



RESEARCH DIGEST

2005 Issue 2

Prepared by

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Research studies and articles based on research

Author	Addis R
Title	Professional perceptions of twin-track planning for looked after children
Date	2004
Publisher	Social Work Monographs, University of East Anglia
Key words	Looked after children, Case practice (Twin-tracking)
Summary	<p>This document outlines the research findings of a study undertaken through interviews with fourteen social work and legal professionals, considering their views of the twin-track planning process and its contribution towards more rapidly achieving permanence for children who are the subject of care proceedings.</p> <p>The findings are presented in an accessible style, with plenty of easy-to-relate-to quotes. The impact of twin-track planning on decision-making for children is considered and the fact that without it, excessive delay can result, is recognised. However, some social workers fear that commencing the process may damage their relationship with parents and effectively threaten the prospect of a successful return home for a child. There is also an exploration of the difficulties professionals experience when explaining twin-track planning to parents and the tendency for some parents to regard it as part of a hidden agenda, geared towards an inevitable adoptive placement.</p> <p>It thus appears that local authorities do not always take a consistently robust approach to twin-track planning and this can create frustration and confusion for professionals who work across authorities, such as guardians and lawyers.</p> <p>The research also considers some of the practical issues relating to the timing of decision-making and the most appropriate point at which legal proceedings can conclude. The contentious issue of whether information about prospective adopters should be made available at the conclusion of care proceedings is addressed, with mixed views expressed. The practice of the National Adoption Consortium of not accepting referrals until a care order has been made is criticised by several professionals, although others point out the risk that decisions about whether parents are able to care for a child may be unduly influenced due to comparison with information about prospective adopters.</p> <p>The work concludes with some suggestions for practice, for example allocating two social workers for the two distinct roles of considering rehabilitation and permanence.</p> <p>This was obviously a very small study and its findings are merely a snapshot of views held by a small sample at a particular time. It is recognised that more research is needed, in particular with non-professionals involved in the process and a more longitudinal analysis.</p> <p>This document presents an interesting opportunity to reflect on the practices of the authorities we work with and the impact of our own role in the twin-track planning process.</p>
Reviewed by	Sharon Dyche

Author	Afuwape S
Title	Where are we with dual diagnosis (substance misuse and mental illness)? A review of the literature
Date	2003
Publisher	Rethink
Key words	Alcohol dependence, drug dependence, mental illness
Summary	<p>Aim of study To review the literature on dual diagnosis and highlight the key issues</p> <p>Methodology A literature search was conducted using databases and bibliographies. Dual diagnosis is used to refer to individuals “with severe mental illness and substance misuse problems”</p> <p>Findings</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A significant proportion of individuals with serious mental illness also abuse alcohol and/or drugs (between 52% and 16% depending on the study) • Several theories have attempted to explain the relationship between mental illness and substance misuse though none explains it fully • Integrated treatment approaches have proved more effective than parallel or serial treatment. Treatment services which reflect this approach are being introduced in the UK • Little is known about the experience of BME groups with dual diagnosis in the UK. Black mental health service users have worse outcomes than White service users • There is evidence that women with severe mental illness are more negatively affected by substance abuse than men. <p>Limitations Most of the literature reviewed is from the US.</p>
Reviewed by	HB

Author	Barnard M
Title	Drugs in the family: the impact on parents and siblings Findings
Date	2005
Publisher	JRF
Key words	Drug dependence
Summary	<p>Only the Findings has been read for this review</p> <p>Aim To describe the impact on parents and siblings when a young person uses drugs problematically. (There is research information about the effect on children of their parent’s drug use but little about older siblings.)</p> <p>Methodology 65 qualitative interviews were held with problem drug users, parents and younger brothers and sisters where possible from the same family. Recruitment took place through drug users in contact with a crisis drug treatment. 10 interviews were held with practitioners who worked with problem drug users and their families.</p> <p>Findings</p> <p>Taken from the JFR Findings</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • At the outset, families would try to solve the family member’s drug problem alone, usually without recourse to

	<p>agencies. The apparent intractability of the drug problem had a profoundly negative affect on the dynamics and functioning of most families.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Many parents linked deterioration in their physical and psychological health to the stresses of living with their child's drug problem. ■ Significant family conflict developed between parents and between the problem-drug-using child and their brothers and sisters, especially if the drug-using child was stealing goods and money from the family home. ■ Family relationships were skewed as the family member's drug problem assumed centre stage, with less time and attention for the other children. ■ Siblings often lamented the loss of a close relationship with their older drug-using brother or sister. ■ There was a mix of anger, sadness, anxiety, shame, social isolation and loss as parents, brothers and sisters struggled to adapt to the impacts of drugs on all their lives. This was greatly compounded by a sense of being impotent to alter the course of the drug problem. ■ In some cases, brothers and sisters were exposed to drugs simply because they shared the same house. In others, older children deliberately introduced their younger brothers and sisters to drug use. ■ There was an increased likelihood that younger brothers and sisters would themselves use drugs and develop drug problems. ■ The researcher concludes that a greater role for family support groups and therapeutic respite might be considered, along with measures such as mentoring for siblings. <p>Limitations Any small-scale study particularly without a rigorous sampling technique always calls into question the generalisability of the findings. There is no indication of the ethnicity of the families who took part. For the full report (56 pages) click here For other material relating to drug use in families see the RD Index using the keyword <i>Drug dependence</i></p>
Reviewed by	HB

Author	Bell A, Bryson C, Barnes M and O'Shea R
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Title	Use of Childcare Among Families from Minority Ethnic Backgrounds
Date	2005
Publisher	DfES, National Centre for Social Research
Key words	Child care, Diversity (Ethnic minority)
Summary	<p>Aim of study To explore the different views and experiences of child care of white and minority ethnic family</p> <p>Methodology Data is taken from two large studies <i>Baseline survey of parents' demand for childcare</i> (2000) and <i>Repeat study of parents' demand for childcare</i> (2002) in which over 10,000 families were interviewed.</p> <p>Findings</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Black Caribbean and white families were most likely to have used some child care and Pakistani, Bangladeshi and Black African least likely • Black children were more likely to have received only formal (not friends or family) care and white families most likely to use informal care. Their use of grandparents was twice as likely as for minority ethnic groups • Black parents were most likely to have experienced difficulty in finding child care and Asian parents least likely • Affordability of child care was more likely to be an issue for minority ethnic parents.
Reviewed by	HB

Author	Brady L, Harwin J, Pugh G, Scott J and Sinclair R
Title	Specialist fostering for young people with challenging behaviour: Coram family's fostering new links project Executive Summary
Date	2005
Publisher	Coram Family, Brunel University, National Children's Bureau
Key words	Fostering, Case practice
Summary	<p>Only the Executive Summary has been read for this review</p> <p>Aim of the report To provide an account of a specialist fostering scheme, Fostering New Links, which provided supported care, and education and therapeutic services to children in London with challenging behaviour. The scheme operated from 1998 to May 2004.</p> <p>Methodology The report reviews the current role of specialist foster care, how the scheme operated including the assessment of the needs of young people, the extent to which the scheme achieved its objectives, the views of some of the young people and others involved and lessons learned.</p> <p>Findings</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is a high level of demand for intensive foster treatment care services • The young people presented high levels of risk both to themselves and to others • A holistic service was needed but proved difficult to provide in practice • 60% of young people who had been with the scheme for four or more months were able to return to school though most had been out of school when they started with the

	<p>project</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 56% of the placements ended prematurely. Children of mixed race were disproportionately likely to be in placements that ended early • Of the 75 placements, 16 young people showed significant improvements in their behaviour, 23 some improvement and for 22 their behaviour started well but deteriorated. • One of the factors which led to the closure of the project was the difficulty in recruiting sufficient carers • In terms of value for money, a placement cost £2000 per week, less than the cost of a residential placement or custody. <p>For the full report click here. (116p)</p>
Reviewed by	HB

Author	Brophy, J
Title	Building Bridges in Changing Worlds: Messages from International Child Maltreatment Research
Journal	Representing Children
Date	February 2005
Volume/issue	17(2); pp 116 – 30
Subject (key words)	Child protection, Diversity
Summary	<p>With reference to her own research, the author stresses the need for the family justice system to address diverse values/ belief systems if it is going to respond effectively to allegations of child maltreatment in ethnic minority households. She has undertaken an international review of research on child maltreatment and cultural contexts and in this article discusses studies relating to three contemporary themes:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Links between poverty, child maltreatment and ethnicity 2. Cross-cultural attitudes to child maltreatment 3. Reporting of maltreatment from a comparative perspective. <p>She comments on the difficulty of drawing firm conclusions given that the endeavour is complex, methodologies vary and relevant research tools may not be available. There are areas of the world where no comparable studies have been made. The findings are complex but some messages are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • That sexual abuse is most widely viewed as unacceptable; • That strong generalisations must be avoided but that studies provide an important starting point, e.g. in most Mexican societies, physical punishment would be described as a positive practice, necessary to good socialization but these views are not shared by all parents. However, those mothers reported as abusive also reported a strong belief in the educational value of punishment; • That there is a complex interplay between poverty and other factors that contribute to maltreatment. For example, the social 'connectedness' in minority neighbourhoods can be a protective factor; • That cultural beliefs affect the use of interview inventories, e.g. Greek mothers avoid endorsing negative statements

	<p>about their children because of a strong belief that this reflects negatively on them;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • That cultural beliefs affect the reporting of abuse, e.g. young Canadian Asians are more likely to perceive themselves as ill-treated in childhood than young people remaining in Asia.
Reviewed by	PL

Author	Bryson C, La Valle I, O'Shea R and Barnes M
Title	Use of Childcare Among Families with Children who have Special Educational Needs
Date	2005
Publisher	DfES National Centre for Social Research
Key words	Child care, Special needs
Summary	<p>Aim of study The report aims to explore the ways in which experience and views about childcare differ for children with SEN</p> <p>Methodology Data is taken from two large studies <i>Baseline survey of parents' demand for childcare</i> (2000) and <i>Repeat study of parents' demand for childcare</i> (2002) in which over 10,000 families were interviewed.</p> <p>Findings</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Children with SEN were more likely to be living in disadvantaged families • Controlling for socio-demographic characteristics, children with SEN were more likely than others to be receiving child care • Amongst children with SEN, those with sight, hearing and speech difficulties were most likely to be receiving child care • Children with SEN were less likely to receive informal child care (from relatives and friends) • Parents of children with SEN experienced greater difficulty in accessing the child care they wanted. <p>Limitations The Summary gives no indication of the frequency with which child care is used by different groups of parents</p>
Reviewed by	HB

Author	Chase E and Statham J
Title	The Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children and Young People: An Overview of key literature and data
Date	2004
Publisher	Thomas Coram Research Unit
Key words	Child protection (Commercial sexual exploitation)
Summary	<p>Only the Summary of the Report has been read for this review.</p> <p>Aim of study "To provide an accessible overview of information relevant to the commercial sexual exploitation (CSE) of children and young people in the UK". The report focuses on abuse through prostitution, abuse through pornography and the trafficking of children and young people. It covers policy and legislation relating to CSE, including</p>

	<p>international treaties, prevalence, the profiles of those affected, preventative strategies and support services.</p> <p>Methodology The literature was found by using Child Data and the eLSC and then “snowballing” from articles traced through the two databases.</p> <p>Findings</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support services are available to young people exploited through prostitution but provision is patchy and there is little evidence on the outcomes for those accessing these services • The issues relating to pornography and the grooming of children on the internet are highly complex. The strategies to protect children need to be correspondingly wide ranging. • The information on the trafficking of children for CSE is limited as are the mechanisms to support those at risk.
Reviewed by	HB

Author	Chand A & Thoburn J
Title	Child and family support services with minority ethnic families: what can be learned from research
Journal	Child & Family Social Work
Date	May 2005
Volume/issue	Volume 10, no 2
Subject (key words)	Diversity (Ethnic minority), Case practice
Summary	<p>It is difficult, and of limited value, to summarise a summary of a large number of research studies into the relationship between primarily local authority services and minority ethnic families. It is perhaps more useful to look at any possible general lessons to be drawn in providing social work services to such families.</p> <p>The personal qualities of the worker found in successful helping relationships are familiar ones: accuracy, empathy, warmth and genuineness. More specifically, the following qualities were sought in professionals: -</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To be sensitive, open-minded and respectful • Knowledgeable about the particular concerns of families • Have appropriate and useful skills • Acknowledge that they do not always have an answer • Seek advice from people from the same community or faith group, who speak the first language of the family • Not appear arrogant or superior • Be open, honest and reliable <p>On the issue of whether individuals and families should have ethnically matched social workers, the answer is mixed: matching can provide more successful outcomes, but an ability to respond sensitively and effectively to people from all ethnic groups – cultural competence – is an essential for all workers. One black adopter is quoted approvingly as suggesting that it's not essential to have a black worker, but one should be available.</p>
Reviewed by	SH

Author	Clark A & Statham J
Title	Listening to young children: experts in their own lives
Journal	Adoption & Fostering
Date	Spring 2005 Special Issue: Listening to children
Volume/issue	Volume 29 No 1
Subject (key words)	Children's views/participation (Child competence)
Summary	<p>Is it possible to obtain the views of children under the age of 5 on relevant issues?</p> <p>The researchers from Thomas Coram Unit sought to obtain the views of two groups of 3-4 year olds, containing 8 and 28 children respectively, on certain aspects of their nurseries. The method used, the Mosaic approach, combined child observation; child to child and adult to child interviews; the use of single-use or digital cameras to take photos of 'important things'; tours of the building directed and recorded by the children; making simple maps of the site using children's drawings and photos; and a 'magic carpet' slide show of their view of their environment. Children were asked about important people, favourite places, and places they disliked. The authors suggest that the method could be used to obtain children's views about where they live in adoption and fostering work. There are clear links with life story work.</p>
Reviewed by	SH

Author	Cossar J
Title	Kinship Care – Retracing the Relationship between Family and State.
Journal	Social Work Monographs UEA Norwich
Date	2004
Volume/issue	Monograph 211
Publisher	UEA Norwich
Key words	Kinship placements, Social policy
Summary	<p>This study acknowledges the increasing use of Kinship Care placements in the USA and the UK. It places this in the context of contradictory evidence on outcomes for children (related at least in part to methodological problems); but the primary focus of the work is to explore what the author refers to as the ambivalent space that Kinship Care occupies between private family life and State intervention. The author includes all placements with family members – those under s17 support, under Residence Orders and under Care Orders.</p> <p>The author uses an existing (Fox-Harding) four-part 'taxonomy' to analyse the relationship between the State and the Family. She identifies provisions in the Children Act 1989 which can be aligned with each. What is interesting is that looking at the political/ideological basis of the legislation gives insight into how the law sees the extended family. Although the legislation makes it explicit that relatives and friends should be considered as placement options for a child – the extended family are not seen within the law as having a direct moral obligation to the</p>

	<p>child. An example of this is that they have to seek leave to apply to have their views and position addressed by the court. The author contrasts this with legislation in New Zealand where extended family members are at the heart of decision-making, regardless of parent confidentiality, via Family Group Conferencing (FGC). In the UK, extended family members tend to be seen as a resource rather than as full partners in the process.</p> <p>The author puts forward that this tenuous legal and moral position of the extended family leads to a lack of coherent policy on Kinship Care and polarised value judgements about their status, payment, assessment and support within a system geared to non-family placements.</p> <p>In terms of practice, this study puts forward four areas for development. The first is that there should be some consistent policy on the use of FGC's and more clarity regarding the rights responsibilities and duties of those outside the nuclear family. The second is that specialist Kinship workers should assess potential carers using a tailored and more inclusive assessment framework. The third is that the issue of financial support to the range of family carers should be decided through national policy to eliminate the postcode lottery and finally social workers need to be trained and culturally competent to ensure that judgements about families are not based on cultural stereotypes.</p>
Reviewed by	Kathryn Smith

Author	Dance C & Rushton A
Title	Joining a new family: the views and experiences of young people placed with permanent families during middle childhood
Journal	Adoption & Fostering
Date	2005 Special Issue: Listening to children
Volume/issue	Volume 29 No 1
Subject (key words)	Adoption, Fostering (Long term fostering), Children's views/participation

Summary	<p>This is another report from the long term study of a group of 223 children placed, in the early and mid-90s, with a total of 133 non-kinship families where the plan was adoption or long term fostering, and at least one of the children was between the ages of 5 and 11 (late permanent placement). Interestingly 8 of the 16 planned long term foster placements had become adoptions.</p> <p>This article looks at the young people's experience after six years. 44 (20%) of the young people were no longer with the family. Of the remaining 176, 29 took part in face-to-face interviews, and a further 47 completed questionnaires, making a total of 46% of the 176. Although the group were found to be representative statistically, participants had to be willing, and have consenting carers. There was therefore an element of selectivity.</p> <p>Overall the majority of young people whose placement was continuing were satisfied with their current circumstances. Although many found the transition to a new home a difficult and lengthy process, most had settled and saw themselves as part of a family, and parent-child relationships were viewed as positive and strong. It was notable that siblings placed with the same family could report dissimilar outcomes. Quotes provide small insights into the realities faced by the children on their brave journeys towards family life. One child said <i>"I was here for three years and I kept thinking 'Do they or don't they?' but now I know they do [love me]"</i>.</p> <p>There was a very small minority [n 5] who felt strongly that adoption was not right for them; they could not accept being adopted, rather than their particular family, it appeared. This group raised questions for the authors about previous assessment of placement need (although sibling groups can present dilemmas), adoption support services, and whether other legal arrangements e.g. special guardianship may be more acceptable.</p> <p>In a final postscript, the authors point out that these were the current views of the participants, which may have since changed.</p>
Reviewed by	SH

Author	Dickens J
Title	Being 'the epitome of reason': The challenges for lawyers and social workers in child care proceedings
Journal	International Journal of Law, Policy and the Family
Date	2005
Volume/issue	19/1
Key words	Case practice, Legal representation (Lawyers), Local authorities
Summary	<p>Aim of study "To investigate the contemporary state of the social worker-solicitor relationship in England"</p> <p>Methodology Interviews were held with 27 social services staff and 27 solicitors between March 2001 and April 2002.</p> <p>Findings Tensions arose between social workers and solicitors</p>

	<p>because of their different understandings of what constituted reasonableness</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Social workers expected their solicitors to fight hard in court on their behalf whereas solicitors prioritised the non-adversarial philosophy, negotiated settlement and sensitivity to the vulnerability of many parents • Solicitors see their client as the local authority rather than the social worker and they are conscious of their professional role in court. Social workers look to support and defence against criticism <p>Nevertheless, most solicitor/social worker pairings were successful.</p> <p>A good working relationship depended on reasonable and professional inter-personal behaviour which included “an awareness of, and willingness to discuss, the different roles and responsibilities each group has”.</p> <p>Limitations Although referring to the fact that the solicitors for parents and local authorities may behave differently on behalf of their clients, the author does not examine the different financial arrangements and the effects this may have on behaviour. The fact that the social worker develops a closer relationship with the child than the solicitor is also not examined as a likely reason for different behaviour.</p>
Reviewed by	HB

Author	Edwards R, Hadfield L and Mauthner M
Title	Children’s understanding of their sibling relationships
Date	2005
Publisher	JRF
Key words	Families (Siblings)
Summary	<p>Aim of study To explore how children understand and experience their everyday relationships with the siblings</p> <p>Methodology Interviews were carried out with 58 children, divided equally between girls and boys, aged between seven and thirteen. Half came from working class families and half middle class. Most children were white. Half lived with both their biological parents, a quarter in step-families and with rest were in lone-mother or extended families.</p> <p>Findings</p> <p>The full report has not been read and the findings are quoted from JFR Findings</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Children often said that having brothers and sisters meant there was always someone there for them, and gave an emotional sense of protection from being alone. Children loved and cared for each other, but also recognised that everyday disputes occurred. Some children, however, intensely disliked their siblings. • Some children said that their brothers and sisters gave them a strong sense of identity as being part of a group, and saw sharing possessions and bedrooms as unremarkable. Others regarded themselves as individuals

	<p>who were also siblings. They had a strong sense of independence and found it difficult to share possessions or bedrooms with their siblings.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Talking together was important to girls in their relationships with their sisters, while for boys doing things together mattered in their relationships with their brothers. In brother-sister relationships, activities took precedence over talking. • Children often talked about older brothers and sisters taking care of and protecting younger siblings, as well as having power over them, and about younger siblings as receivers of this attention and authority. Some younger siblings, however, looked after their older brothers or sisters, or saw them as immature. • Children had a sense of change over time in themselves and their siblings as they grew older. They continually faced change in their everyday relationships with their brothers and sisters, not just in problematic family circumstances. • The researchers conclude that sibling relationships are complex and diverse, and that children are active in shaping these relationships. This has implications for a range of fields of professional practice, such as parenting skills, family therapy and bullying initiatives. <p>Limitations A sample of 58 does not allow for reliable statistical analysis. The Findings do not address the influence of ethnic group, class or family composition on sibling relationship.</p>
Reviewed by	HB

Author	Foreman DM, Foreman D and Minty E
Title	The association between hyperkinesis and breakdown of parenting in clinic populations
Journal	Archives of Disease in Childhood
Date	2005
Volume/issue	90:245-248
Key words	Health, Family problems
Summary	<p>Aim of study To examine removals from home in families where hyperkinesis (severe hyperactivity) was accurately diagnosed</p> <p>Methodology 201 cases were examined from a secondary care clinic</p> <p>Findings</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • About one per cent of children in the UK are thought to have severe hyperactivity • Severe hyperactive children were three times more likely to be removed from their families than children at the same clinic being treated for other psychiatric disorders • Prompt diagnosis and treatment are likely to reduce the risk of removal from home • The use of screening tools, such as the Strengths and

	<p>Difficulties Questionnaire (included in the Framework for Children in Need) can improve the detection rates for hyperkinesis.</p> <p>Limitations The findings relate to children in a clinical sample and may not therefore apply to children who have not been referred to a clinic.</p>
Reviewed by	HB

Author	Farmer E, Lipscombe J and Moyers S
Title	Foster Carer Strain and its Impact on Parenting and Placement Outcomes for Adolescents
Journal	British Journal of Social Work
Date	2005
Volume/issue	35/2
Key words	Looked after children, Fostering, Adolescence
Summary	<p>Aim To examine whether there were particular 'parenting' skills and/or supports or other factors that contributed to good outcomes for fostered adolescents.</p> <p>Methodology A sample of 68 young people (aged 11-17) who had recently been placed with foster carers because of concerns about their current behaviour and/or emotional well-being was drawn from 14 LAs and two independent fostering agencies. Case files were read. Interviews were held with the young people, their carers and social workers three months after the start of the placement and nine months later (after 12 months in the placement) or at the point of disruption. Standardised measures were used. 18% were from minority ethnic backgrounds.</p> <p>Findings</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The level of strain experienced by foster carers was high with over quarter at first interview experiencing clinical or sub-clinical levels (GHQ) • The extent of strain experienced by foster carers depended on: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The number of conduct difficulties displayed by the young people. Violence to other young people and hyper-activity were particularly stressful. 2. Problems with contact such as unreliability, inappropriate amounts of contact, rejection by the parents and lack of safety. (These affected 41% of carers.) 3. The number of stressful events experienced by the carers in the 6 months prior to the placement 4. The reluctance of the foster carer to agree to the placement 5. The perceived availability of the social worker and their sensitivity to carer views. • High levels of strain had a negative impact on parenting, in particular on carer's ability to respond appropriately to children with an emotional age below their chronological age. Highly stressed carers were less likely to like the young people fostered with them, and to be committed and engaged with them. • High levels of stress were associated with more frequent

	<p>placement breakdown</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Enhanced levels of support from social workers and other professionals appeared to attenuate the experience of strain for foster carers.
Reviewed by	HB

Author	Greenan L
Title	Violence against women: A literature review (103 pages)
Date	2005
Publisher	Scottish Executive
Key words	Domestic violence,
Summary	<p>This is a useful review as it is up to date and focuses on interventions as much if not more than on the prevalence and the consequences of violence against women. It was commissioned by the Scottish National Group to Address Violence Against Women.</p> <p>Aim of study To review the literature on the prevalence and the impact of violence against women in all its aspects (sexual violence, domestic violence and commercial sexual exploitation) and on interventions. It also aims to identify gaps in research and failures of policy and practice.</p> <p>Methodology The inclusion criteria and search methods for the literature review are not described.</p> <p>Findings (From a hundred page report, only those that add a different perspective to the knowledge base on violence against women are noted.)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The review considers the evidence about all violence against women not just violence within the family The point is made that women may experience a range of different forms of violence but that services tend to be focused on one form of violence (rape or domestic violence) There were few evaluative studies of services and no studies were found which evaluated interventions designed to respond more broadly to women's experience of violence The nature of the research literature available is heavily dependent on the type of violence being investigated and the academic discipline undertaking the research There is very little evidence on interventions designed for black and ethnic minority women, women with disabilities, older women and lesbian women Women survivors of male violence consistently make the connection between child abuse, rape, domestic violence and commercial sexual exploitation. The author argues that these links will only be "made visible in policy and practice" when violence against women is seen as a symptom of wider gender inequalities. <p>Limitations As there is no account of the inclusion criteria and search strategy it is impossible to assess the comprehensiveness of the review and its theoretical stand point. For the Executive Summary click here</p>
Reviewed by	HB

Author	Harnett, R
Title	Doing Peer Advocacy: Insights from the Field
Journal	Representing Children
Date	February 2005
Volume/issue	17(2); pp 131 – 41
Subject (key words)	Children's views/participation (Advocacy for children)
Summary	<p>Reports on a study of four peer advocacy projects set up to promote young peoples' participation in the design and delivery of statutory services. Based on systematic analysis of interviews with 23 young people, 9 young person coordinators and 12 mentors or managers.</p> <p>Makes a number of practice points about how such groups can be run effectively.</p> <p>Concludes that peer advocacy can be effective in enabling young people from disadvantaged groups to have their voices heard at a policy-making level but that projects need careful design, good support and high-level recognition.</p>
Reviewed by	PL

Author	Hester M and Westmarland N
Title	Tackling domestic violence: effective interventions and approaches
Date	2005
Publisher	Home Office
Key words	Domestic violence, Support services
Summary	<p>Only the Summary has been read for this review</p> <p>Aim of study To provide an overview of the findings from 7 separate evaluations the Home Office Crime Reduction Programme (CRP) which was targeted at domestic violence and rape and sexual assault. The key aim was to identify what worked. See also in this RD Tackling Domestic Violence: providing advocacy and support to survivors from Black and other minority ethnic communities</p> <p>Methodology The evaluation teams used a mixture of quantitative and qualitative methods including interviews with staff and survivors, focus groups, questionnaires and the analysis of statistical data.</p> <p>Findings</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Women were more likely to report violence where legal advocacy was available and where there were close links between the projects and the police • Most projects reduced the attrition rate in the criminal justice system. This was associated with intensive legal and other support. • Repeat victimisation was generally reduced following project intervention. "The most effective approach was the tailoring of advocacy and support to the specific needs of the victim." • The provision of panic alarms and increased home security increased victims sense of confidence and safety alongside other support

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Better and more consistent data collection is needed
Reviewed by	HB

Author	Hobson B (editor)
Title	Making men into fathers: men, masculinities and the social politics of fatherhood
Publisher	Cambridge University Press
Date	2002
Subject (key words)	Fathers, Families, Social policy, Parents
Summary	<p>This collection of international papers attempts a sociological analysis of what it describes as the 'crisis of fatherhood', and the subsequent responses within political and social policy. The said 'crisis' is reflected in the use of phrases such as deadbeat dads, absent fathers, failed breadwinners, feminised families, and unmarriageable males. On the other hand, there is evidence that some fathers are more involved in the care of their children than before e.g. the appearance of baby changing facilities in men's toilets in supermarkets.</p> <p>Laments about the decline of the family and the growth of divorce go back many years. Children were then described as suffering from broken homes. There has been renewed focus in a number of Western countries on the role of men as providers of cash to separated families, and later on their role as providers of care to their children. There are some signs that men are seeking to redefine their own role as fathers, not least through fathers groups in the UK.</p> <p>Attitudes vary significantly between countries and individual policies need to be seen in the context of wider beliefs and attitudes.</p> <p>Sweden is seen as a particularly pro-father society with its 'daddy month', which requires each parent to take at least one month's leave or lose parental benefit for that month, and a 91% level of joint custody orders for divorcing couples. It is notable however that nearly a quarter of all divorce cases end up in court. Until 1973, each child born out of wedlock was allocated a social worker to ensure the child's father was designated and maintained his child. Such policies – 'compulsory fatherhood' - link to a strong emphasis on biological fathers, even if the children are actually cared for by step-fathers. Government adverts have promoted the idea of soft, nurturing fathers (the 'velour pappa').</p> <p>The US, and to an extent the UK, shies away from intruding on what is seen as private life. This is the home of the 'deadbeat dad' - the male equivalent of the 'mother on welfare' - often from an ethnic minority, pressed to provide for their children where single men cannot claim welfare payments. The UK has the Child Support Agency.</p> <p>In Spain, fathers are jailed for failing to pay child support. There are possible signs of fatherhood being reclaimed by men even if the groups are disparate, and diverse in their Identification of the problems and their solutions. In the US some groups emphasise spiritual, cultural and economic</p>

	poverty, and see marriage and greater income equality as the solution. This type of group tends to stress men's responsibilities. Groups emphasising father's rights see the government and feminism as the main enemies, and seek an end to their perceived inequality of rights. Such movements involve relatively small numbers of men. The most tangible change is perhaps the spreading acceptance in Western Europe of a legal assumption of shared custody, as advocated by the Conservative Party recently in the UK. Whether this amounts to a real sharing of parenting, rather than just an equality of possessive rights, depends principally on the decisions of individual parents as they manage their family lives after separation
Reviewed by	SH

Author	Horwath, Jan
Title	Identifying and assessing cases of child neglect: learning from the Irish experience
Journal	Child & Family Social Work
Date	2005
Volume/issue	Volume 10, no 2
Subject (key words)	Child protection (Neglect), Case practice (Assessment)
Summary	<p>The author, a university lecturer, reports on a small scale study commissioned by an Irish health board into how neglect cases were treated, based on an analysis of 57 case files, a postal questionnaire to social work staff (40 out of 66 returned), and focus groups attended by 34 staff.</p> <p>The main theme of the findings was the variation in practice regarding: -</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How social workers interpret the assessment task • Which family members were contacted • Which professionals were contacted • The type of communication SWs had with children and carers • The use made of information on social work files <p>Teams seemed to define neglect in different ways that were adopted by team members. However how SWs worked with children, families and other professionals seemed to vary between individuals within the same teams. The author sees supervision as a critical means of reflecting on practice. She argues for assessment to be child focused, with the needs of the child determining outcomes.</p>
Reviewed by	SH

Author	Jowitt S
Title	Child Protection and the Decision-Making Process: Assessments of Risk and Systems of Professional Knowledge, Judgement and Beliefs
Date	2003
Publisher	The Bridge Publishing House Ltd
Key words	Child protection, Case practice
Summary	Aim To review literature which identifies the significant factors

	<p>that influence professional decision-making in child protection</p> <p>Methodology The inclusion criteria for the literature reviewed is not described nor search methodology</p> <p>Findings</p> <p>Bias and error arise in assessments for the following reasons:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Oversimplification of complex material • Over reliance on initial assessments • 'The rule of optimism' in which social workers are required to think best of parents • Failure to review assessments with new information • Failure to collect all the available information • Group decision making (case conferences) may confirm initial views without challenge • Lack of time for staff to think critically about their cases • Lack of underpinning knowledge <p>The author argues that support needs to be provided to social workers to allow them to use an evidence based approach to assessment which encourages prudent judgements in the face of inherent uncertainty</p>
Reviewed by	HB

Author	Mac an Ghail M and Haywood C
Title	Young Bangladeshi people's experience of transition to adulthood Findings
Date	2005
Publisher	JRF
Key words	Diversity (Asian children and families)
Summary	<p>Only the Findings have been read for this review</p> <p>Aim of study To understand the experience of young Bangladeshis growing up in a predominantly white area, Newcastle</p> <p>Methodology 60 young Bangladeshis (half male and half female) aged between 18 and 18 were interviewed. A comparative group of 40 (20 male and 20 female) white young people were also interviewed. Statistical information was collected on the national and local socio-economic circumstances of young Bangladeshis.</p> <p>Findings</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "The combined effects of Bangladeshis' relatively recent migration to Britain, high levels of poverty, under-achievement at school, radicalisation and gender stereotyping result in social exclusion and accompanying limiting life-course opportunities. • White institutional figures such as teachers and employers tend to work with stereotypical images of young Asians as being 'caught between two cultures', thus assuming that they experience cultural conflict and identity crisis. • There is a serious anomaly between their parents' high expectations and their teachers' low expectations of young Bangladeshis' school achievement. • In terms of future internal migration within Britain, compared with the Bangladeshis the young white people tended to understand their future lives as more likely to be living away

	<p>from Newcastle.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The younger generation of Bangladeshis are not actively involved in representing their community and there is an acute lack of Bangladeshi youth leaders to support Bangladeshi young people. • Young Bangladeshis spoke of the early death of a parent or a relative as combining a sense of trauma and increased maturity. A main traumatic experience for young white people, which was also experienced as developing maturity, was their parents' divorce. • Service providers report that they have difficulties accessing and providing services to the Bangladeshi community and, more specifically, to Bangladeshi young people. • Due mainly to the lack of detailed ethnic monitoring, there is a serious lack of official information about the needs of the Bangladeshi community in Newcastle.” <p>Limitations It would be interesting to have had a control group from a Bangladeshi group living in a major multicultural city to establish what difference it made growing up in a multicultural or majority white environment. For the full report (64 pp) click here</p>
Reviewed by	HB

Author	Mantle G
Title	Helping Parents in Dispute: Child centred mediation at county court
Date	2001
Publisher	Ashgate Publishing Ltd
Key words	Dispute resolution (CAFCASS dispute resolution), Dispute resolution (Mediation)
Summary	<p>Aim The survey aimed ‘to evaluate recipient perspectives on the significance, duration outcome and effects of in-court agreements and to consider the potential implications for policy and practice.’</p> <p>Methodology This ‘essay’ is based on a postal survey of parents who attended county court mediation sessions with court welfare officers in Essex 1998-99. ‘Paired data’ (i.e. responses from both parties) was obtained on 65 cases.</p> <p>Findings The picture of the characteristics of this population of court users is much less detailed than that now available to us in the more recent Essex survey of Trinder et al. But Mantle’s work is in some ways complementary. It includes important findings on the settlement rate and duration of agreements achieved through in-court mediation. Settlement was achieved in about 70% of the mediation meetings held; about half of these agreements survived for six months. These rates are described as ‘rather good’, better Mantle claims than the rates typically found in the voluntary sector. Such findings therefore, he claims, challenge the widely held assumption that ‘mediation is more effective away from court premises.’ Perhaps. But as Mantle readily acknowledges</p>

	<p>research in the field of mediation effectiveness is scant. And the extent to which a postal survey such as this can measure 'effectiveness' is limited.</p> <p>Nonetheless Mantle's evidence of success is remarkable, all the more so in the context of Trinder's portrayal of Essex applicants for contact orders who, in their levels of distress and conflict, their lack of empathy and evident incapacity for any conception of co-parenting seem to have more in common with the subjects of welfare reports than with those separating parents who are likely to bring their disputes to out of court mediation services.</p> <p>Mantle's discussion of key issues, fatherhood and family breakdown, domestic violence, enforcement of orders/agreements, children's rights, has in some important respects been overtaken by events. He is, after all writing pre CAFCASS. Surely we can now assume that our practice in relation to applications for contact in which domestic violence has been alleged has moved some distance beyond the acceptability of a mandatory conciliation appointment in which victim is confronted by perpetrator, as portrayed in this book? Certainly our policy has. And if Mantle's work has helped to push our policy and practice forward in these areas we must be grateful to him.</p> <p>It is not entirely clear quite how agreements were reached in just one meeting. Lawyers and judges seem to play a major, perhaps decisive role. The impression is of a pretty crude model of family mediation; no screening for domestic violence; little preparation for or prior exposition of the principles of mediation; participants obliged to share waiting areas and then to confront one another face to face in cramped offices; mediators and parents under pressure either quickly to reach agreement along stereotypical lines or to have to submit to court imposed solutions; no consideration given to the active involvement of children in the process; the toleration of significant power imbalances in the mediation meeting; mediators failing to furnish parents with any written record of agreements reached.</p>
Reviewed by	Charles Place

Author	Masson, Judith
Title	Emergency intervention to protect children: using and avoiding controls
Journal	Child and Family Law Quarterly
Date	2005
Volume/issue	Volume 17 No 1
Subject (key words)	Family law, Case practice CAFCASS, Child protection
Summary	<p>The removal of a child from his or her parents is probably one of the most draconian acts of any state, and yet little research has been conducted in this area. It is also a key area where CAFCASS acts to seek to safeguard and protect children's interests</p> <p>Two research projects, on the use of police protection [PPO]</p>

	<p>and emergency protection orders [EPO], form the basis for this important exploration of the practice of local authorities and the police regarding the emergency protection of children. The police protection study examined 311 incidents involving 420 children from 8 forces. The EPO study looked at all applications in a 12 month period from a group of 6 local authorities, partly overlapping with the police forces, involving 127 children from 86 families. 137 interviews were conducted with professionals, in addition to telephone interviews with police and magistrates legal advisers from other areas to provide a wider practice context. An unspecified number of children's guardians in three CAF/CASS areas filled in questionnaires.</p> <p>PPO and EPOs were introduced in 1991 to replace the much-criticised Place of Safety Order, which was seen as too long in duration, and lacking in accountability and transparency. The author identifies new practices that have arisen apparently unintended by the Children Act.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Local authorities frequently ask the police to take out PPOs, using the authority of a single unspecialised police officer. • In the name of partnership with parents, local authorities will often ask parents to agree to the accommodation of their children, without time limit, saying that otherwise care proceedings will be initiated. To describe this as 'working together', when there is major power differential, and parents almost always have no legal advice, seems dubious. • The request by parents for the return of their children from accommodation becomes interpreted by the local authority as a breach of the 'voluntary agreement' with the local authority, requiring consideration of legal proceedings. • Any breach of the 'voluntary agreement' can be interpreted as an emergency providing grounds for an EPO application, rather than any immediate risk to the child. • In many court areas EPO applications do not arise out of normal office hours, PPOs apparently being used. • There are courts where <u>either</u> on notice or without notice EPO applications are rare, being against the practice preferred by the local court. <p>The author notes that the reluctance to make court applications could be linked to a fear that the relationship with the parents may become adversarial, but could also be about a desire to avoid the intervention and scrutiny of a court, and a children's guardian.</p> <p>Even when EPO applications were made, in only 15-17% of cases were parents legally represented and able to challenge the local authority view.</p> <p>The author concludes that courts are not in fact holding local authorities to account for their removal of children from parents.</p>
Reviewed by	SH

Author	Meltzer H, Corbin T, Gatward R, Goodman R and Ford T
Title	The mental health of young people looked after by local authorities in England: Summary report
Date	2003
Publisher	ONS
Key words	Mental illness (Child mental illness), Looked after children
Summary	<p>Aim The national survey was carried out in order to help plan services for looked after children with mental health problems.</p> <p>Methodology Questionnaires were sent to LAs relating to 2,315 children identified from LA returns to the DOH on LAC. 1,796 forms were returned. Interviews were conducted with most carers, the majority of children (aged 11-17) and many teachers in relation to 1,039 children aged 5 to 17.</p> <p>Findings</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Overall 45% of LAC were assessed as having a mental disorder. 37% had clinically significant conduct disorder, 12% had emotional disorders, 7% were rated as hyperactive and 4% had other mental disorders. • For children aged between 5 and 15, looked after children were about five times more likely than children living in private households to have a mental disorder • Children living in residential care were substantially more likely to have a mental disorder • The incidence of mental disorder fell in relation to the length of time the child had spent in his/her current placement (though what is cause and effect?) • The physical health of children with mental disorders was poorer than for those with no disorder (11% had poor health against 6% of children with no disorder.) • Almost all the children assessed as having a mental disorder had been in contact with a source of help in the previous year (specialist, front-line or informal service). 34% had been in touch with a specialist in child mental health and 23% with special educational services • Children with a mental disorder were twice as likely as those without to have marked difficulties with reading, mathematics and spelling, and twice as likely to have a statement of SEN. <p>For the full (264 page) report click here</p>
Reviewed by	HB

Author	O'Brien M
Title	Shared caring: Bringing fathers into the frame
Date	2005
Publisher	Equal Opportunities Commission
Key words	Fathers, Child care, Parents
Summary	<p>Aim of study To explore the extent to which fathers can be further incorporated into a shared caring framework from a family-employment perspective</p> <p>Methodology "The report reviews current academic and policy developments on shared caring with a focus on the role of fathers in employment"</p> <p>Findings</p>

	<p><i>Quoted from the Executive Summary</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “Research suggests that the ideal of the involved caring father is culturally embedded in Britain and can impact upon the feelings of mothers and fathers, even when men cannot be as involved as they would like. This ideal is creating new benchmarks by which father involvement is judged. • Time use studies consistently show that fathers, both resident and non-resident, are spending more time with their children, albeit still at a lower level than mothers. In dual full-time earner couples men spend about 75 per cent of women’s absolute time on childcare and other activities with dependent children. • Fathers’ involvement in housework remains low, contributing to women’s feelings of overload and unfairness, particularly for full-time working mothers. • Studies assessing the impact of father involvement in the early years on later child outcomes confirm the importance of early paternal investment in caring. In dual earner families where mothers work full-time in the first year of children’s lives, increased father involvement can protect child welfare. • In the early years, high levels of father support for mothers can increase infant feeding options and promote breast-feeding (British rates are currently low with only 28 per cent of UK mothers still breast-feeding at four months).” <p><i>From the text of the report</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Research suggests that high paternal involvement is ‘grounded’ in harmonious couple relationships and that the quality of fathers’ relationships with their children is more vulnerable than mothers’ to the negative effects of marital discord • Lower marital quality is more consistently associated with parental negativity to children (e.g. criticism, lack of warmth) for fathers than mothers. Mothers appear to have a vital mediation role in facilitating men’s parenting • For young fathers, the quality of their relationship with their partner during pregnancy, not their family and social background, was the most important factor predicting men’s post-natal involvement with infants. • Black British fathers are less likely to be living with their children than White British fathers and Asian fathers are the most likely to be living in a married couple family with their children.
Reviewed by	HB

Author	Parmar A, Sampson A and Diamond A
Title	Tackling Domestic Violence: providing advocacy and support to survivors from Black and other minority ethnic communities
Date	2005
Publisher	Home Office
Key words	Domestic violence, Diversity (Ethnic minority)
Summary	Aim To provide guidance on working with female victims of

	<p>domestic violence who are from minority ethnic groups</p> <p>Methodology The guidance draws on independent evaluations of multi-agency projects funded by the Violence Against Women Initiative. See Tackling domestic violence: Effective interventions and approaches in this RD.</p> <p>Findings</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Women preferred long-term and consistent support • Asian women tend to face particular cultural barriers in seeking help in relation to domestic violence and in leaving their partners • Muslim women may not be able to obtain a religious divorce even though they are legally divorced • Uncertain immigration status may be a barrier to accessing services • Some Asian women prefer the advocate to be Asian and speak their language • Some women may be the victims of racist attacks or institutional racism and these possibilities need to be explored • The information needs of women vary and need exploration
Reviewed by	HB

Author	Preston-Shoot and Wigley V
Title	Mapping the Needs of Children in Need
Journal	British Journal of Social Work
Date	2005
Volume/issue	35/2
Key words	Evidenced informed practice, Social policy
Summary	The paper reviews the literature on mapping needs with reference to children in need. It examines the resource and conceptual barriers to the effective mapping of need. Using one research project as an example it questions the extent to which mapping is able to inform planning and practice.
Reviewed by	HB

Author	Prevatt-Goldstein B & Spencer M.
Title	“Race” and Ethnicity: A consideration of issues for black, minority ethnic and white children in family placement.
Date	2000
Publisher	BAAF
Key words	Diversity (Ethnic Minority), Looked after children, Case practice (Assessment)
Summary	<p>This 23 page, A4 practice guide with it’s 13 short chapters updates the previous BAAF Practice Note 13 (The Placement needs of Black children) and Practice Note 26 (The Children Act 1989: The importance of culture, race, religion and language).</p> <p>It is based on recent UK research focussing on the premise that foster placements should meet the <i>individual</i> needs of each child on all levels within a legal framework requiring the</p>

consideration of racial origin, culture, religion and language, therefore highlighting the importance of recognising the needs arising from common experiences of racism and ethnicity in much the same way as it recognise the common needs related to age, experience of abuse etc.

The British research discussed in this practice guide focus on black adolescents and adults' experiences of alienation and the complexity of adjustment and attachments in foster placements with white families in comparison with those placed with black families.

Unfortunately the research studies used had small samples and were biased by agency and locality. They had the added difficulty of measuring complex concepts such as identity & self-esteem as well as a limited age range. Most significantly this research fails to compare children from ethnic minority groups other than black to majority ethnic groups. However it does base a lot of the recommendations on knowledge of child development theories, clinical research and literature on anti-racists practice.

Psychological theories highlights the importance of cultural, linguistic and religious continuity and draw on evidence of the damage inflicted in Australia and America where placement patterns ignored these factors. It also mentions that despite anti-racist practice being promoted in the UK for some years now, only 29% of local authorities actually has mechanisms in place helping them meet these children's' cultural, racial and ethnic needs.

The needs of foster carers and adopters to receive training and support to enable them to provide environments where children can be protected from racism, thereby helping them to recognised they are not alone in the experience and teach them not to perpetuate or collude with racism is highlighted in chapter 5.

Chapter 6 raise the importance of identity and self-esteem which to date has not received any mention in UK legislation despite it underpinning racial origin, culture, language and religion. It further encourage social workers to include these aspects in their assessments of foster carer's ability to meet the needs of children from minority groups. This chapter draws mainly on theories as there is little research on the conditions that nurture ethnic or racial identity.

A further helpful exploration of matters arising from delay and matching in families with diverse ethnicities is offered in chapters 7 & 8.

In addition this guide provide guidelines to agencies on multi-racial practice with specific guidance on placements with black families as opposed to white families whilst discussing some practical dilemma's such as "*what if the child looks white?*" or "*a black adolescent is refusing to go to a black foster home*" or "*The child is of Chinese, white Irish and African-Caribbean parentage. How long should we wait for the perfect match?*" (chapter 11.)

Lastly this book offers a view on current practice and provides some practice guidelines for better practice on topics such as the need for continuity in a child's life (i.e. language, religion

	and culture); racial origin, identity and self-esteem and other placement needs of children from minority groups.
Reviewed by	Landé Fourie

Author	SCIE
Title	Transition of young people with physical disabilities or chronic illness from children's to adult services
Date	2004
Publisher	SCIE, Trent Focus Group, Trent Institute
Key words	Case practice, Support services, Health, Special needs
Summary	<p>This is a SCARE (Social Care Access to Research Evidence) briefing, "a summary of information on a particular topic to update practice at the health and social care interface."</p> <p>Aim of briefing To summarise the knowledge base relating to the transition of YP with physical disabilities or chronic illness from children to adult services</p> <p>Methodology "identification of a focused question, comprehensive searching of multiple sources and filtering of materials for quality."</p> <p>Findings</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Children's and adult services do not plan and work together • Failure to recognise that transition is unique to the individual in terms of timescales and services needed • YP wish to be given information about their condition and to be able to discuss their concerns in confidence • A formal transition programme can be beneficial • Continuity of contact by those working with them can be helpful • Limitations Much of the research focuses on specific chronic illnesses rather than physical disability and much is descriptive rather than quantitative
Reviewed by	HB

Author	SCIE
Title	Short breaks (Respite care) for children with learning disabilities
Date	2004
Publisher	SCIE
Key words	Child care (Respite), Special needs
Summarzesy	<p>This is a SCARE (Social Care Access to Research Evidence) briefing, "a summary of information on a particular topic to update practice at the health and social care interface."</p> <p>Aim of briefing To summarise the knowledge base relating to short breaks (respite care) for children with learning disabilities</p> <p>Methodology "identification of a focused question, comprehensive searching of multiple sources and filtering of materials for quality."</p> <p>Findings</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Families do not get as many short breaks as they would like • Children with more complex and challenging needs are less likely to have short breaks

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Families prefer home-based breaks • MEG families are more likely to be placed in institutions than family settings and are less likely to be aware of short break services • Children are increasingly being consulted about the use of short breaks <p>Limitations The Briefing points out that the studies examined may be methodologically flawed, with small sample sizes. More research is needed on outcomes and the development of effective models.</p>
Reviewed by	HB

Author	Seden, J, Joshi, M, Owen, R & Williams, C
Title	Consultation and Consequences: a View of the Services Experienced by Some Young People and Six Families
Journal	Representing Children
Date	February 2005
Volume/issue	17(2); pp 142 – 57
Subject (key words)	Children’s views/participation, Parents (Parents’ views), Support services
Summary	<p>Reports on 2 consultations undertaken in 2001</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • With 5 young women involved in a therapeutic post-abuse group • With 6 families, parents of pre-school children seeking help. <p>Describes this work as embedded within the changing ideology from paternalistic welfare to public services that emphasise social inclusion and participation.</p> <p>Concludes that the findings are in line with much current writing and research. Clients want services that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Are available at the point of need • Are given in a timely and sensitive way • Treat them with respect • Treat service-users as partners in problem-solving • Avoid bureaucratic, dismissive responses • Offer time to listen, attend to need and offer emotional support • Respond flexibly • Attend to a basic level of service e.g. giving clear information, responding to phone messages.
Reviewed by	PL

Author	Shephard A
Title	Inappropriate Sexual Behaviour and Young People with Learning Difficulties
Date	2004
Volume/issue	Social Work Monographs 207
Publisher	University of East Anglia
Key words	Adolescence, Conduct disorder (Sexualised behaviour), Special needs (Learning difficulties)
Summary	Aim To obtain the views of statutory and non-statutory service

	<p>providers about their experiences in working with Children and Young People with Learning Difficulties, who displayed abusive sexual behaviour. In addition, the researcher wanted to identify how the workers responded to such behaviours and what strategies were used.</p> <p>Methodology A qualitative design in which the “inductive research method is developed from the data which is used to develop the theory.” Semi structured interviews were used to gain practioners’ personal perspectives on how they responded to the issues being investigated. Interviews were conducted with practioners from two different agencies. Social workers from a statutory service and 7 from a Voluntary organisation were interviewed. They were all volunteers.</p> <p>Findings</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • According to the writer most of the professionals interviewed said they lacked the confidence in managing inappropriate sexual behaviour from children and young people with learning difficulties. The ones with experience were more realistic about the difficulties and what could be achieved, while the others really did not know what to expect so they were more optimistic. • Lack of appropriate training and access to policies and procedures was a common theme. Better communication and increased multi-agency working was deemed to be more beneficial than access to specialist services for adolescent sexual abusers. <p>Limitations The sample was too small and there was no new information. However, this study may be quite beneficial to social work students who have little or knowledge of the subject or who are about to undertake their first research project. The relationship between the data, the findings and any claimed policy implications.</p>
Reviewed by	Vasalee Crawford

Author	Stace s and Roker D
Title	Parental supervision: the views and experience of young people and their parents
Date	2005
Publisher	JFR
Key words	Families, Parents, Children’s views/participation
Summary	<p>Only the Findings have been read for this review</p> <p>Aim of study To understand how ‘ordinary’ families (ie those with no links to statutory services) negotiate monitoring and supervision</p> <p>Methodology Interviews were conducted with 50 young people aged between 11 and 16 and with one or both of their parents. The families were diverse in terms of socio-economic status, age, ethnicity and family structure</p> <p>Findings</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Parents described knowing where their children were, what they were doing and who they were with as a key part of parental care, love and protection • Parents considered the local neighbourhood, the young person’s age and gender and his or her personality in

	<p>deciding how they would monitor and supervise their child</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Monitoring strategies depended on the quality of the parent child relationship • 'Emotional' monitoring was seen to be as important as monitoring physical whereabouts • Mothers were more involved than fathers in day-to-day monitoring and supervision • Mobile phones were seen as useful means of keeping in touch but the internet was seen as potentially risky. <p>Limitations It is not clear from the Findings whether only two parent families were included in the study. The effects of parental separation on monitoring was not therefore addressed.</p>
Reviewed by	HB

Author	Sloper P
Title	Meeting the needs of disabled children
Date	2002
Publisher	DOH, RIP, Making Research Count
Key words	Disability (Children with disabilities), Support services
Summary	<p>This is one of the Quality Protects Research Briefings series. It summarises the research on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>The numbers and circumstances of disabled children.</i> No comprehensive prevalence figures exist making a needs led service difficult to provide. But research does provide information on the circumstances of disabled children and their families. High levels of unmet need have been found in relation to information, short breaks from care, equipment, and the provision of skills and opportunities for the children. Families with a disabled child have to provide more care than other families affecting employment prospects and household income. Disabled children are over-represented in the population of looked after children. • <i>What helps</i> Well co-ordinated services and a single point of contact. This requires a multi-agency steering group to develop care co-ordination. Short terms breaks for carers are important in enabling parents to continue to care for a child. The Carers and Disabled Children Act 2000 provides carers with the right to receive an assessment of their own needs. Disabled children need to be able to participate in sport and leisure facilities. Parents and children want to be given good information about their condition and services available. They also want to be consulted on the provision of services.
Reviewed by	HB

Editors	Sudbery J, Hicks S, Thompson S, McLaughlin H and Bramley C with Wilson K
Title	A Bibliography of Family Placement Literature: A guide to publications on children, parents and carers
Date	2005
Publisher	BAAF
Key words	Adoption, Looked after children, Local authorities (Care

	planning,) Local authorities (Concurrent planning)
Summary	<p>Aim of study To provide a guide to the principle literature about adoption and fostering with the focus on the family placement of looked after children or those placed for adoption.</p> <p>Methodology A combination of professional knowledge and consultation and the search of electronic databases, bibliographies and reference lists was used to select relevant literature. The searches yielded six times as many references as are included in the Bibliography.</p> <p>Coverage The Bibliography covers</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Family placement – the current context in the UK • Family placement in general: foster care • Adoption and permanent foster care • Selected schemes and care arrangements • Race, ethnicity, gender, sexuality, disability and family placement • Attachment, therapeutic help and life story work <p>Limitations The criteria for selecting the items included in the Bibliography from the lists generated by the searches are not identified.</p>
Reviewed by	HB

Author	Thomas-Peter, K
Title	Assessment of Kinship Carers – some Key Issues
Journal	Representing Children
Date	February 2005
Volume/issue	17(2); pp 96 – 106
Subject (key words)	Kinship placements, Case practice (Assessment)
Summary	<p>The author has acted as Coordinator of a Kinship Assessment Project set up in May 2002 by ISWA for Birmingham Social Care and Health Department.</p> <p>In 2 years, the project made 190 assessments of which 40% were grandparents and 35% aunts and uncles. In one year, 60% children were placed in sibling groups and almost all were racially matched.</p> <p>Assessments were carried out using Form F2 (BAAF, 2000), which are also used to assess non-related carers.</p> <p>On the balance of this experience, the author notes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Often kinship care involves some acceptance of risk to be balanced with the potential advantages; • Argues that a different threshold might be appropriate in any approval process, giving weight to the potential advantages to the child of remaining within the family; • Although warmth and belonging are characteristic of kinship placements, this must not prevent a proper assessment of risk; • If kinship carers are exposed to a conflict of loyalties, they must be able to give the child's welfare priority; • Where there is family conflict, the carers need to be able to protect the child from conflict and from hostile messages

	<p>about their parents.</p> <p>The author believes that social work support should remain readily available in the early stages of placement. She expresses concern about the precipitate conclusion of court proceedings when kinship carers may need more time to develop confidence in their ability to manage. She considers that kinship care is a valuable resource offering a diversity of placement relevant to the needs of many children. Assessment is complex and requires sensitivity and skill.</p>
Reviewed by	PL

Author	Towner E, Dowswell T, Errington G, Burkes M, Towner J
Title	Injuries in children aged 0–14 years and inequalities
Date	2005
Publisher	Health Development Agency
Key words	Child protection, Medical issues
Summary	<p>Only the Summary was read for this review</p> <p>Aim of study To understand the variation in accidental injuries sustained by children according to age, gender, social and economic factors, culture and ethnicity and place.</p> <p>Methodology Issues related to inequality were examined from an earlier review of intervention studies</p> <p>Findings</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There are great variations in injury mortality and morbidity, reflecting children’s age, gender, socio-economic group, cultural or ethnic group and location • In particular, children from the poorest families are five times more likely to be killed as a result of unintentional injuries than those from the most affluent • These variations suggest room for improved outcomes • Greater knowledge about disparities between groups and factors leading to increased risk is important in designing interventions
Reviewed by	HB

Author	Ward,H.,Munro,E, Dearden,C. and Nicolson, D.
Title	Outcomes for Looked After Children: Life Pathways and Decision-Making for Very Young Children
Date	August 2003
Publisher	Centre For Child and Family Research Loughborough University
Key words	Looked after children, Case practice
Summary	<p>This study is part of a more extensive research programme exploring outcomes for children in care.</p> <p>The aim of this study is to explore the decision making process that influenced an early finding of a preponderance of very young children amongst those who stay long in care or accommodation.</p> <p>Methodology Sample taken from 6 authorities geographically spread. A comprehensive file search was conducted to trace chronologically all changes experienced by each child from birth until they ceased to be looked after or the end of study period. Semi – structured interviews were also conducted with professional staff from the authorities and court service</p>

	<p>including Children's Guardian's and parents and carers.</p> <p>Findings Of the children and young people who entered care or accommodation in 6 CSSRs (Councils with Social Service Responsibilities) between 1 April 1996 and 31 March 1997 and remained looked after for at least 12 months, by far the largest age group of children were babies who had entered care before their 1st birthday (42 children: 17%). Care plans at entry showed that 14 (36%) of these babies were expected to remain with their birth families or eventually return to them and only 4 (16%) did so. When very young children cannot be returned home quickly, the process of finding robust permanence solutions was complex and accounted for protracted stays in care. These children were the subject of a large number of changes both before and after they became 'looked after'.</p> <p>Limitations Sample is small (42 children) affecting the reliability and generalisability of the findings, particularly when relating to subgroups within the sample studied. Also over half the children came from one council. The data was collected in 1996/7 and changes since then include more use of parallel and concurrent planning, 'Quality Protects', the 'protocol' and more critical use of expert assessments. Limitations whilst acknowledged by study team, left me questioning its relevance but the study raised a number of interesting questions.</p> <p>Questions raised:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 'It must have been evident from an early stage that many of the children in this study would be unlikely to be able to return home, yet a high proportion of care plans specified this as the long term objective'. The study poses questions about the status of and confidence in social work assessments and also the use by social workers of research findings e.g. in relation to timescales for rehabilitation of adults with drug/alcohol/mental health problems. • There was a reluctance identified in the sample to consider foster carers as potential adopters and the study identified three standards of assessment for kinship, foster and adoptive placements. This raises the question of how advanced the use of concurrent planning is now 8/9 years on and whether the standard of assessments should vary. • The study posed the question of the value of the substantial efforts made to place siblings together when it was rarely possible to find placements for groups of 3 or more? The sample identified that the strength of sibling attachments was rarely assessed. • The child's ethnicity was a factor in determining how long the child remained looked after before permanence was secured. The study raises the question of how 'best' match decisions should be made where racially/culturally matched placements are not available within a reasonable timescale.
Reviewed by	Eileen Flavin

Author	Ward H, Skuse T & Munro E
Title	'The best of times, the worst of times': Young people's views of care and accommodation
Journal	Adoption & Fostering
Date	Spring 2005 Special Issue: Listening to children
Volume/issue	Volume 29 No 1
Subject (key words)	Fostering, Looked after children (Residential care), Children's views/participation
Summary	<p>The authors interviewed 27 young people from a selected sub-sample of 61 young people who had left care by September 2000, taken from an original cohort of 242 children and young people who had been in care or accommodation in one of 6 English local authorities between April 1996 and November 1998. Those interviewed had been contactable, and willing to be interviewed and the interview was not regarded by a 'gatekeeper' as against their interests. Inevitably this introduced an element of bias. Anonymous questionnaires sent in after distribution through the <i>Who Cares?</i> magazine produced more negative responses.</p> <p>The authors were surprised by the responses to the main study, in which the majority of young people had positive comments about the experience of care or accommodation, had happy memories of it and tended to regard it as having improved their life chances. Many of the features of care that were most appreciated were the more humdrum aspects of life for other children: having someone to talk to; doing ordinary things, family things like going to the cinema, or eating a meal together; or having someone who cares. This touching pleasure in being ordinary relates, of course, to its absence previously in their lives.</p> <p>Amidst the positive comments there were also evidence of the impersonal if not discriminatory nature of some foster homes, bullying in some residential homes, and poor practice by some SWs.</p>
Reviewed by	SH