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The following references have been selected from the *Australian Family & Society Abstracts* database, produced by the Australian Institute of Family Studies to monitor the research, policy and practice literature on families and the economic and social issues that affect them.

Commonly known by its short title of FAMILY, the database is publicly available on: Informit Online and the CD-ROM AUSTROM (RMIT Publishing); Family Studies Database CD-ROM and Biblioline on the Internet (US National Information Services Corporation).

Parenting in different contexts

Parenting in different contexts is supported by numerous references in the Institute's database, *Australian Family & Society Abstracts*. This bibliography focuses on the changing nature of parenting and caring, and the effects of cross cultural backgrounds, Indigenous families, sexual preference and imprisonment on family functioning and parenting.

These references have been added to the collection since 1999, and are available on inter-library loan from the Institute's Family Information Centre. A number of the articles and papers are also available in full text on the internet, with online addresses provided. Others are available from bookshops and libraries.



The changing nature of parenting and caring

Bowes, J. and Watson, J. (1999), "Families as a context for children", in Bowes, J. M. and Hayes, A. (eds) *Children, Families, and Communities: Contexts and Consequences*, Oxford University Press, South Melbourne, Vic., pp. 76-93.

How community contexts influence both families and children in Australia is considered in this chapter which addresses the following questions: what are families like; how do families operate; and how do families affect children's wellbeing and development? The links between families and the outside world are explored, focusing on the diverse range of families and the changing nature of families within Australian society. Two models of family functioning are analysed: the family life cycle approach and the family systems theory. What it is that

makes some families more resilient and others more vulnerable is discussed and the influences of siblings, parenting style and the extended family are considered in relation to preparing children for life beyond the family.

Godfrey, A. (ed.) (2000), *Passages through Parenthood: Real-Life Stories from Australian Parents*, Thomas Lothian, Port Melbourne, Vic., 245p.

Consisting of a collection of stories told by parents about the compromises and learning experiences involved in bringing up children, this book addresses the nature of society's attitudes to parents and children and reveals how parents cope and what they think about their role in society. Issues raised include: multiple births; single fathers and single mothers; adoption; househusbands; full time working parents; parenting children with chronic illness; father role; parenting teenagers; stepfamilies; teenage mothers; work and family relationship; returning to the workforce after full time parenting; single father of an adopted child; voluntary work; division of labour; sudden infant death syndrome; disabled children; refugees; cultural differences; lesbian mothers; relinquishing mothers; foster parents; and an urban Aboriginal family.

Keary, A. (2000), "Changing images of mother/mothering", *Australian Journal of Early Childhood*, vol. 25, no. 2, June, pp. 13-17.

This paper examines how representations of the mother and mothering practices have altered between a generation of mothers and daughters. It also discusses the varied configurations of mother/mothering which occur at different times in women's lives, in other racial and ethnic situations, and

which have been opened up by medical science through reproductive technology. Taking a broad definition of mothering, the paper points to the hierarchical divisions that have been created between women who pay, and are being paid, for the care and education of children in their early years. It argues that the difficult and complex task for early childhood education and care is to keep pace and to grapple with the ever-changing circumstances of those who nurture and care for the young. (Journal abstract)

Page, J. (2000), "Who cares? A study of diverse care arrangements in Australian society", in *Family Futures: Issues in Research and Policy*, Paper presented at the 7th Australian Institute of Family Studies Conference, Sydney, July, Australian Institute of Family Studies, Melbourne, 12p, Online only: <http://www.aifs.org.au/institute/afrc7/page.html>.

Arrangements for the care of children in Australian society today are far more diverse than when the Commonwealth first provided financial support for families with children in 1941. Family structures and patterns of care today reflect a diversity of changing lifestyles, interpersonal relationships and cultural differences. Children may be shared by former partners or in the care of non-parents, for example, foster carers. They may be in transitional care arrangements such as short-term respite care or in the care of institutions. Many are in non-nuclear family situations arising from the child raising practices of ethnic or Indigenous groups. Initiated by the Commonwealth Department of Family and Community Services, the Diverse Care project has been looking at outcomes from family assistance for families with dependent children in a range of caring arrangements.

Wise, S. and Sanson, A. (2000), *Child Care in Cultural Context: Issues for New Research*, Research paper no. 22, Australian Institute of Family Studies, Melbourne, 23p. Online: <http://www.aifs.org.au/institute/pubs/wise3.html>.

This paper describes new Australian Institute of Family Studies research which aims to address the influence of home – child care discontinuities on children. The study has been designed to advance our understanding of how home-child care congruity factors relate to child care quality, the child care variables that promote congruence across care settings, and the extent to which congruity on child related variables influence the arrangements parents make for their children's care. This paper details the theoretical and empirical literature on home-child care congruity and outlines the approach taken in the current research to unravel the importance of maintaining parental practices for child rearing in child care. Issues covered include: use and expectations of child care among different cultural groups; cross cultural practices among Vietnamese, Eritrean, Ethiopian and Somali families; parents' and carers' views about the role of child care; nature of care and satisfaction with care; and child care quality.



Parenting in cross cultural contexts

Kayrooz, C. and Blunt, C. (2000), "Bending like a river: the Parenting Between Cultures program", *Children Australia*, vol. 25, no. 3, pp. 17-22.

While there are many parent education programs in Australia, there have been few developed to cater specifically to the needs of migrant groups. Attempting to fill this gap, a parenting program was developed and trialled for three

ethnic communities. The program addressed key parenting issues found to be of relevance to members of culturally and linguistically diverse groups, including: intergenerational conflict arising from different acculturation rates; the protective factor of a bi-cultural parenting identity knowledge of the school system; discipline options and child abuse laws; and how to gain support. The program was subsequently independently evaluated. Quantitative and qualitative information from both the process and outcomes of the program revealed that it was effective, particularly in fostering an understanding of the impact of culture on parenting, knowledge of the school system, non-physical disciplinary methods and child abuse laws. This study may be one of the first targeted ethnic parenting programs to be independently evaluated in Australia. (Journal abstract)

Kolar, V. and Soriano, G. (2000), *Parenting in Australian families: A Comparative Study of Anglo, Torres Strait Islander, and Vietnamese Communities*, Research report no. 5, Australian Institute of Family Studies, Melbourne, 67p.

This report is based on the Australian Institute of Family Studies *Parenting-21* Project which began in 1995 as part of a major international research collaboration focusing on parents and children in several different countries. Findings from the final stage of the Australian component of the *Parenting-21* study are presented around two key themes. The first focuses on parents, children and the wider societal context, exploring issues such as how society views parents, how parenting is learned, who is responsible for parenting, how parents judge themselves, and the influences of the wider social context, for example, work and social support, on parenting. The second theme focuses on parenting practices such as teaching children values, particularly via household chores, rules and the involvement of children in decision making; how parents approach discipline; and their long term goals for their

children. The research is drawn from primary data on parenting generated from samples of parents from three culturally diverse communities: Anglo, Vietnamese and Torres Strait Islander families. The influence of cultural background on parents' beliefs and practices is explored by comparing parents from the three cultural groups.

Sims, M. R. and Omaji, A. K. (1999), "Migration and parenting: a pilot study", *Journal of Family Studies*, vol. 5, no. 1, April, pp. 84-96.

When families migrate to a new country they are required to map their parenting practices from their country of origin onto those of their country of residence. Sometimes there is dissonance between practices from both cultures, and families need to decide if they wish to discard the practices associated with their country of origin, amend those practices, or continue to use them in their original form. This study, using the interpretive paradigm, investigates the process of cultural mapping in recent African migrant families. A conceptual framework based on the theory of structuration is used to identify parenting practices and to guide the interviews with families. Outcomes from this study can be used to guide parenting programs used by African migrant families. (Journal abstract)



Aspects of indigenous parenting

Atkinson, S. and Swain, S. A. (1999), "A network of support: mothering across the Koorie community in Victoria, Australia", *Women's History Review*, vol. 8, no. 2, pp. 219-230.

This article, built around a case study conducted by Koorie scholar Sue Atkinson, is concerned with an analysis of patterns of mothering in the contemporary Koorie community

in Victoria. The effect of colonialism on Aboriginal culture is considered, highlighting the intergenerational effects of the policy of child removal and the loss of parenting skills. The contemporary Koorie extended family model is described with reference to issues of: the status and role of female elders; Koorie identity and the extended family; traditional understandings of kinship; the principle of multiple mothering; work and family; professional women as role models; single parenting; racism; and the need to revalue this Koorie model of mothering.

Howard, S. (2001), "Fathering and indigenous families: a North Queensland community partnership", Paper presented at the Helping Families Change Conference, Melbourne, February, Commission for Children and Young People, Brisbane, 6p. Online only: http://www.childcmm.qld.gov.au/publications/fathering_indigenous.pdf (53K).

This paper provides a brief overview of the diversity of Indigenous culture prior to white settlement; addresses, in some detail, changes in what has been called the traditional indigenous family structure and the resultant impact on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and young people; and identifies issues that need to be considered in parenting programs for Indigenous people. A brief description is provided of a trial indigenous fathering program that aims to meet the needs of children whose fathers are in prison, being developed by the Commission for Children and Young People, collaborating with the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Advisory Board.

Kearins, J. (2000), "Children and cultural difference" in Dudgeon, P., Garvey, D. and Pickett, H. (eds), *Working with Indigenous Australians: A Handbook for Psychologists*, Gunada Press, Curtin Indigenous Research Centre, Curtin University of Technology, Perth, pp. 167-175.

Some aspects of child treatment differences between cultures,

with special reference to Aboriginal Australian people, are outlined in this paper which argues that, if children are not to be disadvantaged, the psychologist must become aware of usual, expected behaviour in different cultural groups. Issues discussed include: why cultures differ in their child rearing practices and maintain these differences for long periods; Australian practices; implications for long periods; social behaviour differences; specific learning differences; preferred learning style; and language difference.



Effects of imprisonment on parenting

Healy, K., Foley, D. and Walsh, K. (2001), "Families affected by the imprisonment of a parent: towards restorative practices", *Children Australia*, vol. 26, no. 1, pp. 12-19.

Over the past decade imprisonment rates in Australia have substantially increased. As imprisonment rates rise, so too do the number of families affected by the imprisonment of a parent. Yet the needs of parents in prison and their families have received little attention in social policies and service delivery practices. As the specific issues faced by parents in prison and their families cross many areas of government and community services responsibility, they all too easily slip from policy agendas. This paper outlines the challenges to, and potential for, restorative practices with families affected by the imprisonment of a parent. It draws on recent research undertaken by the authors into the family support needs of parents in prison and their families. (Journal abstract)

Howard, S. (2000), "Fathering behind bars", in *Family Futures: Issues in Research and Policy*,

Paper presented at the 7th Australian Institute of Family Studies Conference, Sydney, Australian Institute of Family Studies, Melbourne, 9p. Online only: <http://www.aifs.org.au/institute/afrc7/howard.html>.

The Children's Commission is particularly concerned to support children and young people who are marginalised and in vulnerable situations in society. As part of the Focus on Fathering Project it is interested in exploring issues relating to fathers in prison. The Commission is concerned by statistics which indicate the over-representation of Indigenous people in prisons (1585 per 100,000 population compared with 116 per 100,000 "other people" according to 1997 Crime and Justice statistics), and youth detention (343 per 100,000 of Indigenous young people compared with 15 per 100,000 of non Indigenous young people). The Queensland government's Aboriginal and Torres Strait Advisory Board (ATSIAB) is also interested in programs that support Indigenous inmates to maintain strong connections to their families and communities. ATSIAB and the Children's Commission are working together to explore issues around the relationships between fathers and their children when the father is in prison. This presentation explains the nature of this aspect of the Focus on Fathering Project, and highlights the key issues which have been identified regarding fathering behind bars. (Author abstract, edited)

Larman, G. (2000), "Raising the profile of children of prisoners", in *World Forum 2000 - Children First in the New Millennium: A New Commitment to Children and Young People*, August, Association of Children's Welfare Agencies, Sydney, 18p. Online only: <http://www.acwa.asn.au/wf2000/Papers/23LARMAN.doc> (81k).

This paper draws on recent New South Wales research to explore the issues facing children of prisoners. It aims to raise the awareness regarding what children of prisoners are left to

cope with when their parent is arrested, imprisoned and released. A brief outline is provided of the Children of Prisoners' Support Group and issues are discussed of: how many children are affected by parental imprisonment; how children are affected; how to maintain the parent-child relationship; and the findings of a recent survey by D. Brookes for the Children of Prisoners' Support Group. Recommendations for change are presented.

Tudball, N. (2000), "Doing it hard: a study of the needs of children and families of prisoners in Victoria", in *Family Futures: Issues in Research and Policy*, Paper presented at the 7th Australian Institute of Family Studies Conference, Sydney, Australian Institute of Family Studies, Melbourne, 13p. Online only: http://www.aifs.org.au/institute/afrc7/tudball_lazarus.pdf (41K).

This paper presents the findings of VACRO's groundbreaking research recently undertaken across the Victorian prison system, which sought to document the needs of the families of incarcerated parents, with special focus on the needs of their children. Findings are summarised, service needs identified through the research are discussed, and recommendations are made.



Parenting in gay and lesbian families

Alice, H. (1999), "Lesbians as foster carers: an under-utilised resource?", *Social Work Now*, no. 14, December pp. 35-40.

As it is recognised that many different family types can provide a healthy home for children, foster parents are sought from diverse backgrounds and sectors of society. In Aotearoa, New Zealand, this includes different racial groups, sole- and two-parent families, extended families and whanau groups, and beneficiary, working, middle and upper

classes. There are also a small number of foster parents who openly identify to agencies as lesbian, gay, bisexual or transgendered. This article reviews the literature on lesbian foster parenting and makes recommendations for agencies using lesbians as foster carers.

Moore, M. (2000), "Children of same sex relationships", 9th National Family Law Conference, Sydney, July, Television Education Network, Melbourne, vol. 1, pp. 157-173.

This paper addresses what is known about the effects of being brought up by a gay parent. Referring to literature and the author's own clinical experience, issues discussed include: children of divorced lesbian mothers; investigation of one parent families; children born to lesbian couples; extended family concern; the area of disturbed interpersonal relations; and children's adjustment and conflict between parents of whatever gender. Conclusions indicate that parenting stress but not parents' sexual orientation, relationship status or educational attainment, showed significant relationships with children's adjustment.

Speedy, J. (2001), "Making ourselves up as we go along", *Dulwich Centre Journal*, no. 1, pp. 45-47.

Some of the issues of life in a lesbian family are discussed in this paper, including: other people's ideas and their impact on children; the significance of the question regularly asked of lesbian parents, "which one of you is the real mum?"; and how to respond to it; the notorious clause 28 in the British Child Protection Act that describes lesbian families as "pretended families" and expressly prevents, by law, any "promotion" of pretended families by government agencies; and the extra difficulties involved for gay parents when splitting up as a couple, and with shared parenting.

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