

# RAP Sheet

RESEARCH ADVANCING PRACTICE

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**NEW ISSUE OF *FUTURE OF CHILDREN* FOCUSES ON DOMESTIC VIOLENCE AND CHILDREN**

The newest issue of the journal *The Future of Children* (Volume 9, No. 3 – Winter 1999; published by The David and Lucile Packard Foundation) provides a variety of viewpoints on domestic violence and children. The topics covered include prevalence, impacts, legal issues, mental health services, and prevention. One article of particular relevance describes collaborative efforts between CPS agencies and domestic violence programs. The entire issue is available online at [www.futureofchildren.org](http://www.futureofchildren.org). You can also order the journal online – subscriptions are FREE!

**STUDY LOOKS AT CHARACTERISTICS OF CHILDREN IN KIN AND NONKIN PLACEMENTS**

Researchers in Minnesota analyzed administrative records for one county's foster care placements during a six-month period in 1994 to examine what child-related factors could be used to predict placement in kinship or nonkinship foster care. Of the approximately 2000 cases included, 40% were in kinship placements and 60% were in nonkin placements at the time the data were collected. Nine factors were investigated for possible relation to the kin vs. nonkin placement variable: gender, race, Hispanic heritage, presence of a disability, presence of special needs, reason for placement, authority for placement, number of prior placements during the current episode of out-of-home care, and child's age at removal. Children in kinship placements tended to be older, and tended to have fewer previous placements during the current episode of out-of-home care. Furthermore, children in kinship placements were less likely to have a known disability, were more likely to have parental substance abuse as the primary reason for placement (rather than maltreatment or other parent-related reasons), were more likely to have been court-ordered (rather than voluntary or temporary emergency placement) into foster care, and were more likely to be African-American than Caucasian. Two possible conclusions can be drawn. First, case workers may be taking these factors into account when deciding to recommend kin vs. nonkin placements. Second, these variables may be indicators for how available and viable possible kin placements are for children in need. For example, it may be that for children with known disabilities, kin are less likely to be available and willing to care for them. This would support the current push to find more foster parents willing to take in children with disabilities.

Beeman, S. K., Kim, H., & Bullerdick, S. K. (2000). Factors affecting placement of children in kinship and nonkinship foster care. *Children and Youth Services Review*, 22, 37-54.

**RESPIRE CARE FOR CHILDREN WITH EBD MAY DECREASE OUT-OF-HOME PLACEMENTS**

Seventy-three families with children experiencing emotional and behavioral disturbances (EBD) were studied to assess the impact of respite care services. The group who received respite care for their children with special needs were compared to a control group who were on a waiting list to receive such respite care. Families receiving respite care experienced a decrease in number of days of out-of-home placements for the children with EBD, while families not receiving respite care experienced an increase in number of days of out-of-home placements for their children. Similarly, parents receiving respite care showed greater decreases on a measure of caregiving strain than parents not receiving respite care. However, differences were not found between the respite group and the wait-list group in regards to changes on measures of family functioning or child behavior (that is, both groups either increased or decreased in similar amounts on those measures during the course of the study). Some evidence was found to suggest that families receiving more hours of respite care showed more improvements than families receiving fewer hours of respite care. The authors conclude that although respite care for families with a child experiencing EBD can be helpful, other services will be needed to improve family functioning and child behavior.

Bruns, E. J., & Burchard, J. D. (2000). Impact of respite care services for families with children experiencing emotional and behavioral problems. *Children's Services: Social Policy, Research, and Practice*, 3, 39-61.

**LINKS BETWEEN CHILDHOOD VICTIMIZATION, RUNNING AWAY, AND DELINQUENT BEHAVIOR**

Researchers compared children who had been physically or sexually abused or neglected with a matched control group, and interviewed both groups in adulthood. Overall, 1196 participants were interviewed. The researchers found that childhood victimization does increase the risk that a youth will run away from home, and that both childhood victimization and running away increase the likelihood of having an arrest as a juvenile. In addition, running away resulted in a significant increase in initial risk for arrest for abused and neglected children, but the effect of running away was much greater for those who were *not* abused or neglected. It was also found that males and females were equally likely to run away from home, and that childhood sexual abuse was *not* more often associated with running away than with other forms of abuse and neglect. The authors noted several important practical implications for their work. First, abused and neglected children are at risk for becoming delinquent, but also at risk for running away. Also, more attention needs to be paid to runaways who were not abused or neglected, because their risk of delinquency increases fourfold when they run away. Lastly, running away might be a critical point for

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MISSION STATEMENT: The *RAP Sheet* is intended to inform professionals across the state of Nebraska of current findings from social science research that could impact the delivery of services to children and families. Summaries of recent articles from academic journals (and occasionally book chapters) on the areas of child protection and juvenile justice are the focus, with smaller sections reserved for announcements and websites of interest. Other topics will be included in special issues as needed. Citations are provided in the format used by the American Psychological Association (APA), and are available through many university libraries. The *RAP Sheet* is funded in part by the State of Nebraska Department of Health and Human Services System. Comments and suggestions are always welcome and can be sent to the editors or faculty advisor.

intervention, especially for those adolescents who are arrested for running away.

Kaufman, J.G., & Widom, C.S. (1999). Childhood victimization, running away, and delinquency. *Journal of Research in Crime and Delinquency*, 36, 1999.

### **GIRLS WHO EXHIBIT BEHAVIOR PROBLEMS AT INCREASED RISK FOR TEEN PREGNANCY**

The sample for this study consisted of 491 girls who were followed from birth to age 18. The results showed that girls who exhibited the highest severity of conduct problems at age 8 were over 5 times more likely to experience a teen pregnancy than girls with the lowest severity of conduct problems at age 8 (18% of the girls with the most severe early conduct problems experienced a teenage pregnancy). Early conduct problems were also associated with a variety of adverse individual, family, and social factors, such as lower intelligence, lower SES status and early punitive parenting. After controlling for these factors, girls in the most disturbed category were still 2.6 times more likely to become pregnant by age 18. Girls with early conduct problems were more likely to have engaged in risk-taking behaviors (such as initiation of sexual intercourse at an earlier age), which may explain the higher rates of teen pregnancy in this group. The authors noted that conduct problems are associated with other psychosocial disadvantages that also increase the likelihood of teen pregnancy. These pre-existing disadvantages appear to be aggravated by risk-taking behaviors in adolescence. Girls with early conduct problems are likely to have these disadvantages and are more likely to engage in risky behaviors; these two processes may combine to account for the greater vulnerability of girls with early conduct problems to later adverse social outcomes such as teenage pregnancy.

Woodward, L.J. & Fergusson, D.M. (1999). Early conduct problems and later risk of teenage pregnancy in girls. *Development and Psychopathology*, 11, 127-141.

### **RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN PRIOR VICTIMIZATION OF ADOLESCENT SEX OFFENDERS AND THEIR SUBSEQUENT ABUSE OF OTHERS EXAMINED**

The authors hypothesized that adolescent sex offenders were more likely to repeat the sexual abuse behaviors they had experienced as victims, and that the characteristics of their victims (gender, age, relationship of victim to offender) were more likely to be reflective of their own victim experiences. Participants in this study were 74 adolescent male sexual abusers in a residential treatment facility who had been sexually abused. The adolescent offenders who had been victimized before age 5 were twice as likely to victimize someone younger than age 5. Also, if they had been abused by a male, they were twice as likely to abuse males, and if the abuser had been victimized by a relative, they were 1.5 times as likely to victimize a relative. The type of sexual abuse to which the adolescent had been subjected was even more strongly related to the type of abuse they perpetrated on others. The relationship for abusive behaviors may have been stronger because offenders have more control over this than

over victim characteristics. The authors suggest that these results support the theory that adolescent offenders may abuse as a reenactment of their own sexual abuse or as a conditioned and/or learned behavior pattern. In addition, the results have implications for focusing interview questions in clinical investigations and developing safety plans for families or caretakers. The authors caution, however, that these relationships occurred only for a subset of adolescent sex offenders who had been sexually abused, and that not all abused children become abusers themselves.

Veneziano, C., Veneziano, L., & LeGrand, S. (2000). The relationship between adolescent sex offender behaviors and victim characteristics with prior victimization. *Journal of Interpersonal Violence*, 15, 363-374.

### **RECEIPT OF CHILD WELFARE SERVICES DECREASES LIKELIHOOD OF JUVENILE INCARCERATION FOR SOME YOUTH**

Social service histories of youth aged 11-17 in 10 California counties were examined for links between the receipt of child welfare services following an investigation of child abuse, incarceration in the statewide juvenile corrections system (which includes only the most serious youthful offenders), type of abuse report, and demographic information about the child. In general, children who had been referred to social services were more likely to be incarcerated as a juvenile than children who had not been referred to social services for maltreatment. Children who had been referred to social services primarily due to neglect were more likely to be incarcerated as juveniles than children who had been referred due to physical or sexual abuse. African-American and Hispanic children who received either in-home or foster care services following an investigation were *less* likely to be incarcerated as a juvenile than those who did not receive services. For Caucasian children and children of "Other" ethnicities, receiving social services following an investigation neither increased nor decreased the likelihood that a child would later be incarcerated as a juvenile. These results stress the importance of concentrating preventive efforts on those at higher risk for incarceration, and the possible buffering effects of post-investigation services for some populations.

Jonson-Reid, M., & Barth, R. P. (2000). From maltreatment report to juvenile incarceration: The role of child welfare services. *Child Abuse and Neglect*, 24, 505-520.

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