

Centre for Excellence in Child and Family Welfare and CAFWAA 2005 National Symposium

LEAH BROMFIELD describes highlights from the 2005 National Symposium “Their Lives, Our Work: Critical questions for practice in child, youth and family services”.

In October 2005, the Centre for Excellence in Child and Family Welfare and CAFWAA (Child and Family Welfare Association of Australia) held the 2005 National Symposium – “Their Lives, Our Work: Critical questions for practice in child, youth and family services”.

The conference organisers should be congratulated on the success of the symposium. The program was very informative and included many excellent presenters, such as:

- Professor Marianne Berry who talked about engaging families;
- Brian Farragher who spoke about the interplay between traumatised children, stressed staff and pressured organisations;
- Howard Bath who provided an overview of current trends in out-of-home care in Australia;
- Dale Tolliday and Patrick Tidmarsh talked about working with young people who have sexually abused other children or young people and their families; and
- Paul Delfabbro and Alexandra Osborn presented the findings from a national profile study of children with high-support needs in Australian out-of-home care.

The study by Paul Delfabbro and Alexandra Osborn is an important piece of new research in Australia and is the feature paper for this edition of the Child Abuse Prevention Newsletter Conference Highlights.

Children with high support needs in Australian out-of-home care: A national profile study

Delfabbro, P. and Osborn, A.
University of Adelaide

The sample in this study was 364 children in care from four Australian states. The children included in the study were selected on the basis of having two or more placement breakdowns (or a breakdown within four months of entering care) as a result of the child's behaviour problems. Case file reviews and interviews were conducted to gather information. The sample was evenly split in terms of child gender, approximately 18 per cent of the children were Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islanders, and the average number of placements



per child was between 12 and 13. The majority of children experienced between two and five placement breakdowns due to the child's behaviour, most children needed both physical and psychological attention for health problems and 34 per cent of the sample had been suspended from school at least once.

Beyond the continuum: International service and intervention models for children with significant emotional and behavioural problems

Delfabbro, P. and Osborn, A.
University of Adelaide

In this study the authors undertook an international review of out-of-home care intervention models for children with significant emotional and behavioural problems. In order to complete this study the authors conducted an extensive literature review, an internet search to identify programs and site visits for intervention programs in the UK, US, Sweden, Canada and Australia. The study has resulted in a database of more than 750 programs. The authors reported that, broadly:

- the UK had a community-based family care and group home approach with few theoretically driven empirical models;
- the US had a wide range of intensive treatment options; and
- Sweden had a privatised foster care system with semi-therapeutic options.

The Australian approach to out-of-home care is most similar to the UK approach of the countries studied.

Full copies of these presentations, and others from the conference can be downloaded from:
www.cwav.asn.au/news/RecentEvents.html#Symposium

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