



# **RESEARCH DIGEST**

## **2005 Issue 1**

Prepared by

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

## Research studies and articles based on research

<b>Author</b>	Axford N, Little M, Morpeth L and Weyts A
<b>Title</b>	Evaluating Children's Services: Recent Conceptual and Methodological Developments
<b>Journal</b>	British Journal of Social Work
<b>Date</b>	2005
<b>Volume/issue</b>	35/1
<b>Key words</b>	<b>Evidence informed practice, Support services</b>
<b>Summary</b>	<p><b>Aim:</b> To consider recent innovation and challenges in respect of the evaluation of children's services interventions</p> <p><b>Definition:</b> Evaluation is defined as "the use of social research procedures to investigate systematically the effectiveness of social intervention programmes with a view to improving policy and practice".</p> <p><b>Model:</b> A model of evaluation is described which incorporates the following elements:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Focusing on a discrete group of children who are likely to benefit for the proposed intervention</li> <li>• Deciding on the intervention to be used based on desired outcomes and evidence about services likely to produce these outcomes (A theory of why an intervention is likely to be effective has to be developed)</li> <li>• Establishing whether the intervention was delivered as intended (integrity)</li> <li>• Evaluating whether the intervention achieved its stated objectives.</li> </ul>
<b>Reviewed by</b>	HB

<b>Author</b>	Barker R and Place M
<b>Title</b>	Working in collaboration – A therapeutic intervention for abused children
<b>Journal</b>	Child Abuse Review
<b>Date</b>	Jan-Feb 2005
<b>Volume/issue</b>	Vol. 14, Issue 1
<b>Subject (key words)</b>	<b>Child protection, Case practice (Therapy)</b>
<b>Summary</b>	<p>The study reports back on a treatment programme, jointly funded by an SSD and health authority in the North of England, using a sole female psychiatric nurse. The therapeutic approach was broadly Rogerian, individually focused, with some therapeutic play for younger children, and a cognitive behavioural approach for older children, including psychoeducation.</p> <p>67 children who had suffered abuse were studied, 60% girls; for just less than half the most frequent abusive experience was sexual abuse. Ages ranged from 4 to 18, with a mean of 9.2. They were seen by the same worker for between 1 and 25 sessions, with an average of 7.</p> <p>The researchers record significant improvements in the children's scores after the sessions, using the Health of the Nation Outcome Scales, which measure clinical features of the</p>

	<p>children's symptoms, and social and physical functioning. Girls showed improvements in the areas of disruptive behaviour and family life and relationships. Boys showed more improvement in physical symptoms e.g. stomach aches, and in emotional or related symptoms.</p> <p>Parents were generally positive; the children themselves were less forthcoming, the usual answer to the researchers' questioning being "It was OK". The social workers for the children were reported to be overwhelmingly positive. The researchers did not assess whether there was a link between perceived therapeutic success and placement breakdown. The extent to which the reported success of the work was attributable to the ability of the one worker remains unknown. The service provides evidence of what can be achieved by inter-agency cooperation.</p>
<b>Reviewed by</b>	SH

<b>Author</b>	Becker F & French L
<b>Title</b>	Making the links: child abuse, animal cruelty and domestic violence
<b>Journal</b>	Child Abuse Review
<b>Date</b>	Nov-Dec 2004
<b>Volume/issue</b>	Vol. 13 Issue 6
<b>Subject (key words)</b>	<b>Child protection (Child abuse), Domestic violence</b>
<b>Summary</b>	<p>The paper reviews the evidence of the relationship between the three areas. The authors suggest that animal abuse be defined as 'socially unacceptable behaviour that intentionally causes unnecessary pain, suffering or distress to, and/or the death of, an animal'.</p> <p>3 negative themes are identified to the inter-relationship: -</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Animal abuse by adults and children as part of a continuum of abuse within the family</li> <li>• Animal abuse perpetrated by children who show later aggressive and deviant behaviour</li> <li>• Animal abuse as an indicator of the existence of child abuse</li> </ul> <p>Available research indicates that overall 'some correlation' can be found between animal cruelty and abuse within the family. On the other hand there is also evidence that the relationship between children and animals can be therapeutic, and can help children build up their resilience in adverse circumstances</p>
<b>Reviewed by</b>	SH

<b>Author</b>	Crawley H and Lester T
<b>Title</b>	No Place for a Child: Children in UK immigration detention: Impacts, alternatives and safeguards <a href="#">Executive Summary</a> <a href="#">Full Report</a>
<b>Date</b>	2005
<b>Publisher</b>	Save the Children
<b>Key words</b>	<b>Immigration, Criminal proceedings</b>
<b>Summary</b>	<b>Only the Executive Summary has been read for this review.</b>

	<p><b>Aim of study:</b> To examine the experience of children who are detained for the purposes of immigration control.</p> <p><b>Methodology:</b> The report is based on 32 case studies of children detained in the UK either with their parents or as separated children whose age is disputed; observational visits to two detention centres; interviews with 40 involved professionals and a literature review.</p> <p><b>Findings:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Around 2000 children are detained with their families every year for the purpose of immigration control. In half the cases the children were detained for more than 28 days.</li> <li>• There are no figures on the number of children detained where their age was disputed though it is likely that this has increased. These are children separated from their parents/carers.</li> <li>• There are significant concerns about the mental and physical health, education and protection of children detained in prison</li> <li>• There is evidence that children are detained unnecessarily in prison and that other controls could be imposed</li> <li>• The review process raised concerns focussing on immigration-related issues rather than the welfare of children</li> <li>• Legal advice and access to formal age assessment procedures is often inadequate.</li> </ul> <p>The report recommends that the government should review its policy towards asylum-seeking children treating them first and foremost as children. It should stop detaining children as a means of immigration control and withdraw its reservation to the UNCRC (which does not allow for the detention of children solely for immigration purposes). Formal age assessments should be undertaken prior to the detention of young people whose age is in dispute. Alternatives to detention should be developed.</p>
<b>Reviewed by</b>	HB

<b>Author</b>	Dalrymple J
<b>Title</b>	Constructions of Child and Youth Advocacy: Emerging Issues in Advocacy Practice
<b>Journal</b>	Children and Society
<b>Date</b>	2005
<b>Volume/issue</b>	19/1
<b>Key words</b>	<b>Children's views/participation (Advocacy for children)</b>
<b>Summary</b>	<p><b>Aim of study</b> – To provide a contemporary understanding of the nature of child and youth advocacy</p> <p><b>Methodology</b> - Analysis of data from five advocacy projects which included interviews with young people, advocates and commissioners</p> <p><b>Findings</b></p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Children identified as important the independence of advocates, the nature of their relationship with the advocate (“a good friend”) and the opportunity to influence the planning process. However, they did not feel they had control over the systems.</li> <li>• Advocates believed their role was to support young people to have their views heard and taken into account. However, the advocate could take away the power of the child to speak for him/herself.</li> <li>• The commissioners of services may construe advocacy according to an adult rather than child agenda.</li> <li>• Dalrymple argues that the promotion of a culture of advocacy from the child’s perspective is “a formidable task” as it challenges the control of adults. Furthermore the legislative endorsement can compromise the independence of advocates. Advocacy can only enhance the influence of children in so far as it is developed in response to children and not the commissioners of services.</li> </ul> <p><b>Limitations</b> – There is no account of how the projects were chosen or how many young people, advocates and commissioners views were sought.</p>
<b>Reviewed by</b>	HB

<b>Author</b>	Dearden C and Becker S
<b>Title</b>	<a href="#">Young Carers in the UK</a>
<b>Date</b>	2004
<b>Publisher</b>	Carers UK
<b>Key words</b>	<b>Young carers, Support Services</b>
<b>Summary</b>	<p><b>Only the Executive Summary was read for this review</b></p> <p><b>Aim of study:</b> To report the findings of the third national survey of young carers who are being supported by specialist young carers projects in the UK</p> <p><b>Methodology:</b> The report is based on data from 87 projects concerning a total of 6,178 young carers</p> <p><b>Findings:</b> (Taken from the Executive summary of main research data findings)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 56% of the sample are girls, 44% are boys. The average age is 12.</li> <li>• 84% of the sample is white; the largest minority group being African Caribbean.</li> <li>• 56% of young carers are living in lone parent families.</li> <li>• People with care needs have a range of illnesses or physical or mental health problems. Half of all conditions are of a physical health nature; 29% are mental health problems; 17% are learning difficulties and 3% are sensory impairments.</li> <li>• Two thirds of the young carers provide domestic help in the home; 48% provide general and nursing-type care; 82% provide emotional support and supervision; 18% provide intimate personal care and 11% also provide child care. The recognised incidence of emotional support has increased dramatically since 1997.</li> <li>• Intimate care is most commonly provided where the person</li> </ul>

	<p>with care needs has a physical health problem or disability. Emotional support is far more common where the person has mental health problems.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Overall, girls are more involved in all types of caring tasks, especially as they get older.</li> <li>• Half the young carers are caring for 10 hours or less per week; one third for 11-20 hours per week; and 16% for over 20 hours per week. Some (2%) are caring for more than 50 hours each week.</li> <li>• The overall incidence of missed school and educational difficulties has reduced, decreasing between 1995 and 1997 and again between 1997 and 2003. However, 27% of all young carers of secondary school-age are experiencing some problems, and the equivalent proportion of young carers of primary school age is 13%. Four in ten children caring for someone who misuses drugs or alcohol have educational difficulties.</li> <li>• 18% of young carers have been assessed, an improvement on 1997. Young carers from minority ethnic backgrounds are more likely to have been assessed, especially under the 1989 Children Act. Those caring for someone with drug/alcohol problems are more likely to receive an assessment under the Children Act (28%).</li> <li>• One fifth of young carers and their families receive no other support except for their contact with a specialist young carers project. Social Services support is the most common external service received.</li> </ul>
<b>Reviewed by</b>	HB

<b>Author</b>	Enneli P, Modood T and Bradley H
<b>Title</b>	<a href="#">Young Turks and Kurds: a set of 'invisible' disadvantaged groups</a> (Findings) <a href="#">Young Turks and Kurds</a> (Full report)
<b>Date</b>	2005
<b>Publisher</b>	JRF
<b>Key words</b>	<b>Diversity</b>
<b>Summary</b>	<p><b>Aim of study:</b> This is an exploratory study which aims to give voice to the experiences of young people from the Turkish and Kurdish communities who are largely inaudible and invisible within youth research.</p> <p><b>Methodology:</b> The first stage comprised a survey of 250 people between the ages of 16 to 23 from the Turkish speaking communities. At the second stage 30 in-depth interviews were conducted with young people and 6 with parents. Three organisations were contacted. 3 focus groups held to discuss the findings.</p> <p><b>Findings</b> (Quoted from Executive Summary)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Turks do not occupy a clear position in the white/non-white divide upon which current understanding of 'ethnic minorities' is based.</li> <li>■ Some young Turkish-speaking people believe they suffer discrimination and harassment from white people, from some</li> </ul>

	<p>minority groups and even from some other Turkish-speaking groups.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Truancy and exclusion from school are problems for the Turkish-speaking young people, especially the Kurds, nearly a quarter of whom in the sample had been excluded.</li> <li>■ Few of the Turkish-speaking young people in the survey have many qualifications to help them in the labour market.</li> <li>■ Most of the young people with qualifications stay on in further education but need to have part-time work to fund their studies.</li> <li>■ The young Turks and Kurds clearly use, indeed rely on, family and kin links to help them through risky and extended transitions from adolescence to adulthood.</li> <li>■ Few are in employment with employers outside their own ethnic economy.</li> <li>■ The majority of young people do not consider looking for a job outside London, though are willing to move to a different country.</li> <li>■ The young people are ambivalent about what it means to be British and most are reluctant to adopt that identity. Neither do they see themselves as part of a broader Muslim community.</li> </ul>
<b>Reviewed by</b>	HB

<b>Author</b>	Fowler, E & Stewart, S
<b>Title</b>	Rule 9.5 Separate Representation and NYAS
<b>Journal</b>	Family Law
<b>Date</b>	January 2005
<b>Volume/issue</b>	35; pp 49 – 52
<b>Subject (key words)</b>	<b>Children Act (Rule 9.5)</b>
<b>Summary</b>	<p>Gives the results of a survey of 52 cases involving 95 children selected on the basis that they were open to NYAS in January 2004.</p> <p>All of the children had been made parties under rule 9.5 and represented by NYAS' own in-house solicitors.</p> <p>Characteristics of the cases:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Most referrals were made by County Courts;</li> <li>• 84% of the children were under 11 years;</li> <li>• 73% had at least one previous CAFCASS report; 8% recommended NYAS' involvement;</li> <li>• 98% involved an intractable dispute over contact;</li> <li>• In 52% the cases had been before the courts for more than 3 years;</li> <li>• In 27% the cases involved serious allegations of child abuse;</li> <li>• All were exceptional and complex.</li> </ul> <p>NYAS reports that its caseworkers are active in resolving disputed areas between parents and in enabling children's views to be conveyed to parents safely and without further acrimony. The work is described as characterised by adopting a broad approach to including people of importance to the child; informing, explaining and reporting back to the child as work proceeds; using life story work in helping the child to understand his/ her family background. In 88% of cases the child was seen at a neutral venue, away from parental conflict.</p>

	<p>NYAS reports that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• In 95% of cases the children's views had a significant impact on decision-making;</li> <li>• In 67% of cases there was a need for separate reporting of siblings' views and needs;</li> <li>• In all cases the court followed the recommendation of the NYAS guardian.</li> </ul>
<b>Reviewed by</b>	PL

<b>Author</b>	Holland. S, Faulkner. A & Perez-del-Aguila. R
<b>Title</b>	Promoting stability and continuity of care for looked after children: a survey and critical review
<b>Journal</b>	Child & Family Social Work
<b>Date</b>	Feb 2005
<b>Volume/issue</b>	Vol 10, Issue 1
<b>Subject (key words)</b>	<b>Looked after children, Fostering, Kinship placements</b>
<b>Summary</b>	<p>The review is of the limited available research on why some looked after children enjoy more stable placements which identifies the following factors (with the corresponding level of evidence): -</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Sibling co-placement (weak support)</li> <li>Kinship care (non-UK, relatively weak evidence)</li> <li>Parental Participation (however equivocal)</li> <li>Professional foster care (one US study)</li> <li>Individualised, multidimensional support (non-UK, good evidence)</li> </ul> <p>Surprisingly, there was no evidence found that participation by the young people themselves increased stability [although involvement in decision-making is more likely to occur with children placed at an older age, who are more likely to suffer placement breakdown]</p> <p>The telephone survey suggested that there is a culture of innovation in the UK in providing different packages for looked after children, but no independent evaluation of their worth.</p>
<b>Reviewed by</b>	SH

<b>Author</b>	Hydén M, & Overlien C
<b>Title</b>	Applying narrative analysis to the process of confirming or disregarding cases of suspected sexual abuse
<b>Journal</b>	Child & Family Social Work
<b>Date</b>	Feb 2005
<b>Volume/issue</b>	Vol 10, Issue 1
<b>Subject (key words)</b>	<b>Child Protection, (Sexual abuse)</b>
<b>Summary</b>	<p>This research arose out of the experience of the second author directly observing the care of young women at a Swedish detention home. Some of the women gave accounts of sexual abuse, which the staff and other young women within the home considered had varying degrees of credibility.</p> <p>The authors analyse what influenced how accounts of abuse were viewed: the credibility, consistency and faithfulness of narratives; behaviour as a victim; evaluation of the degree of</p>

	<p>consent. The women were aged up to 21, so acts of abuse needed to be differentiated from other sexual experiences, often in the context of drug and/or alcohol use.</p> <p>Many of the young people, they say, were not able to deliver coherent stories, reflecting their own limited abilities, and possibly the effects of the abuse, rather than the truth of their experiences. The reverse of the convincing liar, the unconvincing possible victim.</p> <p>The authors advocate an alternative approach of accepting, for therapeutic purposes, the narrative given, however imperfect, and focussing on what that narrative reveals about the broken connection between the young person's personal experience and their public presentation. How can they be helped to give accurate accounts of their life?</p>
Reviewed by	SH

<b>Author</b>	Kehily M J (ed)
<b>Title</b>	An Introduction to Childhood Studies
<b>Date</b>	2004
<b>Publisher</b>	Open University Press
<b>Key words</b>	<b>Childhood studies</b>
<b>Summary</b>	<p>Childhood Studies is a growth area in the academic field and this book is designed for students following Childhood Studies courses and anyone interested in how our views of childhood shape the way children are treated. The book is interdisciplinary and has contributions from leading scholars in different fields ranging through law, education and social work. The book is divided into three areas. Historical Approaches to Childhood highlights changes in the way that we have perceived childhood over time. The continuing dominant view of children as passive and powerless is challenged throughout the book, as is the idea that children are either innocent or evil. This duality of approach is continued in an interesting chapter on childhood sexuality.</p> <p>Part 2- Sociocultural Approaches to Childhood continues the theme of constructed childhoods and a critique of developmental psychology argues that "we are no longer in the terrain of an essential childhood with a fixed and universalized psychology of development." Time to throw away the development charts then!</p> <p>Part 3 looks at Policy Perspectives on Childhood. I particularly enjoyed a chapter which strongly questioned whether our westernised views of children's rights based on the concept of "the self" fit comfortably with other cultures whose focus is "the family" or "the community". The chapter contained some fascinating information about the working of the UNCRC in Vietnam. The book is well written and absorbing and is a good introduction to anyone new to Childhood Studies or for anyone who wants to catch up on the latest research and developments in this area.</p>
<b>Reviewed by</b>	Constance Booth

<b>Author</b>	Kelly J and Lamb M
<b>Title</b>	Using child development research to make appropriate custody and access decisions for young children
<b>Journal</b>	Family and Conciliation Court Review (US)
<b>Date</b>	2000
<b>Volume/issue</b>	38/3
<b>Key words</b>	<b>Child psychology (Attachment), Contact</b>
<b>Summary</b>	<p><b>Aim of article</b> To discuss research in the field of child development and attachment that had a bearing on contact and residence issues for young children. The article is taken from an American journal.</p> <p><b>Methodology</b> The use primarily of review articles to develop the argument</p> <p><b>Argument from the research reviews</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Successful attachment to both parents (and other major care givers) is critically important to the emotional development of children</li> <li>• Most attachments to both parents begin to occur at around 6 months</li> <li>• Extended separations from either parent from 6 months and into early school age are undesirable and likely to damage developing attachment relationships</li> <li>• If the parents are separated, contact at frequent intervals needs to take place in order to allow the attachment to take place</li> <li>• Between the ages of 15 and 24 months, it is normal for children to display anxiety about separation from one parent even where they are securely attached to both parents</li> <li>• Parental separation is likely to increase insecurity in infant-parent attachment relationships at least for some time.</li> <li>• Conflict between parents is likely to increase insecurity</li> <li>• To promote an infant's psychological needs, contact for infants needs to take place every day or every other day and include every day activities such as feeding, play and putting to be</li> <li>• Conflict and litigation can be damaging. Disputes should be resolved quickly and alternative arrangements put in place where parents argue at handover or are unable to communicate.</li> </ul> <p><b>Limitations</b> The research on attachment has mostly been done on middle-class white US children. It is not therefore clear how generalisable the findings are. The implications for children where there is sustained hostility between the parents are not addressed.</p>
<b>Reviewed by</b>	HB

<b>Author</b>	Logan J and Smith C
<b>Title</b>	Face-to-Face Contact Post Adoption: Views from the Triangle
<b>Journal</b>	British Journal of Social Work
<b>Date</b>	2005
<b>Volume/issue</b>	35/1
<b>Key words</b>	<b>Adoption, Contact</b>
<b>Summary</b>	<p><b>Aim of study:</b> To explore the experiences of adopted children, adoptive parents and birth family members (triangles) having face-to-face contact after adoption</p> <p><b>Methodology:</b> The sample consisted of cases (11) where adoptive parents, birth parents and adopted children agreed to be interviewed. This sample was drawn from a wider sample of 61 families identified by 4 agencies where face-to-face contact was taking place. Semi-structured interviews were conducted with the adoptive parents and birth relatives and a variety of techniques were used with the children. The kinship networks were all white British and involved 18 children.</p> <p><b>Findings</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The adults, in particular the adoptive parents, preferred voluntary arrangements for contact</li> <li>• Successful contact was more likely where adults felt positively about each other; where they were able to negotiate arrangements; where the birth relatives gave the adoptive parents “permission to parent”; where all parties were satisfied with the level of contact</li> <li>• Children were most likely to want more contact (50%)</li> <li>• Most children (90%) indicated that they were happy about the adoption and relations in the adoptive family</li> <li>• But 39%, whilst describing themselves as happy in their adoptive relationships, also expressed distress or ambivalence about the decision to place them for adoption</li> <li>• Only one (from five) birth mother in the kinship networks who had contested the adoption subsequently had face-to-face contact</li> <li>• In two kinship networks the children carried the burden of distrust between the adoptive and birth families but nevertheless wanted contact to continue.</li> <li>• There was little preparation for families or support in managing contact once the adoption order was made.</li> </ul> <p><b>Limitations</b> This was a very small sample of families where face-to-face contact was taking place. As there was no control group, it is not possible to know if these kinship networks differed in some significant ways from kinship networks where face-to-face contact does not take place. The findings cannot therefore be generalised to kinship networks where face-to-face contact is not taking place.</p>
<b>Reviewed by</b>	HB

<b>Author</b>	Ludvigsen A & Parnham J
<b>Title</b>	Searching for siblings: The motivation and experiences of adults seeking contact with adopted siblings
<b>Journal</b>	Adoption and Fostering
<b>Date</b>	Winter 2004
<b>Volume/issue</b>	Vol. 28, Number 4
<b>Subject (key words)</b>	<b>Families (Siblings), Adoption, Child psychology</b>
<b>Summary</b>	<p>It is now recognised, the authors say, that knowledge and, if possible, contact with siblings is of major importance to identity formation. The severance of links between young siblings is now more reluctantly undertaken. This research examines the experiences of 30 siblings who approached Barnado's seeking contact with an adopted sibling.</p> <p>76% of the searchers had lived with their birth family, 13.8 % had been adopted themselves. 68% of the searchers were not told about their adopted siblings until after the age of 14; in many families this was a well-kept secret, redolent of a different era in adoption, when there were 'unmarried mothers' homes'. The main motivations for searching was wanting to find out what happened to their sibling, that they were alright; wanting to meet or know them; and a sense of having a duty or obligation to search, to let the adopted sibling know about their family. Searching was for many an extremely emotional experience, 25% reporting very mixed and fluctuating emotions. 10 of the searchers were unable to make contact because 4 adopted adults had died, 2 could not be found and 4 did not want any contact. 16 of the 20 where contact occurred said that contact has continued.</p> <p>The authors argue persuasively that siblings have a need to search for their brother or sister, separate from birth parents' desire for reunion. They note that Barnado's receive almost as many search requests from siblings as from birth parents, mainly mothers. They ask for greater understanding of the special nature of sibling relations and their enduring personal significance.</p>
<b>Reviewed by</b>	SH

<b>Author</b>	McCarthy G
<b>Title</b>	The developmental histories of children who experience high levels of placement instability in the care system
<b>Journal</b>	Adoption and Fostering
<b>Date</b>	Winter 2004
<b>Volume/issue</b>	Vol. 28, Number 4
<b>Subject (key words)</b>	<b>Looked after children, Child psychology, Case practice</b>
<b>Summary</b>	<p>This small study, by a Gloucester clinical psychologist, of 11 children who had experienced over 10 placement moves in a 3 year period found that they were much more likely to have displayed multiple problem behaviours prior to being placed in care. He compared their health and SSD records with those of 10 other children who had had few moves.</p> <p>He recommends early assessment of this vulnerable group,</p>

	using Framework for Assessment Questionnaires, and research as to whether different interventions can improve outcomes for the group.
<b>Reviewed by</b>	SH

<b>Author</b>	Mantle G
<b>Title</b>	Involving Children in Court-based Family Mediation
<b>Journal</b>	Representing Children
<b>Date</b>	2001
<b>Volume/issue</b>	14 (3)
<b>Key words</b>	<b>Case practice CAFCASS (In-court conciliation)</b>
<b>Summary</b>	<p><b>Aim of the Study</b> To provide information about children whose parents took part in court related mediation</p> <p><b>Methodology</b> This article reports a study of data from 448 families who were offered court related mediation by the then Essex Family Courts Service from April 1998 to March 1999. The article also discusses the legislative and practice background relating to the involvement of children in mediation.</p> <p><b>Findings</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 50% of families had more than one child</li> <li>• 20% of the cases involved children of ten or over</li> <li>• 13% of families had at least one child with a special need</li> <li>• 14% of families had at least one child known to social services</li> </ul> <p><b>Limitations</b> The findings do not take one much beyond what an internal analysis of the data could have produced. There is no evidence on ethnic background or domestic abuse. For a larger and more rigorous profile of parents using in-court conciliation by Liz Trinder click <a href="#">here</a>.</p>
<b>Reviewed by</b>	HB

<b>Author</b>	Mills C
<b>Title</b>	<a href="#">Problems at home, problems at school</a>
<b>Date</b>	2004
<b>Publisher</b>	NSPCC
<b>Key words</b>	<b>Education, child protection</b>
<b>Summary</b>	<p><b>Only the Executive Summary has been read for this review</b></p> <p><b>Aim of study:</b> To review research that examines the relationship between how children are treated at home and how they fare at school.</p> <p><b>Methodology:</b> This is not a systematic review. The NSPCC and Institute of Education libraries were searched as were 5 databases. The selection of material for review was dependent on the author's judgement of its relevance.</p> <p><b>Findings</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Maltreated children are at greater risk of poor academic performance</li> <li>• US research shows that there are concentrations of maltreated children among those with SEN</li> <li>• A relationship between maltreatment and increased risk of behavioural problems, aggressions and crime is</li> </ul>

	<p>demonstrated in the literature</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Maltreated children are at higher risk of being bullied</li> <li>• There is some evidence that maltreated children are more likely than other children to be absent from school and excluded</li> <li>• Evidence suggests that maltreated children are at risk of a range of psychiatric condition which may reduce their ability to function successfully in school</li> <li>• Schools need to be alert to the fact that children who are experiencing problems at school are at greater risk of experiencing problems at home</li> <li>• The poor school performance of many LAC may be explained by their history of maltreatment. LAC therefore need special attention paid to their educational needs.</li> </ul>
<b>Reviewed by</b>	HB

<b>Author</b>	Morgan R
<b>Title</b>	<a href="#">Children's views on restraint</a>
<b>Date</b>	2004
<b>Publisher</b>	Commission for Social Care Inspection
<b>Key words</b>	<b>Looked after children</b>
<b>Summary</b>	<p><b>Aim of study</b> To survey the views of children and young people in residential homes and residential special schools on restraint</p> <p><b>Methodology:</b> 6 workshops were held with children and young people from randomly selected children's homes and special schools</p> <p><b>The report covers children's views on:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How to prevent things building up to a dangerous level</li> <li>• When to use restraint</li> <li>• What it feels like to be restrained</li> <li>• How to do restraint</li> <li>• Avoiding restraint</li> </ul>
<b>Reviewed by</b>	HB

<b>Author</b>	Mullender A
<b>Title</b>	<a href="#">Tackling Domestic Violence: providing support for children who have witnessed domestic violence</a>
<b>Date</b>	2004
<b>Publisher</b>	Home Office
<b>Key words</b>	<b>Domestic Violence, Case practice (Support services)</b>
<b>Summary</b>	<p><b>Aim of the report:</b> To provide good practice recommendations for professionals who have a role in delivering support to children affected by domestic violence.</p> <p><b>Methodology:</b> The report draws on the independent evaluation of five projects funded under the Crime Reduction Programme Violence Against Women Initiative.</p> <p><b>Guidance based on the evaluations</b> The report summarises research findings on children's experience of domestic violence and the outcomes for those</p>

	<p>children. It outlines the benefits for children of support:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Permission to talk about what has happened</li> <li>• Ventilation of pent-up feelings</li> <li>• Reassurance that it was not their fault</li> <li>• Rebuilding of self-esteem</li> <li>• Development of individual safety plans</li> </ul> <p>Different methods of support are described, and when, how and with whom they are most effective.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Individual work</li> <li>• Group work</li> <li>• Work with children with special needs</li> <li>• Work with mothers</li> </ul> <p><b>Limitations:</b> The findings were largely based on qualitative research and relatively small numbers.</p>
<b>Reviewed by</b>	HB

<b>Author</b>	Neale B, Flowerdew J, Smart C and Wade A
<b>Title</b>	Enduring Families? Children's Long Terms Reflections on Post Divorce Family Life <a href="#">Executive Summary</a>
<b>Journal</b>	Report to ESRC
<b>Date</b>	3003
<b>Publisher</b>	ESRC
<b>Key words</b>	<b>Children's views/participation, Divorce/separation</b>
<b>Summary</b>	<p><b>Aim of study</b> To explore the changing lives of children and young people whose parents separated, focusing on family dynamics, the management of post-separation arrangements and the significance of the separation in the children's lives.</p> <p><b>Methodology</b> This is a longitudinal and qualitative study. 60 young people were re-interviewed after 3 to 4 years using semi-structured interviews. Second stage interviews were carried out in 2001 and 2002. The sample was evenly divided between boys and girls and just over half were middle-class. Few children were from a minority ethnic background. 50 were in the age range 11-17. The post-divorce arrangements were very varied</p> <p><b>Findings</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The authors argue that the longitudinal and qualitative nature of this sociological study allow the dynamism, complexity and immediacy of young people's lives following parental separation to be capture</li> <li>• They developed a "revised notion of childhood development, seeing this not so much as a predetermined or innate process but as a fluid and creative relational process."</li> <li>• The assumption that multiple transitions in themselves are bad for children is challenged. The impact of transitions depend on their pace and cumulative effect, how they are managed and the extent to which young people are prepared and supported</li> <li>• Children's experience needs to be seen in a broad context</li> </ul>

	<p>not just through the lens of their parents' separation. They did not see the separation as the key event in their lives.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The nature and quality of parent/child relationships is not either determined by or reflected in particular contact or residence arrangements</li> <li>• Shared residence (or dual residence) is experienced differently by different young people. Flexible and supportive arrangements could be positive. But those lacking those features were a trial. Over time the disadvantages of shared residence began to outweigh the advantages for many young people</li> </ul>
<b>Reviewed by</b>	HB

<b>Author</b>	Neil E & Howe D (Eds)
<b>Title</b>	Contact in adoption and permanent foster care
<b>Date</b>	2004
<b>Publisher</b>	BAAF
<b>Key words</b>	<b>Contact, Adoption, Fostering</b>
<b>Summary</b>	<p>This is a collection of research studies (samples of between 42 and 190 children/families) examining issues as they related to children, birth parents (and other relatives) and adoptive and long-term foster families. The point is made in the introduction by the editors that arguments with regard to the value of contact have often been driven by ideology rather than science. I felt that this was certainly not the case with any of these studies: a strong theme to emerge was that decisions about contact should be individual to a particular child.</p> <p>Each chapter usefully concludes with summaries of aims, main findings and implication.</p> <p>A number of themes recur throughout the different studies, namely:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(i) The need for individuality in the planning of contact since the needs of each child (not to mention the birth relatives and adoptive parents) are peculiar to that child. A high degree of professional skill together with careful assessment is required rather than the application of a simple rule of thumb;</li> <li>(ii) Flexibility is needed, not just at the point of placement but also afterwards since children's needs change over time;</li> <li>(iii) If contact is to be satisfactory a good level of support is needed for all concerned. At the present time this is rarely available and may well not be any more readily available in the future given the fact that under the 2003 Adoption Support Services Regulations although there is a duty to make an assessment of the services needed by adopted children and their families there is no statutory duty on the Local Authority to provide the service. The studies show that even in long term foster families support is not necessarily available to manage contact arrangements.</li> </ul> <p>Indirect contact is identified as a neglected area. Practice</p>

	<p>between agencies differs markedly in the extent to which this is promoted. It is suggested that monitoring of arrangements and support for birth parents is essential if it is to be maintained. It is demonstrated that indirect contact can be very valuable (and can lead to direct contact) and should not be seen as an easy option.</p> <p>I found chapter 12 particularly useful. Attachment theory is summarised and applied to contact issues.</p>
<b>Reviewed by</b>	Madeleine Holder

<b>Author</b>	Saunders H
<b>Title</b>	<a href="#">Twenty-nine child homicides: Lessons still to be learnt on domestic violence and child protection</a>
<b>Date</b>	2004
<b>Publisher</b>	Women's Aid
<b>Key words</b>	<b>Child protection, Domestic violence, Contact</b>
<b>Summary</b>	<p><b>Aim of study</b> To learn the lessons from 29 child homicides</p> <p><b>Methodology</b> The report is largely based on the executive summaries of Serious Case Reviews relating to 29 children in 13 families who were killed between 1994 and 2004 as a result of contact (and in one case residence). In the case of 7 children SCRs were not carried out. In 5 cases contact was ordered by the court.</p> <p><b>Findings</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• In three cases the court granted orders for unsupervised contact or residence against or without professional advice</li> <li>• In 11 out of the 13 families, domestic violence was known to be an issue</li> <li>• Several of the homicides occurred during overnight stays</li> <li>• Mental health concerns had been expressed about 9 of the 13 fathers</li> <li>• Some professionals did not appear to have any understanding of the power and control dynamics of domestic violence</li> <li>• In several cases professionals did not talk to children so no assessment of their needs was undertaken</li> <li>• No explanation was available as to why SCRs were not carried out for 7 children.</li> </ul> <p><b>Limitations</b> It is not clear how the cases were selected for inclusion in the study or whether all children killed on contact visits had been included. The researchers did not know in which cases contact had been ordered by the court. Where Serious Case Reviews were not carried out, there is no explanation as to where the information about these cases was obtained.</p>
<b>Reviewed by</b>	HB

Author	Selwyn J and Quinton D
Title	Stability, permanence, outcomes and support: Foster care and adoption compared
Journal	Adoption and Fostering
Date	Winter 2004
Volume/issue	Vol. 28, Number 4
Subject (key words)	<b>Fostering, Adoption, Case practice</b>
Summary	<p>The article reports findings from a study of 130 children in a single English authority, where a decision had been made that adoption was in each child's best interests. The difficulty in all attempts to compare the benefits of adoption with those of foster care is to compare apples with apples, like with like. Children cannot be randomly allocated to both types of home. The adoption best interests decision provided a common starting point of identified need, but the eventual long term foster care (LTFC) group consisted of children who had not been adopted, either because of the failure or change of plans. Analysis identified objective differences between the 2 groups; children in the LTFC group were more likely to be older, have learning difficulties, had spent longer in care, and be from a minority ethnic community.</p> <p>83% of children adopted were still in placement after 7 years, whereas only half of the LTFC group were with their first long term foster carers. More adoptive parents reported feeling close to their adopted children, than did foster carers.</p> <p>Discussion of the differences between adoption and LTFC focuses on how LTFC can acquire some of the evident advantages provided by adoption in the areas of stability and permanence. The authors highlight three areas: -</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The frustration that foster carers feel that LAs gives them the responsibility to care for a child for years, but do not allow them to make day to day decisions that every parent needs to make</li> <li>• The frequent assumption that young people will move on at the age of 16, reinforced by leaving care grants, and the difficulties facing foster carers wanting to continue caring for children, not ready for independence</li> <li>• Enabling foster carers to stay in touch with young people after they have moved on</li> </ul> <p>The authors argue that LTFC should be seen as a positive placement choice for some children.</p>
Reviewed by	SH

Author	Smart C and Shipman B
Title	Visions in monochrome: families, marriage and the individualization thesis
Journal	British Journal of Sociology
Date	2004
Volume/issue	55/4
Key words	<b>Family problems, Diversity</b>
Summary	The article uses a particular study to critique the

	<p>“individualization thesis” of sociologists which holds that choice has made modern relationships, whether with sexual partners or kin, tenuous.</p> <p><b>Aim of study:</b> To understand how people “do kinship” and sustain obligations and commitments across wide geographical boundaries.</p> <p><b>Methodology :</b> This was a qualitative study in which 69 individual from 46 families were interviewed. They had all lived in Britain for at least five years but had close relatives living in a different country. The interviewees came from three different minority ethnic communities. Indian, Pakistani and Irish.</p> <p><b>Findings:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Decisions about marriage ranged on a continuum from those where kin were highly influential (arranged marriages), to those where kinship and culture provided a context for choice, to those where the elements of individualization predominated</li> <li>• The identity of the interviewees was often tied to their cultural background. This limited their choice of partner</li> <li>• Interviewees were prioritising different elements of their culture at different times in their lives and negotiating their choices with their kin.</li> <li>• Cultural “traditions” are themselves under constant change and negotiation</li> <li>• Interviewees balanced individual choice, the preservation of kinship networks and respect for tradition, combining elements of the “individualization” with a deep commitment to other aspects of traditional culture.</li> </ul> <p><b>Limitations-</b> As comment rather than a limitation, it would be interesting to know how the analysis applied in this study might throw a different light the choices of the white population in the UK.</p>
<b>Reviewed by</b>	HB

<b>Author</b>	Stevens M, Liabo K, Frost S & Roberts H
<b>Title</b>	Using research in practice: A research information service for social care practitioners
<b>Journal</b>	Child & Family Social Work
<b>Date</b>	Feb 2005
<b>Volume/issue</b>	Vol 10, Issue 1
<b>Subject (key words)</b>	<b>Evidence informed practice</b>
<b>Summary</b>	<p>The article is a report back on the What Works for Children project provided by Barnado’s, and two universities. It is trying to increase the use of research in social care. Researchers provided responses to practitioner’s questions by searching for, critically appraising and summarising the relevant literature. The service was received enthusiastically by its 10 users, but experience was thought to confirm the absence of a research culture in social care because: -</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The outcome of specific services is poorly evaluated and disseminated</li> <li>• There is a poor fit between published research and</li> </ul>

	practitioners' needs <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reference to research findings is not routine</li> </ul>
<b>Reviewed by</b>	SH

<b>Author</b>	Taylor A and Kroll B
<b>Title</b>	Working with Parental Substance Misuse: Dilemmas for Practice
<b>Journal</b>	British Journal of Social Work
<b>Date</b>	2004
<b>Volume/issue</b>	34/8
<b>Key words</b>	<b>Alcohol dependence, Drug dependence, Case practice (Assessment)</b>
<b>Summary</b>	<p><b>Aim of study:</b> "To contribute to the increasing body of knowledge and research which focuses on practice dilemmas presented by parental alcohol and drug misuse."</p> <p><b>Methodology:</b> Semi-structured interviews were conducted with 40 social welfare professionals working in statutory and voluntary agencies some primarily with adults and others with a child focus.</p> <p><b>Findings:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• All professionals reported problems with gaining and sustaining trust with parents who were afraid of legal intervention and the removal of their children</li> <li>• Difficulty in engaging with parents meant that the assessment of the impact of the substance abuse on the children was problematic</li> <li>• The different cultures and approaches of the adult and child focused services, relating to confidentiality, professional knowledge and priorities, made open communication and assessment difficult</li> <li>• Child focused workers tended to feel that they were not able to assess the extent of substance misuse and workers with an adult focus that they could not assess parenting skills</li> <li>• Both child and adult focused workers faced difficulties in obtaining sustained observational evidence about how children were coping.</li> </ul>
<b>Reviewed by</b>	HB

<b>Author</b>	Trinder, L, Connolly, J, Kellett, J & Notley, C
<b>Title</b>	A Profile of Applicants and Respondents in Contact Cases in Essex <a href="#">Executive Summary</a> <a href="#">Full report</a>
<b>Date</b>	January 2005
<b>Publisher</b>	DCA
<b>Subject (key words)</b>	<b>Contact, CAFCASS (In-court conciliation)</b>
<b>Summary</b>	The study was based on 59 contact cases listed for first directions over a 4-month period in 2003 in Essex. The researchers conducted 88 structured interviews with 43 fathers and 45 mothers. This represented a response rate of 67%. <b>Findings:</b>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Parents were typically in their mid 30s, on relatively low incomes, with young children, usually mother had residence and parents remained in close proximity to one another;</li> <li>• Differing from local population norms, applicants were frequently unmarried;</li> <li>• At the time of application, contact had broken down in ½ of cases, otherwise the pattern was diverse;</li> <li>• Women tended to have ended the relationship and tended to be angry with their ex-partners' behaviour and perceived commitment;</li> <li>• Resident parents were more concerned about 'welfare issues', fear of violence and children's reluctance to go for contact;</li> <li>• Contact parents reported 'power' related issues, attempts to control and threats to stop contact;</li> <li>• Using standardised measures, reports of psychological stress in both adults and children were well above community norms;</li> <li>• Typically, each parent was equally stressed but did not demonstrate empathy with the other parent, rather they were angry and distrustful;</li> <li>• Many of the children were exposed to multiple risk factors – economic adversity, interparental conflict, conflicted contact arrangements, domestic violence and child protection concerns.</li> </ul> <p>The authors identify three types of interaction:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Blocking vs. Risk (the largest group) – contact parent alleging that contact was being blocked; resident parent that contact posed a risk;</li> <li>• Mutual lack of commitment (the second biggest) – each parent reported the other was not committed to contact or failed to stick to the arrangements;</li> <li>• Flexibility/ Communication – each parent reported that the other was inflexible and failed to commit to a schedule.</li> </ul> <p>The authors conclude that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Even at the time of first appointment both parents and children experience high levels of psychological stress;</li> <li>• This might suggest that the courts are usually dealing with families that do require external intervention;</li> <li>• In most cases the dispute was not longstanding suggesting that 'early' intervention could be effective.</li> </ul> <p>They suggest that effective intervention requires three elements:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A rigorous method of risk assessment and intervention;</li> <li>• An effective mechanism to assist appropriate parents in making decisions about contact timetables;</li> <li>• An intervention that would enable parents to work effectively together, addressing issues of collaboration, trust and empathy.</li> </ul>
<b>Reviewed by</b>	PL

<b>Author</b>	Tunnard, J.
<b>Title</b>	<a href="#">Parental Mental Health Problems: Messages from Research, Policy and Practice</a>
<b>Date</b>	2004
<b>Volume/issue</b>	Review 7
<b>Publisher</b>	Research in Practice
<b>Key words</b>	<b>Parental Mental Health; Impact on Children; Review of Research Studies;</b>
Summary	<p>This book is the seventh in the series of research reviews published by 'research in practice' and can be obtained directly from <a href="http://www.rip.org.uk">www.rip.org.uk</a>.</p> <p>This publication presents and distils the findings of 35 UK and international research studies about the impact of parental mental health issues on children and other family members. It supports the case for bridging the gap between providers of services to adults and providers of services to children.</p> <p>The author states that aim of the review is to identify -from a range of publications – sources and messages that might help practitioners and managers improve their understanding of the circumstances of children and families living with parental mental health problems, and find responses that have the potential for achieving positive change.</p> <p>The review highlights that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Mental Health problems are very common: it is likely that we, or someone close to us, will be affected during our lifetime.</li> <li>▪ Adults with mental health problems are among the most excluded groups in society.</li> <li>▪ Moderate to severe mental health problems affect an estimated 1.7 million adults and 2.5 million children in the UK.</li> <li>▪ Parental mental health problems can have negative consequences for families, in particular on relationships and child development, and especially where problems are severe and complex and parents and children are unsupported.</li> <li>▪ The compelling links between poverty, mental ill health, and discrimination and social exclusion make it important that responses are based on a broad understanding of family and neighbourhood circumstances.</li> <li>▪ Local projects demonstrate what it is possible to achieve for parents and their children, especially where services build on parents' strengths and their aspirations for their children, and where mental health problems are neither obscured nor allowed to dominate unduly.</li> <li>▪ Few approaches in the UK have been evaluated robustly.</li> <li>▪ Despite recurring pleas from all quarters, it remains hard to bridge the gap between mental health work with adults and child care work with children and families.</li> </ul> <p>This is not a systematic review of the research evidence of parental mental health problems. Instead the review draws on</p>

	work from various quarters that highlight key messages for practitioners and commissioners working in adult and children's services. The main studies are described in some detail at the end of the review so that readers can be clear about the evidence relied on and the evaluation methods used, and can decide which particular texts might merit closer scrutiny. The author reminds the reader that this information is open to individual interpretation and that we should treat this review, like all research studies with an enquiring mind.
Reviewed by	Renate Ruddock

<b>Author</b>	Wade J
<b>Title</b>	<a href="#">Leaving care</a> RIP Quality Protects Research Briefing 7 <a href="#">Fully referenced document</a>
<b>Date</b>	2003
<b>Publisher</b>	DOH, RIP, Making Research Count
<b>Key words</b>	<b>Looked after children (Care leavers)</b>
<b>Summary</b>	<p><b>Aim of briefing paper:</b> Not stated</p> <p><b>Methodology:</b> Not stated though the Briefing was independently and anonymously reviewed by an academic and a practitioner with specialist knowledge.</p> <p><b>Messages from the research, guidance and inspections:</b> These cover:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Problems associated with leaving care (early independent living, compression of transition to adulthood, difficulties including risk of homelessness, poor educational attainment, lack of formal support)</li> <li>• The development of specialist services ("steady but piecemeal growth in leaving care services")</li> <li>• The new legislation and guidance – the objectives of the <i>Children (Leaving Care) Act</i>. This aims "to delay transitions, improve preparation, planning and consistency of support for young people and strengthen arrangements for financial assistance."</li> <li>• Policy framework (the need for individual planning and review and the development by LAs of clear policy and practice framework)</li> <li>• Preparation and planning for leaving care (pathway planning and the central role of the personal adviser)</li> <li>• Accommodation (provision of a range of accommodation options)</li> <li>• Education, training and employment (financial assistance and social support is available for education, training or work up to 21 or 24 is in continuing education).</li> <li>• Health (the health needs of care leavers tend to be higher than their contemporaries, need for a range of initiatives, the young people perspective is central)</li> <li>• Need for ongoing informal and professional support (contact with families if appropriate, ongoing relationship with foster carers, support groups)</li> </ul> <p><b>Limitations</b> Lack of clarity about the criteria for inclusion of reference material.</p>
<b>Reviewed by</b>	HB

<b>Author</b>	Ward P
<b>Title</b>	Achieving permanence for looked after children through special guardianship: A study of the experience of New Zealand guardians with implications for special guardianship in England
<b>Journal</b>	Adoption and Fostering
<b>Date</b>	Winter 2004
<b>Volume/issue</b>	Vol. 28, Number 4
<b>Subject (key words)</b>	<b>Fostering, Family law (Special guardianship orders)</b>
<b>Summary</b>	<p>Can special guardianship provide the legal security and placement stability for children which custodianship failed to achieve? The author reports on the successful experience of 20 guardians in New Zealand where special guardianship (SG) has been available since 1968, and adoption is almost exclusively confined to infants relinquished voluntarily. He concludes that the lessons for England are that childcare planners will need to address the following areas if they are to make SG attractive to foster carers here: -</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The fear and cost of future legal challenge by the birth family</li> <li>• The means of resolving conflicts over contact</li> <li>• The withdrawal of the LA from the buffer role</li> <li>• Financial support</li> <li>• The appropriate level of social work support</li> </ul>
<b>Reviewed by</b>	SH