



Welcome to the second *Child Abuse Prevention Newsletter* for 2004, produced by the National Child Protection Clearinghouse at the Australian Institute of Family Studies.

In addition to our regular columns, in this edition we are pleased to feature: an overview of the proposed reforms to Victorian child protection legislation, policy and programs, by Leah Bromfield; reflections and highlights from the ISCPAN 15th International Congress held in Brisbane in September 2004, by Nick Richardson, Daryl Higgins and Thomas Feeny; and a review of the Australian Senate's report on abuse in institutional care, by Nick Richardson. Also featured are other reports, overviews, profiles, and a book review.

Staffing changes

In the previous newsletter, a number of staffing changes at the National Child Protection Clearinghouse this year were outlined. We are very grateful to Dr Adam Tomison who had been at the Institute for nine years and made an enormous contribution to the Clearinghouse and the field of child abuse prevention, as well as to Dr Janet Stanley and Ms Katie Kovacs for their valued contributions. We wish them well in their future endeavours.

The Clearinghouse now has three full-time research staff: Dr Daryl Higgins (Senior Research Fellow and Manager of the Clearinghouse), Ms Leah Bromfield (Senior Research Officer), and Mr Nicholas Richardson (Research Officer).

Daryl Higgins: Prior to joining the Institute in August this year, I was a Senior Lecturer in the School of Psychology at Deakin University. My PhD focused on the topic of "multi-type maltreatment" and it examined the overlap between the various forms of child abuse and neglect and their relationship to psychological adjustment problems in the immediate and long term. I have been researching and publishing on topics related to child abuse, neglect and family violence for almost 12 years, and have also worked as a therapist in private practice.

Leah Bromfield joined the Clearinghouse in September 2004. Leah is nearing completion of her PhD on the topic of chronic child maltreatment in statutory child protection services, comparing factors associated with chronic and isolated child maltreatment cases. Previously, Leah was Research Coordinator at Barwon Health's Paediatric and Adolescent Support Service where she undertook research on the impact of a child's chronic illness/disability on parents. Leah also has experience in crisis counselling and has previously been employed in the capacity of telephone counsellor for Lifeline and counsellor/advocate for the Barwon Centre Against Sexual Assault crisis response team.



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Protection Clearinghouse

The National Child Protection Clearinghouse has operated from the Australian Institute of Family Studies since 1995. The Clearinghouse is funded by the Australian Government Department of Family and Community Services as part of the Australian Government's response to the problem of child abuse and neglect. The Clearinghouse collects, produces and distributes information and resources, conducts research, and offers specialist advice on the latest developments in child abuse prevention, child protection, and associated family violence.

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Nick Richardson has been with the Clearinghouse since March 2004. He had previously been working at the Australian Institute of Family Studies as a researcher with the Australian Temperament Project as part of a collaborative venture with Crime Prevention Victoria (exploring a range of issues around adolescent antisocial behaviour). Nick has a background in psychology, and is well-versed on the issues of child abuse and other family violence.

The team will soon be joined by a writer/editor who will assist with communications, such as production of our newsletters and editing issues papers and other publications. In addition, we draw on the time and expertise of a number of the Institute's library staff to assist in conducting our research, as well as answering queries from the public for resources.

For further information about staff, see the *Who's Who* page in this newsletter, or check out the "staff profile" page on the Institute's website.

Future directions

In his departing editorial, Adam Tomison noted that from modest beginnings, the National Child Protection Clearinghouse has developed into a centre for excellence with a national and international reputation in the field of child abuse prevention and child protection. We are excited about the prospects for the Clearinghouse, and keen to make sure that the services we provide are meeting your needs. Please feel free to provide feedback about the Newsletter, Issues Papers and other materials such as the Resource Sheets being progressively published on the web (email feedback to: ncpc@aifs.gov.au).

As well as our usual publications, under the current contract (2004-2007), the Clearinghouse will be focusing on several specific research projects concerning: Indigenous out-of-home care and the safety of children; the national research agenda for mainstream and Indigenous foster care; and policies, procedures and evidence-based guidelines for creating and maintaining child-safe organisations. Keep an eye out for future publications and reports on these topics in the months ahead.

In consultation with the Australian Government Department of Family and Community Services, we will also be appointing a Reference Group of experts to enhance stakeholder input and feedback regarding existing services, and to assist with identifying possible new services, or ways to enhance existing service delivery.

We would like to remind readers that the Clearinghouse welcomes contributions to its Newsletter. Authors can submit articles that describe current initiatives or policies, discuss aspects of child abuse and neglect, or highlight issues in preventing, or responding to, child abuse and neglect. As part of a recent overview of our policies and procedures, a few small changes have been introduced to our general publication guidelines, as well as the posting of guidelines for the e-discussion list hosted by the Clearinghouse: *childprotect*. The revised guidelines are now posted on the web. However, please feel free to phone or email us to discuss your potential contribution, or to provide feedback.

Finally, on a personal note, I am very pleased to be part of National Child Protection Clearinghouse at the Australian Institute of Family Studies, and look forward to being of service to you all through the publications and resources we provide, and value your feedback and contributions as we work to make our society safer for children and young people.

– Daryl Higgins