



Studies in the News for



Children and Families Commission

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Introduction to Studies in the News

Studies in the News: Children and Family Supplement is a service provided to the First 5 California Children and Families Commission by the California State Library. The service features weekly lists of current articles focusing on Children and Family policy. Prior lists can be viewed from the California State Library's Web site at www.library.ca.gov/crb/SITN/index.html .

How to Obtain Materials Listed in SITN:

- When available on the Internet, the URL for the full-text of each item is provided.
- California State Employees may contact the State Information & Reference Center (916-654-0206; cslsirc@library.ca.gov).
- All other interested individuals should contact their local library - the items may be available there, or may be borrowed by your local library on your behalf.

The following studies are currently on hand:

IMPROVED CHILD DEVELOPMENT

Votes Count: Legislative Action on Pre-K Fiscal Year 2008. By Albert Wat and Jennifer V. Doctors. (Pre-K Now, Washington, DC) September 2007. 24 p.

[“A record-breaking 36 states increased funding for pre-kindergarten according to a report released... by Pre-K Now. ‘Votes Count: Legislative Action on Pre-K Fiscal Year 2008,’ an annual state-by-state analysis of legislative support for pre-k, shows historic momentum for funding early education across the country, with 528 million new dollars committed to providing at least 88,000 more children access to pre-k. The number of states increasing pre-k funding breaks last year's record of 34, and far exceeds the FY05 record of 15.... Iowa stands out for becoming one of seven states that are now providing or phasing in pre-k for all children, while three states - Arkansas, Louisiana and Oregon - moved to fully fund pre-k for all eligible at-risk children - a strong step toward providing pre-k for all. Notably, Florida, the only state with a voter mandate to provide pre-k for all 4-year-olds, was the lone state to decrease funding for pre-k. ‘Votes Count’ also highlights the spirit of bipartisanship that characterizes legislative work on the issue. It examines the ‘trickle up’ phenomenon playing out at the federal level as well, with key members of Congress recently introducing bills to provide federal support for state pre-k programs and quality improvements within them.”]

Full text at: www.preknow.org/documents/LegislativeReport_Sept2007.pdf

Highlights from “Votes Count”: www.preknow.org/resource/votescount/index.cfm

A Science-Based Framework for Early Childhood Policy: Using Evidence to Improve Outcomes in Learning, Behavior, and Health for Vulnerable Children. By the Center on the Developing Child. (The Center, Harvard University, Cambridge, Massachusetts.) August 2007. 36 p.

[“It is widely recognized that the path to our nation’s future prosperity and security begins with the well-being of all our children. To this end, one of the most important tasks facing policymakers is to choose wisely among strategies that address the needs of our youngest children and their families. Until now, confusing messages about which strategies actually can improve children’s life chances have presented enormous challenges to this decisionmaking process. As scientists, we believe that advances in the science of early childhood and early brain development, combined with the findings of four decades of rigorous program evaluation research, can now provide a strong foundation upon which policymakers and civic leaders with diverse political values can design a common, effective, and politically viable agenda. With this goal in mind, we describe in this report the process by which brain architecture is formed in very young children, with special attention to the important influence of early experiences on the production of a weak or sturdy foundation for future development, and integrate this scientific knowledge with the identification of those factors from the program evaluation literature that appear to offer the best course toward positive outcomes for children. We believe that this combination of neuroscience, child development research, and program evaluation data can provide an informed and pragmatic framework for those engaged in policy design and implementation.”]

Full text at: www.developingchild.harvard.edu/content/downloads/Policy_Framework.pdf

2007 Special Focus Report on International Comparisons: The Foundation for Child Development Child and Youth Well-Being Index (CWI) Project. By Kenneth Land, Duke University. (The Foundation for Child Development, New York, New York) July 2007. 17 p.

[“This analysis compares the United States to the United Kingdom, Canada, Australia and New Zealand. By comparing the United States to other industrialized, English-speaking countries, the report provides a more accurate baseline for comparison than other international assessments of child well-being. These Anglophone countries share a common language, similar cultural heritage, as well as comparable political and economic cultures. The report assembles 19 key international indicators of child well-being within seven domains of social life.... According to Dr. Kenneth Land of Duke University, the primary author of the report, ‘No country outscores the United States on all domains of child and youth well-being, but our comparison of five Anglophone countries show deficiencies in U.S. child well being. This report highlights the need for continuing public and private sector efforts to support and enhance the well-being of children and youth living in households with limited economic resources in the United States.’” Foundation for Child Development.]

Full text at:

www.newamerica.net/files/07%20International%20CWI-Final.pdf

State Policies to Improve the Odds for the Healthy Development and School Readiness of Infants and Toddlers. By Helene Stebbins, HMS Policy Research. (Zero to Three, Washington, DC) October 2007. 7 p.

[“Early childhood is a time of great opportunity. For young children, it is a time when they will learn to walk, talk and build the foundations for future development. For policymakers, it is a time to improve the odds that young children receive the basic supports and opportunities that will promote their healthy development and school readiness. The National Center for Children in Poverty's (NCCP) ‘Improving the Odds for Young Children’ project profiles each state's early childhood policy choices, and recognizes choices that go above and beyond the minimum requirements dictated at the federal level. This article describes a slice of these policies, those that focus on the infant and toddler years.” The Baby Monitor (October 1, 2007.)]

Full text at:

www.zerotothree.org/site/DocServer/NCCP_article_for_BM_final.pdf?docID=4281

Early Literacy Resource Handbook. By Lucy Arias and others. (Center for Early Education and Development, College of Education and Human Development, University of Minnesota, Minneapolis, Minnesota) [2007.] 65 p.

[“The city of Minneapolis and the White Earth Reservation in NW Minnesota planned and implemented the Minnesota Early Literacy Training Project [MELT] from January 2002 to April 2004. As both a research and a service project, MELT... was a complex variety of activities carried out by a multicultural staff of graduate research assistants and coaches/training specialists.... It has been an exciting project that worked with early educators in both a large urban area and a remote rural community, combining the discipline and rigor of a scientific study and of a high quality professional development program. The research study involved assessing three and four-year old children with five early literacy measures: the Individual Growth and Development Indicators... to measure verbal language development and phonological awareness; a comprehension task to measure children’s ability to comprehend and communicate; and Concepts About Print... to assess children understanding of print and books. The project’s service goal was to implement an early literacy training and coaching curriculum for early childhood staff working in community childcare settings. The training model used was ‘SEEDS of Early Literacy’ which invited pre-K educators to reflect on the impact of their practices and on their role in promoting early literacy as teachers of young children. The literacy coaching provided a challenging and supportive environment for teachers to examine their work and make changes based on data and observation.... This resource book illustrates the amazing work of the project’s early educators who understood the value of early literacy and creatively incorporated activities in all their interactions with children.”]

Full text at:

<http://cehd.umn.edu/ceed/publications/manuals/MELTResourceHandbook2005.pdf>

“Economic, Neurobiological, and Behavioral Perspectives on Building America’s Future Workforce.” By Eric I. Knudsen and others. IN: PNAS, vol. 103, no. 27 (July 5, 2006) pp. 10155–10162.

[“Nobel laureate James Heckman and distinguished researchers in other fields have released a... paper examining from a cross-disciplinary perspective the research in economics, developmental psychology, and neurobiology as they relate to developing workforce skills. They found that early experiences have a uniquely powerful influence on the development of cognitive and social skills as well as brain development. Their policy conclusion: the most efficient strategy for strengthening our future workforce both economically and neurobiologically and for improving quality of life is to invest in high-quality early care and education.” NIEER Online Newsletter (September 28, 2007).]

Full text at: www.pnas.org/cgi/reprint/0600888103v1.pdf

The Impact of Teacher Education on Outcomes in Center-Based Early Childhood Education Programs: A Meta-analysis. By Pamela Kelley, National Institute for Early Education Research, and Gregory Camilli, Rutgers. (NIEER, New Brunswick, New Jersey) 59 p.

[“Findings from a recent meta-analysis conducted by the National Institute for Early Education Research (NIEER)... indicate that outcomes in center-based early childhood care and education programs are more positive when teachers have a bachelor’s degree than when teachers have less education.” Natural Resources (October 4, 2007.)]

Full text at: <http://nieer.org/resources/research/TeacherEd.pdf>

Leaders and Laggards: A State-by-State Report Card on Educational Effectiveness. By the Institute for a Competitive Workforce, U.S. Chamber of Commerce. (The Chamber, Washington, DC) 2007. 88 p.

[“Results from this effort ‘to grade all 50 states and Washington, DC, on their K-12 school systems in order to identify both leaders and laggards in the tough business of school performance.’ View nationwide scores for overall academic achievement, achievement of low-income and minority students, return on investment, truth in advertising about student proficiency, and other data. Select a state from the map to read its education report card.” LII New This Week (October 11, 2007.)]

Interactive webpage: www.uschamber.com/icw/reportcard/default#top

Full text at:

www.uschamber.com/NR/rdonlyres/e6vj565iidmycznvk4ikm3mryxo5nslm7iq2uyrta5vrqdxsagjvkxafz6r3buzaopo4uxv4o4ep4nvhmc3ppc7drjd/USChamberLeadersandLaggards.pdf

Title I and Early Childhood Programs: A Look at Investments in the NCLB Era. By Danielle Ewen and Hannah Matthews. Policy Paper. Child Care and Early Education Series. Paper No. 2. (Center for Law and Social Policy, Washington, DC) October 2007. 28 p.

[“This paper explores the wide range of ways in which school districts are using Title I funds for early education through kindergarten and examines how the implementation of NCLB [No Child Left Behind] has impacted those investments. It also makes recommendations for LEAs [local educational agencies] interested in creating Title I-funded early education programs or thinking about how to sustain these types of investments in the face of policy and funding challenges.”]

Full text at: www.clasp.org/publications/ccee_paper2.pdf

IMPROVED FAMILY FUNCTIONING

Racial Disparity in Foster Care Admissions. By Fred Wulczyn and Bridgette Lery, Chapin Hall Center for Children. (The Center, University of Chicago, Chicago, Illinois) September 2007. 32 p.

[“According to national data, roughly 37 percent of the children in foster care are African American despite the fact that African American children make up only 15 percent of the children living in the United States. The ratio of the two percentages - 2.47 - reflects the fact that African American children are overrepresented in the nation’s foster care system. To better understand this overrepresentation, this study addresses the issue of entry rate disparities at the county level. The study is based on children first placed in foster care between 2000 and 2005, from 1,034 counties in states that contribute to the Multistate Foster Care Data Archive. Patterns in the underlying data connect disparity to age- and place-specific risks. Both placement and disparity rates are highest for infants – particularly African American infants. Disparity generally decreased over time because the placement rate for white children increased while the rate for black children declined. However, disparity increased for teens. Rates of entry declined in urban areas during a period when placement rates in more rural counties increased. In addition to these basic data, the report also examines how entry rate disparities at the county level vary in relation to characteristics of the local population. Disparity tends to be *lower* in counties with a larger proportion of African American residents, children in poverty, female-headed households, and residents with less than a high school education.”]

Full text at: www.chapinhall.org/content_director.aspx?arid=1463&afid=399&dt=1

Improving Work Supports: Closing the financial gap for low-wage workers and their families. By Nancy K. Cauthen. EPI Briefing Paper No. 198. (Economic Policy Institute, Washington, DC) October 2, 2007. 32 p.

[“Low-wage workers and their families face rising levels of economic insecurity.... At the same time, the costs of supporting a family - housing, medical care, child care, and transportation - have increased, consuming larger portions of the family budget.... Government ‘work support’ benefits - such as earned income tax credits, child care assistance, public health insurance coverage, and housing assistance - can help low-wage workers close the gap between insufficient earnings and basic expenses. And there is now abundant research evidence that work supports positively affect employment outcomes and family incomes, which in turn benefit children.... But even the families fortunate enough to receive the multiple benefits for which they are eligible face another set of challenges. Eligibility levels are typically low and families lose benefits before they can get by on earnings alone. In some cases, just a small increase in earnings leads to the complete termination of a benefit (e.g., child care subsidies and health insurance) - the family faces a ‘cliff’ and ends up financially worse off despite earning more. If we agree as a nation that full-time workers should be able to meet their basic needs and those of their children, we need a comprehensive, integrated work support system that is explicitly designed to address the challenges faced by ever-growing numbers of America’s workers and their families. U.S. work support programs need to be modernized and systematically overhauled. This paper begins by describing why work support programs are needed. It then goes on to explain the state of current U.S. programs and why we need to reform them. The final sections of the paper describe some concrete policy proposals for reform and offer recommendations about priorities and next steps.”]

Full text at: www.sharedprosperity.org/bp198/bp198.pdf

IMPROVED HEALTH

“Effects of Nurse Home Visiting on Maternal and Child Functioning: Age-9 Follow-up of a Randomized Trial.” By David L. Olds and others. IN: Pediatrics, vol. 120, no. 4 (October 2007) pp. e832-e845.

[“Objective. Our goal was to test the effect of prenatal and infancy home visits by nurses on mothers’ fertility and children’s functioning 7 years after the program ended at child age 2. Methods. We conducted a randomized, controlled trial in a public system of obstetric and pediatric care.... Results. Nurse-visited women had longer intervals between births of first and second children, fewer cumulative subsequent births per year, and longer relationships with current partners. From birth through child age 9, nurse-visited women used welfare and food stamps for fewer months. Nurse-visited children born to mothers with low psychological resources, compared with control-group counterparts, had better grade-point averages and achievement test scores in math and reading in grades 1 through 3. Nurse-visited children, as a trend, were less likely to die

from birth through age 9, an effect accounted for by deaths that were attributable to potentially preventable causes. Conclusions. By child age 9, the program reduced women's rates of subsequent births, increased the intervals between the births of first and second children, increased the stability of their relationships with partners, facilitated children's academic adjustment to elementary school, and seems to have reduced childhood mortality from preventable causes.”]

Full-text at: <http://pediatrics.aappublications.org/cgi/reprint/120/4/e832>

Vulnerable Infants and Toddlers in Four Service Systems. By Elizabeth Harbison and others. Brief No. 1. (The Urban Institute, Washington, DC) September 2007. 10 p.

[“This brief compiles the best available data on the characteristics of vulnerable young children in four service systems: Early Head Start (EHS); the Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC); the child welfare (CW) system; and Part C Early Intervention Programs (Part C). Data reveal that the children and families in these systems look fairly similar on some key dimensions, suggesting that policy initiatives to support young children's development might be informed by distilling common lessons from the systems' different research bases.”]

Full text at: www.urban.org/UploadedPDF/411554_four_service_system.pdf

“Association Between Infant Breastfeeding and Early Childhood Caries in the United States.” By Hiroko Iida and others. IN: Pediatrics, vol. 120, no. 4 (October 2007) pp. e944-e952.

[“Breast-feeding will not ratchet up the risk of toddler tooth decay, new research claims. Cavities affect one in four young children, but the contributing factors are more likely to be smoking during pregnancy, being poor, or being Mexican-American, the study in the October issue of ‘Pediatrics’ suggested. The finding throws a new twist into the heated debate between breast-feeding advocates and their critics. The American Academy of Pediatrics recommends breast milk for all infants for their first year of life. However, health experts have long been concerned about tooth decay once baby teeth come in, especially for infants who nurse all night.... Preventive dental care is important for toddlers, said Iida, as the data shows cavities can grow as soon as there are teeth. One in 10 of the 2-year-olds in the study already had a cavity. Among the 5-year-olds, nearly half (44 percent) had had at least one cavity.” HealthDay News (October 1, 2007).]

Full text at: <http://pediatrics.aappublications.org/cgi/reprint/120/4/e944>

IMPROVED SYSTEMS OF CARE

STATE CHILD CARE ASSISTANCE POLICIES 2007: SOME STEPS FORWARD, MORE PROGRESS NEEDED. BY KAREN SCHULMAN AND HELEN BLANK. ISSUE BRIEF. (NATIONAL WOMEN'S LAW CENTER, WASHINGTON, DC) SEPTEMBER 2007. 28 P.

[“THE NATIONAL WOMEN'S LAW CENTER'S (NWLC) ANNUAL REPORT AND ANALYSIS OF STATE CHILD CARE ASSISTANCE POLICIES SHOWS THAT ACCESS TO HIGH-QUALITY CHILD CARE FOR LOW-INCOME FAMILIES CONTINUES TO BE AN ISSUE IN MOST STATES. ‘STATE CHILD CARE ASSISTANCE POLICIES 2007...’ LOOKS AT PROGRESS MADE IN FOUR CRITICAL POLICY AREAS: REIMBURSEMENT RATES FOR PROVIDERS, INCOME ELIGIBILITY, WAITING LISTS FOR ASSISTANCE AND CO-PAYMENT REQUIREMENTS. THE ANALYSIS MAKES CLEAR THAT ALTHOUGH SOME PROGRESS HAS BEEN MADE SINCE 2006 MOST STATES STRUGGLE TO SURPASS WHERE THEY WERE IN 2001.” THE BABY MONITOR (OCTOBER 1, 2007).]

FULL TEXT:

WWW.NWLC.ORG/PDF/STATECHILDCAREASSISTANCEPOLICIESREPORT07WEB.PDF

STUDIES TO COME

[The following studies, reports, and documents have not yet arrived. California State Employees may place requests, and copies will be provided when the material arrives. All other interested individuals should contact their local library - the items may be available there, or may be borrowed by your local library on your behalf.]

IMPROVED CHILD DEVELOPMENT

“Associations between Media Viewing and Language Development in Children Under Age 2 Years.” By Frederick J. Zimmerman and others. IN: Journal of Pediatrics, vol. 151, no. 4 (October 2007) pp. 364-368.

[“Despite marketing claims, parents who want to give their infants a boost in learning language probably should limit the amount of time they expose their children to DVDs and videos such as ‘Baby Einstein’ and ‘Brainy Baby.’ Rather than helping babies, the over-use of such productions actually may slow down infants eight to 16 months of age when it comes to acquiring vocabulary, according to a new study by researchers at the University of Washington and Seattle Children's Hospital Research Institute. The scientists found that for every hour per day spent watching baby DVDs and videos, infants understood an average of six to eight fewer words than infants who did not watch them. Baby DVDs and videos had no positive or negative effect on the vocabularies on toddlers 17 to 24 months of age.... ‘The most important fact to come from this study is

there is no clear evidence of a benefit coming from baby DVDs and videos and there is some suggestion of harm,' said Frederick Zimmerman, lead author of the study and a UW associate professor of health services. 'The bottom line is the more a child watches baby DVDs and videos the bigger the effect. The amount of viewing does matter.'" University of Washington News (August 7, 2007). NOTE: Associations Between Media Viewing... will be available for loan.]

IMPROVED HEALTH

“Children's Television Exposure and Behavioral and Social Outcomes at 5.5 Years: Does Timing of Exposure Matter?” By Kamila B. Mistry and others. IN: Pediatrics, vol. 120, no. 4 (October 2007) pp. 762-769.

[“If your toddler is watching a lot of TV, turn it off now and save yourself a lot of trouble later. That's the conclusion of a new study that suggests that the negative effects of lots of early TV viewing on children can be overcome by limiting viewing before the age of 6. The study doesn't confirm that television is actually bad for young kids. Nor does it show exactly how much of a cutback would help children exposed to lots of TV early in life. Still, lead author Kamila Mistry... said it makes a strong case for a 'significant' difference in behavioral problems in kids depending on their viewing.... The American Academy of Pediatrics discourages kids under 2 from watching any TV at all, and it says older kids shouldn't watch more than two hours a day. Why take another look at TV and children? According to Mistry, the new study is unusual, because it followed kids over time - from 2.5 years to 5.5 years - and measured the effects of changing levels of TV watching. The researchers looked at the results of surveys of 2,702 families who enrolled in a national study between 1996 and 1998. The kids were followed from birth to age 5.5. Twenty percent of parents said their kids watched at least two hours of TV a day at both 2.5 and 5.5 years. Four in 10 children had TVs in their bedrooms at age 5.5. Even when the researchers adjusted the study results to account for factors such as income and 'parental involvement,' they found that kids who watched two or more hours of TV daily at both ages were more likely to suffer from sleep, attention and aggressive behavior problems, and 'externalizing of problem behaviors.' Also, those who watched more TV over time had greater problems dealing with others. But those children who reduced TV watching between the two ages didn't have a greater likelihood of either social or behavioral problems.” HealthDay News (October 1, 2007). NOTE: Children's Television Exposure... will be available for loan.]

CONFERENCES AND FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES

State Partnerships for Prevention: Reducing the Risk of Maltreatment of Very Young Children. Zero to Three, Washington, D.C. Applications are due by October 23, 2007.

[“States can get help in training child care providers to work with families to prevent the abuse of very young children. Zero to Three is calling for applications for its State Partnerships for Prevention Project to help states use the Preventing Child Abuse and Neglect: Parent-Provider Partnership curriculum.” CFK Weekly (October 3, 2007.)]

For more information:

www.zerotothree.org/site/PageServer?pagename=ter_trng_pcan_app1

13th Annual National Even Start Association Conference. “Make a Difference: Shape the Future.” October 28-30, 2007. Bahia Resort Hotel, San Diego, California.

[“Re-energize, rejuvenate and renew your commitment to children and families at the National Even Start Association 13th Annual National Conference.... This year's conference will feature a key note by DJ Eagle Bear Vanas, a husband, father and internationally acclaimed motivational storyteller. DJ is an Odawa Indian from Michigan and uses traditional warrior concepts and wisdom to inspire others to achieve their best in life and in careers. Concurrent sessions related to early childhood education, adult education, parenting education, interactive literacy, program management and evaluation will offer participants many choices and opportunities for growth. There will also be a post-conference session on the Parenting Education Profile (PEP). PEP is a framework for program planning and assessing information about parents' behaviors, attitudes, and understandings related to their children's literacy development used by many family literacy programs and others working with parents and children.”]

For more information and to register:

www.evenstart.org/p_development/conference.shtml