



RESEARCH DIGEST










2006 Issue 1




Prepared by

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Research studies and articles based on research



Author	Alderson P and Morrow V
Title	Ethics, social research and consulting with children and young people
Date	2004
Publisher	Barnardo's
Key words	Children's views/participation, Evidence based practice, Ethics values beliefs
Summary	<p>Aim: To identify the issues that arise when conducting research which involves children. It has been written both for professional researchers and for staff working with children who take on a research role (evaluation or consultation).</p> <p>Contents:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Planning the project • Assessing harms and benefits • Respect for rights: privacy and confidentiality • Designing research: selection and participation • Money matters – contracts, funding projects and paying participants • Reviewing aims and methods: , Ethics, values guidance and committees • Information • Consent • Disseminating and implementing the findings • Impact on children <p>The appendix includes sample information leaflets for children. This book provides a straight forward and concise guide to undertaking research which involves children. The format is clear, with examples used to illustrate the points being made. It is easy to find a particular topic and extract what is needed with minimum expenditure of time.</p> <p>The book takes the researcher through the research process identifying at each stage the issues that need to be considered. Often there are no hard and fast answers. For example, in assessing the risks and benefits of a project, should these be assessed only in relation to the participants or should the hoped for benefits for the wider population of children be added into the equation? How are the wider benefits measured?</p> <p>The difference between acting as a professional working with children, as a teacher or social worker, and working as a researcher are stressed. In particular, the role of researcher requires an attitude of uncertainty in the face of interventions that may be familiar and hitherto unquestioned.</p>
Reviewed by	HB







Author	Bhavnani R, Mirza H and Meetoo B
Title	Tackling the roots of racism: lessons for success JRF Findings
Date	2005
Publisher	JRF
Key words	Diversity, Racism
Summary	<p>Only the JRF Findings has been read for this review.</p> <p>Aim: To review British and international evidence on the effectiveness of interventions to tackle racism</p> <p>Methodology: The review analysed literature from a wide range of disciplines, sociology, anthropology and psychology as well as documents held by organisations and individuals.</p> <p>Findings: Taken from the JRF Findings</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “Most interventions do not address the causes of racism and how these causes are reproduced in current times. Although there are many diversity and racial equality documents and action plans, few organisations have any real evidence of what interventions reduce racism. <i>related Findings</i>  • Anti-racist legislation, including action against racial harassment, has not significantly improved workplace conditions for people from black and minority ethnic groups; racial harassment is frequently unreported. <i>related Findings</i>  • Ethnic monitoring can reproduce racism by entrenching racial categories and focusing on people from black and minority ethnic groups as agents of change. <i>related Findings</i>  • Everyday interventions tend to focus on local forms of racism in working-class areas not on the elite and powerful expressions of racism (such as those expressed in some parts of the media). <i>related Findings</i>  • Some elements of the media and some politicians have contributed significantly to an atmosphere of racism through pronouncements against immigrants and black and Asian people. <i>related Findings</i>  • Government Community Cohesion debates tend to focus on faith and intercultural understanding and are less likely to address the key issues of structural segregation and poverty. There is little ongoing evidence of whether these 'cohesion' approaches work. <i>related Findings</i>  • The black voluntary sector has the potential to combat racism in service delivery, but it is under-funded and lacks support. <i>related Findings</i>  • Successful interventions tend to be educational, aimed at improving knowledge and communication, and strongly led. <i>related Findings</i>  • Good communication and an open and honest approach to confronting racism are important. These approaches can heal rifts and lead to reconciliation. <i>related Findings</i>  • Anti-racist activists and watchdog groups are important in

	<p>combating racism in press and institutions. related Findings </p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Schools, colleges, universities, museums and arts and sports venues have an important role to play in combating everyday racism. related Findings  • Racism depends on context – there is no one cause of racism or one solution to racism. related Findings  ” <p>The full report is available from the JRF priced £15.99</p>
Reviewed by	HB

Author	Biehal N
Title	Working with adolescents ‘Supporting families, preventing breakdown’
Date	2005
Publisher	BAAF
Key words	Adolescence, Case practice, Support services
Summary	<p>Aim of study: - to look at the effectiveness of support services in preventing family breakdown and the accommodation of young people. It compares the effectiveness of specialist support teams against services offered by mainstream social work teams. The study was commissioned by the DOH. Six Local Authorities (LA’S) took part – one LA was broken down into three authorities for the purposes of this study.</p> <p>Methodology : - All young people, parents and support workers were interviewed shortly after referral to the service and again 6 months later. Both quantitative and qualitative methods were used. Quantitative to compare young people’s histories, difficulties & outcomes. Qualitative to understand young people’s & parents’ perspectives on their difficulties and the services received.</p> <p>Findings: -</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Using an ecological approach seemed to bring about the most beneficial changes. - Relationship with worker also important. - Little difference in outcomes whether using the specialist support team or mainstream social work services although specialist teams spent much greater time doing direct work with the young person and family. - Motivation of young person and parent made positive difference. - Positive change was most likely to be achieved when problems and issues were of shorter duration. - Whether young person accommodated or not often appeared to be policy of individual authority as opposed to assessed need. - The avoidance of accommodation sometimes meant young people had to remain in abusive situations or led to further crisis. - Smaller number of young people accommodated when LA had specialist service – could be linked to policy of LA - Higher percentage of young people and parents felt positive about input from specialist service

	<p>Limitations: -</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - only 5% of the young people known to come from ethnic minority community – therefore not reflective of the population generally or the over representation of young people within the care system. - Not all young people, parents or workers available for follow up interviews.
Reviewed by	Christine Holleran

Author	Biehal N
Title	Reuniting looked after children with their families: A review of the research JRF Findings
Date	2006
Publisher	JRF NCB
Key words	Looked after children, Families (Birth families)
Summary	<p>Aim of the research review: To appraise the available research evidence on the reunion of looked after children with their families</p> <p>Methodology: This is not a systematic review, because it includes studies employing a wider range of methodologies than is acceptable for a systematic review. However, the principles and procedures of systematic review have been followed. Clear criteria for study relevance and quality were established at the outset. 270 potentially relevant studies were identified through database and bibliography search. Of these, 66 studies were judged to meet the established relevance and quality standards.</p> <p>The review covers:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The factors associated with the likelihood and timing of reunion 2. The effectiveness of specialist interventions designed to facilitate reunion 3. The outcomes of reunion for children <p>Key findings (taken from the JRF Findings)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Many children return home quite quickly after entering care placements, but the probability of return declines sharply once six months have elapsed. This pattern has been widely misinterpreted as implying that the passage of time in itself diminishes the likelihood of reunion, whereas time in care appears to be related to a variety of other factors. <i>related Findings</i>  • Similarly, the much-cited relationship between parental contact and the likelihood of reunion also appears to derive from a variety of other child, family and service factors. <i>related Findings</i>  • Children placed due to behaviour problems are more likely

	<p>to return home than those placed due to abuse, neglect or parental problems. <i>related Findings</i> </p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Children placed because of physical or sexual abuse are more likely to return home than those placed due to neglect. <i>related Findings</i>  • There is some evidence that purposeful social work activity is an important ingredient in successful reunion. <i>related Findings</i>  • Evidence from a small number of UK studies suggests that between one-third and one half of children who return home may subsequently re-enter care or accommodation. <i>related Findings</i>  • There has been little research on the outcomes of reunion, but the evidence suggests that some children who return experience re-abuse or neglect. <i>related Findings</i>  • The limited evidence on psychosocial outcomes of reunion suggests that reunited children may have more serious emotional and behavioural problems than those who remain looked after. <i>related Findings</i>  <p>Limitations: The author stresses that caution needs to be used in applying the review findings because much of the research evidence comes from the US where the legal and cultural context is very different from that of the UK. The full report can be ordered from the NCB (020 7843 6000) for £13.95 plus £3 p&p.</p>
Reviewed by	HB

Author	Brandon M, Thoburn J, Rose S and Belderson P
Title	Living with significant harm: a follow up study Executive Summary Full Report (102 pages)
Date	2005
Publisher	NSPCC
Key words	Child protection
Summary	<p>Only the Executive Summary has been read for this review</p> <p>Aim: To find out whether children who had previously been identified as suffering from or at risk of suffering from significant harm, were protected and whether their development was significantly impaired</p> <p>Methodology: This is a follow up study on a cohort of children (77 from the original 105) who had been identified in a previous DOH study as having suffered or been likely to suffer significant harm. The follow up took place in 2000-01, 6 years after the initial study</p> <p>Findings:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 60% of the children had conduct and 11% emotional problems which affected their lives at home and school. • Loss and disruption was a feature of many of the children's

	<p>lives. 10% of the children lost a parent between 1995 and 2001</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 57% of the children suffered further abuse or neglect between the two studies. They were more likely to be children who had experienced disruption and who had emotional and behavioural problems. 9 children were still suffering maltreatment. • Outcomes for children who had left home and stayed away were the most positive; whereas children who moved from home and then returned did least well • There was evidence from the outcomes of children living away from home, that long-term intensive services, which supported placements with relatives or in foster care, were effective. <p>Limitations: It was easier to trace cases where contact with social services had continued and which were likely to be higher risk. The data on the files was often inadequate or missing.</p> <p>See also Biehal <i>Reuniting looked after children with their families: A review of the research</i></p>
Reviewed by	HB

Author	Broad B
Title	Young People Leaving Care: Implementing the Children (Leaving Care) Act 2000?
Date	2005
Journal	Children and Society
Issue	19 371-384
Key words	Looked after children (Care leavers), Support services
Summary	<p>Aim of study: To examine how LAs are implementing the Children (Leaving Care) Act 2000</p> <p>Methodology: A questionnaire was sent to 300 LAs, leaving care teams and voluntary organisations. Responses were received from 52 leaving care teams, a 17% return rate. Responses were compared with data from two earlier studies on young people leaving care.</p> <p>Findings:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 3% of the young people had a physical disability and 8% a learning disability • 83% were white, 9% black and 4% of mixed heritage • The proportion of care leavers in employment, training or post 16 education had gone up from 35% in the 1994 study to 57% in the current study • There was considerable variation in the level of provision between different teams • The pace of improvement was often slow with the better performing teams were improving faster than the teams that performed less well • There has been less progress in service delivery and outcomes than in the assessment and planning functions <p>Limitations: The response rate was low and calls into question the generalisability of the findings. The opportunity to seek the views of care leavers on these services was missed.</p> <p>See also following book review</p>

Reviewed by	HB
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Author	Broad B
Title	Improving the Health and Well-being of Young People Leaving Care
Date	2005
Publisher	Russell House Publishing
Key words	Looked after children (Care leavers), Support services
Summary	<p>Aim of study To determine the health and well-being needs of young people who have been in care, and to what extent wider social exclusion, earlier life experiences, family background, individual resilience and risk factors affect this. What differences has recent legislation had on the life chances and well-being of care leavers in their transition to independence, and what do young people say about this, and the services available?</p> <p>Methodology The book draws on a range of research, including: a) a national over-view study on the work of 52 Leaving Care Teams working with 7000 young people leaving care in England and Wales, focusing on the impact of The Children Leaving Care Act 2000 on the health and well-being of care leavers. b) a two year research study consisting of structured in-depth interviews with young people leaving care, about their health and well-being.</p> <p>Findings Strong links were identified between a young person's health/well-being and the services available to them, ie. accommodation, financial support, employment, training and education, and the inter-relationship between the different components. For example, if the young person was in a stable placement they were more likely to be successful in relationships and educationally. However, if they were in poverty they were more likely to be excluded from services, social relationships and the labour market. More money, better accommodation and more support were identified as the three main ways of improving the health and well-being of care leavers.</p> <p>Pathway Plans, introduced by CLCA 2000 encourage a more holistic approach as there is a clear requirement to deal with the young person's accommodation, training, education, employment and health needs, essential components of their health and well-being. However, reservations were expressed as to the efficacy of this approach without there being changes within the NHS.</p> <p>Identification of need, and planning was felt to have improved with the new legislation, but there was felt to be no change in service delivery and outcome. The conclusion for some groups (young offenders, asylum seekers and young people on remand) was felt to remain the same, with education, employment, training and health performing poorly, and some improvement in accommodation and financial support. See also the proceeding review of an article in Children and Society.</p>

Reviewed by	Nicola Miller
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Author	Bunting L
Title	Females who sexually offend against children: responses of the child protection and criminal justice systems (Executive Summary)
Date	2005
Publisher	NSPCC
Key words	Child protection (Child sexual abuse), Sex offenders
Summary	<p>Only the Executive Summary has been read for this review</p> <p>Aim of study: To review what is known about female sex offending and to examine the current policies for dealing with this issue within the child protection and criminal justice systems.</p> <p>Methodology: A review of international literature on female sexual offending was carried out. Subsequently current policies and statistics were analysed and interviews were held with key professionals and practitioners working with female sex offenders. MAPPAs and ACPCs were surveyed in relation to this topic</p> <p>Findings:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 5% of sexual offences against children are committed by women • Maternal abuse is particularly damaging for the victim • Women are more likely to co-offend than men • Training is necessary to enable professionals to recognise and respond appropriately to female sexual abuse • Programmes for women need to address the particular features and needs of the female sexual offender. These are rarely available • Child protection policies and training pay little attention to the specific issue of female sexual abuse and the effect of female sexual abuse can be minimised <p>Limitations: Statistics on prevalence, interventions and outcomes are very limited.</p> <p>The full report can be ordered from NSPCC Publications priced £17.50.</p>
Reviewed by	HB

Author	Corbin T
Title	Investigation into sudden infant deaths and unascertained infant deaths in England and Wales: 1995-2003
Date	2005
Publisher	ONS
Key words	Child protection (Sudden infant death)
Summary	<p>Aim of study: To establish whether the decline in the rate of sudden infant death (SID) and the rise in unascertained death rates are linked.</p> <p>Methodology: Analysis from the database of registered deaths in England and Wales of deaths where the certificate</p>

	<p>has mentioned sudden infant death or unascertained (and no other cause)</p> <p>Findings:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The combined rates of SID and unascertained death have fallen from 0.63 per 1,000 live births in 1995 to 0.48 in 2003 • The proportion of SID registrations has fallen in relation to those of unascertained death. This suggests that the distinction between the two causes of death is becoming blurred • There is a huge overlap of characteristics of babies whose deaths are certified as SID and those whose death is unascertained. It would appear that the terms are being used interchangeably. • The authors recommend that unascertained death should no longer be used as a registration term by the coroner unless the police intend on-going investigation. The terms SIDS (Sudden Infant Death Syndrome) for those meeting international criteria or SUDI (Sudden Unexpected Death in Infancy) should be used instead.
Reviewed by	HB

Author	Daniel B, Featherstone B, Hooper C and Scourfield J
Title	Why Gender Matter for <i>Every Child Matters</i>
Date	2005
Journal	British Journal of Social Work
Issue	35 1343-1355
Key words	Diversity (Gender), Case practice
Summary	<p>Aim of article: To make the case for gender analysis in relation to policies and practice and specifically in relation to <i>Every Child Matters</i> (ECM)</p> <p>Argument: That ECM pays little attention to the differing pressures and positions of mothers and fathers. The use of the word “parent” can obscure these differences. Mothers still bear primary responsibility for child care but have less access to financial resources. The articles also addresses the issue of gender for children, arguing that girls may have better at help-seeking than boys and that girls and boys are differently vulnerable in relation to abuse.</p> <p>In relation to child abuse, most perpetrators are men but the focus by social services is on women as protectors. This dilemma is not openly acknowledged in ECM.</p>
Reviewed by	HB

Author	Dickens J
Title	Care, control and change in child care proceedings: dilemmas for social workers, managers and lawyers
Journal	Child & Family Social Work
Date	February 2006
Volume/issue	Volume 11 Issue 1
Subject (key words)	Family law (Family proceedings), Case practice, Legal representation (Lawyers)
Summary	Aim: The paper seeks to shed light on how local authority

	<p>social workers, social services managers and local authority lawyers work together in the family court in presenting the local authority's case.</p> <p>Method: 54 semi-structured interviews with social work and legal personnel across six varied English local authorities, and two group discussions. It emerged that relationship dynamics were triangular between the three groups, not just between social services staff and legal staff.</p> <p>Findings: The author concluded that the evidence showed how fraught the relationships could become. There was a notable imbalance of experience between social workers and lawyers. Social workers tended to be grateful for any help that the lawyers could give; lawyers complained of being drawn too far into social work matters. Managers could resent such legal intrusion, but also saw court proceedings as a risk to an inexperienced social worker's self-esteem, and were concerned not to lose a staff member after a bad experience in court. Each side of the triangle had roles and responsibilities which could correspond or conflict with those of the others involved. Social workers wanted lawyers to be supportive, provide reliable advice, respect their views and be strong advocates in court. The lawyers were instructed by social services, but also had responsibilities to protect the interests of local authorities, and to the court.</p> <p>Going to court to gain control, actually required the loss of control of the case to the court and others involved, including guardians. Social services staff wanted their views to be advocated forcefully, but the process of the family court emphasises reaching agreement between parties often through negotiation and compromise, led by lawyers.</p> <p>The author concludes that rather than seeing these inter-professional differences as problematical - requiring more training, procedures and stronger leadership - the differences can be seen as inevitable, given the complexities of professional values and skills, and that room be allowed for them to complement and challenge each other. In other words, creative tension can exist.</p> <p>See also the article on p 16 of the April 05 PRD</p>
Reviewed by	SH

Author	Green H, McGinnity A, Meltzer H, Ford T and Goodman R
Title	Mental health of children and young people in Great Britain, 2004 Summary report Full report
Date	2004
Publisher	ONS
Key words	Mental illness (Child mental illness)
Summary	<p>Aim of study: To provided up-to-date information about child mental disorders (in children 5-16) in order to inform policy decisions about the need for child and adolescent mental health services.</p> <p>Methodology: A total of 7,977 interviews were held with parents, children (11+) and teachers. The interviews were carried out between March and June 2004</p> <p>Findings:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • One in ten children had a clinically diagnosed mental

	<p>disorder (4% emotional disorder, 6% conduct disorder, 2% hyperkinetic disorder and 1% less common disorders such as autism, eating disorders etc)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There were no changes in the prevalence of mental disorders in children between 1999 and 2004 • Boys were more likely than girls to have a mental disorder • Mental disorder was greater among children in lone parent families (16% against 8% in two parent families), in reconstituted families (14% against 9%), in families where the interviewed parent had no educational qualifications (17% against 4% for interviewed parents with degree qualifications), in families where neither parent was working (20% against 8% where both parents were working), in poorer families, in families in which someone received disability benefit (24% against 8% with no disability benefit), in areas classed as 'hard pressed' (15% against 7% in areas classed as 'wealthy achievers' or 'urban prosperity').
Reviewed by	HB

Author	Hackett S, Masson H and Phillips S
Title	Services for young people who sexually abuse: a report on mapping and exploring services for young people who have sexually abused others (155 pages)
Date	2005
Publisher	Youth Justice Board for England and Wales
Key words	Young offender, Child protection (Child sexual abuse)
Summary	<p>Aims: To investigate recent developments in the UK and Republic of Ireland in services for young people who have demonstrated sexually abusive behaviour, including their organisational, theoretical and policy bases, and to explore the experiences of young people and their families who are receiving such services.</p> <p>Methodology: Literature review, views of key experts and managers, mapping of the services, policy documents and qualitative interview with 23 users</p> <p>Findings:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The problem of sexual abuse by children and young people is more widely recognised than it was 10 years ago • A significant proportion of users of services have a learning disability • Terminological ambiguity leads to confusion about who services are for • A tiered approach to treatment based on agreed thresholds needs to be developed. • Children and young people who sexually abuse should receive services primarily as children • There continue to be problems relating to the availability and quality of assessment services
Reviewed by	HB

Author	Held J
Title	The placement stability of looked after children Executive Summary Full report
Date	2005
Publisher	DfES
Key words	Looked after children, Local authorities, Support services
Summary	<p>This is a study was commissioned under the Every Child Matters – Change for Children Programme</p> <p>Aim of study: To explore the factors which most influence stability for looked after children</p> <p>Methodology: Using 3 year performance data collected by the DfES to select high and low performing authorities, interviews were conducted with senior officers from 18 LAs.</p> <p>Findings:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Four factors in the control of the LA influenced the stability of looked after children. They were: effective diversion from care and early interventions; strong planning to avoid drift and achieve permanence; increased placement choice and increased multi-agency; and multi-disciplinary support to placements • Authorities are urged to work on the factor that is likely to

	<p>result in most positive change if addressed</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> It is recognised that improving a factor such as effective diversion may lead to increased instability as children who are looked after will be more demanding. <p>Limitations: Placement stability may not always be a good measure of effective practice. The study does not attempt to distinguish between stability that is positive and planned from stability arising from inactivity and drift.</p>
Reviewed by	HB

Author	Humphreys C, Regan L, River D and Thiara R
Title	Domestic Violence and Substance Abuse: Tackling Complexity
Date	2005
Journal	British Journal of Social Work
Issue	35 p1303-1320
Key words	Domestic violence, Drug dependence, Alcohol dependence, Support services
Summary	<p>Aim of article: To provide an overview of the literature on substance abuse and domestic violence highlighting the problems caused by the separation of policy and practice in these areas.</p> <p>Methodology: Literature review, interviews with 48 professionals with a policy or practice interest in the interrelationship between domestic violence and substance abuse.</p> <p>Findings:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> There are a significant group of women suffering domestic violence who have problematic use of alcohol and or drugs There is a significant overlap between problematic substance abuse and the perpetration of domestic violence There is little evidence to support a direct link between alcohol, drug abuse and domestic violence; but the interaction of personal and cultural beliefs about substance use and the abuse of power in intimate relationships result in alcohol and drugs being a feature of many abusive relationships. The separation between domestic violence and substance abuse services was recognised as damaging to service users. This separation was accounted for by different theoretical and cultural standpoints, single issue focus, the problems of resourcing facilities for families with complex needs, lack of knowledge and training across the two areas and fragmentation at government level. The authors argue for the development of a greater understanding of the issues relating to the domestic violence within substance abuse services and substance abuse within domestic violence services.
Reviewed by	HB

Author	Iwaniec D, Larkin E & Higgins S
Title	Research Review: Risk and resilience in cases of emotional abuse

Journal	Child & Family Social Work
Date	February 2006
Volume/issue	Volume 11 Issue 1
Subject (key words)	Child protection (Emotional harm), Child psychology (Resilience)
Summary	<p>What are the long term consequences for a child of an experience of emotional abuse, and what factors affect those outcomes?</p> <p>It is notable that the definition of emotional abuse is now being widened to include harm caused by parents involving children inappropriately in their divorce and separation processes, and in subsequent disputes about residence and contact. The authors, led by perhaps the leading UK authority in this area, review the available research. The identified consequences of emotional abuse are extensive and profound, including: -</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Smaller stature, lower weight, missed developmental milestones • Detrimental effects on cognitive and school performance • Reduced ability to manage emotional difficulties, cope with stressful situations, and develop problem-solving skills • Significantly higher drug and alcohol abuse • Higher levels of delinquency • Increased hyperactivity, anxiety, learning and memory problems • Strongly linked to later mental health problems, particularly low mood, hopelessness and low self-esteem • Internalising the critical voice of the abusive care giver • Being more likely to later select relationships which reproduce and confirm the abusive experience • Reduced ability to empathise • Relationship difficulties • Impaired parenting skills <p>Protective factors that promote resilience include: -</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Earlier healthy experiences and attachments • The long term continuation of some sensitive, supportive caring relationships e.g. grandparents • The less abuse experienced, and the earlier the age when it ended • The lower intrusion into the child's self-image • The child blaming others rather than themselves • The child adopting a resistant, confrontational strategy, rather than a compulsive compliant one, which involve suppressing feelings leading to withdrawal and depression. The first strategy risks adult retaliation. • Experiencing positive relationships, activities and accomplishments, particularly at school, with peers or in outside organisations • Genetic factors • An easy or positive temperament • Having at least one person who gives unconditional positive regard, who thinks well of them and made them feel important

	Identification of these factors helps assessment of the risks and positive attributes in any child's individual circumstances.
Reviewed by	SH

Author	Johnston J, Walters M and Olesen N
Title	Is It Alienating Parenting, Role Reversal or Child Abuse? A Study of children's Rejection of a Parent in Child Custody Disputes
Date	2005
Journal	Journal of Emotional Abuse
Issue	5/4
Key words	Contact (Parental alienation syndrome), Child protection (Emotional harm)
Summary	<p>Aim of study: To test competing theories about children's refusal to have contact with the non-resident parent</p> <p>Methodology: The files of 125 child disputing families in the San Francisco Bay area were evaluated by 6 clinicians.</p> <p>Findings:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Just under a fifth of children were negative towards one parent and 6% were extremely rejecting. 11% showed signs of rejecting their father and 7% their mother. Fathers were more strongly rejected than mothers. • Almost half of the parents showed some evidence of behaviour that could have sabotaged the child's relationship with the other parent. This sabotaging behaviour was likely to put the children at risk for emotional, behavioural and learning difficulties. • The overall findings of the study supported a multi-factorial explanation for the children's rejecting behaviour. On their own, explanations relating to parental alienation and child abuse did not account for the variation in the incidence of children's rejection of a parent • Alienating parents also tended to be parents who had poor boundaries and engaged in role reversal with their children. Their emotional neediness may go some way to account for the child's alignment • Substantiated child abuse had occurred in a quarter of cases • Domestic violence occurred in two fifth of cases but did not predict children's rejection of a parent • Children's rejection of a father is associated with: mother's role reversal and warm-involvement with the child, mother's alienating behaviour, child's separation anxieties, father's lack of warmth and father's previous abuse of the child • Children's rejection of a mother is associated with father's alienating behaviour, role reversal by the father, separation anxiety in relation to the father and mother's history of child abuse • Warm involved parenting and alienating behaviour are negatively correlated but where they occur together they powerfully affect a child's attachments • There was no evidence that female victims of domestic violence tended to alienate their children <p>Limitations: The measures used to assess child and parent</p>

	characteristics were mostly new and had not been validated. The study was undertaken at one time period with historical data assessed retrospectively. Causal relationships cannot therefore be inferred.
Reviewed by	HB

Author	Kohli R
Title	The comfort of strangers: social work practice with unaccompanied asylum-seeking children and young people in the UK
Journal	Child & Family Social Work
Date	February 2006
Volume/issue	Volume 11 Issue 1
Subject (key words)	Asylum seekers/Refugees, Case practice
Summary	<p>Case law has determined that these young people are ‘children in need’. Previous surveys have been critical of the social work services provided to them, describing professional ineptitude and failing organisations. The author sees this as part of a long-standing research tradition of telling SWs what they have not done, done too little of, and now ought to do. This author’s approach is to seek to assess the deeper issues of working with such young people, understanding the interaction involved.</p> <p>Method: He interviewed 24 SSD social workers with regard to 34 young people in their care, focussing on how they understood the story of the individuals concerned. About half of the practitioners were in specialist teams dealing with asylum-seeking children, the rest were in normal children and family teams.</p> <p>Results: The report focuses on the content of the SWs’ accounts, rather than statistical analysis. Whilst there are reports of peers confirming suspicious, distant and minimal involvement by some social workers – often centring around the issue of whether the person is the age claimed – the conclusion is that there was evidence that more social workers appeared to care for them well.</p> <p>The author considers that they embodied the humanitarian response urged by international bodies, the social worker acting as a single champion and companion through their passage from arrival to settlement. Social workers were viewed initially with suspicion by the young people who assumed they reported to immigration authorities. Success required often a willingness to accept a ‘don’t ask, don’t say’ position with the young people.</p> <p>Limitations: The young people involved were not interviewed, so the assessments are one-sided, relying on self reported accounts.</p> <p>It is refreshing to read an account which seeks to understand and appreciate the complexity of what is happening, in human terms, rather than is quick to criticise social workers – a popular and soft target.</p>
Reviewed by	SH

Author	Macdonald G and Turner W
Title	An Experiment in Helping Foster-Carers Manage Challenging Behaviour
Date	2005
Journal	British Journal of Social Work
Issue	35 1265-1282
Key words	Fostering, Evidence based practice, Case practice (Therapy)
Summary	<p>Aim: To find out whether training foster-carers in cognitive-behavioural approaches to deal with challenging behaviour would benefit children and carers.</p> <p>Methodology: 67 carers took part in cognitive behavioural training programme designed to address challenging behaviour. 50 were assigned to a control group</p> <p>Findings:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Participants in the training programme showed higher knowledge of behavioural principles and felt more confident about dealing with challenging behaviour • There was no difference between the two groups in their skills in dealing with difficult behaviour, the frequency or severity of behavioural problems or placement stability • The reasons for the disappointing results are likely to be varied: inadequate length of training, lack of support in carrying out the new skill, the extreme nature of the children's behaviour.
Reviewed by	HB

Author	Magadi M and Middleton S
Title	Britain's Poorest Children Revisited: Evidence from the BHPS (1994-2002) CRSP Research Report 3 (161 pages)
Date	2005
Publisher	Centre for Research in Social Policy, Loughborough University
Key words	Poverty, Social trends
Summary	<p>Aim of study: To contribute to research on children at greatest risk of experiencing relatively high risk of poverty within the context of the government goal of reducing the number of children in low-income households by a quarter by 04-05 and a half by 2010.</p> <p>Methodology: Use of the British Household Panel Survey from 1991 to 2002 in conjunction with the Poverty and Social Exclusion Survey (1999). Severe poverty is defined as households with a income of 27% or less than the median and non-severe those with an income between 27 and 59% of median income.</p> <p>Findings:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Between 1997 and 2002 there was no evidence of the decline in the proportion of children in poverty • A quarter of children were in persistent poverty (three or more years in poverty) • 7% were in persistent and severe poverty (3 or more years in poverty and at least one in severe poverty) • Poverty was associated with households where neither parent was in work • Children in long term lone parent families were not necessarily worse off than children in other household

	compositions.
Reviewed by	HB

Author	Palmer G, Carr J and Kenway P
Title	Monitoring poverty and social exclusion in the UK 2005 For the full report see the Monitoring Poverty and Social Exclusion website
Date	2005
Publisher	JRF
Key words	Poverty, Families, Social trends
Summary	(Only the JRF Findings has been read for this review) Aim of study: To report on indicators of poverty and social exclusion across the spectrum of British society Methodology: Data was collected from a variety of sources including government funded surveys, administrative data and local and health authority returns Findings relating to children: (Taken from the JRF Findings) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The numbers living in income poverty continue to fall but only among families with children and pensioners • Half of all children living in income poverty live in households where someone is in paid work, most of them in two-adult rather than one-adult families • The proportion of children living in workless households in the UK is the highest in Europe. This is mainly due to the high number of workless households and , as a result, half of all children living with one parent are in income poverty • Many deep, persistent health inequalities remain. For example, infant deaths are one and a half times as likely among those from manual than non-manual backgrounds. See also <i>Britains's Poorest Children Revisited</i> Review
Reviewed by	HB

Author	Pinney A
Title	Disabled children in residential placements
Date	2005
Publisher	DFES
Key words	Disability (Children with disabilities), Looked after children (Residential care)
Summary	Aim of study: The focus is on children spending long periods in residential provision (SEN boarding schools, social care residential placements and more than 6 months in an NHS hospital) Methodology: 6 different national datasets were analysed Findings: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • About 13,000 disabled children in England are in long-term residential placements • The vast majority are boys of secondary school age • Behavioural, emotional and social difficulties and mental health problems are the most prevalent, alongside learning difficulties • Asian children are less likely to be in residential provision A benchmarking resource is being developed to be posted on-line. This will enable LAs and PCT to review their practice

	<p>against comparable authorities.</p> <p>Limitations: The datasets are not comparable and the data on some may not be reliable. The analysis is therefore exploratory. The report does not cover young people in secure accommodation.</p>
Reviewed by	HB

Author	Schofield G and Beek M
Title	Risk and Resilience in Long-Term Foster-Care
Date	2005
Journal	British Journal of Social Work
Issue	35 p1283-1301
Key words	Child Psychology (Resilience), Fostering (Long term fostering), Case practice, Support services
Summary	<p>Aim: The aim of the <i>Growing up in Foster-Care</i> study was “to explore how the needs of looked after children could be identified and met in long-term foster-families provided by the LAs”.</p> <p>Theoretical base: Resilience and risk relate to internal and external characteristics of the child, foster carer, birth family and professional agencies. The model is interactive with resilience and risk being understood as processes rather than factors. Interventions can therefore be devised to promote and support resilience.</p> <p>Methodology: The phase 1 sample (Sept 97 to Dec 99) consisted of 58 children under the age of 12 from 10 LAs for whom the plan was long-term foster placement. A combination of questionnaires, developmental measures and in-depth interviews provided the base-line data. Phase 2 took place three years later. 53 children were followed up, using Goodman’s SDQ, questionnaires for the social workers and in-depth interviews with the foster carers and children.</p> <p>Findings:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The majority of the children had experienced high levels of abuse in their birth families and their functioning gave cause of concern with the majority (93%) suffering emotional and behavioural problems at phase 1. • At phase 2, 38 (75%) placements were still intact. 6 children (10%) had moved to placements which better met their needs and 8 (15%) were in unstable and temporary situations. • 31 (60%) children were assessed as being in a good progress group. They were increasingly able to use their foster-carers as a secure base. The carers of these children demonstrated sensitive and predictable parenting. For most children, social work support was regular and active. Where it was not, the carers found alternative support for themselves and the children. • Children in the uncertain progress group (14, 27%), were all in their phase 1 placements or settled new placements, but for all there were significant and persisting areas of difficulty that were proving hard to resolve. Carers were struggling to cope and provide positive parenting. Poor professional support was a factor for this group. Relationships with birth parents could be a damaging

	<p>experience for some of these children, a fact unrecognised by the social worker.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There were 7 (13%) children in the downward spiral group. These children had been unable to find emotional or practical security. Professional support had been absent or inadequate to meet the needs of a very needy group of children. “Entangled” birth family relationships were feature of this group. • For some children, the positive use by the carer and/or social worker of a “significant turning point, broke the pattern of downward spiral and promoted resilience processes.
Reviewed by	HB
Author	Smyth B (ed)
Title	Parent Child Contact and Post Separation Parenting Arrangements (146 pages)
Date	2004
Publisher	Australian Institute of Family Studies
Key words	Contact, Residence, (Family Law) Family proceedings
Summary	<p>Aim: To explore different patterns of parenting among separated and divorced parents with children under 18 in Australia.</p> <p>Methodology: The report is based on qualitative data derived from ten focus groups with a total of 54 participants and on quantitative data from a sample of separated and divorced parents who participated in the <i>Household, Income and Labour Dynamics in Australia</i> survey. Post separation parenting was analysed according to contact patterns: 50/50 shared care, little or no contact, holiday only contact, daytime only contact, “standard” contact</p> <p>Findings: (Quoted from the report)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “Patterns of parenting after separation are very varied, as are the perceptions and motivations of parents with different arrangements. Nonetheless, parents with different parenting arrangements appear to have distinct demographic profiles. • Family dynamics in tandem with several demographic factors – most notably material resources, the quality of the co-parental relationship, physical distance between parents’ households, and the repartnering status of parents – look to be important correlates of particular patterns of care, with inter-parental conflict being a dominant force. The maturity of children also seems to be important, with daytime-only contact being most common when children are of pre-school age, and “shared care” applying when children are of primary school age. • Not surprisingly, higher levels of contact appear to be associated with lower levels of inter-parental conflict, lower rates of repartnering, less physical distance between parents’ households, and higher levels of financial resources. The <i>Parent–Child Contact Study</i> breaks new ground by showing how the interaction of these and other factors appears to be clearly linked to qualitatively different patterns of post-separation parenting. • The perceptions of mothers and fathers differed markedly

	<p>where father–child contact was tenuous: mothers perceived fathers not to be interested in being involved with children; fathers believed that mothers cut them out of their children’s lives.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Many parents expressed a need for resources that would assist them in making decisions regarding the future care of children, especially in relation to different ways of sharing the care of children.” <p>Limitations: As the report points out the qualitative sample of parents is too small to generalise. The authors suggest the findings should be regarded as insights. The sampling method may have resulted in a sample which did not reflect the Australian population.</p>
Reviewed by	HB






Author	Trocmé N and Bala N
Title	False allegations of abuse and neglect when parents separate
Date	2005
Journal	Child Abuse and Neglect
Key words	Child protection (Neglect), Child protection (Child sexual abuse), Divorce/separation, Family proceedings
Summary	<p>Aim: To assess the rate of intentionally false allegations of abuse and neglect investigated by child welfare services in Canada.</p> <p>Methodology: 7,672 child maltreatment investigations were studied in Canada in 1998.</p> <p>Findings:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More than one third of the investigations were unsubstantiated and 4% were considered to be intentionally fabricated • In the sub-sample of cases where a custody or access dispute had occurred, the rate of intentionally false allegations was higher at 12% • Intentionally false allegations of neglect are much higher than those of sexual abuse • When parents have separated, fathers are more likely to make false allegations than mothers. 43% of false allegations in custody dispute cases were by the non-custodial parent and 14% by the custodial parent • Nearly half the custody and access investigations were unsubstantiated (as against 34% in non custody cases). <p>Limitations: The judgements of the investigating child welfare worker were not independently verified. This is a study on child maltreatment investigations in Canada. The findings may not be directly applicable to the UK.</p>
Reviewed by	HB



Author	Turney L
Title	Paternity Secrets: Why Women Don’t Tell
Date	2005
Journal	Journal of Family Studies
Issue	11/2

Key words	Paternity, Mothers, Fathers
Summary	<p>Aim of study: To gain an understanding of the personal and subjective experience of paternity</p> <p>Methodology: A self-selected sample of 50 mothers and fathers was recruited through advertisements and community groups in Australia. This articles reports on the experiences of 15 women in the sample who had “paternity secrets.”</p> <p>Findings:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The article reviews the available research on the prevalence of “paternity fraud” and concludes that this is likely to be much lower than “the 10 to 30% popularly canvassed”. • The implications of the “moral panic” associated with “paternity fraud” are explored • Women gave various reasons for keeping paternity secret or maintaining uncertainty: maintaining an important social bond for the children with the man they believed to be their father; lack of certainty about paternity because conception occurred in a period of transition for the woman; accidental pregnancy with another man during a long-term relationship; family pressures; forced aberrant sexual practices on the part of the long-term partner and abuse from the long-term partner • The risks associated with paternity testing during pregnancy meant that women were unable to resolve uncertainty about paternity during pregnancy. They were therefore reluctant to have an abortion or to tell their partner in a situation of uncertainty. • All the women shared the self-blame and social judgements levelled against women who do not know who the father of their child is. • The women appeared no different from any other random group of women except that they were caught in a nightmare where “they had made errors of judgement that had devastating and enduring consequences for themselves and others close to them.” <p>Limitations: The size and selection of the sample call into question the generalisability of the findings</p>
Reviewed by	HB

Author	Tyrer P, Chase E, Warwick I and Aggleton P
Title	‘Dealing with it’: Experiences of Young Fathers in Leaving Care
Date	2005
Journal	British Journal of Social Work
Issue	35/7
Key words	Fathers, Looked after children (Care leavers), Support services
Summary	<p>Aim: To explore the experiences of care leavers who became fathers; to examine the extent to which their needs were met; to explore the types of support services they knew about and were able to access</p> <p>Methodology: Literature review; in-depth interviews with 16 fathers aged between 15 and 24 and professionals who worked with young parents. 13 of the fathers were white British, one of mixed heritage, one Black British and African.</p> <p>Findings:</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 9 of the fathers were living with their child's mother; 4 had regular contact and 3 had none or very little contact. • The young men experienced social exclusion on a number of fronts including imprisonment, unemployment and poor housing • The young fathers had great difficulty in forming trusting personal relationships and in using professional help and services • Services were not designed to meet the needs of this group of young men. <p>Limitations: This is a small sample and therefore difficult to generalise from.</p>
Reviewed by	HB

Author	Wright C, Standen P, John G, German G, and Patel T
Title	School exclusion and transition into adulthood in African-Caribbean communities Findings School exclusion and transition into adulthood in African-Caribbean communities Full Report
Date	2005
Publisher	JRF
Key words	Diversity (Black children and families), School exclusion
Summary	<p>Aim of study: To investigate the impact of school exclusion on a sample of African-Caribbean young people</p> <p>Methodology: Interviews were held with 33 young people (21 men and 12 women) between the ages of 15 and 19 who had experienced permanent school exclusion. They were all in contact with community based projects. Family members and representatives of supportive organisations were also interviewed.</p> <p>Findings</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • While not a representative sample, all but three of the excluded pupils were in education or employment at the time of interview. <small>related Findings</small>  • For many, exclusion acted as a 'critical moment', making them reassess what they had been doing and renew their determination to succeed in getting qualifications for finding work. <small>related Findings</small>  • While they acknowledged the detrimental effects of exclusion, they had still aspired to continue their education and were optimistic about finding work. <small>related Findings</small>  • Exclusion had a significant impact not only on the young person but also on their families; in some cases it appeared to lead to family breakdown. <small>related Findings</small>  • The young people reported considerable variation in the provision of alternative education after exclusion and three were temporarily left without any immediate educational provision. This contributed in some cases to an involvement in criminal activities. <small>related Findings</small> 

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Even if they acknowledged that something they had done had led to their exclusion, the young people generally expressed an overwhelming sense of injustice, exacerbated by their belief that punishments were more severe for black pupils than for white pupils. <i>related Findings</i>  • Young people had found the support provided by family, friends and the voluntary sector crucial to their successful transitions into education and employment. However, these organisations were not funded to provide this support. <i>related Findings</i>  <p>Limitations: As tends to be the case with JRF research the samples are small. In this case the young people were recruited through voluntary projects. The experiences of this group may be significantly different from those young people who are not in touch with a community project.</p>
Reviewed by	HB

Author	York Univeristy of
Title	York Research on Foster Care and Adoption
Date	2005
Publisher	University of York
Key words	Fostering, Adoption, Placement
Summary	<p>This a useful leaflet which summarises the findings from Study 3 of the York Foster Care and Adoption research.</p> <p>Aim of study: To find out what had happened to the children who had been placed in foster care at the time of Study 2</p> <p>Methodology: 596 children from Study 2 were followed up. 30 case studies were undertaken.</p> <p>Findings:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 40% of children were still in foster care and 25% with the original carer. 16% were with adoptive families, 17% with their own families, 18% were living independently, 4% were in residential care and 7% could not be traced. • Only the younger children had moved to adoptive families • Adoption was the most stable of the outcomes offering the children the most security; return home was not a stable situation for many children and some suffered re-abuse; foster care could offer stability particularly if combined with a residence order but this was a rare option; for most young people independent living was unsatisfactory taking place too early and without sufficient support.
Reviewed by	HB