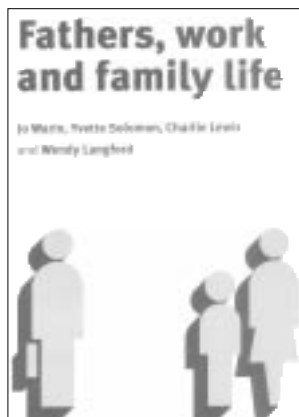


## BOOK NOTES

CAROLE JEAN

The following books on family-related topics are recent additions to the Institute's Family Information Centre. They are available through Libraries, through the Family Information Centre via the Inter Library Loan system, or for purchase from good book shops. Prices are given as and when supplied.

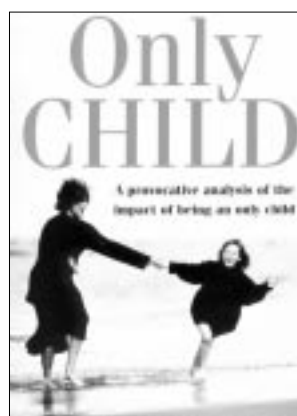


***Fathers, Work and Family Life*, by Jo Warin, Yvette Solomon, Charlie Lewis and Wendy Langford, Family Policy Studies Centre, London, 1999. Price: UK10.95.**

This study examines the impact of work patterns on family relationships, especially on fathers' relationships with their teenage children. Fathers, mothers and children were interviewed in 74 households, with those surveyed coming from diverse family backgrounds and family types. It was found that the majority of families saw the father as playing the role of the main provider, even when wives worked. Being the main provider took on extra significance when it came to fathers' relationships with their children. While many fathers felt under pressure to provide the consumer goods that their children demanded, many also felt that the provision of such items acted as a channel for their feelings of emotional attachment to their family. In families on low incomes (often with the father being unemployed or unable to work because of a disability) many fathers reported a loss of self-esteem because they were not able to fulfil the role of provider.

The study also examined the activities shared by fathers and their children. These activities fell into three distinct categories, comprising activities outside the home (such as sporting or school related activities), those within the home (such as helping children with homework), and hobby related activities. Overall, respondents voiced concerns that the conflict between work and family placed families under

considerable pressure. In many households, fathers were expected to maximise their earning capacity, even at the cost of spending less time with their children. The authors argue that there needs to be more public discussion of parenting issues to provide a context for policy innovations focused on fathers. Government policies, according to the authors, need to promote a positive and constructive relationship between fathers' work lives and family lives. This report would make valuable reading for policy makers as well as anyone concerned with parenting.



***Only Child: A Provocative Analysis of the Impact of Being an Only Child*, by Miriam Cosic, Landsdowne, Sydney, 1999. Price: \$19.95.**

Does being an only child make any difference to the way a child interacts with the world? This is the major question that the author, herself an only child, attempts to answer. The book discusses the evidence found in the general and academic literature, as well as examining the lives of many famous only children to see if there is any truth to the popular mythologies and prejudices that have arisen around only children. In addition, quotes from interviews with many (often famous) Australian only children are included to see how, and if, their lives have been affected by the fact that they are an only child. The author concludes that there is considerable conflicting evidence as to how not having any siblings can affect a child's development and personality.

The book is written in an approachable style, and is intended for adult only children, as well as parents who have (or intend to have) one child. It would also make useful reading for students and professionals in the areas of child care and education. A bibliography is included for readers who wish to research the area further.



***Transforming Children's Lives: The Importance of Early Intervention*, Edited by Rosalind Bayley, Family Policy Studies Centre, London, 1999. Price: UK9.95.**

This book contains the edited proceedings of a conference on families and early intervention held in London in March 1998. Organised by the Family Policy Studies Centre and the UK Department of Health, the conference brought together British and American academics and practitioners working in the area. The conference presentations covered four main themes – to review the case for early intervention, to examine current developments in the United Kingdom and the United States, to consider how governments are working across departments to improve services, and to discuss examples of good practice in the areas of health, social services, education, the criminal justice system and the community. Three papers discussed the situation in the United States. These examined the experiences of early intervention in family life, the use of mentoring programs, and a review of practice comparing the United States and the United Kingdom. Papers

discussing the situation in Britain looked at a range of topics and specific programs, including working with fathers; multi-agency centres; early intervention in child mental health; neighbourhood education and care services for young children; and using schools as a community resource for early intervention. This collection of papers would make valuable reading for anyone in the human services fields wanting to gain an overview of the situation with regard to early intervention in the United Kingdom and America.



**Video – Parents' First Steps: Surviving the First Weeks Following Childbirth, Mercy Hospital for Women, East Melbourne, 1999. Price: \$29.95.**

This practical resource, consisting of a 40-minute video and accompanying booklet, looks at the expectations, challenges and joys of caring for a new-born baby. It follows a real-life couple for the first few weeks after they bring their new baby home from hospital. The video covers four main topics. The first section, feeding your baby, looks at breast feeding, breast care and formula feeding. Section two, baby care, covers nappy changing, bathing and baby massage, settling, coping with fatigue and lack of sleep, and sudden infant death syndrome. Section three, entitled surviving, looks at the physical and emotional changes that affect parents. It discusses dealing with stress and the responsibility of parenthood, resuming sexual relations, general exercise and back care, and post-natal depression. The final segment of the video looks at where parents can go for

help. The video is very engaging with discussions from the new parents interspersed with comments from experts. The booklet reinforces the video material in a clear and easy to read style. Whilst primarily aimed at new parents, the video and booklet would also be valuable to professionals such as maternal and child health nurses, child care workers, teachers of early childhood studies, and parent educators.



**What's in a Name? Definitions and Domestic Violence, by Helen MacDonald, Domestic Violence and Incest Resource Centre, Brunswick, 1998. Price: \$12.00.**

While the term 'domestic violence' has been in common usage for many years, little research work has focused on establishing a common definition for this term. As this term, and others such as 'child abuse' and 'family violence' are continually used in research, and are integral to policy making and the legislative process, the author argues that it is necessary for these terms to be critically analysed and defined. The paper begins by discussing various definitions of domestic violence, ranging from dictionary definitions to those used by government departments, the United Nations, as well as legal definitions. The different definitions used within Australian state and federal laws are discussed, and a brief history of laws relating to domestic violence is given. Sub-categories of domestic violence such as physical, sexual and emotional violence, as well as economic abuse and child abuse are discussed. This report would make interesting reading for students and workers in the human services, as well as relevant legal professionals.

## Australian Social Trends 1999

Australian Bureau of Statistics, Canberra, 1999. Price: \$40.00.

The Australian Bureau of Statistics publication *Australian Social Trends* has over the past five years proven itself to be an indispensable reference tool for locating up-to-date statistics on a range of contemporary Australian social issues.

The recently released 1999 edition continues this tradition by providing relevant, easy to understand and well-presented data. The eight subject areas covered are: population; family; health; education; work; income and expenditure; housing; and culture and leisure. Each subject begins with a set of national and state summary tables and a glossary of terms used. This is followed by a number of in-depth articles focusing on particular themes. For example, the chapter on family explores the topics of spending time alone; looking after children; caring for children after parents separate; and remarriage trends after divorce. As 1999 is the International Year of Older Persons, a number of articles have been included on areas of



relevance to the wellbeing of older Australians. These include the health of older people; older jobs-seekers; the economic resources of older people; and the use of home care, hostel and nursing home services.

This is an attractive and accessible 200-page publication. Its style and presentation of data ensure that it will be equally useful to the general public, secondary and tertiary students, and professionals such as policy makers.

**Secondary School Curriculum Materials Curriculum Corporation, Carlton South.**

The Curriculum Corporation has produced a collection of four curriculum materials on family-related topics designed for students in the lower to middle secondary years. The collection consists of two textbooks, *Family Diversity* (1998; \$34.95) and *Families in Form* (1997; \$34.95), each of which is accompanied free of charge by the CD ROM *Family Figures Database* (1997). The set is completed by a fourth publication, *Family Numbers: Using Statistics* (by V. Zabar, M. Cropley and M. Rowland, 1998; \$19.95).

Both textbooks follow a similar format with text being followed by suggestions for student activities, as well as suggested topics for more in-depth research. *Family Diversity* examines family patterns (family size and shapes), family connections (migrant and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families), colonial families, gender, child care and work/family issues. The *Families in Form* text looks at the issues of what families are; how families change; family violence; and families in poverty.



The *Family Figures Database* CD ROM contains a collection of statistics (mainly sourced from the Australian Bureau of Statistics) which provide additional statistical sources to the issues discussed in the texts. The *Family Numbers: Using Statistics* publication is designed to teach students how to interpret, analyse and represent various forms of data with data covering the subject areas of education, employment, housing, demography, social services and leisure; learning activities for students accompany each chapter.

**Carole Jean** is the Reference Librarian in the Family Information Centre of the Australian Institute of Family Studies.