



# **RESEARCH DIGEST**

## **2006 Issue 2**

Prepared by

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## Research studies and articles based on research

<b>Author</b>	ALMACK K
<b>Title</b>	Seeking sperm: Accounts of lesbian couples' reproductive decision-making and understanding of the needs of the child
<b>Date</b>	2006
<b>Journal</b>	International Journal of Law, Policy and the Family
<b>Issue</b>	20/1-22
<b>Key words</b>	<b>Gay and lesbian, Assisted reproduction</b>
<b>Summary</b>	<p><b>Aim:</b> To explore UK lesbian parents understandings and interpretations of the legal and societal context within which they plan and have children</p> <p><b>Methodology:</b> A qualitative study of 20 lesbian parent families in the UK</p> <p><b>Findings:</b> The main preoccupation of the parents was to address the needs of the children. "The dominant notions of how best to meet children's needs established in contemporary UK family policy pose considerable tensions for the lesbian parent family." Almack sets out the legal and policy context for lesbian parenthood. She explores the decisions the couples made about conception and how this relates to decisions about the child's needs for information about his or her genetic origin, including whether or not the child should have a relationship with the father.</p> <p><b>Limitations:</b> This is a small scale study where selection was not randomised</p>
<b>Reviewed by</b>	HB

<b>Author</b>	AYOUB Catherine C.; DEUTSCH Robin M.; MARAGANORE Andronicki
<b>Title</b>	Emotional distress in children of high-conflict divorce: The impact of marital conflict and violence
<b>Date</b>	1999
<b>Journal</b>	Family and Conciliation Courts Review
<b>Issue</b>	37/3
<b>Key words</b>	<b>Divorce/separation (Conflict), Child protection (Emotional harm)</b>
<b>Summary</b>	<p><b>Aim:</b> To examine the factors that contribute to the emotional distress of children whose parents experience an acrimonious divorce with conflict over custody and visitation</p> <p><b>Methodology:</b> Data was collected between 1993 and 1997 from reports on 105 children where mental health clinicians had been appointed by family courts in the US to report on visitation and custody.</p> <p><b>Findings:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Families with high marital conflict were more likely to have children with high levels of emotional distress</li> <li>• Mothers with diagnosed mental illness or substance abuse were more likely to have children with higher levels of emotional distress. There was however an inverse</li> </ul>

	<p>relationship between the father's mental illness and the children's distress. Mothers with mental illness continued to have a direct relationship with their children whereas the relationship with fathers with mental illness was often curtailed or supervised.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Witnessing domestic violence in the context of a conflictual parental relationship increased emotional distress for children. The effect was observed after only one exposure to an incident of domestic violence</li> <li>• Domestic violence coupled with child maltreatment significantly intensified the negative impact on the child's mental health</li> </ul> <p><b>Limitations:</b> This was a retrospective study where data was collected for only one point of time. Correlations can be observed but causal relationships can only be cautiously inferred. The research was conducted in the US and may not therefore be generalisable to the UK. Clinicians' reports were the only source of data which could not therefore against any other source such as the parent or child's account.</p>
<b>Reviewed by</b>	HB

<b>Author</b>	BARN R
<b>Title</b>	<a href="#">Improving services to meet the needs of minority ethnic children and families Rip ECM Briefing 13</a>
<b>Date</b>	2006
<b>Publisher</b>	<a href="#">Rip</a>
<b>Key words</b>	<b>Diversity (Ethnic minority), Support services, Looked after children</b>
<b>Summary</b>	<p><b>Aim of Briefing :</b> To set out key national service objectives and the legal framework in which the needs of vulnerable minority ethnic children should be identified and met, and appropriate services provided.</p> <p><b>Methodology:</b> The methodological approach is not made explicit</p> <p><b>Contents:</b> The Briefing covers:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The legal and policy context</li> <li>• Key social, economic and health issues relating to minority ethnic families</li> <li>• The provision of services from minority ethnic families</li> <li>• Vulnerable young people from minority ethnic families</li> <li>• Special needs and disability</li> <li>• Looked after children and young people leaving care</li> <li>• Effective service provision for minority ethnic families</li> </ul> <p>The Briefing usefully identifies the key components needed for racially and culturally appropriate services:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Culturally competent practice</li> <li>• A multi-racial workforce</li> <li>• Partnership with the voluntary sector</li> <li>• Consultation with service users</li> <li>• Evaluation of services</li> <li>• Ethnic monitoring</li> <li>• Meaningful equal opportunities policies</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Evidence-based practice</li> </ul> <p><b>Limitations:</b> As stated above, the Briefing does not set out the basis on which the literature has been chosen and analysed. The list of key texts is limited given the extensive literature in this field.</p>
<b>Reviewed by</b>	HB

<b>Author</b>	BIEHAL N
<b>Title</b>	Working with adolescents
<b>Date</b>	2005
<b>Publisher</b>	BAAF
<b>Key words</b>	<b>Adolescence, Looked after children, Support services</b>
<b>Summary</b>	<p>Biehal's study of the effectiveness of specialist support teams for adolescents in diverting them from the care system has two constant themes. First, in spite of the expressed political and theoretical principles of supporting families, the emphasis remains on helping families with young children (poor little mites) not adolescents (young thug). Second financial constraints mean the thresholds for supplying any social work assistance is very high – so families will usually be at crisis point before accessing any service, rather than preventative work being offered.</p> <p>Some of Biehal's results re-state the obvious: change in children and families is more likely to succeed if they had a positive relationship with the worker; motivated parents and children were more likely to be successful in changing than less motivated. Nevertheless, there are some important messages. A surprising finding of the research is that there really is very little difference in outcome whether intervention was by a specialist support team or by a mainstream team - but the families and young people themselves perceived the specialist workers as having contributed significantly more to improvements in their situation than mainstream social workers. It points out that abuse, neglect and domestic violence are issues of continuing importance in work with older children – an obvious point which can sometimes be forgotten in this world of ASBOs and Parenting Orders.</p> <p>Biehal suggests that there is a place for the intensive intervention that specialist support can offer at crisis points, together with an infrastructure of more general social work support. This means providing less stigmatising universal services. But how will this be achieved given their very low priority in cash starved Local Authority budgets? Perhaps Biehal's research will prompt Ministers into ring-fencing cash for such initiatives. Certainly the nucleus is now there, post "Every Child Matters", with more inter-agency co-operation and multi-disciplinary teams becoming the norm: Biehal's message that adolescents need intervention at the level of the individual, the family, the peer-group, the local community and the school reinforces much previous research (think of the Framework, for example) and with government support could make a real difference to changing the way we work with adolescents and young people.</p>
<b>Reviewed by</b>	Liz Hurwitz

<b>Author</b>	BROPHY J
<b>Title</b>	Research Review: Child care proceedings under the Children Act 1989 <a href="#">Executive Summary</a> <a href="#">Full report</a> (126 pages) Printed copies are available free from 020 7210 8520 For the Review of the Child Care Proceedings System in England and Wales click <a href="#">here</a>
<b>Date</b>	2006
<b>Publisher</b>	DCA
<b>Key words</b>	<b>Family law (Family Courts) (Family proceedings), Children Act (Care proceedings), Local authorities, Looked after children</b>
<b>Summary</b>	<p><b>Aim:</b> To provide an evidence base for the work of the Child Care Review Team</p> <p><b>Methodology:</b> The criteria for inclusion in the Review was that the studies should be major, empirical and relate to care proceedings</p> <p><b>Findings:</b> It would be dangerous to cherry pick an eight page Executive Summary which has distilled the evidence from a dense 126 page report.</p> <p>The report addresses the following issues:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The profile of children and parents likely to be involved in public law proceedings</li> <li>• The use of expert evidence</li> <li>• The views of parents and children on attending care courts</li> <li>• Approaches to problem solving including ADR</li> <li>• The implementation of final care plans</li> </ul> <p><b>Limitations:</b> The review points out the limitations of the research material which does not include significant longitudinal data and which is hampered by poor court records and statistics</p>
<b>Reviewed by</b>	HB

<b>Author</b>	CHAND A
<b>Title</b>	Do You Speak English? Language Barriers in Child Protection Social Work with Minority Ethnic Families
<b>Journal</b>	British Journal of Social Work
<b>Date</b>	2005
<b>Volume</b>	35/6
<b>Key words</b>	<b>Interpreters, Diversity (Ethnic minority)</b>
<b>Summary</b>	<p><b>Aim:</b> To critically evaluate the research and literature on child protection social work with minority ethnic families who speak little or no English.</p> <p><b>Methodology:</b> The author reviewed research studies and other social work literature where the issue of interpretation is addressed. No indication of the search plan or selection criteria is given.</p> <p><b>Findings:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Three studies suggested that problems arose for BME families who do not speak English for the following reasons: lack of availability of interpreters, failure to attend more informal meetings, lack of time, the gender of the interpreters, the interpreter speaking on behalf of the client, mistakes made by the interpreter, social workers lack of</li> </ul>





	<p>training in the use of interpreters, lack of confidentiality and the difficulty inherent in translating words relating to sexual abuse into Asian languages</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Laming Report raises the possibility of the deliberate obstruction of child protection investigations through the misuse of interpreters</li> <li>• The use of children to interpret is potentially abusive because they may learn information about their families that is inappropriate. Furthermore children may interpret inaccurately leading to inadequate assessments</li> <li>• Professionals whose first language is English may have a negative perception of clients who do not speak English. Inability to speak English may limit families access to services and to a fair hearing in the family court</li> </ul> <p><b>Limitations:</b> Small sample sizes masking distinctions between different ethnic groups</p>
<b>Reviewed by</b>	HB
<b>Author</b>	<a href="#">CHILDLINE</a>
<b>Title</b>	<a href="#">Old Heads on Young Shoulders: Helping children and young people whose family circumstances force them into adult roles</a>
<b>Date</b>	2006
<b>Publisher</b>	NSPCC, Childline
<b>Key words</b>	<b>Children's views/participation, Support services</b>
<b>Summary</b>	<p><b>Aim:</b> To analyse the calls to Childline from 2004/05 in relation to children taking on adult responsibilities and roles</p> <p><b>Methodology:</b> The content of calls to Childline are captured through the counsellor's written records. Some children rang in relation to the caring role they had assumed and others about other problems with their concerns about their adult responsibilities emerging during the conversation.</p> <p><b>Findings:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 1177 children rang in relation to the physical health problems of someone close to them and 675 about mental health problems</li> <li>• 3442 mentioned alcohol abuse by a significant other of whom 44% had phoned primarily in relation to physical abuse. 1600 spoke to Childline about drug abuse by a significant other of whom 29% were also being physically abused</li> <li>• 1041 rang with parental separation as the main reason for calling and another 3253 rang for other reasons but said that parental separation was an issue in their lives. These children were concerned about (1) having to decide, often under duress, which parent to live with, (2) feeling responsible for their parents' unhappiness and (3) anxiety arising from lack of information about what was happening to their families</li> <li>• 1626 children rang about living with domestic violence</li> <li>• Over 5000 children rang about bereavement in their family</li> </ul> <p><b>Limitations:</b> The children who ring Childline are self-selecting. However the report is based on the experiences of large numbers of children whose voices need to be heard and who may speak for other children in similar situations.</p>
<b>Reviewed by</b>	HB



<b>Author</b>	DOUGLAS G, MURCH M, MILES C, SCANLAN L
<b>Title</b>	Research into the operation of Rule 9.5 of the Family Proceedings Rules 1991 <a href="#">Full report</a> (257 pages)
<b>Date</b>	2006
<b>Publisher</b>	DCA
<b>Key words</b>	<b>Family law (Family proceedings), Children Act (Rule 9.5), Children's views/participation</b>
<b>Summary</b>	<p><b>Aim:</b> To explore children's views of being separately represented in private law cases; to carry out a documentary survey of r9.5 cases; and to interview parents and professionals on their views of the value of r9.5 representation for children</p> <p><b>Methodology:</b> 8 boys and 7 girls were interviewed aged between 7 and 17. 23 parents or carers were interviewed. The file sample consisted of 121 cases drawn from courts with a comparatively high rate of r9.5 use.</p> <p><b>Key findings:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Evidence about the reason for the r9.5 appointment was often limited in the files but in a third of cases the parents appeared to question a previous FCA's assessment. Other reasons were child abuse, further investigation of a child's circumstances and the need for the child to receive professional help in order to facilitate contact</li> </ul> <p><b>Children</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Most children liked the idea of someone appointed by the court to help them have a say in proceedings</li> <li>• Most children believed that the court should be child-friendly and enable children to express their views directly if they wanted to</li> <li>• Some of the children needed someone (a passage agent) to support them through the litigation process</li> <li>• Some children were able to use the CG or their solicitor in this role. Others appeared to have found no one they could trust. They appeared depressed, angered and intimidated by their contact with the family justice system</li> <li>• Children were often ill informed about the court process</li> <li>• Children saw a good guardian as someone who would get to know them, someone they could trust and communicate with, someone who would explain the court process and someone who would report accurately to the court what they had told them</li> </ul> <p><b>Parents</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The majority of parents favoured the idea of separate representation for their children</li> <li>• Many parents were confused about the respective roles of the guardian and solicitor</li> <li>• Some parents wished the guardian had been appointed earlier to prevent the escalation of conflict</li> </ul> <p><b>Solicitors</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The benefits identified by solicitors of separate representation were refocusing the parents and the court on the child, an independent verification of the child's views, and a clear enunciation of the child's voice in the</li> </ul>

	<p>proceedings</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The disadvantages identified by solicitors were added delay, the subjection of the child to a further round of interviews and stress</li> </ul> <p>The report contains detailed accounts of each case where a child was interviewed. These give a vivid picture of children's experiences of the court process and the guardian.</p> <p><b>Limitations:</b> As the researchers acknowledge, the findings relating to the children and parents can only be suggestive given the very small samples. It is a pity that this research did not compare similar cases in high r9.5 areas with those in low r9.5 areas. This approach would have given a clear picture of the value added of the r9.5 appointment.</p>
<b>Reviewed by</b>	HB

<b>Author</b>	FLETCHER H
<b>Title</b>	<a href="#">Family Court and Parental Contact</a>
<b>Date</b>	2005
<b>Publisher</b>	NAPO
<b>Key words</b>	<b>Contact, Family Law</b>
<b>Summary</b>	<p><b>Aim:</b> To identify the part played the CAFCASS in determining how the Family Court processes applications from parents for contact with their children</p> <p><b>Methodology:</b> A questionnaire was sent to FCAs. Responses were received in relation to 864 cases.</p> <p><b>Findings:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The recommendation of no contact was rare (4.4% against fathers and 1.3% against mothers)</li> <li>In 89% of no contact father cases, the court decision was in line with the recommendation and in all the no contact mother cases, the court decision was in line with the recommendation.</li> <li>At the start of proceedings, 36% of fathers were not having contact with their children. By the end of the proceedings, 7.8% of fathers were not having contact. 8% of mothers had lost contact with their children at the outset. This had fallen to 5% at the end of proceedings.</li> <li>Domestic violence (41%) and child protection (29%) were the main reasons contact with fathers was refused. The child's express wishes, drug and alcohol abuse, failure to cooperate and a history of sex offending accounted for the other refusals.</li> <li>Mental illness, drug abuse and contact being against the child's wishes were the main reasons mothers were refused contact.</li> <li>61 fathers and 10 mothers withdrew from proceedings</li> </ul> <p><b>Limitations:</b> The number of FCAs surveyed is not stated nor the basis on which they were approached. The number of cases surveyed is not given as a proportion of the total number of possible cases. It is not therefore possible to establish how generalisable the findings are. Though the high number of returns suggests they should be reasonably representative.</p>

Reviewed by	HB
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Author	FURBEY, Rob
Title	Faith as social capital <a href="#">JRF Findings</a> <a href="#">Full report</a>
Date	2006
Publisher	JRF
Key words	<b>Diversity (Religion), Partnerships</b>
Summary	<p><b>Only the JRF Findings have been read for this review</b></p> <p><b>Aim of study:</b> To establish far Faith organisations and their members can contribute to the development of social capital</p> <p><b>Methodology:</b> Semi-structured interviews were conducted with 24 people, including lay and clerical leaders, users and activists. Group interviews were held with 31 people from 25 organisations and documents were read. There was an element of observation</p> <p><b>Findings</b> (Quoted from the JRF Findings)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Faith communities contribute substantial and distinctive bridging and linking social capital, but also face internal and external obstacles to development. <small>related Findings</small> </li> <li>• Living close to people of diverse faiths is an increasingly common experience. Faith communities are developing local, regional and national frameworks which connect faiths with each other and with secular organisations. However, these frameworks are not always recognised, so their full potential for mutual understanding and community development is not realised. <small>related Findings</small> </li> <li>• Faith buildings can be significant for developing social capital, as places where people can cross boundaries, meet others, share activities and build trust. But the use of faith buildings can be a source of conflict and their wider communal use may be constrained by their sacred status or poor amenities. <small>related Findings</small> </li> <li>• Faith communities can facilitate building bridges and making links with others. They can allow new forms of association, engender trust in shared community initiatives, and motivate particular approaches to questions of social justice and need. But power inequalities within faith communities can also inhibit the development of social capital, particularly through the subordination of women and young people. <small>related Findings</small> </li> <li>• Faith communities contribute substantially to social capital through participation in formal governance, though individual organisations vary in capacity and commitment. Faith groups have distinctive priorities, timescales, working styles and challenging agendas, informed and motivated by</li> </ul>

	<p>their beliefs and commitment to particular neighbourhoods. related Findings </p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Many faith communities also contribute to social capital by participating in the wider public domain. Faith, worship and people's development within faith organisations can foster qualities essential for civic engagement. External networking and action are usually undertaken by a relatively small number of people, but their achievements are often substantial. related Findings </li> </ul> <p><b>Limitations:</b> The numbers involved in this research project are small and the potential faith group "population" enormous and highly diverse. There is no sense in which those interviewed could be said to be representative of the faith group "population". The findings cannot therefore be generalised with any confidence.</p>
<b>Reviewed by</b>	HB
<b>Author</b>	GREY B
<b>Title</b>	Long-Term Fostering or Adoption? A Research Review
<b>Journal</b>	Seen And Heard
<b>Date</b>	December 2005
<b>Volume/issue</b>	15(4); pp
<b>Subject (key words)</b>	<b>Fostering, Adoption</b>
<b>Summary</b>	<p>Reviewing the more significant British research in this area, the author draws on the following findings to argue for a child-centred approach to permanence planning:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>when allowing for various factors such as age at placement, there is little difference in the breakdown rates between 'stranger' adoption and long-term fostering;</li> <li>long-term fostering has significant disadvantages in terms of providing for permanence and security but this factor may be outweighed by other needs, e.g. for a high level of ongoing family contact;</li> <li>children who do not wish to be adopted should be listened to carefully because emotional barriers to placement may never be overcome;</li> <li>disrupting important attachments should not be undertaken lightly; those closely attached to existing carers need special attention;</li> <li>children with severe emotional and behavioural needs should have specialist services and professional foster placements may be most helpful;</li> <li>careful attention to sibling relationships is important; staying together will be right for some and not for others.</li> </ul> <p>He concludes that deciding on the best permanent placement for any child requires complex individual assessment.</p>
<b>Reviewed by</b>	PL

<b>Author</b>	GRYCH H
<b>Title</b>	Interparental Conflict as a Risk Factor for Child Maladjustment:

	Implications for the Development of Preventions Programs
<b>Journal</b>	Family Court Review
<b>Date</b>	2005
<b>Volume</b>	43/1
<b>Key words</b>	<b>Contact, Support services, Family problems (Family conflict)</b>
<b>Summary</b>	<p><b>Aim:</b> To review research on the effects of interparental conflict on children and examine the implications for divorce education programmes designed to reduce conflict after divorce.</p> <p><b>Methodology:</b> Studies on intact families are the main focus of the review</p> <p><b>Findings:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Destructive conflict (likely to lead to child maladjustment) is most likely to occur where the level of conflict is high, where it is not resolved, where it is focused on the child and where it continues at a high level for years after the separation</li> <li>• Prevention programmes are more likely to achieve the aim of reducing child maladjustment where they teach parents ways of managing conflict which shield children; where they foster good parent-child relationships; where parents are enabled not to expose their children to conflicts of loyalty</li> <li>• Children are most likely to be helped by prevention programmes which help them cope with situation of divided loyalty and where they may feel responsible for the conflict</li> <li>• Most universal parent education programmes aim to reduce conflict and enhance children's relationships with both parents. They therefore have as objectives processes which are known to reduce maladjustment in children</li> <li>• Parents generally report high levels of satisfaction with the programmes</li> <li>• Few have been rigorously evaluated. One had positive effects on interparental conflict and one on parenting and children's adjustment. However there is little evidence that parental behaviour changes as a result of divorce education programmes except in one extensive programme. Intensive and targeted intervention is likely to be necessary for high conflict parents</li> <li>• Very few interventions for children have been evaluated and most are community based rather than linked to court proceedings</li> </ul> <p><b>Limitations:</b> Most of the findings on the effect of conflict on children relate to children in intact families rather than separated families.</p>
<b>Reviewed by</b>	HB

<b>Author</b>	HETHERINGTON M
<b>Title</b>	Social support and the adjustment of children in divorced and remarried families
<b>Date</b>	2003
<b>Journal</b>	Childhood
<b>Issue</b>	10/2
<b>Keyword</b>	<b>Divorce/separation, Support services</b>
<b>Summary</b>	<b>Aim of study:</b> To summarise findings from three studies in the

US on children's adjustment to divorce, the risks they encounter and the social factors that protect them or make them more vulnerable

**Methodology:** The article is based on three longitudinal studies involving 1400 families and 2500 children over a period of 32 years. All studies had non-divorced families as comparison groups. Multiple measures and methods for data collection and analysis were used, many replicated across the three studies.

**Findings:**

- Overall children from divorced families show greater emotional and behavioural problems than children from intact families (25% against 10%) though these tend to decline over time. Parent child relationships are also poorer.
- As young adults the children of separated parents tend to have greater problems with substance abuse, employment and relationships
- The averages mask a wide range of outcomes which tend to cluster. About 50% of adolescents of divorced parents and 60% of children from intact families are in a "good-enough" cluster". 20% of adolescents of divorced parents and 10% from intact families are in a multi-problem (depression or anti-social behaviour) cluster. 30% of all adolescents were in a "competent" cluster
- Many children of divorced parents developed resilience to the stresses of parental separation often as a result of a positive relationship with at least one adult
- Many of the problems experienced by the parents and children in divorced families pre-date the separation
- Conflict whether in intact or separated families has negative effects for children (depression, lower academic achievement, low self-esteem and externalizing behaviour)
- Conflict which focuses on the child or involves domestic abuse is most damaging for children
- Children with an easy going temperament and good intelligence are more resilient in the presence of parental conflict
- Parenting capability tends to be lower in separated families than in intact families though it improves over time. In all types of family authoritative parenting is most beneficial for children
- There was little evidence that the type of custody arrangement (mother, father or joint) affected outcomes for children
- Post divorce parenting relationships varied. A quarter developed a co-parenting relationship which was beneficial for the children; most adopted a parallel parenting style with little denigration of the other parent; and a quarter experienced sustained conflict
- The benefits of contact are related to the quality of the child's relationship with the NRP and the quality of the inter-parental relationship, and not to the amount of time the child spends with the NRP
- Frequent contact in situations of high conflict may exacerbate children's adjustment problems
- There is little evidence of a positive effect for the

	involvement of grandparents in divorced families <b>Limitations:</b> These are findings from US studies and may not therefore be generalisable to the UK. Although the sample numbers are large there is no analysis in terms of race.
<b>Reviewed by</b>	HB

<b>Author</b>	HOWE David
<b>Title</b>	<a href="#">Disabled children, parent-child interaction and attachment</a>
<b>Journal</b>	Child & Family Social Work
<b>Date</b>	May 2006
<b>Volume/issue</b>	Volume 11, Issue 2
<b>Subject (key words)</b>	<b>Child psychology (Attachment), Disability</b>
<b>Summary</b>	<p>The author reviews the available research in this area. He concludes that: -</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Higher than normal numbers of children with disabilities are classified as insecure, whilst a significant minority are securely attached</li> <li>• When both children and parents bring vulnerability factors into their inter-action, higher rates of insecurity might be expected</li> <li>• Parental resolution – acceptance of the child's disability, overcoming any grief reaction, having realistic mental representations of the child, and understanding the implications for their care giving role – was strongly associated with secure attachments</li> <li>• Parental non-resolution was similarly linked with insecure attachments</li> <li>• Rates of security increased for children with severe disabilities, but lowered for those with episodic and unpredictable disabilities, such as epilepsy, where there was hope of abatement.</li> </ul> <p>The article concludes with suggestions for supportive and preventive services to improve attachment, focussing on the early stages of parents' learning about their child's condition, and their subsequent adjustment, including understanding the world from the child's perspective.</p>
<b>Reviewed by</b>	SH

<b>Author</b>	HUNT R, COOKE E, CHAMBERS H
<b>Title</b>	<a href="#">Health and Well-being: Physical health</a> ECM Briefing no 12
<b>Date</b>	2006
<b>Publisher</b>	<a href="#">rip</a>
<b>Key words</b>	<b>Looked after children, Health</b>
<b>Summary</b>	<p><b>Aim of Briefing:</b> To summarise the legislative and policy framework and the research evidence relating to the health of looked after children</p> <p><b>Methodology:</b> Not described</p> <p><b>Findings:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• There are relatively high levels of unmet health needs amongst the population of LAC. 45% were assessed as having at least one psychiatric disorder</li> <li>• Health assessments were often overlooked in the past</li> </ul>

	<p>though the situation has been improving with 77% of children in 2004 having had an assessment in the previous year</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• There are high levels of risk-taking behaviour amongst LAC. These often relate to pre and post care experiences rather than to the experience of being in care itself</li> <li>• The experience of being in care can itself contribute to poor health for children</li> <li>• Black and minority ethnic children and unaccompanied asylum seeking children have special needs in relation to the provision of appropriate health services</li> <li>• Children themselves say that they receive inadequate information about health issues and have inadequate opportunity to discuss their concerns with adults</li> <li>• The Briefing identifies policy and practice likely to promote health in LAC.</li> </ul> <p><b>Limitations:</b> Lack of information about the criteria for inclusion and evaluation of the referenced material.</p>
<b>Reviewed by</b>	HB
<b>Author</b>	KIELTY S
<b>Title</b>	Similarities and Differences in the Experiences of Non-resident mothers and Non-resident fathers
<b>Date</b>	2006
<b>Journal</b>	International Journal of Law, Policy and the Family
<b>Issue</b>	20/74-94
<b>Key words</b>	<b>Mother, Father, Parent (Non-resident parent), Contact</b>
<b>Summary</b>	<p><b>Aim:</b> To explore the extent to which the experiences of non-resident parents relate primarily to gender, or to their status (as NRP) or a combination of the two.</p> <p><b>Methodology:</b> Review of the literature on non-resident mothers and a comparison of this with the literature on non-resident fathers</p> <p><b>Findings:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• There has been an increase in the numbers of NRMs to 3% of the NRP population</li> <li>• The aims and findings of the studies of NRMs (which are about pathology and adjustment) differ from those of NRFs (which are about contact and involvement)</li> <li>• Studies of NRMs focus on the pathway to non-resident status often categorising it as either voluntary or involuntary. There is little analysis of how families reach decisions about who children should live with following their parents' separation</li> <li>• There is little evidence in studies of NRPs of the parenting activities and behaviour of either fathers or mothers. Establishing clear parental roles and responsibilities may be especially difficult for NRMs the more if they are NRMs against their will. The nature of non-resident parenthood is dependent on relationships with other members of the family and the context of the separation</li> <li>• There is more information about the psychological and emotional pain of the loss of role for NRMs than NRFs.</li> </ul>
<b>Reviewed by</b>	HB

<b>Author</b>	MAY-CHAHAL C, CAWSON P
<b>Title</b>	Measuring child mal-treatment in the United Kingdom: A study of the prevalence of child abuse and neglect
<b>Journal</b>	Child Abuse and Neglect
<b>Date</b>	2005
<b>Volume</b>	29/9
<b>Key words</b>	<b>Child protection (Child abuse), Child protection (Neglect)</b>
<b>Summary</b>	<p><b>Aim:</b> To provide reliable measures of the prevalence of all forms of child maltreatment in the UK that will be robust in the context of social and cultural differences due to social class, ethnicity and region</p> <p><b>Methodology:</b> 2869 young adults (18-24) (1234 men and 1635 women) ( 92% white and 8% BME) obtained by random probability sampling were interviewed. Maltreatment was researcher assessed from reported experiences while the respondents were 16 or under.</p> <p><b>Findings:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 90% described themselves as coming from a “warm and loving family background”</li> <li>• ¾ had experienced some form of physical punishment</li> <li>• 4% had to care for someone else because they were ill or disabled</li> <li>• The majority of the respondents believed that children should not be disciplined with an implement and that no sexual activity between an adult and a child under 12 was acceptable</li> <li>• 7% met the definition of seriously physical abused, 6% of serious absence of care (neglect), 8% of girls and 4% of boys met the definition of emotional maltreatment</li> <li>• 10% had experienced sexual abuse involving contact by carers or others and a further 6% had experienced sexual abuse not involving contact. 11% of boys had experienced sexual abuse and 21% of girls. 6% of the sample considered that they had been abused</li> <li>• Very few young people had reported abuse to professionals.</li> </ul> <p><b>Limitations:</b> The sample did not include young people living in institutions such as prisons or hospitals. These are likely to have experienced higher incidence rates of abuse than young people in the general population. There was no analysis of the data in terms of ethnic background.</p>
<b>Reviewed by</b>	HB

<b>Author</b>	McAULEY Colette; PECORA Peter; ROSE Wendy
<b>Title</b>	Enhancing the Well-being of Children and Families through Effective Interventions – International Evidence for Practice
<b>Date</b>	2006
<b>Publisher</b>	Jessica Kingsley
<b>Key words</b>	<b>Evidence informed practice (Research), Support services</b>
<b>Summary</b>	<p>There is a clear need to establish a knowledge of which services for families and children work well. This book provides a comprehensive overview of research evidence on the effectiveness of selected child welfare interventions.</p> <p>The editors are founders of the International Association for</p>

	<p>Outcome-Based Evaluation and Research on Family and Children’s Services – a bit of a mouthful but this book is their first enterprise and well worth savouring. The aim is to summarise the available evidence succinctly and the contributors to 26 chapters are well-known. They include Wendy Rose, Nina Biehal, Arnon Bentovim, David Quinton, Gillian Pugh, June Statham, etc.</p> <p>Each section in the book concentrates on evidence based <i>interventions</i> with children and young people that:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. are vulnerable or of pre-school age, or</li> <li>2. have experienced abuse or neglect, or</li> <li>3. experience foster care, adoption and transitions, or</li> <li>4. are in schools and community programmes</li> </ol> <p>The preface refers to a ‘serious preoccupation with developing evidence-based practice on both sides of the Atlantic’. Maybe European comparisons can be drawn upon in later editions but for now it’s just the UK-USA context. Each chapter is readable and following an introduction addresses the nature of the evidence, and also evidence of programme effectiveness, exploring the different approaches. A chapter on (say) ‘Home visiting for parents of pre-school children’ in the UK is followed by a sister chapter of the same title about the situation in the USA. However it can appear disconcerting that the vocabulary is ethnocentric: Programme v Program; focussed v focused.</p> <p>Marjorie Smith looks at early interventions with young children ‘at a time when there is a huge proliferation of these with pre-school children’ in the UK. Reviewing the evidence she finds that no rigorous evaluations of early years interventions have been identified. This is stimulating stuff at a time when many billions are being invested in that sector.</p> <p>Other main ‘headlines’ relevant to CAFCASS staff are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- children that experience neglect</li> <li>- children that experience sexual and physical abuse</li> <li>- foster family care</li> <li>- residential care</li> <li>- leaving care support</li> <li>- adoption</li> </ul> <p>A final example is Bentovim’s analysis of sexual abuse therapeutic interventions. He notes the evidence that some specific conduct problems are more resistant to treatment than anxiety related symptoms, depression and self-blame which appear particularly sensitive to therapeutic treatment.</p> <p>Bentovim’s chapter is much more easy to absorb than the heavily referenced USA equivalent by Corcoran – the Yanks have a heavier body of research over there! It was fascinating to note how the two authors avoid quoting each other or duplicating the references they make.</p>
<b>Reviewed by</b>	Chris Rivers

<b>Author</b>	MCINTOSH J
<b>Title</b>	<a href="#">Enduring Conflict in Parental Separation: Pathways of Impact on Child Development</a>
<b>Date</b>	2003
<b>Journal</b>	Journal of Family Studies
<b>Issue</b>	9/1

<b>Key words</b>	<b>Child psychology (Child development), Contact, Children's views/participation, Divorce/separation</b>
<b>Summary</b>	<p><b>Aim:</b> To review the research literature on the impact of entrenched parental conflict on children's development and the implications for work with children in high conflict situations</p> <p><b>Methodology:</b> The key research is summarised and two case studies are used to illustrate the effects of entrenched conflict for children.</p> <p><b>Key messages:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The developmental needs of children in high conflict situations following parental separation are unlikely to be met</li> <li>• The strongest predictors of emotional distress for children are the combination of domestic violence and maltreatment</li> <li>• Professional intervention should be aimed at promoting children's developmental needs</li> <li>• This requires children to be central to any intervention</li> </ul>
<b>Reviewed by</b>	HB

<b>Author</b>	PLATT Dendy
<b>Title</b>	Threshold Decisions: How Social Workers Prioritize Referrals of Child Concern
<b>Journal</b>	Child Abuse Review
<b>Date</b>	Jan-Feb 2006
<b>Volume/issue</b>	Volume 15, No 1
<b>Subject (key words)</b>	<b>Case practice (Assessment)</b>
<b>Summary</b>	<p><b>Aim:</b> To understand how social workers with a new referral choose between undertaking an initial assessment for a possible child in need, and initiating a child protection enquiry.</p> <p><b>Method:</b> The author examined 23 families where child care concerns came close to the child protection threshold, drawn from two urban northern local authorities and based on interviews with social workers and parents.</p> <p><b>Findings:</b> The author argues that the evidence indicated that rather than using the concept of a continuum of abuse and neglect - using simple scales of severity and a threshold - social workers used five key evaluative factors:-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The specificity of reported harm to a child</li> <li>• The severity of such harm</li> <li>• The risk of future harm</li> <li>• Parental accountability</li> <li>• The extent of corroboration of the referral information</li> </ul> <p>The social workers managed the complexity and uncertainty of new referrals through the use of a set of steps, which can be seen to relate clearly to a legal approach.</p> <p><b>Comment:</b> Thresholds are likely to remain useful concepts to explain why and when certain actions are taken, such as court intervention.</p>
<b>Reviewed by</b>	SH

<b>Author</b>	SANDERS Robert & MACE Sam
<b>Title</b>	Agency Policy and the Participation of Children and Young

	People in the Child Protection Process
<b>Journal</b>	Child Abuse Review
<b>Date</b>	March-April 2006
<b>Volume/issue</b>	Volume 15, Issue 2
<b>Subject (key words)</b>	<b>Child protection, Children's views/participation</b>
<b>Summary</b>	<p><b>Aim:</b> To examine agency policy and practice on child participation in child protection case conferences.</p> <p><b>Methodology:</b> A mix of document analysis and interviewing social workers and conference chairs [but not children] in connection with 89 case conferences involving 9 Welsh local authorities.</p> <p><b>Findings:</b> All of the agencies' policy documents referred to children attending conferences, and/or contributing by other means.</p> <p>In fact, 9 of the 185 children involved had been invited to attend their conference, of which 7 attended. However 3 of these were under 18 months old; the others, 4, 10, 13 and 16. The main method used to convey children's wishes and feelings was through adults – friends, relatives or professionals - reporting children's views.</p> <p>Social workers and conference chairs varied in their opinions about what level of involvement children should have. Tensions were noted between the rights and interests of children themselves, and between them and their parents.</p> <p>Many of those interviewed regarded case conferences as not being 'child friendly', because of the formality and intimidating nature of the process.</p>
<b>Reviewed by</b>	SH

<b>Author</b>	SCHOFIELD G
<b>Title of article</b>	Making decisions about contact in foster care and adoption: promoting security and managing risk
<b>Edited book</b>	Durable Solutions: The collected papers of the 2005 Dartington Hall
<b>Date</b>	2006
<b>Publisher</b>	Jordan Publishing
<b>Key words</b>	<b>Looked after children, Adoption, Contact</b>
<b>Summary</b>	<p><b>Aim of the article:</b> To explore the issues underlying contact decisions in relation to age and purpose of placement</p> <p><b>Key messages:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Fostered and adopted children need to “think through and accept membership of two families”</li> <li>• Contact is the point at which the two families overlap for the child and is therefore a complex and delicate area</li> <li>• Contact has the potential for positively enabling children to manage their dual identities</li> <li>• It can also impact negatively on the child</li> <li>• “Sensitive and committed” adults are needed to help the benefit from contact</li> <li>• Any assessment of the value of contact for a child needs to take account of factors relating to the child, to the carers, to the birth family and to the professional network</li> </ul> <p>The article explores the impact of contact on the developing</p>

	mind and social world of the child. The particular developmental issues are examined in relation to infancy, pre-school children, school children (5-11) and adolescents.
<b>Reviewed by</b>	HB

<b>Author</b>	SHEEHAN Rosemary
<b>Title</b>	Emotional Harm and Neglect: The Legal Response
<b>Journal</b>	Child Abuse Review
<b>Date</b>	Jan-Feb 2006
<b>Volume/issue</b>	Volume 15, No 1
<b>Subject (key words)</b>	<b>Child protection (Child abuse), (Emotional harm), (Neglect)</b>
<b>Summary</b>	<p><b>Aim:</b> To assess how emotional harm and neglect are treated in the Children’s Courts of Melbourne, Australia</p> <p><b>Method:</b> Examine records of 208 pre-trial conferences in early 2002</p> <p><b>Findings:</b> Emotional harm and neglect are under-represented as the sole ground for legal proceedings, although they are often specifically linked to other forms of harm in applications, so that by far the largest group of applications used the ground of ‘physical and emotional harm’. It is suggested that emotional harm was included partly because parents would concede the grounds of emotional harm being met rather than physical harm.</p> <p>The under-representation of emotional harm alone is attributed to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lack of identification and verification of emotional harm by social workers</li> <li>• The difficulty of gathering evidence that would satisfy the court</li> <li>• The legal requirement to propose interventions to reduce the problem, given their frequent root in major parent-child relationship difficulties</li> </ul> <p>The author calls for major reappraisal of how emotional abuse is handled in Australia, and supports similar comments made by the NSPCC here.</p> <p><b>Limitations:</b> The research was limited to the analysis of written information.</p>
<b>Reviewed by</b>	SH

<b>Author</b>	TARLETON B, WARD L, HOWARTH J
<b>Title</b>	<p>Finding the right support? A review of issues and positive practice in supporting parents with learning difficulties and their children</p> <p><a href="#">Executive Summary</a></p> <p><a href="#">Full report</a> (124 pages)</p> <p><a href="#">Version in Plain Facts series</a></p> <p>Printed copies of the report are available free from 020 7767 1348 “while stocks last”</p>
<b>Date</b>	2006
<b>Publisher</b>	Baring Foundation
<b>Key words</b>	<b>Disability (Parents with learning disabilities), Parents, Support services</b>

<b>Summary</b>	<p><b>Aim:</b> To review what is known about parents with learning difficulties and their children, and the kinds of services that already existed to support them in the UK.</p> <p><b>Methodology:</b> This consisted of a review of the relevant literature, meeting with parents with learning disabilities, contacts with professionals and a questionnaire sent to agencies working with parents with learning disabilities</p> <p><b>Key Findings:</b> (Taken from the Executive Summary)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• An increasing number of adults with learning disabilities are becoming parents</li> <li>• In about 50% of cases the children are removed from their parents usually as a result of concerns for their well-being</li> <li>• There are a range of <b>barriers to the provision of appropriate support</b> to parents including negative, or stereotypical, attitudes about parents with learning difficulties on the part of staff in some services.</li> <li>• Many professionals are trying to help parents overcome these barriers so that they can <b>parent with support</b>. To achieve this professionals are: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– <b>raising awareness of parents with learning difficulties</b> and their support needs with non learning disability specialist services</li> <li>– developing <b>multi-professional and multi-agency</b> support for them and their families</li> <li>– <b>empowering parents with learning difficulties</b>.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• <b>Effective support</b> involves a wide range of strategies, including early identification of parents with learning difficulties; support during pregnancy; assessment of support needs; skills training; help at home; parenting groups; flexible support to meet families' individual and changing needs; helping parents to engage with children and family services; and multi-agency working.</li> <li>• The provision of <b>easy to understand information</b> on all aspects of parenting and <b>advocacy</b> support are also critical, especially during <b>child protection and judicial proceedings</b></li> </ul>
<b>Reviewed by</b>	HB

<b>Author</b>	TAYLOR C
<b>Title</b>	Young People in Care and Criminal Behaviour
<b>Date</b>	2006
<b>Publisher</b>	Jessica Kingsley Publishers
<b>Key words</b>	<b>Looked after children, Young offenders</b>
<b>Summary</b>	<p>Cafcassiers who are Archers' fans will know that Susan was spitting tacks when her son became enamoured of Carly. She refers to Carly as 'a tramp' and a 'no-hoper'.</p> <p>Her crime? She is a child in care. So this is the stereotype of a 'looked-after child'. Popular perceptions connect care with trouble – these kids are 'mad or bad'.</p> <p>The author's unique take on her research subject is that she is herself a product of the care system. She is passionate about giving a voice to young people who have experienced various kinds of care, so that professionals might learn from them. Although her sample is relatively small, there is a ring of authenticity about their views and stories. Some speak from</p>

	<p>prison, reflecting on how they might have avoided that path. This book explores the residential experience and rates it most likely to create ' a socialising milieu for delinquency', examining the reasons why, and how this could be changed. There is an emphasis on the significance of the development of secure attachments with carers as a protective factor against offending, where long-term fostering scores highly. Education is a necessary adjunct to attachment and stability, not just attendance but involvement in school life and encouragement to achieve. Life after care is addressed, with an acknowledgement that the Children ( Leaving Care) Act 2000 and the Homelessness Act 2002 are helpful policy developments but they will improve young people's lives only if they are backed by adequate resources.</p> <p>A constant theme of this research is the need to integrate youth justice policy and practice with the welfare intentions of the care system. Taylor highlights the dichotomy between the punitive attitude to children who offend and the recognition in social care that vulnerable children need support and protection.</p>
<b>Reviewed by</b>	Margaret Blatchford

<b>Author</b>	THOBURN J; CHAND A; PROCTER J
<b>Title</b>	Child Welfare Services for Minority Ethnic Families –The Research Review
<b>Date</b>	2005
<b>Publisher</b>	Jessica Kingsley Publishers
<b>Key words</b>	<b>Diversity (Ethnic Minority), Evidence Informed Practice, Looked After Children, Child Protection, Family Law, Support Services</b>
<b>Summary</b>	This is a very informative and comprehensive summary of a wide range of research in the field of working with minority ethnic children and families. It is my opinion that the book meets its objectives as set out in the introduction by Beverley Prevatt Goldstein, in which she begins by explaining the terminologies and complexities related to research, methodologies and studies in the field of minority ethnic children and their families.
<b>Reviewed by</b>	Vasalee Crawford

<b>Author</b>	TOMLINSON J
<b>Title</b>	NAGALRO's Survey of its Members in October 2005: Commentary on Findings
<b>Journal</b>	Seen And Heard
<b>Date</b>	April 2006
<b>Volume/issue</b>	16(1); pp
<b>Subject (key words)</b>	<b>Family Court Advisor (Children's Guardian)</b>
<b>Summary</b>	<p>The article reports on a questionnaire survey of NAGALRO members. There were 99 respondents (no information on the response rate) with poor representation from Yorkshire &amp; Humberside, the North East and Wales. 75% of respondents were self-employed.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 60% of cases were care cases.</li> <li>• Self-employed guardians report an overall reduction in</li> </ul>

	<p>workloads.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• There were concerns about the impact of budgetary controls on the work and on training.</li> <li>• Concerns about pay.</li> <li>• Mixed views about management styles and communication.</li> <li>• Information on the respondents 'last 10 cases' showed that 40% of these cases are uncontested at any stage, approximately 1/3 are contested at the final hearing, 10% had a Finding of Fact hearing.</li> <li>• Asserts that Children's Guardians work to prevent court contests where, usually, this is in the children's overall interests.</li> </ul>
<b>Reviewed by</b>	PL

<b>Author</b>	TRINDER L, CONNOLLY J, KELLET J, NOTLEY C, SWIFT L
<b>Title</b>	Making contact happen or making contact work? The process and outcomes of in-court conciliation <a href="#">Executive Summary</a> <a href="#">Full report</a> (112 pages)
<b>Date</b>	2006
<b>Publisher</b>	DCA
<b>Key words</b>	<b>Dispute resolution (CAFCASS dispute resolution), Family law (Family proceedings), Contact</b>
<b>Summary</b>	<p><b>Aim:</b> To identify the overall effectiveness of in-court conciliation in contact cases and the relative effectiveness of three different models of in-court conciliation</p> <p><b>Methodology:</b> This was a longitudinal quantitative and qualitative study of parents who had attended in-court conciliation in three different areas using different models. The baseline sample consisted of 125 mothers and 125 fathers (67% response rate). A telephone interview was conducted a few days after the conciliation appointment and between 6 and 9 months later. 70% of the baseline sample were re-interviewed.</p> <p><b>Key findings:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The cases were complex often with conflicted parental relationships and high levels of child and adult distress</li> <li>• Overall agreement rates were high with 76% of parents reporting full or partial agreement</li> <li>• Models varied in the levels of their agreement rates. This was a result of the model itself and not the characteristics of the cases</li> <li>• Half of the sample were satisfied with the conciliation process</li> <li>• The process was perceived by parents as focusing almost exclusively on negotiating a timetable for contact. They did not see it as helping them negotiate or modify their behaviour</li> <li>• The brief intervention had a marked impact in that at follow-up only a fifth of agreements had not worked at all and most agreements were either intact or had been extended. More parents were satisfied with the contact arrangements and parents and children were less distressed than at the outset</li> <li>• Conciliation did not however affect the quality of the</li> </ul>

	parental relationship which is a key determinant of child well-being Printed copies of this report are available free from the DCA 020 7210 8520
<b>Reviewed by</b>	HB

<b>Author</b>	TRINDER L, KELLETT J, CONNOLLY J, NOTLEY C
<b>Title</b>	Evaluation of the Family Resolutions Pilot Project <a href="#">Full Report</a> (114 pages)
<b>Date</b>	2006
<b>Publisher</b>	DfES
<b>Key words</b>	<b>Dispute resolution (CAFCASS dispute resolution), Family law (Family proceedings), Contact</b>
<b>Summary</b>	<p><b>Aim of evaluation:</b> To identify the outputs and outcomes of the pilot, to assess what the pilot added over and above existing interventions and to identify the features of the pilot which could be developed</p> <p><b>Methodology:</b> Quantitative information was gathered about cases; parents were asked about their experiences during and after the pilot; and family justice professionals were interviewed.</p> <p><b>Key findings:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The number of referrals to the pilot was low (62 over the year) and only half the referrals completed the programme</li> <li>• Difficulties in multi-agency working and lack of effective management were both reasons for the low level of referrals; tight exclusion criteria, which included cases where domestic violence was an issue, was another</li> <li>• The group work element of the programme was reported by fathers and mothers to be supportive and helpful and there was some evidence that the groups could lead to changes in attitudes and awareness about their children's needs for some parents</li> <li>• The parent planning process (run by FCAs) was seen less positively though most parents saw it as "fair and focused on the children".</li> <li>• The researchers noted that the parent planning process seemed little different from traditional in-court conciliation with limited use of parent plans and few children involved</li> <li>• The results in terms of the increase in children having contact with their NRP and parental satisfaction was similar to that achieved by in-court conciliation. However, more parents reported that their relationship had improved than parents who attended in-court conciliation or who did not take part in the pilot</li> </ul> <p><b>Limitations:</b> The findings have to be very tentative as the numbers involved were very small.</p>
<b>Reviewed by</b>	HB

<b>Author</b>	WADE J, MITCHELL F AND BAYLIS G
<b>Title</b>	Unaccompanied asylum seeking children – The response of social work services
<b>Date</b>	2005
<b>Publisher</b>	BAAF

<b>Key words</b>	<b>Asylum seekers/Refugees, (Unaccompanied children)</b>
<b>Summary</b>	<p>Unaccompanied asylum seeking children are by definition, children in need; this book outlines the authors' research on how social services departments were attempting to meet their obligations to unaccompanied young people.</p> <p>The research was conducted in three unnamed local authorities – a southern county, a London borough and a northern city. The study looked at the management of referrals to social services, how the children were assessed and the services they received.</p> <p>It was found that there were significant variations in the way different areas dealt with UASCs, for example with regard to initial and core assessments. Not surprisingly, the study found that, “better assessments were more likely to have been carried out by qualified social workers”.</p> <p>The types of placements are examined and the support and monitoring UASCs receive in those placements. There are also chapters on education, health and wellbeing and social networks.</p> <p>The thorny issue of assessing the true age of a child is touched upon (albeit rather briefly) and useful information on what happens – and what should happen – when the children reach adulthood both from the legal point of view and in the preparation given to the children for independence.</p> <p>The conclusion helpfully brings together the main conclusions from the study. There is an acknowledgement that the study has been slightly overtaken by more recent events – the subsequent decline in the number of UASCs and the reforms arising from “Every Child Matters”- but the conclusion nevertheless provides useful information which could assist in the future planning of children’s services for UASCs.</p>
<b>Reviewed by</b>	Liz Hurwitz

<b>Author</b>	WIGFALL V, MONCK E, REYNOLDS
<b>Title</b>	Putting Programme into Practice: the Introduction of Concurrent Planning into Mainstream Adoption and Fostering Services
<b>Date</b>	2006
<b>Journal</b>	British Journal of Social Work
<b>Issue</b>	36/41-55
<b>Key words</b>	
<b>Summary</b>	<p><b>Aim:</b> To explore some of the difficulties in setting up concurrent planning services.</p> <p><b>Methodology:</b> Interviews were held with 18 social workers with different levels of responsibility in three LAs where concurrent planning services had been in operation. A small number of interviews were held with other professionals.</p> <p><b>Findings:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Social workers were critical of a position where the outcome appeared a foregone conclusion</li> <li>• They did not believe there were enough carers prepared to act as foster carers with the possibility of becoming adopters</li> <li>• Senior managers endorsed the objectives of concurrent planning but front line workers were less convinced</li> <li>• There was a lack of clarity between the roles of the LA workers and the concurrency planning teams</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Concurrent planning is only suitable in a small number of cases and is difficult to implement.</li> </ul>
<b>Reviewed by</b>	HB

<b>Author</b>	WRIGHT Katherine
<b>Title</b>	The divorce process: a view from the other side of the desk
<b>Journal</b>	Child and Family Law Quarterly
<b>Date</b>	2006
<b>Volume/issue</b>	Volume 18 No 1
<b>Subject (key words)</b>	<b>Divorce/separation, Legal representation (Lawyers), Family law (Family proceedings)</b>
<b>Summary</b>	<p><b>Aim:</b> To provide some insights into the experience of the clients of divorce lawyers, focussing on their need for understandable information, and their overall aims and goals in the divorce process. The study seeks to examine the belief that solicitors exacerbate the level of conflict between parties in divorce.</p> <p><b>Method:</b> 40 clients were recruited with their 10 solicitors in one large Northern city, and inter-action observed, with individual interviews with both samples throughout the process.</p> <p><b>Findings:</b> The author found that the information communicated by solicitors was adequate overall, although practice varied, and that client reluctance to admit their lack of understanding could give the mistaken impression of informed consent. It was found that the typical client in the sample rated the importance of the solicitor doing nothing further to damage the relationship with their spouse marginally above the goal of seeking a settlement which was fair to all sides, and significantly above the need to get the best deal possible. Indeed clients often had low initial expectations about a likely court settlement, which the solicitors raised, particularly where the party felt guilty about the breakdown. ‘Innocent’ parties could equally seek a larger share of the marital assets. The researcher concluded that the factors which increased conflict were not within the solicitor’s control: -</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The need to criticise, in some cases, the spouse’s behaviour within the marriage</li> <li>• Where one party opposed the divorce</li> <li>• The general irrelevance to the financial settlement of self-perceptions of being the ‘innocent’ party</li> <li>• The requirements for disclosure of finances</li> <li>• The involvement of extended family in the dispute</li> <li>• The involvement of new partners</li> </ul> <p>Solicitors were observed to use tactics to reduce spousal conflict. The majority of the client sample did not report that the solicitor had had a further adverse effect on their deteriorating spousal relationship.</p> <p><b>Limitation:</b> Both lawyer and client samples had significant gender biases – 70% of the lawyers and, more surprisingly, 62.5% of the clients were female.</p>
<b>Reviewed by</b>	SH