • Notes that the most robust indicator of future violence is previous violence • Describes psychiatric conditions that may be present in young people who present a risk to others • Reviews the evidence on the effectiveness of therapeutic

	<p>interventions. This indicates that intervention may be effective in reducing long-term risk but that the interventions are expensive and less effective the older the child.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Urges the need for a multi-disciplinary approach to work with families where a child presents a risk to others. The psychiatric input should usually be restricted to assessment and the treatment of coexisting psychiatric conditions.
Reviewed by	HB

Author	Tisdall E, Bray R, Marshall K and Cleland A
Title	Children's Participation in Family Law Proceedings: A Step Too Far or a Step Too Small?
Journal	Journal of Social Welfare and Family Law
Date	2004
Volume/issue	26/1
Key words	Children's views/participation, Family Law
Summary	<p>The Children (Scotland) Act 1995 goes further than other legislation in the UK in requiring children's views to be heard in family proceedings. 1. Children can become party to or initiate private law proceedings. 2. Mechanisms were put in place to allow children to give their view. 3. Parents are required to consult their children on residence and contact arrangements even if these are uncontested and to give due regard to their views.</p> <p>The article reports on a feasibility study on how to evaluate the effect of the legislation on the weight given to children's views.</p> <p>Methodology 26 children took part in focus groups and 17 children were interviewed individually. They were aged between 8 and 18. Some of the children had been represented by a solicitor in proceedings relating to parental responsibilities, some had experienced parental separation but were not involved in court proceedings and some had not experienced parental separation. In addition, 10 adults who had supported children in expressing their views were identified and 14 family justice professionals.</p> <p>Findings</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All professionals believed that children's views should be considered but they had different views about whether they should be legally represented or attend court and how decisions should be taken on children's involvement • The Form 9 which asks children to give their views once proceedings have been started was not seen as an effective method of involving children • Children who had been legally represented had a positive opinion of their lawyers and the weight this had given to their views. Children who had not been legally represented had negative opinions about lawyers in general. • Children had mixed views about attending court and how this might be made a positive experience for them • Children spoke of the adverse impact of delay in proceedings for them and their families • There were no clear processes for keeping children

	<p>informed of progress of the case</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Children wanted to have their views considered but did not want to have to choose between their parents. <p>The general conclusion was that although the legislation in Scotland is intended to promote children's participation in the process of decision making, in practice the procedures are not currently robust enough to ensure that this happens.</p>
Reviewed by	HB

Author	Tunnard J
Title	Parental problem drinking and its impact on children
Date	2002
Publisher	Research in Practice
Key words	Alcohol Dependence, Parents
Summary	<p>The reason for this review of the research is because "alcohol is a legal substance. It is widely available and not prohibitively expensive. Its use is not only condoned by most communities, but regarded as an important feature of family and social life." The author notes that services in respect to alcohol abuse are less coordinated and organized than those for people suffering in the drugs field. Therefore the relevance of the research is related to its impact on users especially in the area of children and family work and how a model of working with these families might evolve enabling them to access necessary resources. Parents often are unable to deal with their responsibilities both at home and at work and thereafter there can be social and other problems. The lack of precise knowledge is clear but from self-reported information, the researchers estimate that some 38% of men and 15% of women may be affected by uncontrolled drinking, suggesting that one in eleven children may live in households where the adults demonstrate alcohol dependence. It is not just alcohol that affects children in families. There can be other cathartic/traumatic incidents which cause distress during childhood.</p> <p>It is the reporting of the children's wishes and feelings re their parent's alcohol dependence which is so important – looking at effects on mental and physical health, including of course fetal alcohol syndrome.</p> <p>Two other findings are also interesting – both children and parents report how family finances suffer from alcohol abuse. With these problems there is then the added association of the potential for domestic breakdown – thus the effect on the family of alcohol abuse can be devastating. Unless there are protective factors, the children continue to be exposed to the effects of problem drinking in a family.</p> <p>The bibliography is helpful. The model for intervention does provide a useful social work tool for intervention with families suffering from alcohol abuse.</p>
Reviewed by	Judi Lyons

Author	Walker, J
Title	FAInS – A New Approach for Family Lawyers?
Journal	Family Law
Date	June 2004
Volume/issue	34; pp 436 – 441
Subject (key words)	Family Law, Divorce/ separation (Support services)
Summary	<p>Describes research linked with the development by the Legal Services Commission of what is now called the Family Advice and Information Service. The service aim is to provide a comprehensive, interdisciplinary approach to meeting the needs of families where parental relationships are breaking down. Fundamental to the service is the provision of a holistic approach by specially trained solicitors who will consider referring clients on to other relevant professionals at an early stage.</p> <p>Research on a 'Pre-pilot' set up in 2002 in Cardiff, Exeter, Newcastle and Nottingham looked at data provided by solicitors for 319 FAInS clients and 229 non-FAInS clients.</p> <p>Findings:</p> <p>Although the initial meeting was longer and more wide-ranging for FAInS clients than for non-FAInS clients, there was little discernable difference in the level of satisfaction between the two groups. At this stage, few solicitors referred clients on to other agencies.</p> <p>The full research report on the extended pilot is due to be presented in October 2005.</p>
Reviewed by	PL

Author	Welsh E, Buchanan A, Flouri F and Lewis J
Title	'Involved' fathering and child well-being: Fathers' involvement with secondary school age children JRF Summary
Date	2004
Publisher	JFR and NCB
Subject (key words)	Fathers
Summary	<p>Aim To explore the nature of fathering and its impact on secondary school children</p> <p>Methodology 2218 children completed a questionnaire in school and 635 mothers and 452 fathers completed questionnaires brought home by their children. In addition in depth interviews were held with the child, mother and father in 26 intact families drawn from the larger questionnaire sample.</p> <p>Findings</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The view of fathering in intact families was 'traditional', involving 'being there', providing and guiding • Resident and non-resident fathers were more likely to be involved if the mothers were also involved with their children • NRFs were more likely to be involved if the separation was

	<p>recent and there were low levels of conflict between the parents</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Children were more likely to experience emotional and behavioural difficulties if there were high levels of conflict between the parents • There was no association between NRF's involvement and children's well-being (This finding may be due to the nature of the sample.) <p>Limitations of the study</p> <p>Outcomes for children with resident and non-resident fathers were derived from different samples (in the first case the father questionnaires and in the second the child questionnaires). Furthermore, in depth interviews were only conducted with intact families and the group from which they were drawn (cases where a questionnaire was returned by both parents and child) may have differed from other families. The sample limitations calls into question the generalisability of the findings.</p>
Reviewed by	HB