



DEBORAH WHITEAR

Australia is one of the top ten countries for Internet use, making the World Wide Web an effective medium to disseminate research and policy information on Australian family issues.

This column reports new features on the Australian Institute of Family Studies Web site, and identifies various worldwide family research and family policy resources on the Internet.

NEW ON THE AIFS WEB SITE www.aifs.org.au/

Now in its third year, the Institute's Web site continues to grow to the extent that a review, redesign and revamp of its structure have been underway over the last few months. All pages now have a consistent look with navigational headers and footers and colour coding for key areas to assist movement between main pages such as Research, Information, Publications and Conferences. We have introduced a Media Releases page that records formal media releases to the press. However, the 'What's New' page is still the best way to access all new developments on the site.

Institute publications

The Institute's Publications page has been redesigned for easier use. The main page now lists all publications in chronological order, with the most recent first, and whether the title is available in hard copy or online. Most research papers can be accessed online in HTML or in PDF (Portable Document Format).

Institute database

The Institute's *Australian Family & Society Abstracts (AF&SA)* database, which records the literature of family and social issues in Australia via citations and abstracts, now offers direct access to many documents available in full text on the World Wide Web. For example, Institute publications, many government documents, conference papers and journal articles. When an online document is available, an active Internet link (URL) will appear after the citation leading database users directly to the online document. The AF&SA database is available on Informit Online (\$370 per year) or as part of a subscription package with other databases (www.informit.com.au). It is also grouped with the United States family database as Family Studies Database on the Biblioline Web (www.nisc.com).

STRENGTHENING FAMILY RELATIONSHIPS

With the announcement of a National Family Strategy and support in the recent Budget for marriage and relationship

education, the Commonwealth Government has highlighted the importance of education and prevention strategies to assist couples form satisfying and lasting relationships. With 'Relate', a specially developed Web site, the Government has also demonstrated the usefulness of Web-based information as part of its education and prevention strategy.

The following Web sites are examples of information, education and support services for couples and families.

Couples and relationships

Relate

www.relate.gov.au

From the Commonwealth Department of Family and Community Services, 'Relate' is a special Web site which aims to foster 'relationship skills for love, family and life'. The purpose of the program is to make marriage and relationship education a social norm, enrich the lives of couples and individuals, and benefit the community as a whole by preventing marriage and relationship problems before they arise. The site provides a searchable database to locate marriage and relationship education services by life stage and locality; a question and answers page about relationship education; tips for good relationships; booklets and facts sheets; and a good collection of links to counselling services and resources on parenting. Course dates, locations and a booking form are available.

Family Relationships Institute

www.relatewell.com.au

An example of an organisation running relationship education courses and workshops, the Family Relationships Institute emphasises three important features in its workshops: that they are run by professional educators; that they focus both on relationships skills development and on the practicalities of making a relationship work; and that they focus on the experience and needs of the participants. Workshops for 1999 include: Let's keep it alive; ENRICH; Enjoying partnering and parenting; Living as a stepfamily; Sole parent groups; Women's circle/women and relationships; Men's group/

men and relationships; Darers support group; School programs; and Staff programs.

Family Track: Family and Marriage Education Links

www.familytrack.com/links.htm

This is a collection of over 400 Internet Web sites (evaluated on research based criteria), that offer family and marriage enrichment and education on topics such as human development, family finances, sexuality, parenting, relationships, family interaction, and family and society.

Manhood Online

www.manhood.com.au

Under the banner 'Better men for a better future', and stimulated by the work of Steve Biddulph, the site offers resources for men including articles, profiles and interviews on work and education, relationships, fatherhood and parenting, health and sexuality, and spirituality, as well as information on men's services and support.

Marriage Support – Couples Place

www.couples-place.com

This site offers resources for marriage and other committed couple relationships, such as relationship articles, courses by email, forums, quizzes, and so forth.

National Forum on Men and Family Relationships

www.law.gov.au/mensforum

Papers from the first National Forum on Men and Family Relationships held last year in Canberra are published here online. The Forum brought together experts to share information and identify issues and strategies for the future, focusing on men's relationships and the provision of relationship services appropriate for men.

One Plus One

www.onepluseone.org.uk/

One Plus One monitors contemporary marriages and relationships, focusing on understanding the causes, effects and prevention of relationship breakdown. It is a UK national marriage organisation which carries out research and develops projects aimed at preventing relationship breakdown. Some of the features of this Web site include a searchable library catalogue, answers to frequently

asked questions, facts and figures, publications, information about One Plus One's research projects and training programs, and forthcoming conferences.

Parenting

Child and Youth Health www.cyh.com

Conflict and negotiation; relationship violence; family breakdown; fighting with brothers and sisters; girlfriends and boyfriends; relationships with parents; stepfamilies; surviving sexual abuse; all can be found in the Youth Relationships section on this Web site funded by the South Australian Government to support parents and children. It offers a large database with information about the health of children and young people, parenting information, and a 24-hour Parent Help Line, publications, news items and contact information for more than 250 child and youth health locations in South Australia.

Network for Family Resiliency www.nnfr.org

This site is made up of special interest groups and resources on parenting education, programs and curriculum, research (with a

listing of researchers working in the field), adolescent sexuality, evaluation, family economics, intergenerational issues, and violence prevention.

National Parent Information Network (NPIN) <http://npin.org>

A United States project sponsored by two ERIC Clearinghouses (Educational Resources Information). The purpose of the network is to provide information to parents and those who work with parents, and to foster the exchange of parenting materials. Network resources have been reviewed for reliability and usefulness.

Parenting Tips www.fcs.wa.gov.au/parenting/tips/default.htm

Organised by age group, this Web site from the Western Australian Family and Children's Services Department offers over 200 valuable tips for parenting. Also available are: Fact sheets on various topics including grandparenting, the role of fathers and holiday fun; Parenting information about child care, before and after school care, and vacation care; and Parenting services such as a telephone advice line.

Quality Time www.qualitytimemagazine.com

This is an Australian independent online magazine offering articles on parenting, child health, play, and reviews of children's books.

Vanier Institute of the Family www.vifamily.ca

A Canadian national non-government organisation that researches the demographic, economic, social and health influences on contemporary family life. In French and English the Web site aims to build public understanding of important issues and trends critical to the wellbeing and healthy functioning of families. Contents include many online resources such as a *Family and Health Newsletter*, back issues of the journal *Transitions*, Family Trends Essays, and answers to frequently asked questions about the family.

Work and family

Work and Family Unit www.dewrsb.gov.au/group_wrp/workfamily/index.htm

Publications from the Work and Family Unit (Commonwealth Department of Workplace Relations and Small Business) have been produced to raise

awareness of work and family issues including legislative entitlements. Separate information sheets are available covering the following topics: Balancing work and family; Permanent part-time work; Job-sharing; Career breaks; Home-based work (teleworking); Parental leave; Personal/carers leave; Caring for adults; Shiftwork; Relocation; Making family-friendly agreements; and Child care. For employers, there is a series of Work and Family Resource guides to assist employees to better balance their work and family commitments.

US Families and Work Institute www.familiesandworkinst.org

This Institute is a non-profit organisation committed to finding research-based strategies that foster mutually supportive connections among workplaces, families, and communities. The site contains information on current research including the Fatherhood Project, publications (and order form), and links to related Web sites.

Deborah Whithear is the Web Manager at the Australian Institute of Family Studies.

ADOLESCENT RELATIONSHIPS AND WELLBEING STUDY

FAMILIES NEEDED

The Australian Institute of Family Studies and the University of Queensland in conjunction with the Family Court of Australia are seeking assistance in a study concerning adolescent relationships and wellbeing. The study is supported by the Australian Research Council.

Who can participate?

Separating and divorcing parents and parents who have not experienced separation and divorce and their children are invited to take part in the study.

- Separating and divorcing parents and their children need to meet all of the following criteria: (a) you have one, two or three children with at least one aged 10–16 years; (b) neither you nor your former partner have children from another relationship; (c) you separated from your former partner within the last four years.
- Parents and children not experiencing separation and divorce need to meet all of the above criteria except that the parents need to be living together.

What is involved?

- For separating/divorcing families: (a) each person in the family wishing to participate will be asked to complete a

questionnaire; (b) for those residing within approximately 80 kms of the Melbourne or Brisbane Central Business District (CBD) an interview will be conducted with participating parents and one of their children at a time and location convenient to them; (c) participants will be asked to complete shorter questionnaires at the time of interview – those not being interviewed will be sent second shorter questionnaires; (d) 12 months later, a further questionnaire package will be completed and interviews conducted with those already having been interviewed.

- For parents and children not experiencing separation and divorce completion of questionnaires is all that is required; interviews will not be conducted.

Compensation

As compensation for their time and effort, each family member will be given a movie ticket.

Further information

Contact Jane Muggleton at the Australian Institute of Family Studies on (03) 9214 7851, or Matt Vance or Carla Ward at the University of Queensland Family Centre on (07) 3365 7294.