



# Literature highlights

COMPILED BY JOAN KELLEHER, AIFS LIBRARIAN. The following selections from new additions to the Clearinghouse collection over the last six months may be borrowed from the Australian Institute of Family Studies library via the interlibrary loan system.

## Aboriginal children

**Many voices: reflections on experiences of Indigenous child separation**, edited by D. Mellor & A. Haebich, National Library of Australia, Canberra, 2002, 324pp, 1 audio CD.

This book draws on the extensive information collected for the National Library's 'Bringing Them Home Oral History Project' – testimonies from all sides of the history of Indigenous child separation in Australia. The book includes the voices of children who were taken from their families, adults who cared for them in institutions and missions, families who took them into their homes and government officers who enacted official policies. A diverse group of expert writers have contributed their perspectives, which are interwoven with artworks and poetry from Indigenous artists, many of whom were interviewees for the project.

**Tjitji tjuta atunymanama kamiku tjukurpawanangu = looking after children grandmothers' way: report to the Child Protection Policy and Planning Unit, SA, on the Child Protection Project**, by Ngaanyatjarra, Pitjantjatjara, Yankunytjatjara Women's Council, Department of Family and Community Services, Canberra, 1991.

Presenting the views of the Ngaanyatjarra, Pitjantjatjara, Yankunytjatjara Women's Council on child protection policies, this report asserts the importance of Women's Law, Grandmothers' law in raising children. The report presents the results of two rounds of fieldwork interviews: the first employed very open ended questions; the second used a questionnaire on specific issues arising from analysis of the first stage interviews. On both occasions interviews were conducted by anangu (Pitjantjatjara word for Aboriginal person) or relatives of anangu. The questionnaire is included as an appendix. The report describes the effect of current child protection practices on Indigenous communities, and calls for community control over decisions concerning the care and protection of children and family cohesion.

**Working with Indigenous children and families: what do services need to know to provide effective support to protect Indigenous children, provide care and strengthen Indigenous communities?** by M. Cadd, *SNAICC Newsletter*, Winter–Spring 2002, pp.1–6.

Addressing the issue of how best to protect Indigenous children, the author discusses strategies that can be used by agencies in

the field of child and family welfare. She urges service providers to engage in a cooperative effort to achieve child protection through strengthening Indigenous families and communities, pointing out that Indigenous children must be seen in the context of their community and therefore the needs of the community, or family, must also be met. The author notes that Indigenous organisations providing community and family services are often small and inadequately funded, and asks that government agencies offer the funding and infrastructure to support them. She believes that partnerships between mainstream and Indigenous agencies will result in the delivery of appropriate and effective child and community services to Indigenous people.

**Putting the picture together: Inquiry into Response by Government Agencies to Complaints of Family Violence and Child Abuse in Aboriginal Communities**, by S. Gordon, K. Hallahan & D. Henry, State Law Publisher, Perth, WA, 2002.

The Inquiry into the Response by Government Agencies to Complaints of Family Violence and Child Abuse in Aboriginal Communities has examined how Western Australian state government agencies respond to evidence of family violence and child sexual abuse that may be occurring in Aboriginal communities generally; considered current research into the prevalence, causes and solutions to Aboriginal family violence; consulted widely, including with representatives of Aboriginal communities, youth, health services and related organisations; and made recommendations on practical solutions for addressing incidents of sexual abuse in Aboriginal communities, including any necessary legislative and administrative measures. The report provides a full overview of the Inquiry; of family violence and child abuse, including causality and prevalence; of service provision by seven government agencies in WA, against a backdrop of research on service developments in responding to family violence and child abuse; and of findings and recommendations.

## Action research

**Using action research to facilitate change in child protection services**, by F. Seymour & E. Davies, *Journal of Community Psychology*, vol.30, no.5, Sept 2002, pp.585–90.

The authors have been involved in the planning and development of services for child abuse investigation and therapy. As well as the development of those

services, the authors have also retained an interest in the suitability of various research models that could be applied to their work. In this article they describe action research and the model of research that they think best describes their activities, and illustrate this in relation to their efforts in the area of improving services to children and their families where allegations of sexual abuse have occurred.

## Adoption

**Review of Queensland's adoption laws by Queensland Department of Families, Adoption Legislation Review Unit, *Australian Journal of Family Law***, vol.16 no.3 Dec 2002, pp.181–84.

Queensland's Department of Families is conducting an internal review of the *Adoption of Children Act 1964*, recognising the need to develop a legislative framework to support contemporary, child focused and efficient adoption practice in Queensland. This article sets out the background to the review, the terms of reference, issues being considered, and the time frame.

## Asylum seekers

**Damaging kids: children in Department of Immigration and Multicultural and Indigenous Affairs' immigration and detention centres**, by Western Young People's Independent Network, Catholic Commission for Justice Development and Peace, East Melbourne, 2002.

Australia is a signatory to several United Nations conventions on human rights. This report assesses how well these international agreements are being respected in Australia's treatment of children and young people seeking asylum. It investigates how young people in immigration detention are affected by their experiences. Given the disturbing evidence that emerges of self harm by people held in detention, the report concludes that the emotional and psychological abuse of children is occurring in detention centres administered by the Department of Immigration, Multicultural and Indigenous Affairs, and that the Department's policy and practices create a culture of self harm and psychological child abuse.

**Protecting children or political priorities? The role of governments at Woomera**, by M. Liddell & C. Goddard, *Children Australia*, vol.27, no.3, 2002, pp.26–32.

In March 2002 the authors notified all the children living in the Woomera Detention Centre to South Australia's child protection system, in an effort to ensure that the well-

being of those children was protected. An investigation was conducted; serious problems at Woomera were identified, and the relevant South Australian Minister asked the Federal Minister for Immigration for 'new guidelines' for the centre. Then silence descended. In this article, the authors detail the reasons for their notifications and outline the events which followed. The Federal Government criticised the report of the investigation by South Australian child protection workers, and there is no indication of any action taken on it. In explaining the ensuing silence the authors refer to their understanding of the contents of a Memorandum of Understanding between the Federal and South Australian governments. This memorandum, it is believed, ensures no further information about Woomera will be revealed. Further, the memorandum appears to leave the Federal Government with total responsibility for follow-up action. The South Australian Government seems to have surrendered its responsibility in this regard. Given the lack of action, the authors question whether both levels of government could be in breach of South Australia's *Children's Protection Act 1993*. (Journal abstract)

### At risk groups

**Attributions, affect, and behavior in abuse-risk mothers: a laboratory study**, by M.R. Dadds et al., *Child Abuse & Neglect*, vol.27, no.1, Jan 2003, pp.21–45.

This study investigated parent attributions in mothers who were at risk of child abuse, and those who did not experience significant parental or child behaviour problems. It assessed how parental attributions predict affective and behavioural reactions to child behaviour. The authors found that abuse risk mothers were more likely to attribute positive behaviour to external causes, and negative behaviour to internal causes.

### Child protection policy

**Child abuse: towards a knowledge base**, by B. Corby, Buckingham, Open University Press, 2000.

This work considers child abuse in a historical, social and political context, looks at policy developments in Britain since the early 1990s, and examines concerns about the extent and nature of institutional abuse and the shift towards more preventive family supportive approaches to child protection work.

**An integrated strategy for child protection and placement services**, by Department of Human Services (Victoria), Community Care Division, Melbourne, 2002.

During 2002 the Victorian Department of Human Services undertook research to identify better responses to complex and chronic problems within some families, and to allow earlier intervention to prevent child abuse and neglect. This document outlines an integrated strategy designed to achieve an improved service response for children within the protection and placement system. The strategy is based on five themes: strengthening pre-

vention and diversion; improving flexibility and responsiveness; community-based solutions to recognise local issues; more effective support for Indigenous children and families; and capacity building to improve services and processes.

### Child protection services

**Children and young people in Queensland: a snapshot**, by Queensland Commission for Children and Young People, The Commission, Brisbane, 2002.

The Commission for Children and Young People considers the monitoring of the wellbeing of children in Queensland, particularly relating to governmental services, a key imperative for the State Government. This report focuses specifically on examinations of children and young people that allow the development of measurable 'indicators of well being'. That is, it focuses on literature that allows the categorisation of specific factors that may provide measures of children and young people's health, safety, education and general wellbeing. This is followed by an examination of the available data held by government agencies on children and young people in Queensland, and the policy implications resulting from an analysis of such data. This has been done in an attempt to identify long-term trends and service gaps, and as a guide to initiatives aimed at protecting children and young people from harm.

**A fair start for Queensland children: young people and families: a report card on child protection services**, by A. Elliott & C. Sultmann, Queensland Council of Social Service, Kelvin Grove, Qld, 2002.

This report is part of the larger initiative, the Fair Queensland campaign (2002), which aims to revive commitment to equity in Australia and is an initiative of the Queensland Council of Social Service (QCOSS). The report examines the current range of child protection services, evaluating performance and noting where services can be introduced or further improved. It particularly focuses on responding to reports of harm, working with families, and meeting the needs of children in care, and makes several recommendations for future policy and services.

**The Inquiry into Child Protection Services reports**, by L. Frow, *NCOSS News*, vol.29, no.10, Nov 2002, pp.1-6.

The Interim Report on Child Protection Services, the first report from the Inquiry of the NSW Standing Committee on Social Issues, was released on the 16 October 2002 in conjunction with the First Report on Early Intervention for Children with Learning Difficulties. The author explains the deliberate linking of these two reports, summarises the recommendations made in the Interim Report, and highlights a number of questions that are raised by the two reports that will need some further thought and response from the community sector.

**A time to invest in Australia's most disadvantaged children, young people and their families**, by Child and Family Welfare Association of Australia (CAFWAA), The Association, Sydney, 2002.

This paper outlines the major policy issues which the Child and Family Welfare Association of Australia (CAFWAA) believes Commonwealth and State governments need to address. It paints a picture of how we might establish opportunities to empower and enrich Australia's families and children, and outlines a series of targeted planning and actions to be taken across a number of dimensions of Australia's service systems. Sections are: promoting stability and permanence for children and young people; investing in family strengths and prevention programs; actively supporting kinship care; development and support of foster carers; the need for a range of services for children and young people with complex needs; educational needs of children and young people in out of home care; commitment to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children; a new response to refugee children; building service quality: practice standards, quality assurance and continuous quality improvement; commitment to non-government sector sustainability.

### Child protection workers

**The influence of risk and protective factors on burnout experienced by those who work with maltreated children**, by M. Stevens & D. Higgins, *Child Abuse Review*, vol.11, no.5, Sept–Oct 2002, pp.313–31.

In a study exploring the degree and type of burnout, trauma symptoms and coping strategies reported by those working with maltreated children and families, the authors found high levels of emotional exhaustion and low to moderate levels of personal satisfaction. Workers filled in self-report questionnaires assessing family background, adjustment and coping strategies. The authors found that family background characteristics predicted the occurrence of maltreatment and adjustment and a personal history of maltreatment predicted current trauma symptoms but not burnout. Even when positive coping strategies are employed, interpersonal, intra individual and job resource issues affect their efficacy.

**Strengthening families to protect children: a discussion paper**, by PeakCare Queensland, Paddington, Qld, 2002.

PeakCare is the peak body for non government child and family welfare services in Queensland. In this discussion paper, PeakCare puts forward strategies to help prevent the abuse and neglect of children and young people, to provide early intervention for families unable to protect and care for their children, and to assist families to cope with and recover from past instances of child abuse or neglect.

### Children's wishes

**Children, family and the state: decision-making and child participation**, by N. Thomas, Policy Press, Bristol, UK, 2002.

Different theories of childhood, children's rights and the relationships between children, parents and the state are examined. The care system and the extent to which

children have been, and are, involved in decisions is the main focus.

**Youth and violence: students speak out for a more civil society**, by E. Galinsky & K. Salmond, Families and Work Institute, Denver, CO., 2002.

A study was designed to ask a representative sample of youth directly for their solutions to violence. Physical, emotional and extreme violence were all included, and in all environments: home, school and social. Interviews with experts were also held. The findings are presented here, with their relevance to policy and action.

## Crime

**Pathways from child maltreatment to juvenile offending**, by A. Stewart, E. Waterson & S. Dennison, Australian Institute of Criminology, Canberra, 2002.

This important study demonstrates a direct path from child maltreatment to juvenile offending. It focuses on 41,700 children born in Queensland in 1983. The authors examine 11 predictive factors for youth offending, and find that children who suffer maltreatment are more likely to offend. This study shows that working with large administrative data sets can yield critically important information for policy-making and can also inform practice.

## Disabled parents

**Stereotypes, parents with intellectual disability and child protection**, by D. McConnell & G. Llewellyn, *Journal of Social Welfare and Family Law*, vol. 24, no. 3, 2002, pp. 297–317.

Although the number of children born to parents with intellectual disabilities is increasing as a result of the banning of involuntary sterilisation, so too is the rate of child removal from such parents. The authors review the way in which child protection authorities and the courts respond to parents with intellectual disabilities. They suggest that the judgements made by the authorities are informed by stereotypical beliefs about intellectual disability, rather than the individual's parenting capacity and unique circumstances; as a result, these parents suffer disadvantage, discrimination and distress in dealing with the authorities.

## Domestic violence

**Domestic violence and child protection: a research report**, review by J. Mulrone, *Australian Domestic and Family Violence Clearinghouse Newsletter*, no. 13, Jan 2003, pp. 4–6.

*Domestic Violence and Child Protection*, written by J. Irwin, F. Waugh and M. Wilkinson, summarises four years of research into the practice issues in child protection and domestic violence work in New South Wales. In this review of the report, the author notes its importance in allowing the voices of women and children to inform policy makers and practitioners about what makes a difference in practice. The author outlines the research project and summarises the report's findings and

implications. She lists the key themes of good practice identified in the report.

**Domestic violence and child protection: issues in safety planning**, by F. Waugh & M. Bonner, *Child Abuse Review*, vol. 11, no. 5, Sept–Oct 2002, pp. 282–95.

Citing evidence for the link between domestic violence and child abuse, the authors examine practitioner intervention policies in relation to issues identified in research around safety planning for women and children. In a survey of New South Wales practitioners, three major factors were found to influence intervention with women and children: definitional understanding of domestic violence and child abuse; child protection legislative changes; and the response of the NSW Department of Community Services to domestic violence. The authors suggest that confusion over who the client really is stands in the way of the integrated intervention needed to ensure the safety of women and children caught up in domestic violence and child abuse.

**Family violence and child protection**, by G. Callister, *Children Australia*, vol. 27, no. 4, 2002, pp. 14–16.

Noting the increase in reported or discovered cases of family violence, particularly in Indigenous families, the author discusses the experiences of child protection workers. She outlines separately the challenges of working with men, women and children, and working with other service systems.

**Intimate partner violence and child abuse: terrorism in everyday lives**, by V. Walther, *Children Australia*, vol. 27, no. 4, 2002, pp. 6–13.

In this Kath Dawe Memorial Lecture paper, the author discusses family violence in its social and political contexts. She explains some of the manifestations of this type of violence and presents related statistics. She talks about the role of hospitals in fighting family violence and reports on the Mount Sinai Hospital Domestic Violence Prevention Program, with which she is involved.

**One way of responding to family violence: putting on a PARKAS**, by W. Bunston, *Children Australia*, vol. 27, no. 4, 2002, pp. 24–27.

The PARKAS (Parents Accepting Responsibility – Kids Are Safe) program was designed to help children (aged 8–12 years) who had experienced family violence. One of the key objectives of PARKAS was to prioritise the voices of the children. The author describes the structure, objectives and outcomes of the program, and considers future developments.

**An unacceptable risk: a report on child contact arrangements where there is violence in the family**, by K. Rendell, Z. Rathus & A. Lynch, Women's Legal Service (reprint ed.), Annerley, Qld, 2002.

The purpose of this research was to gather information on the way in which legal and welfare systems respond to women and children affected by violence and abuse after separation. Conducted over 12 months from January 1999, the methodology comprised a literature review, interviews with staff in key agencies, a survey of practitioners including lawyers, social workers and domestic violence workers, focus groups and individual interviews with women and ongoing input from the reference group. Issues discussed include: the link between domestic violence and child abuse; the role of the Family Court in child protection; characteristics of abuse of children in contact; reporting child abuse; legal aid in Queensland; and different legal pathways for different types of relationships. A summary of recommendations is provided. This publication is a reprint of the 2000 report, with the addition of a foreword which provides a brief summary of the work undertaken towards some of the issues raised in the report, as well as references to material not cited in the original publication.

**Wesley Uniting Mission: Creating the Future**, by H. Grimshaw, *Child Abuse Prevention: National Child Protection Clearinghouse Newsletter*, vol. 10, no. 2, Summer 2002, pp. 12–14.

The Creating the Future package was designed to assist children who have been affected by family violence. The author discusses the objectives and operation of the program, which was evaluated by the Conflict Management Research Group at the University of South Australia. She includes many examples of the behaviour and stories of the children who took part.

**What about me? The voice of children in the Family Relationships Services Program**, by E. Watt, in *What About Me? The Voice of Children in the Family Relationships Services Program: 2001 Annual Conference Proceedings*, Family Services Australia, Deakin, ACT, 2001, pp. 20–24.

The author presents her observations of the consequences of domestic violence on some children who visited children's contact centres. She aims to inform practitioners of the complex issues facing staff, and hopes that the child-focused practice developed by staff of children's contact centres will receive the recognition it deserves, and result in the development of fundamental changes in children's practice.

## Family law

**Family Law Council: report on family law and child protection**, by M. Osborne, *Australian Journal of Family Law*, vol. 16, no. 3, Dec 2002, pp. 175–78.

The Family Law Council's report *Family Law and Child Protection* examines the operation of the Commonwealth family law

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legislation and State and Territory child and family legislation. It highlights the difficulties presented by the lack of a national framework in child and family services generally. This article briefly outlines the background to the report, and provides an overview of the Council's recommendations under the following headings: a federal child protection service; the 'one court principle'; admissibility of evidence; and high-level implementation committee.

**Magellan's discoveries: an evaluation of a program for managing Family Court parenting disputes involving child abuse allegations,** by T. Brown, *Family Court Review*, vol.40, no.3, July 2002, pp.320–32.

The Family Court of Australia introduced Project Magellan in 1998 to manage parenting disputes involving allegations of child abuse. The author presents the background of the project and the findings of an evaluation, and assesses the potential for success of similar programs elsewhere. She points out that the pilot program made a significant contribution to the knowledge about child abuse in parental separation. She argues that the relationship between child abuse and relationship breakdown is of serious concern and should be acknowledged as such.

### Gordon Report

**Inquiry into Response by Government Agencies to Complaints of Family Violence and Child Abuse in Aboriginal Communities (the Gordon Inquiry), Western Australia 2002,** by T. D'Eatough, *Developing Practice: The Child, Youth and Family Work Journal*, no.5, Summer 2002–2003, pp.50–52.

This article describes the aims of the Gordon Inquiry, set up to investigate allegations of violence and sexual abuse following the death of Susan Taylor, a young Aboriginal woman from the Swan Valley Nyoongar Community in Perth, Western Australia.

### Grief & Loss

**'All you do is look back and regret' – disenfranchised grief as an obstacle for recovery from abuse,** by M. Scott & S. Weisz, *Grief Matters*, vol.5, no.3, Summer 2002, pp.47–49.

Survivors of domestic violence and child sexual abuse suffer significant losses through these experiences. Often, in concentrating on survival and escape, we can ignore or diminish the importance of these losses, thus not allowing a woman time to grieve. In order to support the process of recovery, women and children need time and opportunity to grieve and, through this, move towards healing. (Journal abstract)

**Child abuse and family violence: the losses for children,** by N. Mudaly & J. Tucci, *Grief Matters*, vol.5, no.3, Summer 2002, pp.43–46.

The authors explore the experience of loss for children who have suffered abuse and family violence, drawing on research interviews conducted with children who have undertaken and completed therapy. They propose that a theoretical orientation which centrally locates loss and grief may also play an important role in understanding how to develop therapeutic and protective practices which directly compensate for such loss and promote a sense of recovery and identity configuration.

**The loss and grief of the survivors of domestic violence and child abuse,** by N. Macnamara, *Grief Matters*, vol.5, no.3, Summer 2002, pp.50–52.

This article explores the impact of loss and grief on the survivors of domestic violence. The author uses a particular framework to assist a client through the process of expressing, acknowledging and re-storying her experiences of violence, loss, pain and integration. (Journal abstract)

### Interagency collaboration

**Interagency practice in intensive family preservation services,** by L. Campbell, *Children and Youth Services Review*, vol.24, no.10, Sept 2002, pp.701–18.

The role of Intensive Family Preservation Services (IFPS) in the system of family services is explored in this article. The author discusses interagency issues raised in the evaluation of Families First, a pilot program of IFPS. This pilot program operated as a standalone program funded by State government and delivered by a non-government family support service. Referrals of children at risk of placement are made by Child Protection Services (CPS). The evaluation involved tracking tensions and achievements in the relationship between Families First and CPS, and also looked at relations with complementary family support services. This paper is addressed primarily to caseworkers who span the boundaries between organisations on a daily basis, shaping the help that is given to families in trouble and how they perceive and use that help.

### Kinship care

**Understanding kinship care: report on a research project undertaken by the Childhood and Youth Policy Research Unit of the University of Western Sydney and the Association of Childrens Welfare Agencies,** by J. Mason *et al.*, Association of Childrens Welfare Agencies, Haymarket, NSW, 2002.

Official recognition of kinship care as a child welfare placement option to placement is a relatively recent development in child welfare policy throughout Australia. The authors

examine the extent of the policy change, why it has occurred and the processes around its implementation. They also explore the experience of kinship care in New South Wales through interviews with workers, children and carers. Their data shows an increasing incidence of kinship care; it is now more likely to occur within New South Wales than placement with strangers. The authors believe that improvements to policy and practice within the New South Wales Department of Community Services could be achieved if their recommendations for kinship care are included in an overall restructuring of current policies relating to the child protection and child welfare system.

### Mandatory reporting

**Mandatory reporting: a state of confusion,** by Australians Against Child Abuse, Victoria, Jun 2002, pp.1–3.

Under Victorian legislation it is mandatory for health education and welfare professionals to report concerns about children at risk of physical and sexual abuse. This article discusses how the legislation has been only partially implemented, with reporting by social workers, psychologists, preschool teachers and child care workers remaining discretionary. The discussion calls for a national approach to child protection and mandatory reporting, suggesting that a federal inquiry is needed to establish minimum standards of care, uniform legislation, a national independent research program and a federal system of children's services commissioners.

**Mandatory reporting of child abuse: evidence and options: report for the Western Australian Child Protection Council,** by M. Harries & M. Clare, Department for Community Development, Perth, WA, 2002.

The Minister for Community Development via the Western Australian Child Protection Council commissioned this analysis of the evidence that exists to support or otherwise reject mandatory reporting as an optional mechanism for addressing child abuse in Western Australia. The identified aim of the project was to present an appraisal of various methods of reporting suspected child abuse and their outcomes in terms of improving child protection in WA. The report includes an introduction to the project, the methodology used, the social and policy context, the history of mandatory reporting in Australia and internationally, various analyses and arguments regarding mandatory reporting, and appraisal of options. The report concludes with recommendations regarding future developments towards the implementation of mandatory reporting of child abuse and some reasons why various groups support it.

### Munchausen by proxy syndrome

**Munchausen by proxy syndrome: not only pathological parenting but also problematic doctoring?,** by J. Jureidini, A. Shafer & T. Donald, *Medical Journal of Australia*, vol.178, no.3, Feb 2003, pp.130–32.

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Certain social expectations of medicine combine with characteristics of specialised technological paediatrics to facilitate the form of child abuse labelled 'Munchausen by proxy syndrome'. Examining this form of child abuse highlights possible shortcomings of medical practice. The primary medical tasks of diagnosing and curing illness and of preventing suffering are sometimes overridden by other motivations of which doctors may not be fully aware. More open discussion of what motivates health professionals in their work may improve medical practice and lead to a reduced incidence of Munchausen by proxy syndrome. (Journal abstract)

**Munchausen by proxy syndrome: not just pathological parenting but also problematic doctoring? Another view**, by K. Moran, *Medical Journal of Australia*, vol. 178, no. 3, Feb 2003, pp. 133.

Much has been written about the motivation of perpetrators in Munchausen by proxy syndrome (MBPS), but little about the motivation of doctors who 'collude' with parents in these behaviours. It is interesting to put forward a theory as to why doctors who are motivated to make 'the diagnosis' might fail to recognise invented illness. For an understanding of motivation to be useful in preventing the phenomenon of MBPS, it would be necessary to both reliably identify doctors' motivations and intervene to change these. As a practising paediatrician, the author does not believe that either of these steps is feasible. A more useful approach to this problem of paediatric diagnosis would be to establish guidelines for the problem of the unresolved clinical problem or 'difficult diagnosis'.

### Physical punishment

**Please don't hit me! Community attitudes towards the physical punishment of children**, by J. Tucci, B. Saunders & C. Goddard, *Australians Against Child Abuse*, Ringwood, Vic, 2002.

The results of the community survey described in this report show that attitudes towards the corporal punishment of children appear to be shifting. Less than 20% of respondents believed that parents should be allowed to hit (or smack) a child under two years, and only 50% thought that parents should be allowed to smack a child between the ages of two and five. Most respondents preferred non-violent methods of disciplining children to the use of physical force. Respondents clearly favoured the use of legislation to define acceptable and non-acceptable ways of punishing children. There was significant support for banning the use of implements to hit children, and for measures to prevent children from being hit around the head or shaken.

**Physical punishment: what does the research say?**, by P. Linke, *Every Child*, vol. 8, no. 3, Winter 2002, pp. 28–29.

The author reviews research into the effects of corporal punishment on children, and reports findings that show chiefly negative

associations between corporal punishment and childhood or adult behaviours, including anxiety problems, drug or alcohol problems, or antisocial problems. The research also shows links between the use of corporal punishment and child abuse, and multigenerational patterns of corporal punishment. The author describes the negative effects of corporal punishment on learning, and discusses how to teach children in a positive learning environment based on social learning theory

### Play groups

**Mobile Playscheme**, by L. Hillan, *Child Abuse Prevention: National Child Protection Clearinghouse Newsletter*, vol. 10, no. 2, Summer 2002, pp. 16–17.

Child protection issues often arise in caravan parks housing families who cannot secure either public or private housing. For the last 20 years, the Mobile Playscheme, discussed in this article, has serviced Brisbane North, Brisbane South and the Gold Coast/Tweed Heads regions, providing free playgroups with a focus on the provision of safe play opportunities in 15 caravan parks.

### Prevalence

**Child maltreatment in the family: the experience of a national sample of young people**, by P. Cawson, NSPCC, London, 2002.

This report is based on interviews about the childhood experiences of a national random probability sample of nearly 3000 young people aged between 18–24 years. The size and representative nature of this sample make this the most authoritative prevalence study of child abuse to have been conducted to date in the United Kingdom. It considers in detail the nature of maltreatment for which parents are responsible.

### Public health

**A promise unfulfilled on child abuse**, by D. Scott, *Australian and New Zealand Journal of Public Health*, vol. 26, no. 5, Oct 2002, pp. 415–16.

The WHO World Report on Violence and Health supports a public health approach to the problem of child abuse and neglect. The author provides information relating to risk and protective factors for child abuse and neglect and those associated with poor health and educational outcomes, as well as a broad range of other psycho-social problems for children and adolescents. In one chapter the report looks at child abuse and neglect and addresses the following issues: acts of omission as well as commission; the nature of intent; and normative violence. The author challenges the way these issues are addressed in the report and the assumption that accepts the right of the state to intervene in the domain of the family on behalf of the child, and the existence of a legal and service infrastructure capable of intervening in ways that benefit the child.

### Publishing

**How to write up a social work outcome study for publication**, by B.A. Thyer, *Journal of Social Work Research & Evaluation*, vol. 3, no. 2, 2002, pp. 215–22.

The author outlines his and others' learnings of both mistakes and successes based upon 20 years' experience of writing, reviewing and editing outcome studies in social work practice. This is presented as a standardised outline for the organisation of journal manuscripts that report evaluation studies. He reviews the most common errors that occur in writing outcome studies and describes correct practice. Also recommended is an outline to structure the way social work outcome studies are formatted.

### Resilience

**Nurturing resilience in our children: answers to the most important parenting questions**, by R.B. Brooks & S. Goldstein, Contemporary Books, Chicago, Ill., 2003.

In this book the authors of *Raising Resilient Children* expand their theory of resilience. Parents can help children acquire the building blocks of resilience, thus arming them with the emotional tools needed to resolve problems and make appropriate and thoughtful decisions. Other characteristics of resilient children include better self control and interpersonal skills, as well as the ability to handle challenges and frustrations effectively.

**Promoting resilience in children and young people**, by R. Gilligan, *Developing Practice: The Child, Youth and Family Work Journal*, no. 5, Summer 2002–2003, pp. 29–35.

The author emphasises the importance of encouraging resilience and positive qualities such as self-esteem in young people who have been abused. He points out ways this can be achieved, in particular through the child's relationship with a dependable adult, for example, a teacher.

### Sex differences

**Gender and child protection**, by J. Scourfield, Palgrave, New York, 2003.

This book examines the gender differences in child protection services (CPS). Women are more likely to be engaged with CPS than men, who are more likely to harm children. The reasons for this gender difference are addressed and different ways to engage men and women are discussed.

### Sexual abuse

**Abolishing child sex tourism: Australia's contribution**, by M. Brungs, *Australian Journal of Human Rights*, vol. 8, no. 2, Dec 2002, pp. 101–24.

The author examines Australia's position on child sex tourism: how effective its legislation is, and to what extent it is complying

with international obligations. She outlines some of the issues involved before discussing international laws on child sex tourism and the relevant Australian legislation, namely the *Crimes (Child Sex Tourism) Amendment Act 1994*. She considers difficulties in implementing it, whether reform is appropriate, and whether this legislation has been successful. While she believes that the Act has achieved its objectives, she identifies problems in its operation and strategies that may overcome these.

**Profiting from abuse: an investigation into the sexual exploitation of our children**, UNICEF, New York, 2001.

The problem of the sexual exploitation and trafficking of children for commercial gain is investigated in this book. Protection policies need to be tailored to the specific cultural, national and local realities of the societies in which the exploitation occurs.

**The sexual abuse of children by strangers: its extent, nature and victims' characteristics**, by B. Gallager, M. Bradford & K. Pease, *Children & Society*, vol. 16, no. 5, Nov 2002, pp. 346–59.

This paper examines the issue of stranger abuse of children. The perception by parents of the extent of such abuse and the real extent of the problem are discussed.

**Sexually abused and sexually exploited children and youth in South Asia: a qualitative assessment of their health needs and available services**, by Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific, United Nations, New York, c.2000.

In 1997 the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific adopted a resolution to eliminate the sexual abuse and exploitation of children and youth in South East Asia and the Pacific. This report provides information on the current situation in Bangladesh, India, Nepal, Pakistan and Sri Lanka.

**Sexually abused and sexually exploited children and youth in the Greater Mekong Subregion: a qualitative assessment of their health needs and available services**, by Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific, United Nations, New York, 2000.

In 1997 the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific adopted a resolution to eliminate the sexual abuse and exploitation of children and youth in South East Asia and the Pacific. This report provides information on the current situation in the Greater Mekong Subregion.

**We are not alone: a guidebook for helping professionals and parents supporting adolescent victims of sexual abuse**, by J.C. Angelica, Haworth Maltreatment and Trauma Press, New York, c.2002.

Adolescent victims of sexual abuse have specific needs and concerns. This book provides a court-oriented resource which is

targeted toward this group. The process of reporting, investigating and prosecuting cases of sexual abuse are explained in ways which help the young victim better understand what is happening and why.

### Substitute care

**Children entering out-of-home-care in South Australia: baseline analyses for a 3-year longitudinal study**, by P. Delfabbro, J. Barber & L. Cooper, *Children and Youth Services Review*, vol. 24, no. 12, Dec 2002, pp. 917–32.

Referring to the paucity of attention given to understanding the complex interaction between child and placement variables, the authors note that it is important for researchers to ascertain which child characteristics are important or decisive in placement decisions. Research by Farmer has suggested that this process can be facilitated by the identification of sub-groups of children. This article describes a study which examined the statistical validity of Farmer's classification system using a sample of 235 children placed into alternative care in South Australia. The data represent the baseline results for a three-year longitudinal study that will systematically assess the psycho-social and placement outcomes of foster children every four to six months to obtain a clearer understanding of the interaction between outcomes in alternative care and child characteristics.

**The costs of caring: a study of appropriate foster care payments for stable and adequate out of home care in Australia**, by M. McHugh, NSW Association of Childrens Welfare Agencies, Sydney, 2002.

Foster care is the backbone of child welfare services and is undergoing a crisis in recruitment and retention partly due to poor reimbursement. In 2001, the Child and Family Welfare Association of Australia, the Australian Foster Care Association and the Association of Childrens Welfare Agencies commissioned the Social Policy Research Centre to examine the adequacy and effectiveness of foster care allowances in Australia. The broad research objective was to establish a set of budgets to cover costs for children of specific ages and sex in home-based care. The study used three sources of information to examine the issue of adequacy of subsidy payments: surveys with agencies and foster care associations; focus groups with carers; and estimates of the costs of children developed by the Budget Standards Unit at the SPRC for children not in care. The research finds that the estimates of the costs of children in foster care are on average 52% higher than the costs of children not in care. It shows that no State or Territory is, overall, paying an adequate reimbursement to foster carers at the standard subsidy level, compared to the estimated costs of foster children. The research also confirms that there is a high level of discontent amongst carers about reimbursement of costs in all States and Territories.

**Family reunification: rhetoric and risks**, by B. Clare, *Children Australia*, vol. 27, no. 3, 2002, pp. 19–25.

This paper explores the recent emphasis on family reunification as an intervention strategy with 'high-risk' families whose children have been placed in the care of the state for reasons of significant abuse and/or neglect. It considers some of the dominant ideas and ideologies around reunification as an intervention strategy and reflects on the many layers of complexity involved in seeking to reconnect children and families under circumstances of risk. Finally, it considers the 'systemic factors' that compound the inherent difficulties involved in returning children to the care of their parents and offers some practice strategies aimed at recognising and minimising those risks and maximising the likelihood of a successful and safe outcome. (Journal abstract)

**Promoting the participation of children and young people in care**, by J. Cashmore, *Child Abuse & Neglect*, vol. 26, no. 8, Aug 2002, pp. 837–47.

Emphasising the importance for young people and children in care of participating in decisions that affect their lives, the author reviews research in this area from the UK, North America, Australia and New Zealand. She examines the reasons why participation is important, and finds that children and young people often do not feel that they have opportunities to participate. She concludes that to achieve genuine and effective participation, the following must exist: opportunity and choice in ways to participate; access to relevant information; the availability of a trusted advocate; proper resourcing; and supportive policy and legislation. She also points out the need for feedback to measure the effectiveness of these measures.

### Systems abuse

**What's wrong with child welfare? An examination of current practices that harm children**, by M. Kiraly, *Children Australia*, vol. 27, no. 3, 2002, pp. 10–18.

This paper outlines the growing awareness of one experienced professional in the out-of-home care field regarding some of the deleterious practices of the present time. While much good practice exists in this field, it is the author's contention that entrenched attitudes which convey insensitivity and discrimination towards children and young people in care are still all too frequent, and that these attitudes continue to militate against meeting the essential needs of children and young people. This paper outlines a group of theoretical concepts and relates them to a number of areas of current malpractice by way of an attempt to explain how these occur. In doing this, it seeks not to deny the sensitivity and skill of most current practitioners, and the excellent work that abounds in the child/youth welfare fields. Rather, the paper seeks to address those areas of practice which are still of concern, and to call for a change of attitude where needed. (Journal abstract)