



# **RESEARCH DIGEST**

## **2003 Issue 2**

Prepared by

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

**Research studies and articles based on research**

Author	Barnard M and Barlow J
Title	Discovering parental Drug Dependence: Silence and Disclosure
Journal	Children and Society
Date	2002
Volume/issue	17 45-56
Subject (key words)	Children, drug dependance
Summary	36 children and young people described growing up in families where at least one parent was dependent on drugs. Parents tried to shield children from exposure, but most demonstrated a detailed awareness of their parent's problem whilst having to live with the parentally imposed fiction that drugs were not at the heart of the family's dynamics. Children have great difficulty in sharing their knowledge and experience with anyone.

Author	Bream V and Buchanan A
Title	Distress among children whose separated or divorced parents cannot agree arrangements for them
Journal	British Journal of Social Work
Date	2003
Volume/issue	33 227-238
Subject (key words)	Separation, divorce, outcomes for children, distress, SDQ
Summary	The article of based on a larger study of children (116) who were subjects of welfare reports and their parents (100). As measured by the Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire (SDQ), 52%of boys and 48% of girls had significant adjustment problems immediately after the proceedings. A year later, 62% of boys and 32% of girls were still showing signs of maladjustment. Children were more likely to have problems where parents were also distressed and where there was domestic violence. The levels of distress seemed at least in part related to the court proceedings themselves.

Author	Brophy J, Jhutti-Johal and Owen C
Title	Significant harm: Child protection litigation in a multi-cultural setting
Date	2003
Publisher	LCD
Subject (key words)	Diversity, child protection, public law, ethnic minority
Summary	The <a href="#">Executive Summary</a> provides an overview of the study which examines how issues of cultural diversity are addressed in public law proceedings. It criticises the lack

	<p>of ethnic monitoring in public law which hampers the development of policy.</p> <p>The study is also critical of the inadequate information on court files relating to culture, race and religion. It discovered that expert reports varied in the degree to which cultural, racial and religious issues were addressed. The researchers make a distinction between 'descriptive' and 'substantive' treatment of these issues.</p> <p>The study is based on the analysis of court records for 183 children from 8 ethnic groups, observation of 36 family court hearings, and in-depth interviews with 25 key court personnel.</p> <p>A free copy by contacting the LCD on 020 7210 8520.</p>
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Author	Cobley, C. & Kemp, A.
Title	'Shaking Forces' – Shaken Baby Syndrome and the Level of Violence Involved
Journal	Family Law
Date	January 2003
Volume/issue	33 (pp 51 – 55)
Subject (key words)	Serious child abuse, shaking injuries, causation
Summary	<p>On the basis of recent cases taken to appeal as to whether the threshold conditions were met by evidence of subdural haematoma, the President of the Family Division has called for more research effort aimed at understanding 'Shaken Baby Syndrome'. Research by Geddes et al (2001) questioned the prevailing view that considerable, repeated shaking is required to cause these injuries and it was argued that they could occur as a result of the "rough and tumble of ordinary family life".</p> <p>However, subsequent research by Kemp et al (forthcoming) found that subdural haematomas were often associated with other injuries indicative of a considerable degree of violence.</p>

Author	Douglas G and Ferguson N
Title	The role of grandparents in divorced families
Journal	International journal of Law, Policy and the Family
Date	2003
Volume/issue	17 41-67
Subject (key words)	Grandparent, divorce, grandchild
Summary	The study aimed to explore the role grandparents play post divorce from the perspective of the grandparents, the

	<p>parents and the grandchildren.  The sample was drawn from court files. 115 family members were interviewed from 44 families. (33 mothers, 16 fathers, 30 children, 21 maternal grandparents and 15 paternal grandparents.)</p> <p>Findings:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Maternal grandparents appear more significant than paternal in lives of grandchildren</li> <li>• Grandchildren are more important to grandparents than grandparents are to grandchildren</li> <li>• Especially maternal grandmothers provided a great deal of support to their divorced child and the grandchildren</li> <li>• Paternal grandparents saw their grandchildren less frequently post-divorce and maternal grandparents saw them more frequently</li> <li>• Paternal grandparents contact with their grandchildren was mediated through the father and therefore dependent on his relationship with the mother and his own parents</li> <li>• Two grandparents in the study considered taking legal action to gain contact but did not do so because they did not wish to make the situation worse for their grandchildren and because of the costs.</li> <li>• Children's accounts of their relationships with their grandparents varied greatly. 10 of the 27 children said they confided in their (mostly maternal) grandparents.</li> <li>• Two norms operated to define the relationship between grandparent and parent, that of 'non-interference' and that of 'obligation'</li> <li>• Grandparents adopted different styles dependent on the extent to which they acted as parent to their child or grandchildren, the extent to which they acted as partisan supporters and how child or grandchild focused they were.</li> </ul> <p>In policy terms the researchers conclude that grandparents (usually maternal grandmothers) cannot be expected to provide substantial child care post divorce and that grandparent-grandchild contact post divorce does not have an 'essential purpose or fundamental importance' which would justify an enhanced legal status for grandparents.</p>
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Author	Feltham H
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Title	How do child panel solicitors ascertain the wishes and feeling of their child clients in public law cases under the Children Act 1989?
Thesis	MA Brunel University
Date	1999
Subject (key words)	Legal representation of children, solicitors, public law
Summary	The study surveyed all 18 solicitors on the Northamptonshire Children Panel about how they worked with child clients in public law cases. The findings suggested that some solicitors may have found it difficult to balance the child's right to protection with their right to have their views expressed. Not all solicitors always saw their child client.

Author	Featherstone B
Title	Taking fathers seriously
Journal	British Journal of Social Work
Date	2003
Volume/issue	33, 239-254
Subject (key words)	Fathers, social policy, child protection
Summary	The article examines the social and political context of contemporary fatherhood. Labour government policy has promoted responsible parenting including supporting projects which encourage fathers to be a resource to their children and develop problem-solving skills as parents. However, more negative discourses are frequently employed in social work settings. These see men as presenting a threat (sexual abuse and domestic violence) and as "no use". The author suggests that the complexity of contemporary fathers' lives needs to be recognised by those who work with families and that a more sophisticated discourse needs to be developed which avoids the either/or of father as resource or father as threat/no use.

Author	Hawthorne J, Jessop J, Pryor J and Richards M
Title	Supporting children through family change: A review of interventions and services for children of divorcing and separating parents
Date	2003
Publisher	JFR
Subject (key words)	Services for children of separated parents
Summary	A <a href="#">summary of the findings</a> is available on line. The survey found a variety of service provision for children

	<p>and parents including face-to-face interventions, leaflets websites and help-lines. Because children are reliant on their parents for access the services, accessibility was identified as a problem. It was often difficult to assess the effectiveness of the services because few were systematically evaluated. The researchers suggested that children should be asked what kind of support they would find helpful.</p> <p>The full report reviews a wide range of projects and provision. It provides a useful checklist (framework) for those designing and evaluating services which seek to support children and parents following parental separation.</p>
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Author	Henricson C
Title	Resolving the tensions in parenting policy
Date	March 2003
Publisher	JRF
Subject (key words)	Parenting, social policy, policy review
Summary	<p>A summary of the <a href="#">Findings</a> are available. The National Family and Parenting Institute undertook this review of government policy in relation to parenting. It found that government policy reflected the complexity and ambiguity of contemporary parenthood. This could cause tensions between different policies. The review makes the case for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A regular in-depth review of parenting policies</li> <li>• A clear statement of parental rights and responsibilities in the form of a <i>parental code</i></li> </ul>

Author	Hill, M , Lockyer, A , Morton, P , Bachelor, S & Scott, J
Title	Safeguarding Children in Scotland: the perspectives of Children, Parents and Safeguarders.
Journal	Representing Children
Date	October 2002
Volume/issue	15 (3) pp 169 – 183
Publisher	
Subject (key words)	Scotland, law, children, representation
Summary	<p>In Scottish law, children's hearings deal with all matters elsewhere dealt with in family and youth courts. Since 1985, it has been possible for the chair of children's proceedings or the sheriff (in contested or appeal cases) to appoint a <i>safeguarder</i> whose role is to ensure that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• children's rights are protected in the proceedings</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• the views of the child are communicated to the hearing</li> <li>• proposals are made in the children's best interests.</li> </ul> <p>This is a qualitative study of information from 88 safeguarders (48% response to questionnaires) and some follow-up client interviews.</p> <p>Responses will be familiar. Particular concerns were raised about the 'disappointment or bitterness' sometimes expressed by parents and children when the safeguarder's recommendation differed from the children's expressed wishes. The report recommends that best practice should include careful attention to how the safeguarder role is initially explained and how the report and recommendations are conveyed to the child(ren) and family prior to the hearing.</p>
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Author	Humphreys C and Thiara R
Title	Mental health and domestic violence: 'I call it symptoms of abuse'
Journal	British Journal of Social Work
Date	2003
Volume/issue	33 209-226
Subject (key words)	Domestic violence, mental health
Summary	<p>The paper reviews the literature on the link between domestic violence and mental illness or post traumatic stress disorder in women.</p> <p>The findings (from a wider research study) relating to women survivors' experiences of mental health services are described. The sample was drawn from 12 non-refuge based projects affiliated to the Women's Aid.</p> <p>Questionnaires were completed by 180 women (80% return rate) and 20 women were interviewed. 25% of the questionnaire sample were from ethnic minorities and 20% of the interview sample.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Women described their experiences in terms of emotional distress rather than mental ill-health</li> <li>• Women's experiences of mental health and social work services ranged from neutral to negative. The abuse was not recognised; victims were blamed; referrals to support services were not made; women in receipt of mental health services were seen as the problem and stigmatised</li> <li>• Helpful interventions from voluntary services included: recognition of the existence of domestic violence, pro-active screening for domestic violence, appropriate referral, non-medical support services and services which recognised diverse needs.</li> </ul>

Author	Jenkins D
Title	The security of the frame: An integrated model of assessment in child care social work
Thesis	MA in Advanced Social Work
Date	October 2002
Subject (key words)	Assessment, Children's Guardian, Therapy, case study
Summary	The author is a Children's Guardian. He describes a model of assessment based on psychodynamic and systems theory. He tests the applicability of the model to a case in which he was the Guardian. The model uses seven 'frames' (child, parental, familial, institutional, societal and cultural). The assessment examines each frame in terms of evidence about the level of the security provided. Evidence is generated from external sources and the face to face interviews including counter-transference experiences.

Author	Jones A
Title	How children's wishes and feelings are represented in private law court proceedings
Thesis	MA Children, Policy, Practice and the Law, University of Liverpool
Date	September 2002
Subject (key words)	Children's representation, children's participation, welfare reports, private law proceedings
Summary	<p>Welfare reports prepared by FCAs were read from 60 court files with a view of analysing how the children's views were represented.</p> <p>Findings:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Children were interviewed in 28 of the 60 cases</li> <li>• In 16 cases the views of the child were reported</li> <li>• In 16 cases it was made clear in the report that the children were aware of and understood the nature of the application</li> <li>• In 23 cases the children were not interviewed, in 14 because the author of the report said they were too young but in some cases because the parents had reached an agreement</li> <li>• There was considerable inconsistency about the age at which children were considered too young to be interviewed and the assessment of children's capacity to understand the nature and implications of the court proceedings</li> <li>• The number of interviews with adults was far greater than with children</li> </ul> <p>The author's general conclusion was that children's views were not being reported 'in an accurate or authentic way'.</p>

Author	Kelly J and Fletcher H
Title	Contact, Separation and the Work of the Family Court Staff
Journal	Family Court Journal
Date	2003
Volume/issue	1/1
Subject (key words)	Contact, family court, family court reporter, family court advisor, CAFCASS
Summary	<p>NAPO undertook a survey of the work of FCAs in the summer of 2002. Questionnaires relating to 300 families involving 457 children were completed by FCAs. The survey provides some baseline information about the cases, about recommendations and outcomes in terms of court decisions.</p> <p>Findings:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Surprisingly in nearly a third of cases (64/300) the children were living with their fathers at the start of</li> </ul>

	<p>the proceedings</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Allegations of domestic violence had been made against the father in 61% of cases and in about a third of these cases was admitted or established. In 16% of cases allegations of domestic violence was made against the mother.</li> <li>• At the start of the proceedings in 126 cases, no contact was taking place. By the end of the proceedings there were only 18 cases in which children had no contact with the father. In 7 of the 18, domestic violence had been established as a fact.</li> <li>• Recommendations concurred with outcomes in 78% of cases</li> </ul>
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Author	Monck E, Reynolds J and Wigfall V
Title	The role of concurrent planning: Making permanent placements for young children
Date	2003
Publisher	BAAF
Subject (key words)	Adoption, long-term placements, concurrent planning
Summary	<p>Three concurrent planning samples (24 children) were compared with two non-concurrent planning samples (44 children) in terms of the length of time to achieve permanent placement, the number of moves prior to permanent placement, the extent of difficulties experienced by children as measured on standardised tests and birth parent perspective on the process.</p> <p>Findings:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Concurrent planning cases moved faster to permanence and involved children in fewer moves between carers</li> <li>• Concurrency carers were committed and resilient</li> <li>• Contact could be problematic during concurrency placements</li> <li>• Children in the concurrent planning sample did not show signs of harm on developmental and relationship measures</li> <li>• Concurrent planning needed a radical rethink for all the agencies and staff concerned</li> <li>• Concurrent planning was judged to have worked well for the children in the study</li> </ul>

Author	Nicholas B, Roberts S and Wurr C
Title	Looked after children in residential homes
Journal	Child and Adolescent Mental Health

Date	2003
Volume/issue	8/2
Subject (key words)	Looked after children, service provision, child mental health, children's homes
Summary	Looked after children in residential homes are a particularly vulnerable group who are known to have high rates of mental health problems and limited access to services. 177 children in residential homes in Leeds were surveyed in 2000. 64% had had some contact with child mental health services in the previous 5 years; 27% were in current contact; and 36% had had no contact. There was a move away from psychiatric assessment and a greater emphasis on consultation, group work and individual from the Therapeutic Social Work team.

Author	Pashley R
Title	Adopters' experiences and perceptions of contact
Thesis	MA Childcare, Advance Award in social Work, University of Keele
Date	2002
Subject (key words)	Adoption, contact, birth parents
Summary	This thesis surveys the literature on post adoption contact. The research is based on interviews with four sets of adoptive parents. All had adopted 2 children who were at the time of the study between 6 and 15 years old. In all cases some post adoption contact had taken place. The author concluded that the key factor in determining the success of post adoption contact was the capacity of adopters and birth parents to form and affirming and affectionate relationship with each other. Where this did not happen, an inappropriate burden of responsibility fell on the children to maintain communication with their birth parents and contact was likely to fail.

Author	Tanner and Turney
Title	What do we know about child neglect? A critical review of the literature and its application to social work practice
Journal	Child and Family Social Work
Date	Feb 2003
Volume/issue	8.1
Publisher	
Subject (key words)	Neglect, knowledge base, research
Summary	A brief summary of the state of research on neglect, which also advocates the importance of social work professionals being 'research minded' and 'research literate'. It argues for practice that is reflective, analytical and critical, which is difficult to develop against a

	background of limited resources and increasing workloads.
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Author	Timmis G
Title	Lawyers' Perspectives on Public Law Cases
Journal	Representing Children
Date	2002
Volume/issue	15 (4) pp 271 - 290
Publisher	
Subject (key words)	Legal representation (Lawyers), Family Court Advisor (Children's Guardian), Family law
Summary	A study of solicitors views of case developments and guardian input in care and adoption proceedings based on 62 responses to 140 questionnaires sent to solicitors selected at random from the 1998 Children Panel list. Explores the extent to which circumstances and plans changed during the course of proceedings. A large majority of respondents thought the guardian was properly independent, reported thoroughly and helpfully and made an essential contribution to the successful resolution of the case. Most cases (71%) came to an agreed outcome before the final hearing. 50% of respondents thought there were circumstances in which tandem representation could be dispensed with at some stage in the proceedings.

Author	Woodcock J and Sheppard M
Title	Double trouble: Maternal depression and alcohol dependence as combined factors in child and family social work
Journal	Children and Society
Date	2002
Volume/issue	16 232-245
Subject (key words)	Alcohol dependence, depression, maternal depression
Summary	The study was based on 97 women who were clients of child and family care teams and who were also suffering from major depressive disorder. 19 of these women were also dependent on alcohol. The study found that mothers who were alcohol dependent as well as depressed exhibited significantly higher levels of difficulty in social relationships, health and parenting problems. Parenting could be destructive and undermining to their children.