

# Section on Child Maltreatment Newsletter

## Division 37, American Psychological Association

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### President's Column

**Mary E. Haskett, PhD**  
*NC State University, Raleigh NC*

It was wonderful to see so many Section members in Washington D.C. for the APA convention! Members were busy presenting papers, attending sessions, socializing, and touring D.C. See pictures of Section members "in action" on our website and in the newsletter. If you were not able to attend this year, we hope you'll make it to Orlando in 2012. At the convention we continued to celebrate our 15-year anniversary. Visit the Section web site to see the slide show review of our history, compiled by **Lauren Stokes, Kate Cuno**, and **Elizabeth Risch** under the direction of **Frank Ezzo**. Frank also designed a banner to announce our anniversary at the Section and Division convention presentations.

The Section gave two awards during our business meeting at the convention. Both awardees were present to accept their awards. Our Early Career Award for Service was presented to **Staci Perlman** of Kutztown University of Pennsylvania. The Dissertation Grant Award was presented to **Angelique Day**, a doctoral student in the Interdisciplinary Health Sciences program at Western Michigan University. I spoke to Angelique at the convention and she already has very clear ideas about how to translate her dissertation findings into policy recommendations. I'm confident we will see these two scholars in leadership roles in our field! Thank you to **Cindy Miller-Perrin** for chairing the Awards Committee.

We had a very productive Executive Committee meeting during the convention. Highlights include a vote to extend our board to include an appointed Early Career Professional to lead initiatives related to the needs and interests of ECPs within the Section. Currently, more than half of our EC and Board members are ECPs, and students make up a significant proportion of our membership. You will hear more about this new initiative in the coming months. We also

voted to sponsor a service activity in Orlando to coincide with the APA convention; **Rex Culp** and **Lana Beasley** will be planning and organizing the event and they welcome your ideas. Details will be provided in early 2012 so you can make plans to participate with other Section members to make a difference in the lives of children and families in Orlando.

As I scanned the program to make decisions about sessions to attend, I was pleased to see that programming on child maltreatment and related topics (e.g., parenting, foster care) was sponsored by several Divisions other than our "home" Division 37. Specifically, I noticed relevant programming by Divisions 7, 16, 17, 31, 50, 53, and 54. Clearly, there are many possibilities for collaboration across APA Divisions. I had such an opportunity at the 2010 convention when I served as Discussant for a symposium sponsored by Division 48 (Peace Psychology) on the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Children. Papers presented in the symposium pointed to the many ways children throughout the world are mistreated and harmed by adults. If we expand our definition of maltreated children beyond the narrow scope of children in the protective services system, it is easy to see common interests and goals between the Section and Division 48.

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The papers were published as a Special Supplement in the most recent issue of the Division 48 newsletter, which can be found at this URL: <http://peacepsych.org/images/PeacePsychNewsletterSpring11.pdf> I was particularly struck by the overlap in our interests when I noticed a quote from Mahatma Gandhi displayed prominently in the newsletter— *“If we are to teach real peace in this world, ... we shall have to begin with the children.”* That same quote has been on the opening page of my university website for many years! I invite you to review the Special Supplement of the newsletter, and consider ways in which the Section might partner with Division 48 and other Divisions. There is much to be done on behalf of maltreated children and those at risk; our impact can be multiplied when we collaborate with others.

Before closing, I'd like to extend thanks to **Amie Lemos-Miller** for her time and dedication in serving as Editor of the Section newsletter for the past three years. The newsletter benefitted greatly from Amie's energy, creativity, and professionalism. We will miss her in the role of Editor but hope she will continue her involvement in Section activities in the coming years.

In Peace,

Mary Haskett

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## DISSERTATION GRANT

The Section on Child Maltreatment (Section 1 of Division 37, APA) announces its 2012 annual dissertation grant. A \$400 prize will be awarded to one successful graduate student applicant to assist with expenses in conducting dissertation research on the topic of child maltreatment.

Applicants are requested to submit an electronic copy of the following:

- 1) A letter of interest, indicating how the applicant would use the award funds toward the completion of the dissertation research;
- 2) A 100 word abstract; and
- 3) A five-page proposal summarizing the research to be conducted.

Please submit applications by **January 15, 2012** to:

Cindy Miller-Perrin, Ph.D.  
Professor of Psychology  
Pepperdine University  
Social Science Division  
Malibu, CA 90263  
[cindy.perrin@pepperdine.edu](mailto:cindy.perrin@pepperdine.edu)

### **Prior Awardees of the Dissertation Grant include:**

Angelique Day, MSW (2011) (Western Michigan University), “An examination of post-secondary educational access, retention, and success of foster care youth.”

Julie Laura Cohen (2010), “Enhancing retention of foster parents: The role of motivational interviewing.”

Stephanie Block (2006) (Univ. of California Irvine), Examining different types of false memory in sexually abused and nonabused adolescents and adults and the effects of trauma and memory.

## Best Practices

### EVIDENCE-BASED TREATMENT FOR CHILD ABUSE AND NEGLECT: THE CALIFORNIA EVIDENCE-BASED CLEARINGHOUSE FOR CHILD WELFARE

Amy Damashek

*Western Michigan University, Department of Psychology*

Child maltreatment can result in a range of social, emotional, and behavioral difficulties including Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (e.g., Dubner & Motta, 1999), depression (Boney-McCoy & Finkelhor, 1996), criminal behavior and aggression (Gelles & Straus, 1990; Shields, Cicchetti, & Ryan, 1994), social problems (Mannarino & Cohen, 1996), and school difficulties (Erickson & Egeland, 2002). Given the range of potential difficulties that maltreated children might experience, it is critically important to provide children and families with services that can effectively treat maltreating behavior and symptoms. Moreover, with regard to prevention, it is also important to implement services that have been found to be effective, rather than investing resources in programs that have little evidence of effectiveness.

The California Evidence-Based Clearinghouse for Child Welfare (CEBC; <http://www.cachildwelfareclearinghouse.org/>) is an excellent resource for those seeking to effectively treat maltreating behaviors and symptoms related to abuse or neglect (e.g., child trauma), as well as to prevent child abuse and neglect. The CEBC was developed to disseminate information about evidence-based services to child welfare agencies and those who deliver services to maltreated and maltreating children. The CEBC is sponsored by the California Department of Social Services in cooperation with the Chadwick Center on Children and Families/Rady Children's Hospital, and the Child and Family Services Research Center in San Diego.

Currently, The CEBC includes reviews on 31 topic areas (e.g., child neglect, domestic violence, adult anger management) and more than 100 programs. Each of the programs is reviewed by topical experts and scored, using a 1-5 scale, on two dimensions: (1) scientific evidence of effectiveness and (2) relevance to child welfare. The scientific reviews are periodically

updated to reflect current research. To obtain a scientific rating of "1, well supported" a program must have: a treatment manual; 2 randomized controlled trials (RCT) in different settings indicating superiority of the treatment to a comparison treatment; 1 RCT showing a treatment effect lasting at least 1 year post-treatment; and reliable and valid outcome measures. In addition, if several outcome studies have been conducted, the preponderance of studies must support the efficacy or effectiveness of the treatment (<http://www.cachildwelfareclearinghouse.org>).

In addition to rating each program, the CEBC website provides a brief description of each program as well as a detailed report that includes the main components of the program, the format, the recommended duration and intensity, delivery settings, the resources needed to implement the program, and relevant peer reviewed research on the program. The CEBC was initially developed to provide information about programs that are used or marketed in the state of California; however, topic area experts strive to other programs relevant to the topic area, regardless of whether they are known in the state of California.

A review of the treatments in the CEBC rated for treatment of child physical abuse, sexual abuse, and neglect indicates that there are few treatments that have received the highest scientific rating (i.e., 1, well-supported) by the CEBC (for a more thorough discussion see Damashek & Chaffin, in press). Treatments for physical abuse have been the most successful in accumulating evidence for effectiveness, and the CEBC has identified 3 treatments that have been rated as "1, well-supported" (i.e., Parent-Child Interaction Therapy, Incredible Years, and Triple P Positive Parenting Program). Each of these 3 programs was originally developed to treat disruptive child behaviors.

With regard to sexual abuse, the website rates programs for youth who have engaged in inappropriate sexual

behavior with other youth. There is one program that has received a scientific rating of “1, well established” (i.e., Multisystemic Therapy for Youth With Problem Sexual Behaviors), and one program that has been rated as “2, supported by research evidence” (i.e., Cognitive Behavioral Therapy for Childhood Sexual Behavior Problems).” With regard to trauma symptoms resulting from sexual abuse, one treatment (i.e., Trauma Focused Cognitive Behavioral Therapy) has been rated as “1, well established.”

Progress on the accumulation of evidence for treatments for child neglect has been the slowest. No programs have been rated as “well-supported” for the treatment of neglect. Two programs (i.e., Childhaven Therapeutic Child Care and Homebuilders) have been rated as “2, supported by research evidence” and two (i.e., SafeCare and Family Connections) have been rated as “3, promising research evidence.”

In summary, the CEBC provides a database for practitioners to find the most well supported treatments that are relevant to clients who have been victims or perpetrators of maltreatment or for those who are at risk. The CEBC also provides information about scientific progress in treating child abuse and neglect. On a positive note, some significant strides have been made in developing an evidence base for treatments to address child abuse and neglect, particularly in the area of physical abuse. Unfortunately, however, the list of “well established treatments” is relatively short, and evidence for effective treatment of child neglect is the slowest to accumulate. Thus, it is important for researchers to continue to engage in high quality research endeavors to increase the evidence base, especially for treatment of child neglect. In short, child maltreatment researchers “have their work cut out for them.”

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## Special Feature

### MEET OUR FORMER SECTION PRESIDENTS

*In this final issue of the 2011 Section newsletter, our 15-year anniversary celebration concludes with interviews with Past Presidents **Bette Bottoms** (2001-2002), **Sharon Portwood** (2005-2006), and **Anthony Mannarino** (2007-2008). We are fortunate to have had the opportunity to hear from all of the Section past presidents in the 2011 issue of the newsletter. We thank them for sharing their insights and for their continued commitment to the Section.*

#### Meet the Section's 2005-2006 President

*Margaret Stevenson, PhD interviewed **Bette Bottoms, PhD**. Dr. Bottoms was the 2001-2002 Section President.*

**Who were the individuals leading the initiative to start a Section on child maltreatment? Why did they think the Section was needed and give me your own thoughts on why the Section was needed?**

Georgi Achilles, Sandra Barrueco, and I recently summarized the founding of the Section in a chapter about the history of Division 37. We noted that the Section arose from discussions in the 1990s amidst a climate of nationwide distress over escalating rates of child abuse. Diane Willis directed the APA's Coordinating Committee on Child Abuse and Neglect to pioneer three working groups focused on child abuse issues: prevention and treatment, the legal system, and education and training. The conclusion was that APA needed an organization with the goal of championing child abuse issues exclusively. Willis took the idea to the Division 37 executive committee and President Jan Culbertson, and in 1994, the Section on Child Maltreatment was established. As Chair of the new Section, Willis wrote its original bylaws and led a Coordinating Committee of devoted child advocates including Barbara Boat, Barbara Bonner, Jan Culbertson, Dennis Drotar, Jeff Haugaard, Karen Saywitz, and Cynthia Schellenbach.

The first President, Jeffrey Haugaard, further developed the bylaws and appointed an Advisory Board of 20 widely known researchers, clinicians, and advocates in child maltreatment. Subsequent Section Presidents were Gail S. Goodman, me, Tom Lyon, Sharon Portwood, Anthony Mannarino, Cindy Miller-Perrin, and our current president, Mary Haskett. Of course, even this list omits many other psychologists whose work

helped lay the foundation for the study of child maltreatment and therefore for the Section on Child Maltreatment – apologies to all of them.

**Do you feel this mission (below) is still relevant 15 years later?**

**SECTION MISSION:** The purpose of the Section shall be to promote the general objectives of the American Psychological Association and the Division of Child, Youth, and Family Services to support and encourage the development of the scientific study of child maltreatment and of sound professional practice relevant to child maltreatment, to provide up-to-date information about maltreatment, to encourage networking across divisions and sections in the area of child maltreatment, and to advance scientific inquiry, training, and professional practice in the area of child maltreatment as a means of promoting the well being, health, and mental health of children, youth, and families.

Yes, of course the mission is still relevant, and sadly enough, there will probably be no reason to revisit this mission statement any time soon. The Section is still the only dedicated home within APA to professionals who are primarily concerned with child maltreatment issues, and it is home to child maltreatment-related advocacy and public policy work within APA. Through the dissemination of information in publications and trainings, congressional briefings, and amicus briefs, Section members have heightened the national awareness of child maltreatment and the needs of victims in public, professional, and political domains. The Section should continue to support quality research on these issues and to share this information, translating it into policy that serves the needs of maltreated children.

### **What are the current challenges related to child maltreatment that the Section should be addressing at this time?**

I hope the Section continues to focus on obtaining the necessary resources (money and people) to conduct congressional hearings regularly, identify legal cases ripe for the application of psychological knowledge via amicus briefs, develop more educational curricula on topics related to child maltreatment, and develop and use advocacy training materials. I'll also comment on a challenge that the Section faced while I was President, and one that I believe it still faces: taking a stand against physical child discipline. My one great disappointment was that I walked out of the presidency having not been able to lead APA to pass a strong statement against physical punishment of children.

### **How has your own career developed and changed since you were President of the Section?**

My career has changed a great deal in some ways, but not so much in others. I am still at the University of Illinois at Chicago, one of the most diverse and social-action-focused universities in the country, where I have been since I got my doctorate in 1992. I am still active in research, most recently being led by my wonderful graduate students to study issues relating to public perceptions of sexual offender registration laws applied to juvenile offenders. But I'm only a 25% time professor these days, with 38% of my time being spent as Dean of the Honors College (as is former Section President Jeff Haugaard at SUNY-Albany, coincidentally) and 37% of my time spent as Vice Provost for Undergraduate Affairs. (Yes, this does add up to more than 100% in practice.)

I am a career researcher, a career child advocate, but I am also a career administrator, because I am impatient when faced with a problem. I want to solve it and move on, and I want to work with smart, interesting others while doing it. That's why I was a president of the Section on Child Maltreatment, and why I was a president of Division 37. These roles taught me extremely valuable leadership skills as well as the confidence to pursue other major academic leadership positions. And these roles gave me friends for life. So the Section really was my personal stepping stone to where I am today, in a job – jobs, that is – that I absolutely love.

### **Meet the Section's 2005-2006 President**

*Jessica Loehman interviewed Dr. Sharon Portwood in May 2011. Dr. Portwood was the 2005-2006 Section President.*

### **What initially drew you into the field of maltreatment?**

I did some volunteer work at a center that provided short term care for children who had been taken from their homes by DSS – typically following incidents in which the police had arrested the adults present and DSS needed a temporary place to house the children until the agency could sort out placement issues. In the course of my volunteer work, I saw many children with obvious, outward signs of abuse. This really pulled at my heartstrings and made me think that I could put my education and professional skills to work to help maltreated children.

### **How did you get involved with the Section?**

I knew Dr. Jeff Haugaard, who founded the Section, and he got me involved very early on. I was excited about the new Section because there wasn't really a central place within APA for people who were interested in child maltreatment.

### **When you were president of the Section in 2005, what were some of the goals you were trying to accomplish?**

At that time, the Executive Committee was focused on getting students more involved, and there was a lot of good work around putting products like internship guides together for students. I was lucky enough to come on board at a time when people had already started a lot of good things, and it was my job to help these initiatives to gain a foothold to ensure that they continued.

### **So you were more focused on student involvement in the Section?**

Yes, continuing to expand student involvement, but also continuing to reach out to non-academics. One of the continuing challenges we faced was how best to reach out to psychologists who are not affiliated with universities and to make sure that people who are in practice still have a good link back to the Section. This can, of course, start with building strong connections to individuals when they are students.

**What were some things that you were able to accomplish as president?**

We were so busy, in many respects, just trying to make sure that the Section would take hold and thrive. To that end, I became really involved with Division leadership in my role as Section President. At the time, the Section was so new that we needed to be proactive to make sure that we had a seat at the table. It wasn't that people didn't want to include the Section, but the Section had never been there before. For example, an early draft of a new Division brochure failed to mention the Section – again, not because we were intentionally excluded, but because we still had a lot of work to do to create awareness of the Section. I hope that I did my part to carry the baton forward to help us get more established as an important part of the Division.

**You have touched on this some already, but in what way is the Section important to APA?**

I see the Section as the unique link to information and activities specific to child maltreatment for all types of psychologists – students, researchers, academics, and those in private practice. The Section also works to ensure that other Divisions consider issues of child maltreatment that are relevant to their work. For example, child maltreatment is clearly an important issue for many clinicians who are members of Division 12, but since that is a large Division, it helps to have the Section voicing those concerns in partnership with Division 12. The Section can play an important advocacy role for issues of child maltreatment.

**How have things changed in the field over your career?**

I think excellent work has been done over the years. We know so much more based on good research. The continuing challenge is how we can ensure that sound research findings reach the people who can put that knowledge into practice. While there is more good quality, empirically based knowledge available, it is still so slow to get out to policy and practice. In my experience, people who work in child maltreatment tend to see people who are familiar with work in the area, giving them the mistaken impression that current knowledge is really getting out there. However, then you'll participate in a group outside the direct sphere of child maltreatment and realize that none of them knows about these advances. It's a constant struggle to get the word out.

**What are some of the current challenges that face the field?**

The biggest one, of course, is budget cuts. Whenever budget cuts come around they seem to hit mental health services for children, making our role as advocates even more important.

**What directions should the section take over the next five years?**

I would emphasize the continuing need for advocacy. David Finkelhor and his colleagues put out some really good data several years ago demonstrating that significant progress had been made in reducing the incidence of child maltreatment. The researchers were very good to emphasize that all of these advances were in large part due to resources being directed toward prevention. However, now all of those resources are being pulled. I often feel like we make advances as a field, and then we get pushed backwards. There is still a critical need to get the word out that there is a huge cost to not addressing issues of child maltreatment. Not only is there a tremendous human cost, but there is a very real financial cost to putting future adults out there who will struggle in multiple areas of their lives. We need advocacy to ensure that the field continues to move forward and that we don't take those backward steps.

**Meet the Section's 2007-2008 President**

*In April, Kate Cuno, Graduate Student Representative-Elect, interviewed Past President Anthony Mannarino, Ph.D. Dr. Mannarino was the Section President in 2007-2008.*

**What were some of the goals the Section on Child Maltreatment was pursuing during your term as President?**

Certainly first and foremost we had experienced a decline in membership in the period preceding my term as president so one of the important goals was to try and increase membership; that was probably number one on the list. I would say number two was that during my term as president, it coincided with the start up of the Division of Trauma Psychology, Division 56, and we were looking to see what kind of relationship we could establish between the Section and the new Division of Trauma Psychology. Those were the two major areas we were focusing on.

**Describe some of the accomplishments of the Section in 2007 and 2008.**

In terms of membership increase, there was good news and bad news. The bad news was that we did not

increase membership, at least not by much; the good news is that we stemmed the tide and did not continue to have a decline in membership as we had the proceeding 3-4 years. During the following couple of years, we had picked up some membership and overall, stabilized at somewhat of a lower level. I think a lot of people have felt that at least a couple of factors were at work in that regard, one being the economy and people's lack of discretionary money to be spent on joining things like the Section.

With regard to our second goal, we did establish a relationship with the Division of Trauma Psychology and continue to have an ongoing liaison with them. In fact in 2009 we were able to do a symposium at APA sponsored jointly by our Section and Division 56 on childhood trauma and maltreatment, so we got some things accomplished there and continued that liaison with Division 56. The third major accomplishment included a committee and task force led by Sandy Berman, on the effects of corporal punishment in the home. Sandy and her colleagues did a very nice job in summarizing the literature on the impact of corporal punishment on children and at the end of my term they were looking to see how that paper would be published.

#### **What initially drew you into the field of child maltreatment?**

Initially, some clinical work I was doing with the court system, evaluating children who had been referred for suspicion of child maltreatment, primarily physical or sexual abuse. This was 30 years ago and it was so apparent at the time that there were huge gaps in our knowledge and understanding with regard to the outcomes of maltreatment on children. So it seemed a wide-open area for research opportunities with huge societal implications.

#### **How has the field changed over the course of your career in child maltreatment?**

The biggest way that it has changed has been the amount of research that has gone on in the last 2-3 decades. When I got started there was little to no research in child maltreatment and over the last 30 years there has been a burgeoning of research on child maltreatment outcomes, prevention, treatment, and so forth. The amount of research has been enormous and with it has come the establishment of journals in the field, like the Journal of Child and Adolescent Trauma and Child Maltreatment, among others. The field has really grown from its infancy, specifically with regard to

the research and the academic part of it that did not exist 30 years ago.

#### **In what ways is the Section important to APA? Is the mission of the Section still relevant?**

I definitely think it is. If APA has a commitment to children and if APA has a commitment to making sure that the youngest people in our society grow up free of maltreatment, I can't think of anything more important that APA could advocate for. I think it is as relevant as it ever was, if not more so. Of course there are many competing priorities in APA but I think it is heart and center of what APA ought to be about.

#### **What are some of the current challenges in the field, and what directions should the Section take over the next 5-10 years to move the field forward?**

When you think about child abuse and neglect, we know that more than half of the children who are referred for suspicion of child maltreatment are referred because of neglect. Physical and sexual abuse has been studied extensively but neglect has been neglected for the most part. As a result, we don't have agreed-upon definitions of neglect, few descriptive studies about what children who are neglected look like, and few to no studies about appropriate treatments. I think we need to make many more inroads on childhood neglect since it is far and away the largest area of child maltreatment for which children get referred. Many people have said that but I'm not so sure we have made enough headway.

The other thing is, with regard to APA, lots of different areas look at child maltreatment; for example, Division 56, Trauma Psychology, The Division of Family Psychology, to name a few. The question then is how can our section remain a viable section; how can it survive and thrive? I think that's a challenge we've had over the last 5 years and that's partly why we have had a decline in membership, that as well as a suffering economy. That's probably the greatest challenge that current presidents and future presidents are going to face with the section.

#### **Do you have any final thoughts to share with us?**

When section originally came into being, I was part of the original executive committee in 1995, 1996. I've always been a member of the Section but didn't get actively involved until I was elected President-elect in 2005. It was very great to get involved with a really terrific group of people who are advancing the cause of helping this group of kids.

## Public Policy

### CONGRESS RETURNS TO ONGOING BUDGET BATTLES

Thomas L. Birch, J.D.  
*National Child Abuse Coalition*

Congress returned from the August recess and legislators turned their attention again to the issues of spending and revenues. The Joint Select Committee on Deficit Reduction – the so-called “supercommittee” of six Democrats and six Republicans from the House and Senate — created by the Budget Control Act to settle the debt ceiling controversy is charged with identifying \$1.5 trillion in spending cuts by Thanksgiving this year. Congress must enact the cuts by December 23.

There can be little doubt that discretionary spending will suffer mightily. President Obama has said that the deal will result in the lowest level of domestic spending since the Eisenhower administration in the 1950s. Everything in discretionary spending is on the table, and the debt ceiling compromise does not include any immediate revenue additions or tax increases. That initiative is left to the supercommittee.

In the meantime, work on individual appropriations has essentially been put on hold. For the fifteenth straight year – what gets to look like business as usual — Congress will allow a new fiscal year to begin on Oct. 1 without having enacted all of the regular appropriations bills needed to keep the government running. Almost none of the dozen regular appropriations bills for fiscal 2012 are ready for enactment. Instead, Congress is developing a continuing resolution to keep the government operating for a month or more after the new fiscal year begins October 1, while the appropriations process advances. Typically, the continuing resolution allows agencies to operate at their prior year level, but that has not been the case in the current congressional session with House Republicans forcing specific spending cuts in the process of continuing federal funding on a stop-gap measure.

The House Labor-HHS-Education Appropriations Subcommittee had planned to draft its bill on September 9, but that markup session was canceled and has not been rescheduled. In the Senate, Sen. Tom Harkin (D-IA), chair of the Senate Labor-HHS-Education Appropriations Subcommittee, has said he plans to go ahead with drafting a bill in his subcommittee, but no certain date has been set.

When the House finally does plan to act, appropriations subcommittees will be bound by the allocations, made by the House Appropriations Committee for the Fiscal Year 2012 spending allocations, cutting total federal discretionary spending by approximately \$30 billion in the next fiscal year compared to FY 2011. The plan presented by House Appropriations Committee Chair Harold Rogers (R-KY) would cut combined spending for the Labor, Health and Human Services (HHS), and Education Departments by more than \$18 billion. The Department of Defense would receive an increase of \$17 billion.

The allocations, referred to as the “302(b)s,” represent the amount of federal money each appropriations subcommittee is given to work with in drawing up its funding legislation. Rogers warned that appropriations this year would include “double-digit reductions” in almost all areas of non-security spending. The reduced spending allocations set by Rogers would cut \$41.5 billion from President Obama’s budget request for the Labor, HHS, and Education appropriations bill.

### GAO REPORT CERTIFIES UNDERCOUNT OF CHILD FATALITIES

More children are likely to have died of maltreatment than are reflected in the estimated 1,770

child fatalities reported in *Child Maltreatment 2009*, the most recent study of the annual analysis of the National Child Abuse and Neglect Data System (NCANDS) issued by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS). According to testimony presented on behalf of the U.S. Government Accountability Office (GAO) at a hearing on July 12 before the House of Representatives Ways and Means Subcommittee on Human Resources, the undercounting of child maltreatment fatalities, as explained in GAO's report [\*Child Fatalities from Maltreatment: National Data Could be Strengthened\*](#), is reflected by the fact that nearly half the states report their data to NCANDS based solely on children already known to child protective services (CPS) agencies. However, not all children who die from abuse or neglect were previously known to protective services. While HHS has encouraged states to obtain information on child maltreatment fatalities from other, non-CPS sources of information, 24 states reported to GAO that their 2009 NCANDS data did not include child fatality information from any non-CPS sources.

Rep. Dave Camp (R-MI), chair of the Ways and Means Committee who commissioned the GAO study, opened the hearing before turning the gavel over to the subcommittee chair, Rep. Geoff Davis (R-KY). Davis emphasized the importance of focusing on improving counts of child maltreatment fatalities "to allow to better protect children."

Testifying on behalf of GAO, Kay E. Brown, Director of Education, Workforce and Income Security at GAO, advised that a synthesis of information about child fatalities from multiple sources such as death certificates, state child welfare agency records, or law enforcement reports could produce a more comprehensive picture of the extent of child deaths than reliance only on CPS data. She cited a study finding that more than 90 percent of the child fatality cases could be identified by linking any two of the data sources. Currently, the undercount of fatalities, Brown told the subcommittee, ranges from 55% to 76% using multiple reporting sources.

Brown cited further barriers to collecting accurate counts, including inconsistent state definitions of maltreatment, differing state legal standards for substantiating maltreatment, and missing state data. In addition, local child death investigators, such as law enforcement officials, coroners and medical examiners, and CPS staff, are often unable to determine, without definitive medical evidence, that a child's death was caused by abuse or neglect rather than natural causes. GAO's survey found that in 43 states medical issues were a challenge in determining child maltreatment, exacerbated by significant variations in the level of skill and training for coroners and medical examiners from state to state. Brown also explained that the sharing of reporting data across jurisdictions – county or state – is often hindered by confidentiality rules governing child abuse reporting information.

The 1988 amendments to the Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act (CAPTA) included a provision proposed by the National Child Abuse Coalition to require HHS to establish a national data collection and analysis program for child maltreatment data. Up to that time, the annual collection of reporting information supported on a discretionary basis by HHS had been discontinued by the Reagan administration.

In responding to requests from the states for additional assistance from HHS in collecting data on child fatalities and near-fatalities from maltreatment and using this information for prevention efforts, GAO recommends in its report that the Secretary of HHS:

- take steps to further strengthen data quality, such as by identifying and sharing states' best practices and helping address differences in state definitions and interpretation of maltreatment;
- expand available information on the circumstances surrounding child fatalities from maltreatment;

- improve information sharing on the circumstances surrounding fatalities from maltreatment; and
- estimate the costs and benefits of collecting national data on near fatalities.

Teresa Covington, director of the National Center for Child Death Review, testified that child deaths from neglect are especially underreported, significant in understanding that the majority of all child maltreatment cases are attributed to neglect. She also identified differing state definitions and varying capacity for investigation as challenges to an accurate understanding of the scope of child fatalities and recommended developing national standards on definitions and reporting criteria.

Dr. Carole Jenny, director of the child protection program at Hasbro Children's Hospital in Providence, R.I., urged federal support for training more doctors in child-abuse pediatrics to be better able to help police, forensic, and social service agencies in making correct diagnoses of child deaths from abuse or neglect and by ruling out conditions that mimic abuse or neglect.

Michael Petit, president of the Every Child Matters Education Fund, pointed to the findings and recommendations in the fund's report, *We Can Do Better: Child Abuse and Neglect Deaths in America*, asserting that child protective services are "stretched too thin." Petit maintained that "protection is a matter of geography," where some states appear to have a higher death rate than others.

Jane Burstain, senior policy analyst at the Austin, Texas Center for Public Policy Priorities, urged the subcommittee panel be mindful of the implications for protecting children and preventing maltreatment and related fatalities in their current deliberations over reducing federal spending. In her testimony she said, "To cut programs that support struggling families just when they need it the most is the very definition of penny wise and pound foolish." If we fail to invest in our families and children, she warned, "our children will pay for it with their lives."

When asked by the legislators on the subcommittee what services have proven successful in supporting parents and helping to prevent maltreatment of children, more than one witness identified home visiting.

Rep. Jim McDermott, (D-WA), struck a similar theme when asking about states with the best systems to predict and prevent abuse or neglect. Petit identified Vermont with its extensive safety net including comprehensive health care and home visiting services.

Other members of the subcommittee expressed differing concerns. Rep. Rick Berg (R-ND), a freshman member of the subcommittee, spoke of the importance of improving communication among agencies to achieve a more complete picture of the problem. Rep. Tom Reed (R-NY), another first-term member, proposed requiring drug and alcohol testing for all parents on public assistance.

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## Case Notes

### WHEN ARE PROSTITUTED YOUTH PERCEIVED AS VICTIMS VERSUS OFFENDERS?

*Margaret C. Stevenson, Ph.D., The University of Evansville,  
Barbara A. Oudekerk, Ph.D., University of Virginia,  
Erica C. Marburger, The University of Evansville*

In almost all 50 states, prostituted youth are legally recognized as adult offenders (Adelson, 2008). Yet, recent federal anti-trafficking statutes enacted to stem the tide of human trafficking deem all minors under 18 engaged in prostitution to be victims (Trafficking Victims Protection Act, 2008). As a result of such discrepancies, a prostituted child of the same age and same circumstances could be treated as a victim or a criminal depending on various factors such as the legal approach to which law enforcement agencies adhere, whether or not the child is a U.S. citizen, and whether the case is state or federal. Even further, the treatment of prostituted youth varies from state to state (Adelson, 2008). For instance, the age at which prostituted youth are prosecuted as adults ranges from 12 to 18 across states (for a review, see Adelson). Of course, being treated as a victim versus an offender has serious consequences for a prostituted child. Prostituted youth who are treated as victims receive services (i.e., safe housing, counseling, medical care, legal advocacy, case management) that they do not receive if they are prosecuted as adult offenders (Brittle, 2008).

Consider the case of B.W., a 13-year-old girl who was arrested for prostitution after offering to engage in oral sex with an undercover police officer for twenty dollars (B.W. v. Texas, 2010). She was charged and convicted in adult criminal court. Before her trial, a State psychologist examined B.W. and found that she had a history of untreated substance abuse and had been on probation for other charges in the past. Additionally, B.W. revealed to the psychologist that she had been living and having sex with her thirty-two-

year-old "boyfriend" for over a year and previously had been physically and sexually abused.

At trial, B.W. pled guilty to charges of performing sex acts for a fee and the court found that she had engaged in "delinquent conduct" equivalent to the offense of prostitution, a class B misdemeanor. Paradoxically, 13-year-old B.W. was convicted of a crime even though federal law deems all child prostitutes to be victims and Texas State Law defines the age of fourteen as the legal age of consent. The State of Texas claimed that their laws regarding the legal age of consent are designed to protect minors from sexual abuse rather than to protect juvenile offenders like B.W.

Because B.W. was charged as an adult and convicted, she was prevented from receiving services that could have broken the possible control that her boyfriend had over her and helped her recover from her illegal drug addiction. In different states, however, B.W. would have been treated quite differently. In the state of Missouri, for instance, B.W. would be treated like a victim in need of therapeutic services; she would be offered safe housing, medical care, and intensive counseling (Benvenue, 2007). In contrast, in Las Vegas and other cities with high incidences of child prostitution, it is possible that B.W. would spend time in an institution similar to jail and would not be offered any rehabilitative services (for a review, see Adelson, 2008). Although B.W.'s case was eventually dismissed through a process of appeals within the Texas Supreme Court, she still experienced nearly three years of legal battles before the state acknowledged her status as a minor.

Legal and scientific scholars have debated about the appropriate treatment of prostituted youth, but there is growing legal and scientific consensus toward treating prostituted youth as victims in need of services rather than as offenders (Leary, 2007). Yet, until state-level policy shifts in line with federal anti-trafficking statutes, many prostituted youth will be denied victim status and necessary services, and instead will be treated as adult offenders. It is possible that some state legislators are reluctant to propose changes to state policy regarding prostituted youth because they believe their constituents will not support this legislative shift. Thus, it is important to examine public attitudes toward prostituted youth.

Social psychological research and theory suggests that various factors will predict whether people perceive prostituted youth as victims versus as offenders. Examples of such factors include the context of a situation (i.e., the age, race, socioeconomic status, and physical appearance of a prostituted child), the labels applied to target individuals (e.g., child prostitute versus prostituted child), and the subsequent attributions people make for the target's behavior (i.e., internal attributions of sexual deviance versus external attributions of exploited naivety). Yet, little research has explored factors that influence whether prostituted youth are perceived as victims versus offenders (e.g., Mitchell, Finkelhor, & Wolak, 2010).

In preliminary research, Oudekerk, Nagel, and Reppucci (2011) examined perceptions of a sexual relationship between a 15-year-old girl and a 21-year-old man described either as statutory rape (no money is exchanged after sex) or prostitution (the younger partner receives \$50 after sex). On the one hand, community members were significantly more likely to perceive the youth involved in prostitution as a sexual abuse victim, compared to the youth involved in statutory rape. On the other hand, they were significantly more likely to recommend that the younger partner involved in prostitution, versus statutory rape, be arrested and held legally responsible for her behavior. Data from a separate online survey suggest that perceptions of legal intervention as a

deterrent and protective mechanism might explain punitive judgments about prostituted youth. Of 86 participants to date, 20% somewhat to strongly agreed that the best way to protect youth is by placing them in jail, 42% somewhat to strongly agreed that punishment decreases the likelihood other youth will become involved, and 44% somewhat to strongly agreed that age of consent laws should not prevent adolescents from being held legally responsible for engaging in prostitution (Nagel, Oudekerk, & Reppucci, 2011).

Much more research is needed to explore the various factors that affect public perceptions of prostituted youth. Understanding the psychological determinants of attitudes toward prostituted youth puts us one step closer toward identifying conditions in which prostituted youth are likely to be treated as victims, and in turn, receive the valuable services they need.

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## EARLY CAREER AWARD FOR OUTSTANDING RESEARCH

The Section on Child Maltreatment (Section 1 of Division 37, APA) announces its 2012 Early Career Award for Outstanding Contributions to Practice in the field of child maltreatment.

Nominees should be professionals within eight years of receiving their terminal degree. They need not be a member of the Section. Self-nominations are welcome.

Nominations should include an electronic copy of the following:

- 1) A cover letter outlining the nominee's accomplishments to date and anticipated future contributions. This letter should describe the nominee's major accomplishments related to the field of child maltreatment and how the nominee's work has had an impact on the field;
- 2) The nominee's current curriculum vitae;
- 3) A letter of support; and
- 4) Other relevant supporting material, as appropriate.

Please submit applications by **January 15, 2012** to:

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Professor of Psychology  
Pepperdine University  
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Malibu, CA 90263  
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## Student's Corner

### HIGHLIGHTS OF THE 2011 APA CONVENTION

*Lauren Stokes, M.A., University of Kansas*

*Kate Cuno, M.A., American School of Professional Psychology*

What an exciting APA conference we had this year in Washington D.C.! As the Student Representatives of the Section, we were so pleased to experience all the wonderful opportunities that APA had to offer, especially the student programming of Division 37 and the Section on Child Maltreatment. We would first like to thank **Lauren Legato** (Student Representative for Division 37) for inviting us to participate in the organization of the student programming. It was certainly a great success! We were privileged to participate in the Student Mentoring Breakfast organized by **Angela Tunno** (Board Member for Division 37), where experts in child and family policy discussed their career paths and encouraged students to become involved in policy work.

Our own president, **Mary Haskett**, and Member at Large, **Amy Damashek**, were on the expert panel along with **Vesna Kutlesic**, **Karen Budd**, and **Sandra Bishop**. We had such a great turnout (even at 8 am!) that we plan to include this in the student programming next year. The mentoring breakfast provided a unique opportunity for students to learn about the many diverse career paths that are available in child and family policy. In addition to the mentoring breakfast, we collaborated with Divisions 53 and 54 for our student social hour. Students were able to network with future colleagues, enjoy some snacks and refreshments, and learn about ways they can become involved in the Division and the Section. Not only did we recruit three new student members to the Section, but we were able to discuss the many additional opportunities for student involvement.

In addition to student specific programming, APA provides multiple opportunities for students to learn about recent research and clinical developments in the field. An exemplary example of this was an excellent presentation hosted by Division 37 on the mental health concerns of youth in foster care. This symposium provided much inspiration to an exciting new Task Force that is in the crux of its development in the Section!

Alongside **Sara Maltzman** (a new member-at-large to the Section) and other Section members, we are in the beginning stages of creating the mission of the task force, whose aim is to provide appropriate education materials related to child development and overall child mental health to protective service workers nationwide.

There were many wonderful ideas exchanged at the EC meeting and we are really looking forward to getting started! Another noteworthy example was a symposium chaired by **Mary Haskett** and co-chaired by **Lauren Stokes** on family homelessness and the need for parenting interventions. The symposium presented the research and initial findings of another Task Force in the Section. This task force, entitled *Supporting Positive Parenting in the Context of Family Homelessness*, is in the process of publishing a manuscript on this topic. APA was a great opportunity to present the initial research to our colleagues!

Thanks to all of the students who participated in these events at APA and don't forget about next year's APA in sunny Orlando, Florida! We hope to see you all there!

Please contact **Lauren Stokes** ([ldrerup@ku.edu](mailto:ldrerup@ku.edu)) or **Kate Cuno** ([kate.cuno@gmail.com](mailto:kate.cuno@gmail.com)) if you are interested in getting involved with student leadership activities in the Section. We would be thrilled to include you in our exciting student activities!

**APA 2011**

The APA annual conference was well attended by Section Members



Welcome to the Conference



Sandra Bishop, Elizabeth Risch, Aaron Lyons



Lauren Stokes, Staci Perlman, Beryl Cowan, Mary Haskett



Sightseeing at the conference



Sara Maltzman, Lauren Stokes, Kate Cuno

## Meet the Newsletter Contributors!



Jessica Loehman, interviewed past president Dr. Sharon Portwood

Jessica Loehman is a School Psychology graduate student at North Carolina State University. She is interested in studying how children's self-regulation, social skills, and externalizing behaviors can be changed through improving parent-child and peer relationships. Jessica hopes to conduct research full-time after graduation, focusing on early intervention efforts to foster success in school, as they relate to positive parent-child relationships and supportive home environments.



Kieran Fogarty, Angelique Day, Amy Damashek

Angelique Day, 2011 Dissertation Awardee

Angelique Day, a doctoral student in the Interdisciplinary Health Sciences program at Western Michigan University is awarded the 2011 Section on Child Maltreatment Dissertation Award for her proposal entitled, "An Examination of Post-secondary Educational Access, Retention, and Success of Foster Care Youth". Her dissertation is directed by Dr. Kieran Fogarty.

## Meet the Newsletter Contributors (continued)!

Dr. Sharon Portwood, 2005-2006 Section President



Dr. Anthony Mannarino, 2007-2008 Section President



Staci Perlman, 2010 Early Career Award for Service Winner

Staci Perlman, Ph.D. is on the faculty in the Department of Social Work at Kutztown University of Pennsylvania. Dr. Perlman is recognized for outstanding service in the area of family homelessness. She is conducting research on social-emotional adjustment and school readiness of children who have experienced child maltreatment and homelessness.

Dr. Perlman has been on the faculty at Kutztown University of Pennsylvania for only one year but has already launched a successful program of research and established a reputation in her community as the “go to” consultant on trauma among children living in shelters for homeless families. Dr. Perlman is currently co-chair of the Division 37 Section on Child Maltreatment task force on The Intersection of Child Maltreatment and Family Homelessness.

**Newsletter of the Section on Child Maltreatment**

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