Research Update from the Institute of Child Protection Studies

December 2013

This quarterly update provides an overview of research projects currently being implemented by the Institute of Child Protection Studies (ICPS), Australian Catholic University. ICPS aims to enhance the well-being of children, young people and families through quality research, evaluation, training and community education. ICPS links research, policy and practice through collaborative partnerships with government, non-government and community organisations; and has a particular emphasis on participatory research methods. Current research projects at ICPS include:

- Improving contact between children in out-of-home care and their parents: Developing and trialling a contact intervention;
- Refugee Communities Intercultural Dialogue: Building relationships, building communities;
- Evaluation of Intergenerational Trauma Initiatives; and,
- Service Delivery Pathways and Homelessness: ‘Connecting the Dots’.

See also New Publications and Staff Profile at the end of the Update. For more information about ICPS Research Updates, contact erin.barry@acu.edu.au.

Improving contact between children in out-of-home care and their parents: Developing and trialling a contact intervention

This three-year study will develop and trial a new model of delivering contact between children in care and their birth parents, which will reduce current and future distress related to contact, improve children’s relationships with their birth parents and increase successful reunifications in the long term.

The project, which will be conducted in the ACT and Victoria, is a joint initiative between ICPS, the ACT Community Services Directorate, the University of Melbourne, Victorian community service partners, and ACT community service partners, including Marymead Child and Family Centre and Barnardos. ICPS is currently in the process of finalising the contract arrangements for this project and is undertaking planning with project partners. Applications for a Project Manager for this project recently closed, and ICPS has also received scholarship funding from the ACU to support a PhD on this topic.
Refugee Communities Intercultural Dialogue: Building relationships, building communities

This research aims to provide in-depth and contextualised data about how services may better support refugee parents to care for their children, and understand the social resources and connections required by refugee parents and their children to support positive parenting skills and family relationships. A reference group has been established for this project and members have been contacted within the ACT and South Australia to discuss sampling and possible recruitment strategies, for interviews to begin in early 2014.

This project has been funded by the Department of Social Services, and is being implemented by Vicky Saunders and Prof Morag McArthur, in partnership with the Australian Centre for Child Protection. For more information, contact vicky.saunders@acu.edu.au.

Evaluation of Intergenerational Trauma Initiatives

The Healing Foundation, an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander-led organisation established to enable healing in the community, has funded programs in Kununurra, Darwin and Brisbane that help children, young people and families to deal with intergenerational trauma using cultural and community-driven projects. In partnership with the Australian Centre for Child Protection (ACCP), University of South Australia, ICPS has worked in these communities to track their progress, evaluate their outcomes and provide advice on future development. With a strong focus on child-centred practice and community development, the ACCP and ICPS have engaged with workers, schools, children, young people and families in a range of evaluation activities.

This project has been funded by the Healing Foundation, and is being implemented by ACCP and ICPS. For more information, contact tim.moore@acu.edu.au.

Service Delivery Pathways and Homelessness: ‘Connecting the Dots’

This research examines the perceived impact of specialist homelessness and key government services on the lives of people who have experienced homelessness. It aims to make an important contribution to informing a knowledge gap to understanding clients’ experiences of these service systems. The study
explores how key services can improve the service experiences of homeless people as they negotiate these systems.

Although the initial project report was submitted to the Department of Social Services (DSS) in June, the project contract was extended in order to undertake further interviews with people being case-coordinated by the Department of Human Services. Those interviews have been occurring throughout September – November and will be concluded by the end of 2013.

This research has been commissioned by DSS, DEEWR, DHS, and AIHW. For more information, contact justin.barker@acu.edu.au.

New Publications


Dr Tim Moore has over 20 years of experience working within the child, youth, family and community sectors, working with young carers, children in out-of-home care, young people with disabilities, families affected by homelessness, mental illness and alcohol or other drug issues. Tim has developed significant interest and expertise in the broad field of children’s participation. Drawing from his practice experience as a youth worker, Tim has helped to design participatory processes, supporting children and young people to actively shape, facilitate, evaluate and lead projects that directly impact on their lives. He has conducted research in the areas of homelessness, young caring, juvenile justice, out of home care and Aboriginal youth. Tim has advised local and national peaks, advocacy bodies and governments on children and young people’s participation.

Tim has a commitment to translating research to practice and maximising the impact of his research work. In 2010, Tim worked with Debbie Noble-Carr and Megan Layton to produce the Kids Central toolkit and training package for services working with children in the homelessness sector (see www.acu.edu.au/icps-kidscentral).

In 2012, Tim completed his doctoral studies which provided a group of experienced researchers with the opportunity to reflect on their practice and the practice of research with children in Australia, to consider how they understand children and childhood, and how their research is underpinned and influenced by the assumptions they hold. It asked researchers to consider how factors in the research environment (i.e. funding bodies, ethics committees, the broader academic field) influenced their research practice: the tensions that they have encountered and navigated their way through the often complex and ‘messy’ world of children’s research. It promotes reflexive practice as a way of managing tensions and creating new theories of childhood.

In addition to his research roles, Tim has been a sessional lecturer in Social Work, Youth Work and Theology. Tim is also an associate of the Thomas Wright Institute, a member of the National People with Disability and Carer Council and is on the Board of Carers Australia.
Selected Publications

Peer-reviewed journal articles


**Research monographs and reports**


Moore, T., (2005). *Reading between the lines: Talking to children and young people about their experiences of young caring*. Canberra: Youth Coalition of the ACT.

**Non-refereed articles and practice-based publications**


