



Literature highlights

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Aboriginal families

Their future, our responsibility: making a commitment to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children, by J. Pocock, Fitzroy, Vic, Secretariat of National Aboriginal & Islander Child Care, 2001, 20p.

Recognising the importance of children to the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community, this paper looks at some of the major issues impacting on them. The author discusses the current practice of the removal of children rather than addressing and correcting the issues that lead to family breakdown and child neglect. These issues, he believes, largely stem from entrenched societal problems including poverty and unemployment, and attempts to correct these beforehand would be far more valuable than the removal of children once it is too late. He also raises the issue of the placement of indigenous children with non indigenous carers, which poses a threat to their cultural identity.

Through young black eyes: a handbook to protect Indigenous children from the impact of family violence and child abuse, by K. Bedford, Northcote, Vic, Secretariat National Aboriginal & Islander Child Care, 2002, 120p.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children are over represented in child protection cases and are much more likely to be removed from their families than other Australian children. This publication was funded by Partnerships Against Domestic Violence, a Commonwealth Government initiative coordinated by the Status of Women. It focuses on the particular impact of family and domestic violence on children and children who are subjected to other forms of child abuse and neglect, and seeks to raise awareness of the relevant laws, legislation and reporting requirements of the respective States and Territories. This publication provides basic information to help clarify the issues of family violence and child abuse for communities, especially those lacking specific child protection services. A directory of related agencies, services and resources is also included.

At risk children

'Children at risk: drugs, alcohol and violence from the New Zealand perspective', by C.M. Earl, in *Food for thought: conference handbook: the 10th National Family Law Conference*, Melbourne, Vic, Television Education Network, 2002, pp.103-107.

In New Zealand all matters relating to children at risk are heard before the Family Court regardless of whether the action has resulted from an intervention by the state welfare agencies or by allegations made as part of a custody dispute. The approach to the case and the consequent results will differ depending on the statutory base for intervention. The author looks at the Children, Young Persons and Their Families Act 1989 and points out some of the difficulties with state intervention in dealing with children at risk. He also considers the way in which the Family Court deals with allegations of children at risk in custody and access cases, and concludes that the custody and access process is not appropriate for addressing care and protection issues.

Attitudes

School counsellors' attitudes and beliefs about child sexual abuse, by J.D. Goldman & U.K. Padayachi, *Journal of Family Studies*, vol.8, no.1, Apr 2002, pp.53-73.

School counsellors are in a unique position to address child sexual abuse. However, little is known about their attitudes and beliefs on the issue. In order to examine these, all school counsellors in Queensland were sent a questionnaire to ascertain their attitudes and beliefs about child sexual abuse. Results show that the 122 school counsellors who responded, consisting of 52 males and 70 females, believe they have an important role in the detection of child sexual abuse. They believe they are the appropriate professionals to be part of programs aimed at preventing it. School counsellors strongly object to sexual activities between adults and children, and overwhelmingly believe that sexual relationships education should not be left to parents. Most school counsellors believe

that children should help to legally prosecute adult perpetrators. Most school counsellors also believe that child sexual abuse is a moderate or serious problem in Australia, but is less prevalent in their local community than in the country as a whole. (Journal abstract)

Best practice

Maintaining a focus on the child? by J. Horwath, *Child Abuse Review*, vol.11, no.4, Jul-Aug 2002, pp.195-213.

This article describes the UK Department of Health assessment framework entitled 'The Framework for the Assessment of Children in Need and their Families' and examines ways in which the framework can improve assessment practices in child neglect cases. The effectiveness of the framework is found to be dependent on how managers, frontline staff in area child protection committees and social service departments, approach its implementation. Tensions can arise amongst those using this framework and if not addressed early can lead to distorted assessments that lose the focus on the child.

'Planning partnerships with families', by R. Bland & C. Craft, in *Children, Young People and Communities: the Future is in Our Hands: conference proceedings*, Hobart, Tas, Division of Child, Youth & Family Support, Department of Health & Human Services, 2001, pp.69-71.

The authors have put together a series of points to describe principles related to the Children, Young Persons and Their Families Act 1997 and how it caters for children in care facilities. The new Act is designed to provide care and protection of children, maximising the child's ability to grow up in a safe environment. The authors discuss the obstacles involved in this process and the skills needed for child protection workers to achieve a working partnership with families. They list what they see as the essential principles for working in a partnership including respect, honesty and privacy rights.

Quality protects: a commentary on the government's agenda and the evidence base, by A. Rushton & C. Dance, *Child & Adolescent Mental Health*, vol.7, no.2, 2002, pp.60-65.

This review explores the aims, origins and effects of the Quality Projects the

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policy introduced by the government in 1998 to improve social services for children. Outlined in this article are four areas on which progress towards improvement of services will depend. These include 'better performance indicators; the extent and quality of research based evidence; the expansion of professional social work training and user feedback and involvement' (p.60). It was concluded that progress being made to aid troubled children and families will need assessing through systematic research in addition to consistent service performance indicators.

What should a good statutory child protection system look like?, by C. Peltola, *Developing Practice: The Child, Youth & Family Work Journal*, no.4, Winter 2002, pp.42-52.

There are two aspects of service provision in statutory child protection systems: the business side which focuses on management and administration; and professional service delivery which is concerned with services being delivered to families. The focus of this paper is to examine how these two activities are increasingly seen as separate from and unrelated to each other. The author argues that this separation is at the heart of the problems within child protection statutory service provision, and that these two approaches should be brought together.

Child deaths

Chain of violence, by C. Goddard & J. Stanley, *Community Care*, 4-10, Apr 2002, pp.32-33.

Discussing failures in child protection which result in the death of child, the authors suggest that a link exists between such failures and violence against social workers. They point out that while their training emphasises the need for child protection workers to build a partnership with abusive parents, little is offered on how to cope where such a relationship is impossible or unsafe because of violence. They claim that the literature on fatal child abuse generally fails to make a connection with violence against social workers. The authors suggest that while there are many possible causes of child protection failure, measures to support workers and alleviate their trauma, stress and sense of isolation would empower them and result in more effective interventions against child abuse.

Fatal assault of children and young people, by New South Wales, Child Death Review Team, Surry Hills, NSW, NSW Commission for Children & Young People, 2002, 160p, Online (2317K) <http://www.kids.nsw.govol.au/publications/cdrt2000.html#fa>; http://www.kids.nsw.govol.au/files/final_fatal_assault.pdf

This report examines the deaths of 60 children and young people who died as a result of fatal assault in the period January

1996 to July 1999 in New South Wales. Fatal assault of a child or young person is defined as death resulting from acts of violence perpetrated upon him or her by another person. It includes acts by which the perpetrator intended to kill the child and acts from which the child died, even though the perpetrator may not have intended the outcome. The key research questions for the project were: What are the social and demographic characteristics of the population of children who die from assault in NSW? How can the types of death be categorised? What involvement did families have with human service agencies prior to the child's death?



What themes emerge from the data for avenues for prevention? Chapters in the report are: Introduction: the fatal assault of children; Methodology; Major findings; Fatal non-accidental injuries; Child fatalities and parents affected by mental illness; Family dispute and breakdown; Teenage victims; Implications of the findings for services.

Child sexual abuse

A comparison of two programmes for victims of child sexual abuse: a treatment outcome study, by M. Nolan, A. Carr & C. Fitzpatrick, *Child Abuse Review*, vol.11, no.2, Mar-Apr 2002, pp.103-123.

This article compares two treatment outcome programmes for victims of child sexual abuse. Using a checklist, self report form, and inventory, analysis was carried out was on child sexual abuse victims before and after treatment. In addition, a comparative study was conducted on those receiving individual therapy, and those receiving group and individual therapy. Results showed that after six months, individual therapy and combined individual and group therapy were equally effective in the treatment of psychological effects of child sexual abuse, although there was only a small statistical significance in the rate of clinical improvement associated with treatment outcomes.

Cross-examination, sexual abuse and child witness identity, by H.L. Westcott & M. Page, *Child Abuse Review*, vol.11, no.3, May-Jun 2002, pp.137-152.

This article presents extracts from cross examinations with child witnesses who have allegedly been sexually abused. The discussion is about the impact the cross examination may have on the child's identity as child, victim and witness. Children may be portrayed as less than innocent and in some cases as instigators rather than victims. It is often perceived that children are poor witnesses - easily confused, untruthful, with poor memo-

ries. Finklehor's four trauma-causing factors of sexual abuse are outlined in the context of cross examination. These are: sexualization, betrayal, powerlessness, and stigmatization. It is suggested these four traumatic factors in cross examination resemble those of abuse.

Developing a sensitive practitioner research methodology for studying the impact of child sexual abuse, by A. Durham, *The British Journal of Social Work*, vol.32, no.4, Jun 2002, pp.429-442.

Using a qualitative approach this study outlined methodology used to explore the impact of child sexual abuse on the lives of seven young men aged between 15 and 24. Research conducted combined a life story approach, feminist praxis, anti-oppressive research and social work practitioner research. It was concluded that a life-story practitioner research approach was a highly appropriate methodology for the creation of a safe climate for the production of sensitive knowledge on the experience and effect of child sexual abuse. Consequently, the knowledge generated was in substantial depth.

Exposing misinformation concerning child sexual abuse and adult survivors, by C.L. Whitfield, J. Silberg & P.J. Fink, *Journal of Child Sexual Abuse*, vol.9, no.3/4, 2001, pp.1-8.

By way of introduction to the articles in this journal, the authors contend

that information is widespread on the long-term effects and consequences of child sexual abuse. Society's denial and disbelief have often unknowingly supported the agendas of those wishing to discount and minimize the effect of these crimes. The media has contributed to this skepticism and has been in favour of claims such as the "false memory syndrome". The articles in this journal by well known and respected researchers and clinicians examine the different elements of the problem with the aim of countering misinformation and raising the level of discussion as to the real issues.

Children's rights

'Children's rights', by P. Ambikapathy, in *Children, Young People and Communities: the Future is in Our Hands: conference proceedings*, Hobart, Tas, Division of Child, Youth & Family Support, Department of Health & Human Services, 2001, pp.46-49

In this assessment of the impact of the Children, Young Persons and Their Families Act 1997 in Tasmania, the author describes the Act as proactive in recognising the rights of the child. It has dramatically changed the representation of children in court, giving them separate legal representation and allowing them to represent themselves where appropriate. It also gives the children the right to be in their own home and with their own parents, moving away from child rescue to child protection. The legislation requires the court to continue to act in the best interests of the child while also having regard for the rights of the parent. It also gives consideration to cultural issues in relation to Aborigines and other groups.

Community participation

'Community building: children and families', by J. Ramsay, J. in *Children, Young People and Communities: the Future is in Our Hands: conference proceedings*, Hobart, Tas, Division of Child, Youth & Family Support, Department of Health & Human Services, 2001, pp.75-79.

In this keynote address, the author examines the ongoing role of communities in building resilient families, suggesting that all members of our society need community support. The author believes the government has a role to play in this, and the development of state and local partnerships in Tasmania has provided opportunities for building strong communities. He describes Tasmania Together, an initiative with a long term commitment to improve social and economic conditions in all of Tasmania including a role in helping to build strong communities. The author discusses the benefits to both community and the individual of stronger communities. He believes that such communities foster a stronger sense of mutual obligation and social responsibility in the

individual, and the wider community demonstrates less violence and alienation; stronger communities can therefore situate problems such as child abuse and neglect to a wider social context.

'CREATE-ive ideas for early intervention through participatory community building', by A. Hines & D. Roberts, in *Children, Young People and Communities: the Future is in Our Hands: conference proceedings*, Hobart, Tas, Division of Child, Youth & Family Support, Department of Health & Human Services, 2001, pp.71-73.

The CREATE Foundation is an organisation run by young people in state care to empower them and give them the same life opportunities as all young Australians. The authors explain that young people in state care often have limited life outcomes, whether this is an increased rate of homelessness, drug addiction or simply not finishing school. They describe the services and programs offered by CREATE, including a magazine, online site and programs connecting them with other children in state care to give them a sense of community.

Shared action: stronger communities, safer children, by F. Gardner, *Children Australia*, vol.27, no.2, 2002, pp.23-28.

This article explores the effectiveness of an innovative and exciting project called 'Shared Action, a community development approach to child protection in Bendigo, Victoria. Shared Action was a three-year project which started in January 1997. It began by encouraging a sense of community ownership. A shared vision was developed with key goals leading to a wide range of community activities. A sense of hope and cooperation grew along with social networks, the capacity to resolve conflict constructively and a shared sense of community responsibility. (Journal abstract)

Cross cultural differences

'Culture and child abuse', by S.S.Yeo, in B. Raphael & A. Malak, eds. in *Diversity and mental health in challenging times*, Parramatta, NSW, Transcultural Mental Health Centre, 2001, pp.164-175.

This chapter looks at cultural diversity in relation to child abuse and neglect. Issues include the delivery of culturally appropriate and effective services for ethnic minority communities and correct assessment and treatment. The author notes that Australian child protection legislation is based on a western world view, while definitions of child abuse are culturally specific. She discusses some differences between traditional Chinese, Indian and

Western child rearing practices, arguing that culturally responsive forms of treatment would result in greater utilisation of services and positive treatment outcomes. She believes that culturally appropriate child protective services must be provided and that cultural context has to be taken into account when defining child abuse.

Detention centres

Children and young people in detention centres: has anything changed in nine years?, by G. Rogers, *Developing Practice: The Child, Youth & Family Work Journal*, no.3, Autumn 2002, pp.46-49.

The treatment received by children, young people and their families held in detention is viewed by many as inhumane. However, the author argues that it has been happening for years. In 1993 the NSW Child Protection Council made a submission to the Joint Standing Committee on Migration of the Federal government regarding detention practices. The Council visited the Villawood detention centre in Sydney and concluded that conditions under which the asylum seekers were being held were detrimental to their well being, and especially damaging to the health and development of children and young people. The author outlines a range of circumstances identified by the Council which it considered contravened articles of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child: lack of educational opportunities; lack of recreational opportunities; lack of adequate health care; impoverished overall environment; and increased potential for child abuse. The author argues that in the main the systemic abuse of detainees continues.

Children in detention: submission to the HREOC inquiry, by R. Bragg, *NCOSS News*, vol.29, no.6, Jul 2002, pp.16-17.

The Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission is conducting a national inquiry into children in immigration detention. This is a summary of the NCOSS submission to the inquiry. Issues covered include breach of human rights; alternatives to mandatory detention; conditions in the detention centres; improving conditions; child protection; education; health; and other services.

Why are there no flowers in Australia?, by A. Pitsis, *Rattler*, no.61, Autumn 2002, pp.2-5, Online <http://www.cccnsw.org.au/resource/rattl061/story01/story01.html>

There are currently 582 children in immigration detention and most of these children are asylum seekers. Since 1994, they

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have been subject to mandatory and non-reviewable detention. This paper examines the issue of children in migration detention, the human cost of this policy, and some of the attempts to redress this situation. (Journal abstract, edited)

Decision making

Professionals' decision-making about out-of-home placements following instances of child abuse, by P.A. Britner & D.G. Mossler, *Child Abuse & Neglect*, vol.26, no.4, Apr 2002, pp.317-332.

This study examined the methods used by different groups of child welfare professionals and how information is utilized to make placement decisions following instances of child abuse. A detailed questionnaire regarding four case studies of child physical abuse was administered to a variety of legal and welfare professionals and participants were asked to rate the impact of particular pieces of information regarding child, family, and system level characteristics on their decision-making process. Analysis revealed that the various professional groups base their decisions about foster care placement on different kinds of information.

Divorce & child abuse

Abused children caught between Commonwealth and States, by L. Mullinar, *SACOSS News*, Sept - Oct - Nov. 2002, pp.15.

This article highlights a political flaw that allows non-offending parents in child abuse cases before the Family Court to lose custody of a child or children. Litigants have to bring their own cases forward, and legal aid is often unavailable to help the non-offending parent. Suggestions for resolving this issue are made, the author arguing that the real issue is that the States must take responsibility for presenting the case to the Family Court.

Are children protected in the Family Court? A perspective from Western Australia, by S. Jenkins, *Australian & New Zealand Journal of Family Therapy*, vol.23, no.3, Sept 2002, pp.145-15.

Despite a landmark High Court judgement in the area of child sexual abuse allegations (M and M, 1988), a major concern in such cases seems to be the fear that mothers use false accusations against fathers as 'weapons' in custody and contact cases. This paper seeks to examine the validity of such views as they apply to Western Australia. In particular, it examines the belief that false accusations are rampant; the questionable nature of 'parental alienation syndrome', the belief that young children's accounts of abuse lack credibility, and the ignoring of the effect of abuse itself on the nature of a child's testimony. The paper argues that the principle of 'protection of the child's best interests' should not necessarily be

equated with the child having access, with a parent previously accused of having abused the child. (Journal abstract)

Child abuse in the context of parental separation and divorce: new reality and a new intervention model, by T. Brown ... [et al], *Children Australia*, vol.27, no.2, 2002, pp.35-4.

Child abuse allegations in the context of parental separation and divorce have long been seen as merely weapons fashioned by angry and vindictive parents involved in separation and divorce wars. They have been disregarded on the basis that they were unlikely to be real. However recent research from Australia and overseas has shown that this picture is not true. Child abuse in this context is real and it is serious. Moreover the research has shown that the socio-legal system does not serve children caught in this situation at all well. The Magellan program, a world first experimental program to overcome the problems for these children and their families as they progress through the socio-legal system, was introduced by a consortium of agencies in Victoria recently. This article reports on the program and its outcomes, and considers implications of some of the components of the new program for the various professionals working with this issue. (Journal abstract)

Fractured families, fragile children - the sexual vulnerability of girls in the aftermath of divorce, by R. Fretwell Wilson, *Child & Family Law Quarterly*, vol.14, no.1, 2002, pp.1-24.

This article explores the notion that female children are at risk of sexual abuse after parents divorce - either by a parent, a parent's partner or someone who does not reside at the home. Whether the law can be effective in alleviating the risk of sexual abuse in divorce proceedings through education of parents about the risk, or by directing the parent with whom the child lives to take precautions against ill-treatment, is examined.

Improved court management procedures for child abuse allegations post-divorce, by L. Dessau, *Law Society Journal*, vol.40, no.6, Jul 2002, p.11. Online, <http://lawsocnsw.asn.au/page.asp?PartID=5887>

The Magellan Project focuses on Family Court management of cases involving allegations of physical and/or sexual abuse of children. The author refers to a recent evaluation which indicates that the pilot project has had very successful outcomes, and concludes that the new program will ensure that children are not torn between two parties but will remain at the Centre of Court co-ordinated concern.

Drug abuse

'Mothers and illicit substance use: bad parent or bad science?', by J. Hodson, in *Politics, action and renewal: 4th Australian Women's Health Conference - Proceedings*, Strathfieldsay, Vic, Australian Women's Health Network, 2001, p.261-268.

This paper challenges the medically sanctioned notion that women who use illicit drugs while they are pregnant are more likely to abuse or neglect their children. The author discusses the practice of removing the child at or shortly after birth from a mother who uses illicit drugs, arguing that there is not enough research to support the idea that these women will be abusive mothers. She further argues that this entire enquiry needs to be reframed, and that attention should focus on poverty prevention rather than maternal substance abuse.

Early intervention

'Prevention and early intervention for children and families', by R. Fisher, in *Children, Young People and Communities: the Future is in Our Hands: conference proceedings*, Hobart, Tas, Division of Child, Youth & Family Support, Department of Health & Human Services, 2001, pp.4-9.

In this keynote address, the author explores the changing nature of families and why it is some children develop health and behavioural problems which may lead to issues such as suicide, juvenile offending or substance abuse. He addresses some of the risks that can lead to behaviour problems and also looks at issues related specifically to Aboriginal children. The author believes that early intervention and prevention is essential and government departments have responsibilities to children. He discusses some initiatives the Western Australian government has undertaken to prevent risk, including the provision of information centres and help lines.

'Strengthening families through early intervention: a solution focussed approach', by D. O'Neil, in *Children, Young People and Communities: the Future is in Our Hands: conference proceedings*, Hobart, Tas, Division of Child, Youth & Family Support, Department of Health & Human Services, 2001, pp.44-46.

The author suggests that current social policy is focused on rescue work rather than preventative work. She explains that although our immediate response is to the pain of a child, removing it from a home does not prevent abuse. She believes that the answer lies in greater emphasis on

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preventative measures. She gives examples from the range of services provided by, St Luke's Anglicare for families and children. St Luke's was reorganised in 1987 around outcomes, with its services becoming more goal directed. The author explains how this approach can give families and children more protection than by just responding to their immediate needs.

False Memory Syndrome

Crisis or creation? A systematic examination of "false memory syndrome", by S.J. Dallam, *Journal of Child Sexual Abuse*, vol.9, no.3/4, 2001, pp.9-36.

In a review of literature, the author of this article critically examines whether "False Memory Syndrome" is a valid diagnostic construct. In 1992 an advocacy group was formed for people claiming to be falsely accused of sexual abuse. This group developed the term "False Memory Syndrome" and claimed that it was a public health crisis or epidemic. The author concludes there is no such epidemic and that there is a general lack of support for the existence of this 'syndrome' in the mental health field as it is based on faulty assumptions. "False Memory Syndrome" is best described as a pseudoscientific syndrome that arose in defence against child sexual abuse claims.

Father role

Just the two of us: the involvement of fathers in building stronger families, by J. Fleming, *Developing Practice: The Child, Youth & Family Work Journal*, no.4, Winter 2002, pp.60-70.

Fathers have been a neglected area of research and interest in the area of child and family welfare. However, they are also often recognised as being a key to the functioning of the family. This paper begins by exploring some common themes that have been identified about fathers in the child and family literature. It then aims to clarify what are the realities for fathers and the underlying tensions, and looks at where fathers are likely to be overlooked in child and family work. Finally it discusses ways of developing an alternative framework for working with fathers.

Internet

Child abuse and the Internet, by J. Stanley, Melbourne, Vic, National Child Protection Clearinghouse, Australian Institute of Family Studies, 2001, 20p. Online <http://www.aifs.gov.au/nch/issues/issues15.html>

The past decade has seen rapid development and exponential growth in the use of electronic, computer-based communication and information sharing via the Internet, particularly across the Western

world. Clearly there are many benefits that result from Internet usage, but until recently there has been little recognition of the dangers that may also result from the use of such technology. There is now growing evidence that the Internet is a new medium through which some commonly recognised forms of child maltreatment, sexual and emotional abuse, may be pursued. In this paper the relationship between child abuse and the Internet is explored, in particular: child sexual exploitation; children's exposure to sexually explicit or offensive material; and the use of the Internet by paedophiles to legitimise, reinforce and facilitate their sexual activities. Current efforts to prevent Internet-related child abuse are described. These can be broadly categorised as: the monitoring and criminal prosecution of



offenders; community education; the restriction of children's access to offensive material on the Internet; and the regulation of the Internet industry. The paper concludes with a series of recommendations for further action. (Author abstract)

Child pawn, by P. Syvret, *The Bulletin*, Jun 25, 2002, pp.36-38.

This article details the work of the Brisbane police Task Force, Argos to target paedophiles online. The biggest challenge faced is the speed of technological change, especially when children are often more informed about this than their parents. The article concludes with a warning to parents, which includes the names of chat and file exchange software that can be downloaded from the Web and is used by paedophiles to contact children.

Child pornography and the Internet: accessibility and policing, by B. Blundell ... [et al], *Australian Police Journal*, vol.56, no.1, Mar 2002, pp.59-65.

Detailing much of the technology used in sending and receiving information over the Internet, the authors explain the difficulty in identifying and prosecuting offenders involved in posting, viewing and collecting child pornography. They

conclude that the rapid growth of the Internet has escalated the problem of child pornography to an international level, and that there is a long way to go before online content can be properly regulated.

Online services and child sexual assault: old crimes, new threat, by C. O'Connor, *Australian Police Journal*, vol.56, no.1, Mar 2002, pp.74-84.

The author suggests that since the inception of the Internet and the information revolution, child pornography has become much more readily available. He discusses the dynamics of the offender and the offence; the historical growth of online child sexual exploitation in Victoria; home Internet use; the correlation between child pornography collection/viewing and offending; the vulnerability of children

and the Internet; the voluminous quantities of child pornography and related material available; and offender networks in their global context. The author's conclusion is that for any person in the community to now ignore the threat of child exploitation via online services is an admission that they do not have the intent to confront the problem.

Mandatory reporting

Mandatory reporting: a question of theory versus practice, by A. Tomison, *Developing Practice: The Child, Youth & Family Work Journal*, no.4, Winter 2002, pp.13-17.

According to the author of this article, the arguments for and against mandatory reporting cannot be assessed without reference to the context within which it has been implemented. Both the theory and the practice of mandatory reporting need to be examined, and a number of arguments supporting the ideal or the 'theory' surrounding mandatory reporting, as well as the results and the problems in the child protection system arising from mandatory reporting are provided. While mandatory reporting sends the message that society will not tolerate child abuse and neglect, on balance due to the relatively

limited resources available to respond adequately to the high demands for child protection, any extension of mandatory reporting should not be a priority.

Mandatory reporting: Is it the culprit? Where is the evidence?, by J. Cashmore, *Developing Practice: The Child, Youth & Family Work Journal*, no.4, Winter 2002, pp.9-12.

A number of questions are currently being raised about the effect of mandatory reporting on the increase in reported child abuse and neglect and on the capacity of the child protection system to respond. The author argues that there is little empirical evidence to indicate whether or not mandatory reporting meets the objectives of promoting early intervention and the delivery of needed services to children and their families. Her main concern in relation to mandatory reporting is that it results in additional reports that put pressure on the child protection system, and she states that children are best protected by overall social investment in supporting children and their families.

Mandatory reporting of child abuse and neglect. Why would you want it?, by F. Ainsworth, *Developing Practice: The Child, Youth & Family Work Journal*, no.4, Winter 2002, pp.5-8.

Most states in Australia pursue mandatory reporting as an approach to the prevention and reduction of child abuse and neglect. The author of this article believes that the question that needs to be asked is 'what evidence is there that children are abused and neglected less in jurisdictions where mandatory reporting exists by comparison to jurisdictions where it does not exist?' He provides a comparison of outcomes and notifications of child abuse and neglect by type of action for New South Wales where mandatory reporting exists and for Western Australia where mandatory reporting does not exist.

A study in confusion: factors which affect the decisions of community professionals when reporting child abuse and neglect, by C. Goddard ... [et al], Ringwood, Vic, *Australians Against Child Abuse*, 2002, 105p.

The outcomes of this study suggest that the current system of reporting and investigating child abuse remains obstructed by layers of uncertainty and confusion. In addition, children's safety is jeopardised by a policy requiring the re-referral of children in order to obtain any additional service. This report (there is also a separate summary document) examines the circumstances under which community professionals report children to the Department of Human Services (DHS) in Victoria. The information was obtained from a sample of 52 professionals from a range of disciplines in different settings, who have contact with children. The results raise a number of critical issues for the child protection system including:

confusion by a significant proportion of professionals about their obligations to report cases of child abuse; the discretionary decision for many professionals to report child abuse; the need for professionals to receive significant support in their deliberations about abuse; lack of feedback once a report is made; continuing abuse even when a report has been made; and differences between concerns and expectations of professionals and subsequent actions taken by DHS.

Paedophiles

Professional perpetrators: sex offenders who use their employment to target and sexually abuse the children with whom they work, by J. Sullivan & A. Beech, *Child Abuse Review*, vol.11, no.3, May-Jun 2002, pp.153-167.

This article examines the literature on the problem of sex offenders who use their employment to target and sexually abuse the children with whom they work. It outlines: recent policy and legislative attempts to address the issue of professional perpetrators; the extent of the problem; investigations of such abuse; the types of settings within which professional perpetrators abuse (such as foster care, child care settings and churches); characteristics of abusers (for example authoritarian, charismatic, unassuming or inadequate) and the likelihood of multiple abusers in the one setting. Further research is required on perpetrator characteristics and the nature of their behaviour in order to protect children within schools, faith communities and childcare agencies in the future.

Performance measurement

Performance measurement in child protection, by Tilbury, C. *Australian Social Work*, vol.55, no.2, Jun 2002, pp.136-146.

The increasing use of performance measurement by government means that child protection services are under pressure to demonstrate effectiveness in protecting children from harm and efficiency in the use of public funds to help children and families. From a policy perspective, the way performance measurement is conceptualised and implemented can have major consequences for service delivery. This paper examines key issues raised in the literature about performance measurement, the context for its introduction in child protection, how the concepts of effectiveness and efficiency are dealt with, how client outcomes are defined, and assumptions about 'good performance'. An overview of performance measurement in child protection in Australia is provided. The paper argues that a critical approach to performance measurement in child protection can contribute to improved service delivery to clients. (Journal abstract)

Resilience

'Resilience, an ordinary magic', by A. Deveson, in M. Teesson ... [et al], eds. *No one is an island: contemporary TheMHS in mental health services, book of proceedings, 11th annual TheMHS Conference, 29-31 August 2001, Wellington, New Zealand, Balmain, NSW, The Mental Health Services Conference, 2002*, pp.36-41.

The coping methods used by children growing up in difficult circumstances is a relatively new field of research. The author examines this research, focusing on the resilience of children and the effect of living with a parent who has a mental illness. She points out that these children have not only survived but have also gone on, against expectations, to become well adjusted adults. She suggests that resilience is an innate human quality, backing up her argument with anecdotes and personal experiences.

Therapy

Sneaking up on traumatic memory: the use of creative metaphors with child sexual assault, by S. Morwood, *Psychotherapy in Australia*, vol.8, no.4, Aug 2002, pp.40-44.

To revisit or not to revisit - that is the dilemma facing trauma counsellors, especially when children are concerned. No one likes talking, about sexual assault, domestic violence, or traumatic loss, but how does one help a hurting child to move forward without talking about their hurt? In this article the author describes a technique that walks a middle path between the extremes of avoidance and immersion that characterize exposure therapy. (Journal abstract)

Victimisation

Further abuse of sexually abused children, by H.Y. Swanston ... [et al], *Child Abuse & Neglect*, vol.26, no.2, Feb 2002, pp.115-12.

This article reports on a study which aimed to determine the incidence of re-abuse in children known to have been sexually abused and to find factors that increase the risk of further abuse. The study group was comprised of 183 children with substantiated sexual abuse who presented to the Child Protection Units of two Sydney metropolitan hospitals from 1988 through 1990. Six years after presentation for the abuse, records of the Department of Community Services were checked to see if any of the young people had been the subject of substantiated notifications for abuse/neglect before and after intake to the study.

Katie Kovacs is a Project Officer with the National Child Protection Clearinghouse