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Recent Research Abstracts

Issue 53 – October 2008

Child Inclusive Practice

'DOING WHAT IT TAKES': A FAMILY DISPUTE RESOLUTION CASE STUDY USING A MULTIDISCIPLINARY APPROACH Boyhan, Patricia A; Gerner, Francesca J T *Journal of Family Studies*, Nov 2007, Vol 13 Issue 2, pp 236-244

Abstract: Traditional models of family dispute resolution (mediation/conciliation) have been shown to be an excellent option for reasonably well-functioning separated parents who wish to avoid emotional and costly adversarial methods. However, for some clients who may be experiencing 'blocks' due to unresolved issues and emotional wounding from the former relationship, innovative and alternative clinical strategies may hold the key to releasing the blocks and restoring their ability to form a parental alliance, to focus on the best interests of their children, and to developing sustainable post-separation agreements. Using a case study, this paper demonstrates how a multidisciplinary approach may be implemented to provide best outcome for conflicted and/or highly complex families. (Author) (AN 2756391)

CHILD-FOCUSED AND CHILD-INCLUSIVE FAMILY LAW DISPUTE RESOLUTION: ONE YEAR FINDINGS FROM A PROSPECTIVE STUDY OF OUTCOMES McIntosh, Jennifer E; Wells, Yvonne D; Long, Caroline M *Journal of Family Studies*, May/Jun 2007, Vol 13 Issue 1, pp 8-25

Abstract: This prospective study compared outcomes over one year for two groups of separated parents who attended mediation about their entrenched parenting disputes. The two treatments studied both aimed to improve the psychological resolution of parental conflict with associated reduction of distress for their children. The child-focused intervention prioritised the needs of children in high conflict divorce without any direct involvement of the children, while the child-inclusive intervention incorporated separate consultation by a specialist with the children in each family and consideration of the children's concerns with the parents in the mediation forum. The child-inclusive intervention showed a number of independent effects not evident in the other treatment group, related to relationship improvements and psychological well-being. These effects were strongest for fathers and children. Agreements reached by the child-inclusive group were significantly more durable and workable over the year, and these parents were half as likely to instigate new litigation over parenting matters in the year after mediation than were the child-focused parents. The article considers possible mechanisms of change underpinning these outcomes. (Author) (AN 26087646)

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ACCESSING THE PARENTAL MIND THROUGH THE HEART: A CASE STUDY IN CHILD-INCLUSIVE MEDIATION Hewlett, Bill *Journal of Family Studies*, May/June 2007, Vol 13 Issue 1, pp 94-103

Abstract: This article describes and comments upon a recent case involving the author as a child consultant within a mediation process. It outlines the step-by-step approach employed to reduce acrimony between the parents and to refocus their attention on their children. It illustrates how the intrinsic concern that parents have for their children can be harnessed to bring about a shared desire for improvement in their children's lives, motivating them to forego their own perceived needs for 'justice' or retribution with respect to each other, in the service of a deeper understanding of the negative consequences of their conflict on their children. (Author) (AN 26087651)

SHARING THE PARENTING AFTER SEPARATION: A 10-YEAR-OLD'S TIPS FOR DEALING WITH DIFFERENCE Moloney, Banu *Journal of Family Studies*, 12(2), pp 277-280; 2006-280

Abstract: Child-focused and child-inclusive practices in post-separation dispute processes are informed by the principle of the best interests of the child. But also informing these practices is the truth that children are capable of deep understanding of complex life situations and can indeed educate adults in ways that are wise and compassionate. A challenge for adults is to place trust in the wisdom of the child. (AN FLH1977647051)

DVD 'DIALOGUES WITH SEPARATED PARENTS: CHILD FOCUSED DISPUTE RESOLUTION (McIntosh & Moloney, 2006) and **Companion Handbook 'Creating Child Focused Dialogues with Separated Parents: Theoretical and Clinical Underpinnings of Child Focused Dispute Resolution** Emery, Robert E *Journal of Family Studies*, Nov 2006, Vol. 12 Issue 2, pp 281-283

Abstract: A review of the DVD release of the parenting video 'Dialogues With Separated Parents: Child Focused Dispute Resolution' together with a companion handbook titled 'Creating Child Focused Dialogues With Separated Parents: Theoretical and Clinical Underpinnings of Child Focused Dispute Resolution,' by Jennifer McIntosh and Lawrie Moloney are presented. (AN 23341791)

CHILD-SENSITIVE PRACTICES IN HIGH-CONFLICT PARENTING DISPUTES: A 30 YEAR ROAD TO SERIOUS REFORM Moloney, Lawrie *Journal of Family Studies*, 12(1), pp 37-56 2006-56

Abstract: This address to the 2005 International Forum on Family Law, held at Parliament House, Canberra, attempts to capture the essence of two important initiatives in Australia - the creation of Family Relationship Centres and the development of non adversarial litigation process. The particular focus is on why these initiatives are so important for children and the post separation environment of their parents (AN FLH0762927432)

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CHILDREN'S VOICES: REFLECTIONS ON THE TELLING AND THE LISTENING Moloney, L
Journal of Family Studies, Oct 2005, Vol 11 Issue 2, pp 216-226

Abstract: This article considers two transcripts, illustrating that children are often wiser than we imagine. The transcripts also reveal that tapping into this wisdom involves considerable openness and skill on the part of the adult listener and brings with it a considerable degree of adult responsibility. This, in turn, has implications for child-inclusive practice in post separation mediation.
(Author) (AN 19160403)

CURRENT FINDINGS ON AUSTRALIAN CHILDREN IN POSTSEPARATION DISPUTES: OUTER CONFLICT, INNER DISCORD McIntosh, Jennifer; Long, Caroline
Journal of Family Studies, 11(1), pp 99-109, April, 2005-109

Abstract: This paper sets out descriptive baseline data on the first 111 Australian families participating in a current study of the efficacy of child- focused and child-inclusive Family Law Mediation. The families come from the first of two treatment groups in that comparative study. While outcome data are not yet available on this group, the baseline data, gathered prior to intervention, are of interest and value. The paper describes the nature of parents' conflict with each other, the strength of their parental alliance, and the psychological functioning of the children at the time of presentation to the mediation service. High mental health risk for the children in these families is evident, both from parents' and children's perspectives. Uniquely, the paper includes the perceptions of 73 children about their parents' conflict and its impact on them. Implications are discussed, underscoring the imperative of early intervention with separating families that includes screening of the children's experience of conflict and their own needs for recovery.
(AN FLH0855871347)

TRAINING FAMILY THERAPISTS TO WORK WITH CHILDREN AND FAMILIES: A MODIFIED DELPHI STUDY Sori, Catherine Ford; Sprenkle, Douglas H
Journal of Marital and Family Therapy, 30(4), pp 479-495, Oct 2004-495

Abstract: This study examined child inclusion issues and training marriage and family therapists (MFTs) to treat children. This modified Delphi study utilised a panel of experts, and gathered data through questionnaires and qualitative interviews. Panellists believe children should participate in family therapy sessions for both child and adult problems, except when parents are discussing sex or sensitive issues. Child-focused courses should emphasise developmental issues, engaging techniques, theoretical issues, play therapy theory, MFT treatment for child disorders, and specific child / family problems. Panellists suggest numerous child-focused references, but reached consensus for only one. Key therapist attributes and skills were identified. Deductive and inductive training methods and the role of supervision were highlighted. Although therapist playfulness and creativity were emphasized, few play techniques were included in the final profile.
(Author) (AN FLH2567974259)

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MEDIATING 'IN FRONT OF THE MIRROR': A CASE STUDY IN CHILD-INCLUSIVE PRACTICE

Holmes, Penny *Journal of Family Studies*, Oct 2003, Vol 9 Issue 2, pp 267-272

Abstract: This article focuses on the divorce mediation session of a family undertaken by Family Mediation Centre of Narre Warren, Victoria in 2003. A divorced woman approached Family Mediation Centre in early 2003. She and her husband had separated a few months earlier and their daughters, aged 16 and aged 12, were refusing to see their father. The couple also needed assistance to divide their matrimonial assets fairly. The woman reported that both daughters refused to go to their father's residence by themselves. The younger daughter was reluctant to see him at all. She stated that her own father was a paedophile, who had been charged with the sexual abuse of her older siblings and other children. (AN 12110170)

CHILD-FOCUSED DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMS FOR FAMILY DISPUTE PROFESSIONALS: RECENT STEPS IN THE EVOLUTION OF FAMILY DISPUTE RESOLUTION STRATEGIES IN AUSTRALIA

Webb, Nola; Moloney, Lawrie *Journal of Family Studies*, Vol 9(1), Apr 2003 pp 23-36

Abstract: In 2001, the Australian Government funded professional development programs for both legal and non-legal professionals who currently provide dispute resolution assistance to separating or separated families. These programs include Changing the Face of Practice (for family law practitioners) and Children in Focus (for mediators, conciliators, and counsellors). The aim has been to develop the ability of these professionals to assist more separated parents than has been the case to date, to resolve their differences in a way that focuses on the best interests of the children. The assumed starting point is the encouragement of arrangements that allow for parenting responsibilities after separation to continue to be shared. The precise manner in which these responsibilities are shared will vary significantly from case to case. However, the principle underlying the assumed starting point is that the arrangements are of benefit to the children and not simply tokenism. Within the framework of the Government's overall strategy, this paper traces background and challenges, and describes the two recent professional development programs. (PsycINFO Database Record (c) 2008 APA, all rights reserved)

CHILD INCLUSION AS A PRINCIPLE AND AS EVIDENCE-BASED PRACTICE [electronic

resource] applications to family law services and related sectors by Jenn McIntosh, *AFRC Issues* No 1 2007 <http://www.aifs.gov.au/afrc/pubs/issues/issues1.html>

THROUGH A CHILD'S EYES: CHILD INCLUSIVE PRACTICE IN FAMILY RELATIONSHIP SERVICES

by Mackay, Marcus Canberra Department of Family and Community Services, 2001.