



RESEARCH DIGEST

2004 Issue 4

Prepared by

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Research studies and articles based on research

Author	Anderson L, Vostanis P & Spencer N
Title	The health needs of children aged 6-12 years in foster care
Journal	Adoption & Fostering
Date	2004
Volume/issue	Vol 28 Number 3
Subject (key words)	Fostering, Health, Mental illness (Child mental illness)
Summary	<p>Fifty-six Leicester foster children and their carers were asked to complete two health and family checklists. The results are therefore about self-reported levels of health, illness and treatment.</p> <p>Physical health seemed to be a minor problem, under appropriate control, with higher levels of GP registration and immunisation than previously reported amongst children in care.</p> <p>High levels of mental illness issues were reported, associated significantly with recent admission to public care and to short-term placements. Mental health issues were significantly lower in long-term foster care.</p> <p>The authors, senior professionals in the fields of child health and child psychiatry, conclude that the findings strongly demonstrate the importance of easily accessible and designated child mental health services for children in care, and the need to incorporate health promotion objectives into care plans.</p> <p><i>A Health Note</i> later in the same issue of <i>Adoption & Fostering</i> advocates screening for mental health problems during statutory health assessments, and then providing psychological assessments to children experiencing difficulties.</p>
Reviewed by	SH

Author	Bancroft A, Wilson S, Cunningham-Burley S, Backett-Milburn K and Masters H
Title	The effect of parental substance abuse on young people Findings (Summary) Full report
Date	2004
Publisher	JRF
Key words	Alcohol dependence, Drug dependence
Summary	<p>Aim – To learn about the needs of children, particularly children over 16, whose parents are abusing drugs or alcohol so that effective policy and support can be developed.</p> <p>Methodology – In-depth interviews were conducted with 38 young people between 15 and 27 living in Scotland.</p> <p>Findings (Quoted from the <i>Findings</i> Summary)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Parental drug and alcohol misuse created considerable problems for most of the young people. Many felt that their parents were unable to provide consistent practical or emotional care. • While the effects of drug and alcohol abuse were similar, the former brought with it more anxiety and social stigma

	<p>and the latter was more associated with violence and parental absence.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Many of the young people felt their childhood was shortened through having to assume early responsibility for their own and others' wellbeing. • Although the young people in this study lived in a range of circumstances, they showed resilience and adaptation in finding ways to deal with their difficulties. • A sense that others, especially parents, cared about them even when they did not care for them helped them keep going. • Informal relationships – with extended family members, neighbours, friends and friends' families – were very important. But such support was seldom either reliable or unconditional. • Where experienced, a strong personal relationship with a service worker was highly valued. • The young people shared similar goals and dreams – of jobs, houses and families – but not all were on the way to achieving this. Education and work were key factors in putting them in a position to achieve their goals. <p>Limitations – The report accepts that children of substance abusing parents are a hard to reach group. It may not therefore be representative of these young people. The sample was too small to allow any quantitative analysis.</p>
Reviewed by	HB

Author	Beek M & Schofield G
Title	Providing a secure base: tuning in to children with severe learning difficulties in long-term foster care
Journal	Adoption and Fostering
Date	2004
Volume/issue	Vol 28 Number 2
Subject (key words)	Fostering (Long term fostering), Disability (Children with disabilities)
Summary	<p>The research is based on a small sub-group of four children with severe learning difficulties from a larger longitudinal study of 52 children placed in long-term foster families. Each child was found to be making excellent progress in foster care, which the researchers link to five elements of the foster care given: -</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Providing availability to be 'ever there', and hence provide security for the child • Tuning into the minds and feelings of the child, and being able to see the world through the child's eyes • Building self-esteem, encouraging problem solving, activities, and friendships • Building choice, autonomy and independence • Including the child as a full member of the family <p>The authors conclude that secure in these relationships, the children's anxiety levels were reduced and they were freer to learn, play and develop their potential</p>
Reviewed by	SH

Author	Brasse, G
Title	Conciliation is Working
Journal	Family Law
Date	October 2004
Volume/issue	34; pp 722 – 5
Subject (key words)	Family law (conciliation)
Summary	<p>Describes the conciliation arrangements operating in the Principle Registry of the Family Division since Jan 1983 following a Practice Direction – Custody and Access Conciliation (1982) 3FLR448 and a study of effectiveness. The appointments involve a DJ and CAFCASS officer and are privileged. It is expected that children attend where any child in the family is over 9 years.</p> <p>Once the dispute has been outlined in court, the CAFCASS officer sees the children on their own and then the parties. Orders will only be made by agreement.</p> <p>Only cases where there are serious allegations of child abuse or domestic violence are exempted from conciliation and exclusion may only occur by order.</p> <p>If the conciliation proves unsuccessful the case will be timetabled for hearing. That DJ and that CAFCASS officer will not be further involved.</p> <p>A survey by Principle Registry District Judges of their own practice in 257 cases over 3 months (April – June 2003) found:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 77% contact disputes, 27% residence, 9% other issues • 41% resulted in agreement at the first appointment; 26% adjourned for further conciliation • Children attended in 51 cases of which 27 resulted in agreement <p>Overall, the author's experience is that children are happy with the process and pleased that their wishes and feelings are taken into account; the parents often experience hearing their children's views from a neutral person salutary, helping to resolve the dispute.</p> <p>The scheme is popular and seen as efficient and effective.</p>
Reviewed by	PL

Author	Broad B
Title	Kinship care for children in the UK: messages from research, lesson for policy and practice
Journal	European Journal of Social Work
Date	2004
Volume/issue	7/2
Key words	Kinship placements, Family law (International)
Summary	<p>In 2002, 12% (6,900) of LAC were living in kinship placements. This represented an increase of 32% over the previous year. The article examines the reasons for the increase in kinship care and puts this in a European context.</p> <p>The article describes a research study undertaken by the</p>

	<p>author which examined the views of the carers, the young people and the social workers.</p> <p>Methodology 50 young people aged between 11 and 25 were interviewed. Those of Caribbean ethnic origin accounted for 46%, white 36% and African 12%. 19 carers were interviewed.</p> <p>Findings</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In all but one case the ethnic origin of the carers matched exactly the ethnic origin of the young person • Placements were relatively stable • Kinship placements usually began after a family crisis. In most cases the alternative would have been another placement away from the birth family • The young people mostly had a positive view of their placement with a relative and contrasted this favourably with the situation before the kinship placement <p>Limitations of the study</p> <p>There was no control group. It is not therefore possible to know if the characteristics of the children in the sample differed from other LAC. The sample is too small to be confident about the generalisability of the findings. There is no analysis of cases where the placement broke down.</p> <p>Policy and practice implications</p> <p>The author argues that the findings suggest the SSDs need to develop dedicated organisational structures to assess and support kinship placements with appropriate training for staff. A key element of successful kinship placement is attention to the views of the children and the carers.</p> <p>Broad argues for a new approach to permanency planning which encompasses the child's extended family and friends as sources of support, information and possible care. For some kinship carers financial support would need to be on a level with that provided to foster carers.</p>
Reviewed by	HB

Author	Buchbinder E and Eisikovits Z
Title	Reporting bad results: The ethical responsibility of presenting abused women's parenting practices in a negative light
Journal	Child and Family Social Work
Date	November 2004
Volume/issue	Vol 9, Issue 4
Subject (key words)	Domestic violence, Child protection (Child abuse)
Summary	<p>The authors interviewed 20 Israeli women in order to try to identify the turning point when the women refused to continue living with violence from their partner. The researchers, using feminist perspectives, expected to discover coherent accounts of survival, consistent with the growing view of 'women who stay' are staying out of personal strength, rather than vulnerability. They discovered a more complex picture.</p> <p>It was apparent from their descriptions of their partner's violence that some women had clearly not acted to protect their children from serious injury, still remaining with the perpetrator</p>

	<p>afterwards. The women seem, the researchers believe, to have separated their own and their children's interests, placing the latter secondary to their own emotional safety. The researchers found that although the turning point was described as being when the abuser exceeded the tolerable limit of violence to both mother and children, the critical change had been in violence to the mother.</p> <p>The researchers were uncomfortable with their findings, but defend their ethical responsibility to publish them. They criticise "psuedo-attempts to defend abused women while expecting that they be both martyrs and 'mothers of the year' " as unethical and unrealistic, and a possible disservice to abused women in the long run. They believe that practitioners in the field should be able to "foster simultaneously women's understanding of structural oppression resulting from gender violence, as it impacts on the women's ability to function in her various roles, and the assumption of personal responsibility for the quality and level of her functioning".</p>
Reviewed by	SH

Author	Byrne, M, Carr, A, & Clark, M
Title	Power in Relationships of Women with Depression
Journal	Journal of Family Therapy
Date	November 2004
Volume/issue	26(4); pp 407 – 429
Subject (key words)	Mental illness (Adult mental illness) ((Depression), Family Problems (Family conflict)
Summary	<p>Considering that 2/3 of clinically depressed people are women and that there is a complicated interrelationship between depression and poor family relationships, the study compared 20 couples where the female partner was depressed with 20 'normal' couples and 20 couples where the female partner had another mental health problem. The researchers used standard instruments for measuring marital satisfaction, power relations, processes and outcomes.</p> <p>Findings, significant for the couples with a depressed female partner were:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • That these women were in a weaker financial and psychological position; • That they experienced less control over decision-making and child care tasks; • That both parties reported more physical assault in the previous year, some of them serious; • That depressed women tended to feel trapped in unsatisfactory relationships wherein they chose to avoid conflict and felt that communication was pointless. <p>The authors conclude that the women's depression was maintained by the couples' inability to negotiate power imbalances, their poor economic position and a lack of constructive communication.</p>
Reviewed by	PL

Author	Cavet J and Sloper P
Title	Participation of Disabled Children in Individual Decisions About Their Lives and in Public Decisions about Service Development
Journal	Children and Society
Date	2004
Volume/issue	18/4
Key words	Children's views/participation, Disability (Children with disabilities)
Summary	<p>Aim – To establish what evidence exists about disabled children's participation in decision-making, both regarding their own lives and about the shape of service delivery.</p> <p>Methodology – Literature review</p> <p>Findings</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Disabled children were able to hold and express their views given the right environment • Children valued involvement in decision-making and respect for their views • Many disabled children are not being involved in decision-making or not being involved effectively • The evidence on the achievement of better outcomes following the involvement of disabled children is very limited though there is some indication that there are benefits in terms of increased self-confidence and better adherence to treatment regimes <p>Limitations – It is not clear from the article how many items were reviewed nor what the exclusion and inclusion criteria were. There was little evidence about the specific needs of disabled children from minority ethnic groups.</p>
Reviewed by	HB

Author	Chahal K
Title	Experiencing ethnicity: Discrimination and service provision
Date	2004
Publisher	JRF
Key words	Diversity, Management (Service delivery)
Summary	<p>Aim –To bring together lessons from a wide range of projects initiated under the JFR Race Equality and Disability Programme since 2000.</p> <p>Methodology – Review of the publications from 31 JFR projects and 3 other publications</p> <p>Findings</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Minority ethnic communities continue to experience mainstream services as operating on the basis of stereotypes and assumptions. They also believed they were subject to prejudice and discrimination in the delivery of services • Disabled people within the minority ethnic groups experienced discrimination within their own communities • Services were seen as “mono-cultural” and therefore inappropriate to meet their own needs in terms of language, religion and culture. The staff group could be seen as unrepresentative and organisations lacked guidelines

	<p>relating to working with minority ethnic users</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There was inadequate information about service provision • There were high levels of unmet social, care and identity needs. Formal parenting support was not culturally sensitive. Inappropriate assumptions were made by service providers about the extent and nature of informal family support • Faith communities and the minority ethnic voluntary and community sector were valued and met the needs of specific groups. However they were often stretched in terms of resources • The particular needs of women were often ignored by service providers • Ethnic monitoring despite being required by law often did not take place in both statutory and voluntary agencies. <p>Limitations – The research projects reviewed did not include comparative material. It is not therefore possible to establish whether other sections of British society experience similar or different problems. Furthermore, despite calling for more sensitivity to cultural, religious and ethnic diversity, these elements are not evident in the report as shaping the experiences of different minority ethnic groups.</p>
Reviewed by	HB

Author	Ellaway B, Payne E, Rolfe K, Dunstan F, Kemp A, Butler I and Sibert J
Title	Are abused babies protected from further abuse?
Journal	Archives of Diseases in Childhood
Date	2004
Volume/issue	89 (845-846)
Key words	Child protection (Physical abuse), Case practice
Summary	<p>Aim – To assess the effectiveness of child protection services in protecting abused babies from further abuse</p> <p>Methodology – A cohort of a all babies under 1 year who had been physically abused in Wales over the two year period April 1996 to March 1998 where followed for three years after the abuse.</p> <p>Findings</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 69 babies were identified as having been physically abused • In 49% of families where there were other children, there were serious concerns about at least one sibling • 5 babies died from the original abuse;14 were permanently removed from home; of the 49 who went home15 (31%) were further abused • Of the 15 re-abused babies, 12 were allowed home. 3 of these children were re-abused. 8 children were physically abused and 7 neglected • The siblings of the abused babies were also at risk of abuse • In 30-35% of abusing families domestic violence and mental illness were factors.
Reviewed by	HB

Author	Feathersone B
Title	Fathers Matter: A Research Review
Journal	Children and Society
Date	2004
Volume/issue	18/4
Key words	Fathers, Social policy
Summary	<p>This article reviews research relating to fathers at a broad brush level covering:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The nature of father involvement • Factors influencing their involvement • The influence of fathers on their children • Social policy developments aimed at engaging fathers in services for families
Reviewed by	HB

Author	Flowerdew J and Neale B
Title	Parent problems: Looking back at our parents divorce
Date	2004
Publisher	Young Voice
Key words	Children's views/participation, Divorce/separation
Summary	<p>This is a sequel to <i>Parent problems: children's views on life when parents split up</i> RD Nov 02. 60 of the 117 children who took part in Nuffield and ESRC funded research four years previously were interviewed again.</p> <p>Children and young people reflect on what it felt like growing up when their birth parents had separated. The views expressed are varied though generally children want (but do not always get) more flexible arrangements as they get older. Some children were comfortable with the arrangements that had been made and the evolving family but others express great unhappiness and frustration.</p>
Reviewed by	HB

Author	Franklin A and Sloper P
Title	Participation of Disabled Children and Young People in Decision-Making within Social Services Departments in England Summary
Date	2004
Publisher	Social Policy Research Unit, University of , University of York
Key words	Children's views/participation, Disability (Children with disabilities)
Summary	<p>Only the Summary of the report has been read for this review</p> <p>Aim - To investigate the participation work of SSDs under the Quality Protects programme which includes disabled children and young people</p> <p>Methodology - A national survey of a SSDs in England. A detailed questionnaire was sent to 102 SSDs who had involved disabled children in decision-making. 71 responses were received.</p> <p>Findings</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 60% of the surveyed authorities (all of whom had stated they involved disabled children in decision-making) involved children in both service development and in their individual packages of care and 40% involved children in only one of these processes • The numbers of children involved varied considerably and only small numbers were involved in service development • There was a reported need for more support, skills development and training for children and staff involved • There was little systematic collection of evidence on the outcomes of the participation. <p>Limitations – It would have been useful to have information from the SSDs which did not seek the views of disabled children.</p>
Reviewed by	HB

Author	Freeman M
Title	The outcomes for children returned following an abduction
Date	2003
Publisher	Reunite
Key words	Family law (Abduction), Family law (International)
Summary	<p>This is a report on research by the <i>reunite</i> Research Unit funded by the Foreign and Commonwealth Office.</p> <p>Aim To investigate the outcomes for children returned through Hague Convention proceedings following an abduction.</p> <p>Methodology</p> <p>Parents whose children had 'ended up' in a European jurisdiction were contacted through a variety of avenues. Semi-structured interviews were held with 30 parents in 22 cases involving 33 children. 19 mothers took part and 11 fathers. All the 'abductors' (11) were mothers. 11 of the 'left behind parents' were fathers and 8 mothers.</p>

	<p>Findings</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In 63% of the sample cases, the mother was the ‘abductor’ • In 8 cases the children were living with the mother at the time of the abduction, in 1 case with the father and in 13 they were living with both parents • 9 of the cases involved abduction from England and 10 abduction to England. In 16 cases the abduction was to the country of the abductor • In 9 cases a custody order was in existence at the time of the abduction. In the rest there was no order • ‘Abductors’ and ‘left behind parents’ disagreed on the reason for the abduction • In most cases there were no proceedings in the ‘home’ country prior to the abduction or before the child was returned • Of the 33 children, only one had not been returned at the time of the research. The average length of the abduction was 19 weeks • In 19 cases the child was returned as a result of Hague proceedings in the requested state • Some parents received poor legal advice • 9 (of 14) ‘abducting’ mothers expressed concern about the return of the child • Court welfare officers saw the children in 24% of cases • Undertakings were given in 57% of cases (half concerning violence) and were broken in 67% of those cases. The ‘home’ states appear to have made little effort to enforce undertakings made in the ‘requested’ state. ‘Abductors’ (mostly mothers) who had returned to the ‘home’ state on the basis of undertakings were therefore forced to start new proceedings in the ‘home’ state often without legal aid • 13 of the 14 mother ‘abductors’ returned to the state of habitual residence either with the child or at the same time as the child. None of the 8 father abductors returned. • In subsequent proceedings, custody was an issue in 17 cases. 59% of abductors were awarded custody. Mothers were awarded custody in 71% of cases. In 11 cases the abductor applied for leave to remove; in half these cases leave to remove was refused • 10 (from 11) of the abducting mothers believed the children had suffered harm as a result of the return to the home jurisdiction. Most of the left behind parents felt that the child has suffered harm as a result of the abduction • Left behind parents spoke of serious financial consequences of the abduction and emotional stress. Abducting parents spoke of serious emotional consequences of being forced to live where they did not want to be • In 46% of cases contact was taking place regularly after the return • The Hague convention appears to be working well in terms of its objective to return the child to the home jurisdiction. However, returning parents may face serious problems on their return including delay in subsequent legal resolution,
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	<p>lack of financial support and inadequate accommodation as well as continued harassment, all in foreign country. Nevertheless, for many returning parents the situation on their return was not as difficult and distressing as they had anticipated. Left behind parents tended to be disappointed that the return of the child did not resolve all difficulties within the family.</p> <p>Limitations This was a small sample which did not include any abducting fathers.</p>
Reviewed by	HB

Author	Ferguson N with Douglas G, Lowe N, Murch M, Robinson M.
Title	Grandparenting in divorced families
Date	2004
Publisher	Policy Press
Key words	Grandparents
Summary	<p>This timely book concentrates on issues of grandparenting after divorce. Members of 44 families who had undergone divorce in first half of 1997 and six months of 2000 were interviewed. The varied experiences of the different members of the family are detailed. Overall, these seemed to confirm that there are many different forms of contact for grandparents with grandchildren and the age of the children and the extent of prior involvement of grandparents will have quite a bearing. Most grandparents will not apply to the court in order to have contact with their grandchildren. The grandchildren mainly wanted to be very fair and loyal to both sides of their family. However as the children grew older they either had less to do with their grandparents or else met them on a much more flexible basis.</p> <p>Four continua (partisan/non partisan, enthusiastic/reluctant, adult-centred/child-centred, grandparent as parent/grandparent as grandparent) are helpfully identified as a tool to enable the grandparent – grandchild relationship to be assessed. They are self-explanatory. Whilst there was a “norm of non-interference” in most cases, there were also examples of difficult relationships prior to the divorce which influenced the subsequent relationship between child and grandparent.</p> <p>The authors do pay attention to state policy in relation to grandparenting, concluding that in this private area it is difficult for the state to consider compensating grandparents for caring for their grandchildren. However, there are some interesting comments about support and advice groups for grandparents, and a suggestion that grandparent carers might be given enhanced pension rights.</p> <p>The authors are hopeful that the evidence of their project will provoke more research into the nature and dynamics of grandparenting worldwide. Their quotes and summaries make the book very accessible and the final chapter is a good summation of the project and addresses the idea of more state involvement in this area. If grandparents’ rights are increasingly asserted, the findings from this project provide helpful insight into the reality and diversity of grandparent/grandchild relationships in a number of different families.</p>
Reviewed by	Mike Stirling

Author	Hagell A
Title	Time trends in adolescent well-being Briefing Paper
Date	2004
Publisher	Nuffield Foundation
Key words	Adolescence, Mental illness (Child mental illness)
Summary	<p>This is a Briefing Paper arising from a Nuffield Seminar held in April 2004 to discuss the findings of an Institute of Psychiatry study (funded by the Nuffield Foundation). A report of the study, "Time trends in adolescent mental health" (2004) by Collinshaw S, Maughan B, Goodman R and Pickles A can be found in the <i>Journal of Child Psychology and Psychiatry</i> vol 45/8.</p> <p>The Briefing paper highlights the main findings of the study:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "That there were few systematic trends in adolescent hyperactivity over the past 25 years for either girls or boys • That adolescent emotional problems (such as depression and anxiety) have increased for both girls and boys since the mid 1980s • That adolescent conduct problems showed a continuous rise for both boys and girls over the whole 25 year study period (this seems to be an increase in non-aggressive conduct problems such as lying, stealing and disobedience rather than aggressive problems such as fighting) • That the strength of associations between these problems and poor outcomes later in adulthood have remained similar over time, suggesting that the results are not attributable to changing the thresholds for what is counted as a problem – that is, they are not the result of an increasing tendency for parents to rate teenagers as problematic, but the result of real changes in problem levels • That marked changes in family type (such as increases in the numbers of single parents families) over the period were not the main reason for rising trends in behaviour problems, and • That changes in socio-economic indicators were not the main reason either, although there is now a social class gradient in emotional difficulties that was not there before." <p>The Briefing paper also notes that while in the UK adolescents show an increase in psychosocial problems, in the Netherlands and the US there has been either no increase or a decrease.</p>
Reviewed by	HB

Author	Kaniuk J, Steele M & Hodges J
Title	Report on a longitudinal research project, exploring the development of attachments between older, hard-to-place children and their adopters over the first two years of placement
Journal	Adoption and Fostering
Date	2004
Volume/issue	Vol 28 Number 2
Subject (key words)	Adoption, Child psychology (Attachment)
Summary	Many previous studies have looked at the experience of

	<p>children after adoption. This study confirms the general improvement previously reported in their attachment to adoptive mothers, their emotional adjustment and progress at school. Such progress was found with 54 of the 65 children placed between the ages of four to eight, even if some difficulties also occurred.</p> <p>The particular 'value added' by this research was that psychological testing was used both to assess the children at placement and after two years, and also the attachment history of the adoptive mothers. The children were asked to complete 'narrative story stems', such as a story that a little pig went for a walk and gets lost. What happens next? The responses of children indicated, for example, their level of security, expectation of and confidence in adults, sense of fear, or even that the child feels so anxious about separation and loss that they wish to avoid the thought of it. The adopters were given an Adult Attachment Interview.</p> <p>A higher proportion (70%) of adopters were identified as having secure attachments to their own parents, compared with an average population score of 50%, which the authors believe to be attributable to skilled adopter assessment by social workers. What was very striking was that the poorer performance of some children in placement could be clearly related to their adoptive mothers' unresolved issues of attachment from their own childhoods, relating to loss and trauma. Unhappy childhoods of their own had left mothers more easily prone to feeling rejected and hurt by the children's hostile, destructive or rejecting behaviour. Interestingly, one of the most effective groups were mothers who had, what the authors call, 'earned secure' ratings, who had experienced earlier loss and trauma, but had been able to resolve their feelings and move on. Data on adoptive fathers remains to be analysed. The authors emphasise how their results underline the importance of skill and judgement in adoption work.</p>
Reviewed by	SH

Author	Kroll B & Taylor A
Title	Parental Substance Misuse and Child Welfare
Date	2004
Publisher	Jessica Kingsley Pubs
Key words	Alcohol dependence, Drug dependence, Child psychology (Attachment) (Child development)
Summary	<p>This book attempts to make sense of a growing concern about the impact of the substance misuse by parents upon their ability to meet the needs of their children. The three main domains of the Framework for Assessment (DoH 2000) are used as a foundation to discuss issues surrounding substance misuse - the parenting task, the child's developmental needs and the family and environmental factors.</p> <p>Chapters 1 and 2 provide the essential context for an understanding of the dynamic between parental substance misuse and child welfare and the authors review the difficulties of actually pinning down the impact and meaning of drug misuse</p>

on children`s lives.

Chapters 3 to 5 look at the ways in which a relationship with a substance can develop and its relevance to parenting ability . Chapter 3 presents a wider sociological perspective of the problem whilst Chapter 4 becomes relevant for the practitioner who is trying to make sense of the substance-misusing parent they have just visited. Physical and psychological substance dependency is discussed with the emphasis on the understanding the substance-misusing parent`s attachment to the preferred substance. Questions about the user`s need for this type of attachment relationship, the nature of their attachment to their children and the dynamics of loss which accompany any alteration in substance dependency and behaviour could have usefully been discussed here. Chapter 5 discusses issues arising out of the above and whilst the authors conclude that many substance misusing parents are aware of the consequences of their behaviour and may take appropriate steps to minimise the impact on their children, they recognise that many parents may be unwilling or unable to face the consequences which in turn has significant implications for children`s welfare.

Chapters 6 to 8 are concerned with the world of the child and the specific impact that parental substance misuse can have on children`s welfare. No doubt we all carry examples of this. Object Relations theory and Attachment theory are used to make sense of child development difficulties and the parent - child relationship. Neither theory is elucidated at length but the different qualities of attachment relationships are well described and could usefully be used when assessing the nature of the child – parent relationship no matter what the presenting difficulty. Whilst the book uses the categories within the child developmental domain of the Assessment Framework to examine the impact of parental substance misuse on children`s development, I thought that greater discussion of Object Relations theory could have provided greater depth in understanding the effect of impingements on children`s development. The issue of children`s resilience to adversity is also discussed.

Chapters 9 to 12 review practice issues and comment on the different agencies involved with drug misusing parent and family. The authors highlight the difficulties in coordinating agencies who have different priorities, resources, client focus and philosophies. The last two chapters consider the merits of a more `holistic` approach to the substance misusing parent and propose a higher level of cooperation and understanding between agencies with the child`s needs being prominent throughout.

I have not found many books which link the behaviour of substance misusing parents and children`s welfare and this book was useful in raising the issues and providing an overview of the dilemmas. As mentioned the section on attachment could be used when looking generally at attachment issues. There was an appendix at the end of the book which listed the different types of substance and drugs but I would have liked more detailed reference as to what these substances did for the

	<p>parents and how they influenced their ability to care for children. As a Children`s Guardian the frequent difficulty in cases involving substance misusing parents is in assessing the prognosis for parental change and the timescales involved for the child. It would have been useful to discuss the effect of different substances; the ability of parents to alter their attachment to a particular substance and their ability to avoid relapse. Discussions around those features which determine success i.e. parental determination, the ability to alter lifestyle, the capacity for reflection (about self as well as the child) and the availability of a useful support network which are all crucial when making decisions about children`s future within this context would also have been useful.</p>
Reviewed by	David Jenkins

Author	McAuley C, Knapp M, Beecham J, McCurry N and Slead M
Title	The outcomes and costs of Home-Start support for young families under stress (Findings) Young families under stress (Full report)
Date	2004
Publisher	JRF
Key words	Case practice (Support services)
Summary	<p>Only the Findings summary has been read.</p> <p>Aim – To evaluate the outcomes and costs of Home-Start support</p> <p>Methodology – 80 young families under stress who were in a Home-Start programme were compared with 82 similar families who did not receive this support. The mothers were interviewed at baseline (for Home-Start mothers at the start of the programme) and 11 months later.</p> <p>Findings These were generally disappointing in that they did not show improved outcomes for the Home-Start families despite the greater costs. Mothers in both groups were experiencing high levels of parenting stress at the outset. At the 11 month follow-up both groups had improved in well-being. The study concludes that “the evidence did not therefore point to a cost-effectiveness advantage for Home-Start”.</p> <p>Limitations The Summary points out that outcomes were only measured at the 11 month point and the results might be different if measured later on. It is also clear that the Home-Start mothers “valued the service and considered that it had made a positive difference to their lives”. It is therefore clear that the process was valued even if no outcome differences were discernible.</p>
Reviewed by	HB

Author	McConkey R, Nixon T, Donaghy E and Mulhern D
Title	The Characteristics of Children with a Disability Looked After away from Home and their Future Service Needs
Journal	British Journal of Social Work
Date	2004
Volume/issue	34/4
Key words	Disability (Children with disabilities), Looked after children
Summary	<p>Aim – To document the characteristics of LAC with disabilities in one administrative area in Northern Ireland To describe their ‘out-of-home placements To estimate the future needs of these children</p> <p>Methodology Interviews were held with the keyworkers of all children with a disability who were looked after for at least 90 days (total 108)</p> <p>Findings</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 51% were reported to have severe learning disabilities, 29% profound or multiple disabilities, 11% mild or moderate

	<p>learning disabilities and 11% physical disabilities. Nearly half had challenging behaviour and a third severe communication difficulties. 15% were technologically dependant. The existence of challenging behaviour or communication difficulties couple with a lack of appropriate support services, rather than the disabilities themselves, probably accounted for the children being looked after.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Nearly half the children were living with their families at the time of the survey; just under a third were in a residential establishment and a quarter were in a foster placement. • Most of the children's families had complex social needs. • Respite services were available for 86% of birth or foster families. • There was a wide variation across the 4 Trustssurveyed in the children's gender, ages, disability and service provision. • The survey suggested that there were inadequate long term residential places available for children with challenging behaviour and technologically dependant. The need for local provision conflicts with the need for specialised provision given the small number of children requiring long term residential placement.
Reviewed by	HB

Author	McKeigue B and Beckett C
Title	Care Proceedings under the 1989 Children Act: Rhetoric and Reality
Journal	British Journal of Social Work
Date	2004
Volume/issue	34/6
Key words	Children Act, Social policy
Summary	<p>The authors seek to demonstrate that two main objectives of the CA89, (1) the reduction in delay in care proceedings and (2) a shift away from compulsion to working in partnership, have not been achieved. They show that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The length of care cases has increased substantially in the ten years up to 2002 (doubling from an average across courts from 24 to 48 weeks) • The number of care cases has nearly tripled (2263 to 6335) in the ten years to 2002. <p>They argue that the above evidence shows that the CA 89 has failed to achieve two of its main objectives. They demonstrate that the government, judiciary and some academics (eg in <i>The Children Act Now: Messages from Research</i> DoH 2001) use a number of rhetorical devices and statistical sleights of hand to ignore or deny the significance for children and their families of the increasing number of care cases and length of proceedings. The authors call for the failure of the CA 89 to be recognised so that the negative effect on families of the increasing use of care proceedings and length of cases can be acknowledged and the causes better understood and addressed.</p>
Reviewed by	HB

Author	Mitchell J
Title	Contact in Practice
Journal	Family Law
Date	September 2004
Volume/issue	34; pp 662 – 6
Subject (key words)	Contact, Divorce/separation, Evidence informed practice
Summary	<p>Making the point that family justice practice should be evidence-based, a District Judge reviews 7 recent UK studies on post-separation contact, drawing out the following themes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Resident and non-resident parents commonly have different perceptions of the success of contact. • Around half of children have direct contact at least once per week. • Over 60% of parents come to the point where they are 'friendly'; 30% remain in 'tense' relationship • Only 30% of parents describe negotiating contact as 'easy'; perhaps 40% report disputes about contact • 'Once contact has become problematic it is extremely difficult to get it back on track' • Most children want contact with their non-resident parent but a significant minority would sacrifice contact if this meant an end to arguments <p>The author concludes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Post-separation contact is enjoyed and wanted by most children • Maintaining negotiations can be very difficult in the face of strong emotions and the extent of change; mediation should be an obvious choice • Delay should be avoided and services, e.g. CAFCASS, resourced to be more responsive to need • The court should be able to deal with the range of justiciable issues that impede co-operation • There should be proactive screening for domestic violence • Children's views should have a more prominent place
Reviewed by	PL

Author	Monck E, Reynolds J, & Wigfall V
Title	Using concurrent planning to establish permanency for looked after children
Journal	Child and Family Social Work
Date	November 2004
Volume/issue	Vol 9, Issue 4
Subject (key words)	Local authorities (Concurrent planning), Adoption
Summary	<p>Advocates of concurrent planning (placing a child, where the possibility of rehabilitation to parents is being assessed, with carers who are able to offer a permanent home if rehabilitation is not viable) have argued that such an approach could reduce the number of moves made by the child and speed up permanent placement. This study compares what happened with 24 children in three concurrent planning (CP) projects with</p>

	<p>44 placed by 'traditional' adoption teams. But to what extent are these two groups comparable? Children cannot be randomly allocated to the two approaches. Considerable selection took place before children were accepted for concurrent planning, the 24 were chosen from 219 children referred by LAs to projects. Significance differences emerge: 96% of the CP children were below 6 months old at entry into care, whilst only 7% of the traditional group were of this age; the CP children included no sibling groups; figures on the extent of special needs in the two groups are also not available. Older age, membership of a sibling group and special needs are all known factors likely to delay successful placement.</p> <p>The results for the 24 CP children indicate that they did have fewer moves and were adopted more quickly, than it is likely they would have been through normal adoption practice. Their long-term prognosis is therefore likely to be better than it would have been. Concurrent planning recommends itself at least as an improved service to this, albeit selected, group.</p> <p>Those involved in the CP projects thought that an important factor was that the concurrency carers were willing to undergo the risks and torn emotions, inherent in CP, because of the high possibility of a baby entering their family.</p> <p>Concern that rehabilitation work would be perfunctory seems to have been allayed. The authors concluded that the birth parents seem to have been well served. It is notable that three-quarters of the families who had contact with each other reported good relations. The academic analysis no doubt hides some powerful human stories, strong battles between the hearts and minds of the individuals involved.</p> <p>The question now arises of whether CP can be successful with an older group of children. The original Seattle CP project took children up to the age of 8.</p>
Reviewed by	SH

Author	Moorhead, R, Douglas, G, Doughty, J & Sefton, M
Title	The Advice Needs of Lone Parents
Journal	Family Law
Date	September 2004
Volume/issue	34; pp 667 – 673
Subject (key words)	Divorce/separation (Support services), Parents (Lone parents)
Summary	<p>Summarises a study published by One-Parent Families (2004).</p> <p>Methodology</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discussions with relevant focus groups • A detailed telephone survey of 200 advice-seekers to the One Parent Families helpline over a 4-month period in 2003. (Father callers were oversampled to ensure a higher proportion in the survey. This allowed the researchers to establish whether the experiences of fathers and mothers were different) • Respondents had to have actual residence <p>Sample characteristics were:</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 52% formerly married, 32% unmarried cohabitants, 34% never lived together • ¾ had been lone parents for over one year <p>Findings (detailed results are presented in tabular form)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lone parents tend to have more need of advice over a wide range of long-standing problems and are likely to face multiple justiciable problems • The need for advice about social welfare issues, not usually reflected in LSC awards, often overshadows what is traditionally on offer and is as likely to affect children's welfare • Resources may be unfairly targeted on parents who have been previously married • Family break-up is a process and not an event, so that advice needs continue, sometimes for many years • There is a need for holistic advice that will address the practical and emotional needs of separating parents.
Reviewed by	PL

Author	Moran P, Ghate D and van der Merwe A
Title	What works in parenting support? A review of the international evidence
Date	2004
Publisher	DfES
Key words	Divorce/separation (Support services)
Summary	This is a review of the international evidence regarding the effectiveness of parenting support programmes.
Reviewed by	HB

Author	Mullender A (Ed)
Title	We are Family: Sibling relationships in placement and beyond
Date	1999
Publisher	BAAF
Key words	Families (Siblings)
Summary	<p>This collection of papers and research studies brings together a great deal of information about siblings from many different perspectives. Whilst it focussed on children in the public arena there was much useful content relevant to the private law practitioner. I particularly like the way the book is put together making it easy to 'dip in and out' depending on certain topics. It is clear that practitioners want to base their practice on evidence and research and there is much here in this book that can be used to influence practice. One of the aims was to raise awareness of the importance of the sibling relationship when planning for children and it certainly succeeded in this. I found it thought provoking and it has made me want to search out more information.</p> <p>Key messages</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • One message of the book is that the nature of this

	<p>relationship should not be underestimated and acknowledging the importance of this from the child's perspective is as crucial to private law practitioners when there are so many diverse family structures.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It was quite concerning that there was found to be a lack of consistent policy and practice guidelines in sibling placement and contact and that whether siblings were separated or kept in contact was generally service provision led rather than by children's needs. It was interesting to note that in the days of the children residential homes siblings there were more likely to be kept together. • A familiar message was that children were not listened to sufficiently about their relationships and wishes and feelings as too often the family dynamics were described from an adult perspective. • The book concludes that the door should never be shut on sibling contact.
Reviewed by	Joyce Ripley

Author	Patel T, Williams C & Marsh P
Title	Identity, race, religion and adoption: the public and legal view
Journal	Adoption and Fostering
Date	2004
Volume/issue	Vol 28 Number 1
Subject (key words)	Adoption, Diversity (Black children and families), (Transcultural practice)
Summary	<p>This is an attempt to assess public opinion on the placement of children from minority ethnic groups. 1,200 members of the public were asked their view on the appropriate placement for a Muslim child born in England with Nigerian grandparents. The authors conclude that there is public support for a combined policy of matching children's ethnicity and religion, but also ensuring that efforts to do this should not override a child's chances of adoption.</p> <p>The methods used to obtain a random group of interviewees to represent public opinion seem a little crude. Researchers, all undergraduate law students, were asked to find ten willing members of the public, conforming to a specified gender, age, ethnicity and religious mix.</p>
Reviewed by	SH

Author	Ripley J
Title	Does a Parental Responsibility Order Make a Responsible Parent?
Date	2003
MA Thesis	Liverpool University
Publisher	Unpublished
Key words	Children Act (Parental responsibility), Fathers
Summary	Aim – To establish whether conferring the legal status of Parental Responsibility encourages NRFs to exercise these responsibilities.

	<p>Methodology - Literature and policy review and a postal survey of 500 mothers who had been involved in a legal dispute 2 to 3 years previously in the NW. 92 replied (response rate of 18%). In half the cases, the parents were unmarried and the father had made an application for PR. In the other half, the parents were married.</p> <p>Findings</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The literature review traces the complex agendas underlying the development of UK family policy, which has increasingly emphasised the responsibilities of biological fathers • The number of children still having contact with their fathers was significantly lower amongst the unmarried group (38% against 57%). In both groups in over two thirds of cases the children were having less contact than when the orders were made • Ongoing contact was associated with the length of the relationship between the adults and between the child and father prior to separation • 61% of married fathers and 77% of unmarried fathers made no financial contribution to the child's upbringing. Those who paid maintenance were more likely to have contact • Fathers in both groups showed a very low level of participation the their child's school life (87% not involved) and 91% of mothers felt that the father did not offer the child emotional support • Over half of unmarried fathers did not exercise any element of PR two to three years after obtaining the legal order. <p>Ripley concludes from her study that, 'What has emerged is ... a gap between the intention of the policy makers and the reality of the unmarried paternal involvement in separated families.'</p> <p>Limitations The survey was only of mothers' views. A survey of fathers might have produced a different picture of their involvement with their children.</p>
Reviewed by	HB

Author	Roberts R, O'Connor T, Dunn J, Golding J and the ALSPAC Study Team
Title	The effects of child sexual abuse in later family life: mental health, parenting and adjustment of offspring
Journal	Child Abuse and Neglect
Date	2004
Volume/issue	28 (ps 525-545)
Key words	Child protection (Child sexual abuse), Family problems, Mental illness
Summary	<p>Aim – To investigate links between child abuse (occurring before 13 years), later mental health, family organisation, parenting behaviours and adjustment in offspring.</p> <p>Methodology – The study investigated a subsample of the Avon Longitudinal Study of Parents and Children. The subsample comprised 8292 mothers who had completed self-report data on prior sexual assault. 127 reported child sexual</p>

	<p>abuse (0.015%). Further data was collected from these families.</p> <p>Findings</p> <p>Prior sexual abuse was associated (though effect sizes were small) with:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Current membership of a non-traditional family type (single mother and stepfather) • Poorer psychological well-being of the victims • Teenage pregnancy • Problematic parenting behaviours • Adjustment problems in the victim's offspring • The level of the mother's anxiety affected the extent of the child's problems <p>Limitations</p> <p>The differences between the abused and non abused groups in terms of variables relating to adult mental health, parenting relationships and child adjustment were small though statistically significant. This is not acknowledged by the authors.</p>
Reviewed by	HB

Author	Rushton A & Dance C
Title	The outcomes of late permanent placements: The adolescent years
Journal	Adoption and Fostering
Date	2004
Volume/issue	Vol 28 Number 1
Subject (key words)	Adoption, (Fostering) Long term fostering
Summary	<p>133 children, who had been placed in adoption or permanent foster care placements between the ages of 5 and 11, were tracked to age 14 and beyond. As with other similar samples, about 70% of the families were still together after six years, but the researchers wondered to what extent placement continuity could be equated with successful care.</p> <p>Disruptions had not been predictable; half of the disruptions had occurred despite the parents feeling quite confident after a year, and a similar number of placements endured even though significant worries had been expressed at the twelve month stage. Behavioural problems appeared to increase over time where children had difficulty initially settling into families.</p> <p>Reasons given for disruption included: -</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Contact with birth parents who encouraged the child to want to return home • A failure to secure therapy when needed • One or two cases where therapy was reported to have exacerbated the difficulties • A few cases where disruption followed the child alleging abuse by the carers <p>Disruption could lead to later successful placement; four out of the nine disrupted children were now said to be happy in their new families.</p> <p>The placements that had continued could be divided into those that had gone smoothly, those which were positive overall but</p>

	<p>with considerable difficulties at times, and those reporting a fairly negative experience, characterised by considerable unhappiness and stress. The last group accounted for over a third of the continuing placements. A flavour of life in such families is given by quotes from two children still in placement: “You only adopted me because without me you wouldn’t have been able to adopt my brother”, “You are not my parents, you never have been and never will be”.</p> <p>A difference did emerge between children placed on their own or with their siblings. Singly placed children were more likely to disrupt, and more likely to continue unhappily.</p> <p>As to why some unhappy placements end, whilst other unhappy ones soldier on, there seemed to be no significant difference in the objective behaviour of the two groups of children.</p> <p>Commitment by the parents appeared to be a key factor, even if at times this deteriorated into grim determination.</p> <p>The authors conclude that the picture of what happened is clearly mixed, broad success with a substantial minority causing concern. They suggest that intensive multi-professional support should be available as needed over an extended period.</p>
Reviewed by	SH

Author	Selwyn J, Frazer L and Fitzgerald A
Title	Findings adoptive families for black, Asian and black mixed-parentage children: agency policy and practice Executive summary
Date	2004
Publisher	NCH
Key words	Adoption, Diversity (Ethnic minority)
Summary	<p>Only the Executive Summary was read for this review</p> <p>Aim – To understand the barriers in the way of black, Asian and mixed-parentage adults and those in mixed relationships coming forward to adopt.</p> <p>Methodology – 3 LAs with large ethnic minority populations took part in the study in which data on LAC and adopted children was studied, and SW team managers were interviewed and prospective adopters sent questionnaires.</p> <p>Findings</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is a shortage of all minority ethnic adopters. Some minority ethnic groups have a very low age profile with the result that recruitment will be difficult • The impact of racism has affected people’s willingness to approach agencies • Minority ethnic children waited longer for adoption • SW matching reports need to give greater consideration to how adopters could help a child understand their heritage, culture and form a positive sense of self. Neither a black or white family is a perfect match for a black mixed-parentage child • Where agencies had recruited more minority ethnic social work staff, there had been an increase in applicants, but most had difficulty attracting staff.
Reviewed by	HB

Author	Stone, B (Ed.)
Title	Representing Children April 2004
Journal	Representing Children (whole journal)
Date	April 2004
Volume/issue	16(4)
Subject (key words)	Mental illness (Child mental illness), Case practice, Children's views/participation (Advocacy for children)
Summary	<p>This is an issue devoted to children's mental health issues and their rights, particularly when their liberty is restricted by being compulsorily detained in hospital or custody.</p> <p>ONS (1999) statistics suggest that 10% of all children aged 5 – 15 years has a mental disorder. Many would put this figure higher. Significantly more problems become manifest in the age range 15 – 18 years. Only around a quarter of young people ever get specialist help from CAMHS. Another study found that 95% of young people in custody had significant mental ill health, most of which was undiagnosed.</p> <p>A 2003 study found that there were 2,134 admissions to CAMHS inpatient units + 715 'inappropriate' children's admissions to general psychiatric wards. (As compared to 58,100 'looked after' children.)</p> <p>Concerns are expressed:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • That children inpatients do not have reviews, or the right to an advocate and there is no explicit responsibility to promote their general welfare; • That mental health needs of children in the justice system are rarely identified; • That the current Mental Health Bill does not contain provision to include a welfare checklist type requirement in decision-making.
Reviewed by	PL

Author	Stuart M and Baines C
Title	Progress on safeguards for children living away from home JFR Findings
Date	2004
Publisher	JRF
Key words	Child protection, Looked after children
Summary	<p>These JFR Findings are based on two reports, Progress on safeguards for children living away from home (160 pp) and Safeguards for vulnerable children: three studies on abusers, disabled children and children in prison (56 pp) both by Stuart M and Baines C. They will be reviewed separately in the next RD.</p> <p>Findings (from JFR Findings)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "Legislation, policy and procedures have been much improved but effective implementation has been more problematic • The main groups of children living away from home do now seem better safeguarded but worries remain for some of the

	<p>most vulnerable groups - those in private foster care, prisons and in some health settings.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Safeguards do not pay full attention to more marginalised groups of children such as disabled children and those with emotional and behavioural difficulties. • The regulation and inspection of schools with boarding provision have been transformed since 1997, but it is too early to judge whether the changes are improving safeguards. • In dealing with sexual abuse, there has been progress in: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - increasing awareness of the risks: but gaps remain in the information available to the public, parents, carers, staff and children themselves on how offenders operate; - establishing procedures for preventing abusers from working with children: but these are not being implemented consistently and, with most abusers unconvicted, there is a danger of relying too much on criminal checks with little use of 'soft' information; - establishing appropriate arrangements for abused children giving evidence in court: but implementation is slow and under-resourced. • In dealing with sexual abuse, there has been no or little progress in: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - bringing abusers to justice and securing convictions; - providing adequate help and treatment for abused children; - providing adequate treatment and supervision arrangements for abusers, especially young abusers and women; opportunities to reduce re-offending are being lost. • The researchers conclude that the scale of the problem of sexual abuse of children is such that a major rethink of policy is needed - with much greater emphasis on prevention and early intervention.”
Reviewed by	HB

Author	Warman, A
Title	Adoption and Looked-after Children: International Comparisons
Journal	International Family Law
Date	September
Volume/issue	2004
Key words	Adoption, Looked after children, Family law (International)
Summary	<p>This article is based on the research reported in <i>Adoption and Looked after Children – an International Comparison</i> (Oct 03 RD p26)</p> <p>The article stresses the different approaches to placement for children who have been abused. The current approach in England and Wales differs from other European countries and is more akin to that of the US. Other European countries put more resources into maintaining family ties and many would not look to adoption as an option for long-term placement. In contrast in England the importance of early decisions about permanent placement including adoption against the wishes of</p>

	<p>the birth parents are stressed. Other countries do not equate legal 'possession' of a child with stability for the child. The study emphasised that there is no research information on outcomes for children in the different systems; no evidence on 'what works'. Professionals may hold the same views about the needs of children but these will be interpreted according to the local social and legal context.</p>
Reviewed by	HB

Author	Weyts, Arabella
Title	The educational achievements of looked after children: Do welfare systems make a difference to outcomes?
Journal	Adoption & Fostering
Date	2004
Volume/issue	Vol 28 Number 3
Subject (key words)	Looked after children (Educational issues), Social policy
Summary	<p>If you want to find out more about home, go abroad. The author, a senior co-ordinator of a children's rights centre in Belgium, attempts an ambitious comparison of the effect of different welfare traditions and ideologies on outcomes for children in foster and residential care. She chose to examine the experience of children in: - England (neo-liberal model[?]), Norway (social-democratic model), Belgium (conservatvie-corporatist model) and the Basque area of Spain (the Mediterranean model). Other writers on international social welfare have identified these models.</p> <p>Specific local authorities in each country were asked to identify the last 50 entrants into care, aged over 10, and in care for at least 6 months. Questionnaires were completed for 42 children in England, 36 in Norway, 33 in Spain and 68 in Belgium (!). Statistical problems, and the difficulty of comparing like with like, emerge recurrently. For example, the proportion of boys in the samples was 50% in the English one and 32% in the Belgian group. The average period in care was 64 months in England, and only 36 months in Norway.</p> <p>Some of the results are interesting. In England, 36% of the children were said to be in care because of the need for long-term protection from abuse and/or neglect, the most common reason. In Norway, this was the fifth equal reason, 8% of the sample. The most common reason there was the need for stability for the child, and 'for parents to understand the difficulties arising from medical deficits or mental health problems in the children'. In England and Spain, two-thirds of children reached the threshold of significant harm, in Belgium just over half, and in Norway only 44%. This seems to indicate that in the former two countries, the emphasis is more on state intervention after harm has occurred, rather than prevention of harm and enabling families.</p> <p>Major differences emerge in the means of caring for children. In Spain and Belgium, only 12% of children were fostered, whereas in England and Norway, 71% and 72% were fostered,</p>

	<p>respectively. Significant impairment of educational development virtually excluded the Spanish and Belgian children from foster care, whereas almost half of the English and Norwegian children were in this position.</p> <p>Judging educational attainment was difficult; exam results were not comparable because of different exam systems. Results were obtained for certain useful abilities: to swim, use a PC, read well, and, for those over 16, to complete a job application. No obvious relationship emerged between the type of welfare system and the skills achievement of looked after children. Further comparisons were made, but few results were significant statistically.</p> <p>The author admits that there appears to be limited benefits from making global comparisons to understand the outcomes of looked after children. Two more profound inferences could possibly however be drawn: that it is difficult for one country to copy another's services, and limited effects can be achieved from modifying welfare systems and changing processes, contrary to the assumptions of many politicians and senior managers. In other words, that it is the content and quality rather than the structure of care which is critical.</p> <p>The author concludes that the greatest gain for children is to be had not from changing systems but from improving assessment, professional collaboration and raising expectations about what children can achieve. She praises the English government's view that "the time has come to realise the right to education for all children".</p>
Reviewed by	SH

Author	Wilcox D, Richards F, & O'Keefe Z
Title	Resilience and risk factors associated with experiencing childhood sexual abuse
Journal	Child Abuse Review
Date	Sept-Oct 2004
Volume/issue	Vol 13, Issue 5
Subject (key words)	Child protection (Child sexual abuse), Child psychology (Resilience), Adolescence (Adolescent perpetrators)
Summary	<p>This work focuses on the diverse moral journeys that children make after being abused, where the destinations can vary from healthy resilient adulthood to becoming an active child abuser. The article consists of a literature review, together with two case examples of adolescent offenders.</p> <p>The available evidence about the inter-relationship between being abused and becoming an abuser is that the majority of child sexual abusers have been sexually abused themselves as children, approximately 75% of female perpetrators, and 40-50% of male perpetrators. However most people who have been sexually abused as children do not go on to offend.</p> <p>The extent of the effect of sexual abuse on children has been linked to: -</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The nature and extent of the abuse experienced • The victim's relationship to the perpetrator • Whether abuse was accompanied by the threat of violence or actual harm

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The victim's perception of the abuse • Whether the victim is believed or supported by significant others • Whether they are able to place the responsibility for the abuse on the abuser, rather than blame themselves or their situation • A close relationship with someone in whom they can confide <p>It appears to be the consequent perception of the abuse rather than the extent or frequency of abuse that determines the degree to which children are adversely affected by the abuse. The abuse traumatises the child through the experience of pain, being frightened and helpless, realising that one's own will and wishes have become irrelevant to the course of events, leaving a damaged sense of self.</p> <p>Protective factors reducing the effect of the trauma and building psychological resilience include: -</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Personality traits such as self-esteem, intellectual ability and social skills • Family characteristics, including support and a harmonious environment • Good peer relationships • External supports which enhance a child's ability to cope e.g. good school performance or membership of a survivors' group <p>On the contrary, the additional adverse effects of being abused by a parent, with everyone else around denying the existence of the abuse, become more apparent. An established theory, from pioneers Finkelhor and Browne, sees later abusing behaviour by victims as an attempt to find relief by re-enacting the abuse, but with the previous helpless victim now in control.</p> <p>The authors end with a plea for offenders to be treated in order to promote protective factors – facing up to their responsibility for their behaviour, social skills, employment etc – rather than simply categorised and contained.</p>
Reviewed by	SH

Author	Williams F
Title	Rethinking Families
Date	2004
Publisher	Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation
Key words	Families, Social policy
Summary	<p>This is a succinct and useful report drawing together the research findings from the University of Leeds five-year qualitative study on changes in parenting and partnering and the implications for future policy directions. The project was funded by the ESRC and includes work by Carol Smart and her team on the experiences of children following parental separation (see RD Nov 02 Neale B and Smart C <i>It's Good to Talk</i>).</p> <p>It is impossible to summarise what is in effect a summary of a wide ranging research project. So I note what strike me as the</p>

	<p>most significant findings:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Between 1971 and 2001 the percentage of children living in married couple households fell from 90% to 64% and those living in lone parent households rose from 5% to 22%. This is one aspect of the hugely increased diversity of family forms in 2001. • Family forms are more diverse but the commitment to the needs of others especially children remains strong and finds different means of expression • Friends play an important part in the network of adults as do family members. Friendship has become a metaphor for any relationship marked by ‘closeness, confiding, sharing and mutuality’ • People negotiate personal and family dilemmas in relation to an ethic of care (moral reasoning). They ask how they can manage their lives to balance their own needs with those of others, rather than seeking external moral imperatives. <p>Policy implications</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Policy makers should recognise and support the ethic of care as well as the work ethic • This implies allowing parents time to care • Good quality care for children is important in terms of improved relationships, self-determination and well-being. <p>Limitations</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Although the report criticises the government for failing to take account of the diverse needs of minority ethnic parents and disabled parents and children, it does not explore in any depth the differing attitude to family and children different ethnic groups. • The report is refreshingly optimistic about people’s capacity to negotiate the dilemmas in their lives, but it glosses over the effect of parents disagreeing about what best meets their own needs and those of their children .
Reviewed by	HB

Author	Wilson G, Gillies J and Mayes G
Title	Fathers as Co-Parents: How Non-Resident Fathers Construe Family Situations
Date	2004
Publisher	Scottish Executive Publications online
Key words	Fathers, Residence (Shared parenting)
Summary	<p>This paper provides a summary of a PhD thesis (held at Glasgow University)</p> <p>Aim – To research the perspectives of co-parenting fathers</p> <p>Methodology – Literature review; 4 group discussions with a total of 14 NRFs to establish 8 common post-separation situations; 17 NRFs completed 3 repertory grid interviews at 6 month intervals.</p> <p>Findings</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “NRFs perceived the relationship between separated parents as essential to contact with their children, but often felt controlled by the resident parent. They employed

	<p>different strategies of negotiation, toleration or retaliation for coping with this experience of control.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Becoming non-resident creates particular problems for parenting. Fathers in this study thought other NRFs may consider losing contact with children as ultimately a better solution for the family, but repudiated such a course of action themselves. • Family and friends, or organisations with a largely male profile, were favoured as sources of support by the NRSF participants over existing services for separated parents • The sense the NRFs made of their role is flexible. Interactions with a child and with the child's mother were often seen in the same terms by NRFs. • NRFs' perceptions of parity in their parental co-operation depended on whether the contact schedule is perceived as consensual, and whether they see the other parent frequently. • Parental conflict did not emerge as a primary consideration for these fathers in co-parental situations, but it can have varied implications for different individuals; not all of these may be negative. Conflict can arise where a NRF's understanding of his role in the separated family does not change when faced with transitional events (e.g. a new partner or change in employment for either parent). • In a context of potentially impermanent family relationships, one strategy for NRFs to cope with change or inter-parental conflict is to re-construe that role as less central, or adhere more strongly to an alternative role (e.g. parental role in a new family). • Education or support interventions provided for, and targeted at, NRFs would be a useful initiative. Services should be proactive in reaching that population, and should take into account fathers' distinct perspectives and issues.” <p>Limitations – This is a small study and it is not clear how representative the fathers who took part were. The paper does not make it clear how involved the fathers were at the start of the study and how this changed over time.</p>
Reviewed by	HB

Author	Wilson K, Sinclair I, Taylor C, Pithouse A and Sellick C
Title	Fostering success: An exploration of the research literature in foster care Summary
Date	2004
Publisher	SCIE
Key words	Fostering
Summary	<p>Aim – To identify what impact foster care has for fostered children (outcomes)</p> <p>Methodology – Scoping review ‘providing a summary of the main trends in research ... rather than a comprehensive account of all the research’ which would be available in a systematic review. 286 ‘usable references’ were read. The academic team also worked with user consultation groups.</p>

	<p>Findings</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Foster care seems to be safer and less likely to produce difficult behaviour and emotional problems than residential care and is welcomed by most users • There is little evidence that different types of provider (LA or independent) produce different outcomes • There is some evidence that 'coherent and intensive' schemes can be effective • Most children want contact (and have a right to it) but 'contact is more problematic than has hitherto been thought'. <p>The report concludes by considering the implications for organisations and for practice and by identifying the principles which should lie behind provision. The key message is that the approach to fostering needs to be systematic, with organisations, foster carers and SWs following the same principles in relation to the children.</p> <p>Limitations – The report notes that the selection of literature did not allow firm conclusions to be drawn in relation to some key aspects of fostering, for example, contact, friends and families versus stranger foster care and different forms of long-term placement.</p>
Reviewed by	HB

Author	Witney C
Title	Original fathers: an exploration into the experiences of birth fathers involved in adoption in the mid-20 th century
Journal	Adoption & Fostering
Date	2004
Volume/issue	Vol 28 Number 3
Subject (key words)	Adoption (Birth relatives) Fathers

Summary	<p>A rare study of some of the fathers involved in the 90,000 adoptions that have taken place in Britain since 1926. The author believes that fathers were excluded from adoption arrangements because child care was seen historically as 'women's business', reflected in the legal status of the 'illegitimate' child. In the 1980's, US researchers began to suggest that birth fathers also suffered from grief and the loss of their children.</p> <p>Contacting birth fathers is not of course easy, and respondents are highly self-selecting. The author analysed completed questionnaires from 60 men whose names were on the Adoption Contact Register indicating they wanted contact with their adopted children. 33 took part in phone interviews and four were interviewed in person.</p> <p>Contrary to images of seduction and abandonment, half of the men believed that their relationship was a loving and stable one; a number later married the child's mother. The majority were the same age as their partner, and only one man denied responsibility for the child's future. 55% were too young to marry without the consent of parents, age 21 up to 1967. 14 of the men had no further children. Poignancy permeates the study report.</p> <p>The main reasons given for the adoption decision were pressure from the mother's family (73% of the cases), stigma, financial difficulties and youth. Mothers were often sent away by their family to have the child, to avoid stigma. The general attitude of families and authorities to fathers could be summed up as "you've done enough already". Advice of any kind to fathers was sparse.</p> <p>By 1999, 24 of the 60 men had been successful in contacting their children, 15 now considered the child part of their present family.</p> <p>The group cannot be considered a representative sample of birth fathers, however they do counter stereotypes of feckless, disinterested men just walking away. Adoption practice has changed considerably, although mother's wishes still tend to predominate (does a <i>de facto</i> 'right to choose' operate?). The author states that mothers and grandmothers, together with social services, arranged adoptions in the mid-20th century. She questions how much children still remain women's business.</p>
Reviewed by	SH