Subject: Studies in the News (January 14, 2008)

Studies in the News for

Children and Families Commission

Contents This Week

Introductory Material

IMPROVED CHILD DEVELOPMENT
California Report Card 2008
Narrowing achievement gaps among California children
Public funding for preschool in California
Interactive media and preschoolers' learning
Children's television programming
Alaska - early learning guidelines
State children's cabinets and councils
Directory of children's cabinets
IMPROVED FAMILY FUNCTIONING
Who are America's poor children?
Teaching low-income parents to 'work the system'
IMPROVED HEALTH
Oral health needs of mothers and young children
California autism rate climbs despite vaccine change
Chromosome abnormalities and autism risk
Writing simple oral health educational materials
IMPROVED SYSTEMS OF CARE
Use of vouchers for child care and training
21st Century Community Learning Center afterschool program
Process evaluations for out-of-school time programs
Using outcome evaluations in out-of-school time programs

STUDIES TO COME
Food insecurity and developmental risk
Educating children without housing
CONFERENCES AND FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES
California Even Start Family Literacy Conference
Closing the Achievement Gap Using Parent Involvement Conferences

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 http://www.library.ca.gov/sitn/ccfc/.

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

California Report Card 2008: The State of the State's Children. By Children Now. (Children Now, Oakland California) 2008. 52 p.

["The '2008 California Report Card: The State of the State's Children' highlights the generally poor health and education status of the state's children by assigning letter grades to key individual determinants, such as a C in health insurance, a C- in K-12 education and a D+ in obesity. According to the report and its supporting documentation, these issues are undermining children's optimal development and putting the state's future at undue risk by dramatically increasing the financial costs and societal problems faced by future generations. The report also shows, however, that real progress on these issues can and should be made in 2008. The most current and comprehensive set of indicators of California children's health and education status are presented in the report, including: Only 47% of 3- and 4-year-olds attend preschool; One in three children is overweight or obese; Just 65% graduate from high school on time; 37% of children, ages 2-5, did not visit a dentist within the last year; Fewer than half of families can afford the basics of housing, child care, food, health insurance and transportation."]

Full text at: http://publications.childrennow.org/assets/pdf/policy/rc08/ca-rc-2008.pdf

The Promise of Preschool for Narrowing Readiness and Achievement Gaps among California Children. By Jill S. Cannon and Lynn A. Karoly. Research Brief. (Rand Corporation, Santa Monica, California) 2007. 5 p.

["This research brief summarizes an evaluation of the potential of preschool to make a difference in the achievement gaps among California children in order to assess the potential expansion of public funding for preschool education."]

Full text at: http://www.rand.org/pubs/research_briefs/2007/RAND_RB9306.pdf

Publicly Funded Early Care and Education Programs for California Preschool-Age Children. By Lynn A. Karoly and others. Research Brief. (Rand Corporation, Santa Monica, California) 2007. 5 p.

["This research brief summarizes a review of the system of subsidized early care and education programs serving preschool-age children in California in order to assess the potential expansion of public funding for preschool education."]

Full text at: http://www.rand.org/pubs/research_briefs/2007/RAND_RB9307.pdf

The Effects of Interactive Media on Preschoolers' Learning: A Review of the Research and Recommendations for the Future. By **Christina Romano Glaubke. (Children Now, Oakland, California) October 2007. 41 p.**

["Over the past couple of decades, a debate has grown over the appropriateness of using computers and other interactive media, such as interactive books and toys, video games, and the Internet, to teach preschool children. While some experts believe that technology has the capacity to positively influence young children's cognitive and socio-emotional development in significant ways, others believe that technology can rob children of many of the essential childhood experiences they need for healthy development or, even worse, cause irreparable harm. This report provides an extensive literature review, as well as interviews with leading academics, industry executives and advocates, who are involved in the debate."]

Full text at:
http://publications.childrennow.org/assets/pdf/cmp/prek-interactive-media-2007.pdf

Big Media, Little Kids 2: Examining the Influence of Duopolies on Children's Television Programming. By Christy Glaubke and others. (Children Now, Oakland, California) 2007. 19 p.

["Television broadcasters claim that duopolies are necessary to 'preserve and enhance' their ability to serve the public interest. Children Now's 'Big Media, Little Kids 2:

Examining the Influence of Duopolies on Children's Televison Programming' finds quite the opposite is true when it comes to children's television. The report provides compelling evidence that, as media companies grow bigger through consolidation, the amount of programming provided for children decreases dramatically. This finding is especially important because the quantity of children's educational programming is one of only a handful of ways that citizens can measure broadcasters' efforts to serve the public interest, which they are required to do in exchange for free use of the publicly-owned airwaves."]

Full text at: http://publications.childrennow.org/assets/pdf/cmp/big-media-little2-07.pdf

State of Alaska: Early Learning Guidelines - A Resource for Parents and Early Educators. By the Alaska Department of Education and Early Development and the Alaska Department of Health and Social Services. (Alaska Department of Education and Early Development, Juneau, Alaska) December 2007. 204 p.

["Broadly defined, the Guidelines are a set of statements that reflect expectations for children's knowledge and behavior. They are designed to support the growth and development of young children from birth to kindergarten entry, whether the children are in their own homes, others' homes, licensed child care, early intervention programs, Head Start, or in private, faith-based, or public preschools. The Guidelines serve as a source document, informing parents and caregivers in these settings about expectations for children's development and learning. This document represents our hopes for young children. Specifically, the Guidelines spell out what young children should know and be able to do by the time they reach the end of each of four critical stages of development: 18 months, 36 months, 60 months, and entry to kindergarten."]

Full text at: http://www.eed.state.ak.us/publications/EarlyLearnigGuidelines.pdf

State Children's Cabinets and Councils: Getting Results for Children and Youth. By Karen Pittman and others. (Forum for Youth Investment, Impact Strategies, Inc., Washington, DC) December 2007. 16 p.

["Children's cabinets and councils are typically are made up of heads of government agencies with child and youth serving programs, who meet on a regular basis with the collective goal of coordinating services, developing a common set of outcomes, and corroboratively deciding upon and implementing plans to foster the well-being of young people…. A handful of states, like New York and Maryland, have had permanent children's coordination bodies in place for decades. However, widespread calls for the creation of formal, permanent children's cabinets and councils have come more recently…. The confluence of information, authority and influence held by the individuals, departments and governmental branches represented on state-level cabinets and councils gives these entities enormous potential to effect change. State level children's cabinets and councils, if structured and staffed correctly, have a unique

capacity to increase a state's horsepower for changing the odds for its children and youth… "]

Full text at:
http://www.forumfyi.org/Files/State_Childrens_Cabinets_Getting_Results.pdf

2008 Directory of State Children's Cabinets and Councils. By Elizabeth Gaines and others. (Forum for Youth Investment, Impact Strategies, Inc., Washington, DC) December 2007. 36 p.

[This directory "provides at-a-glance responses to questions such as: which states have children's cabinets and councils? Who is involved in them? What do they do? The guide provides summaries of interviews done with children's cabinet and council directors in the latter half of 2007." CFK Weekly (January 9, 2008.)]

Full text at: http://www.forumfyi.org/Files/CC_Directory.PDF

IMPROVED FAMILY FUNCTIONING

Who are America's Poor Children? The Official Story. By the National Center for Children in Poverty. (The Center, New York, New York) November 2007. 4 p.

["Nearly 13 million American children live in families with incomes below the federal poverty level, which is $20,650 a year for a family of four. The number of children living in poverty increased by 11 percent between 2000 and 2006. There are 1.2 million more children living in poverty today than in 2000. Not only are these numbers troubling, the official poverty measure tells only part of the story…. Research consistently shows that, on average, families need an income of about *twice the federal poverty level* to make ends meet. Children living in families with incomes below this level - for 2006, about $41,000 for a family of four - are referred to as *low income*. Thirty-nine percent of the nation's children - more than 28 million in 2006 - live in low-income families. Nonetheless, official poverty statistics continue to be used by researchers, policymakers, and the media to define economic disadvantage. In addition, eligibility for many public benefits is based on the official poverty measure. This fact sheet details some of the characteristics of American children who are considered poor by these official standards."]

Full text at: http://www.nccp.org/publications/pdf/text_787.pdf

"Teaching Low-Income Parents to 'Work the System.'" By Edwin C. Darden. IN: Education Week, vol. 27 (Published online, December 26, 2007) 2 p.

["Jerry D. Weast, the schools superintendent in Montgomery County, Md., was recently asked what he was doing to improve low-performing schools. His answer should serve as

a wake-up call for school districts throughout the nation. Weast replied that his public school district spends big bucks every year trying to teach low-income parents 'how to kick my butt … how to work the system just like affluent people.'… Few parents living on the edge of poverty believe they have the power to make a difference in the quality of their children's education. For many, school did not serve them well; as a result, they may be intimidated from trying to engage teachers and administrators…. A growing number of parents arrive from places on the globe where criticizing any government institution could land them in jail or worse. In many countries, there is simply no tradition of an active, engaged citizenry that participates in public institutions to ensure they deliver for constituents."]

Full text at:
http://www.edweek.org/ew/articles/2007/12/26/17darden_web.h27.html?tmp=394068110

IMPROVED HEALTH

A Mother's Oral Health Profoundly Impacts the Health of Her Child. By Children Now. Oral Health Policy Brief. (Children Now, Oakland, California) 2007. 12 p.

["Pregnancy and early childhood are critical periods for ensuring good oral health, yet too many Californians fail to visit a dentist during those times. The public health consequences are both costly and preventable, considering: 18% of premature births are attributable to poor oral health in mothers. Pregnant women with poor oral health are seven times more likely to have a premature and/or low birthweight delivery. Only 19% of pregnant women enrolled in Denti-Cal (California's Medicaid dental program) access any dental care during pregnancy. Less than 10% of Denti-Cal enrollees under age 2 have ever received preventive dental care. Children of mothers with poor oral health are five times more likely to have oral health problems. Advocacy groups, provider organizations and state policymakers are working to educate families about the oral health needs of pregnant women, new mothers and young children. Yet much more remains to be done to ensure proper oral health care during pregnancy and early childhood."]

Full text at:
http://publications.childrennow.org/assets/pdf/policy/oral-health-brief-2007.pdf

"Continuing Increases in Autism Reported to California's Developmental Services System: Mercury in Retrograde." By Robert Schechter and Judith K. Grether. IN: Archives of General Psychiatry, vol. 65, no. 1 (January 2008) pp. 19-24.

["Autism cases in California continued to climb even after a mercury-rich vaccine preservative that some people blame for the neurological disorder was removed from routine childhood shots, a new study found. Researchers from the state Department of Public Health found the autism rate in children rose continuously during the 12-year

study period from 1995 to 2007. The preservative thimerosal hasn't been used in childhood vaccines since 2001, but is used in some flu shots. Doctors say the latest study adds to existing evidence refuting a link between thimerosal exposure and autism risk and should reassure parents that the disorder is not caused by vaccinations. If there was a risk, they said, autism rates should have dropped between 2004 and 2007. The findings show 'no evidence of mercury poisoning in autism' since there was no decline in autism rates even after the elimination of thimerosal, said Dr. Eric Fombonne, an autism researcher at Montreal Children's Hospital who had no role in the research. Some advocacy groups blame thimerosal for the impaired social interaction typical of autism. Nearly 5,000 claims alleging a vaccine-autism link have been lodged with the federal government, which is deciding whether victims should receive compensation from a government fund." CNN.com (January 7, 2008.)]

Full text at: http://archpsyc.ama-assn.org/cgi/reprint/65/1/19

"Association between Microdeletion and Microduplication at 16p11.2 and Autism." By Lauren A. Weiss and others. IN: New England Journal of Medicine, Online First, January 9, 2008. 9 p.

["Scientists have discovered the strongest link yet between specific chromosomal abnormalities and an increased risk of autism, the neurological disorder that affects up to one in every 166 children in the U.S. The abnormalities were linked with certainty to only 1% of autism cases. But the researchers… say their work points the way to finding other genetic changes linked to the disease, as well as potential treatments - and prenatal screening tests that could spark ethical questions. Using a very large genome scan, the researchers also discovered that the genetic abnormalities - either a deletion or a duplication of a section of chromosome 16 - were not directly inherited from either parent. Instead they developed spontaneously during the embryonic stage of development, possibly due to interplay of various genetic factors inherited from the parents. Through the use of new and very costly chromosome micro-array tests, doctors can detect the abnormalities in autism patients and their parents and then predict the risk of recurrence in subsequent pregnancies." Business Week (January 9, 2008.)]

Full text at: http://content.nejm.org/cgi/reprint/NEJMoa075974v1.pdf

A Way with Words: Guidelines for Writing Oral Health Materials for Audiences with Limited Literacy. By Ruth Barzel. (The National Maternal and Child Oral Health Resource Center, Georgetown University, Washington, DC) 2008. 2 p.

["The National Maternal and Child Oral Health Resource Center (OHRC) is pleased to announce the availability of 'A Way with Words: Guidelines for Writing Oral Health Materials for Audiences with Limited Literacy.' This resource was developed to assist professionals working to improve the oral health of infants, children, adolescents, and their families. A Way with Words provides tips to help those who produce educational

materials make them easy for everyone to understand, and thus more useful. The tip sheet offers suggestions for how to choose words; set an appropriate tone; and craft sentences, paragraphs, lists, and headings that communicate most effectively with people with limited literacy. Ideas for how to design documents and how to present unfamiliar terminology are also presented. A list of resources for more information is included.]

Full text at: http://www.mchoralhealth.org/PDFs/AWaywithWords.pdf

IMPROVED SYSTEMS OF CARE

Using Vouchers to Deliver Social Services: Considerations Based on the Child Care and Development Fund (CCDF) and Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) Program Experiences. By Gretchen Kirby and Andrew Burwick. Prepared for U.S. Dept. of Health & Human Services. (Mathematica Policy Research, Inc., Washington, DC) November 2, 2007. 64 p.

[“Vouchers are one strategy for delivering public services in a way that makes the consumer the central figure in deciding when and where to receive services. Vouchers also present a unique opportunity to expand the role of faith- and community-based organizations in the network of publicly funded services. This report examines how vouchers were used in the CCDF and TANF programs and the degree to which this funding mechanism supports the goals of maximizing client choice and expanding the service delivery network to include faith- and community-based organizations. The report notes that vouchers are used to subsidize the consumer-demand services of child care and training for TANF recipients, but TANF program administrators have not considered using them for other services. In addition, CCDF and TANF administrators do not seem to consider vouchers as a specific means of expanding the role of faith- and community-based organizations in the service delivery network.” News from Mathematica (January 2, 2008.)]

Full text at:
http://www.mathematica-mpr.com/publications/pdfs/voucherconsiderations.pdf

“When Elementary Schools Stay Open Late: Results From the National Evaluation of the 21st Century Community Learning Centers Program.” By Susanne James-Burdumy and others, Mathematica Policy Research. IN: Educational Evaluation and Policy Analysis, vol. 29, no. 4 (December 2007) pp. 296–318.

[“This article presents evidence from the elementary school component of Mathematica’s national evaluation of the 21st Century Community Learning Center afterschool programs. The findings indicate that the programs affected the supervision students received after school, with parents less likely to care for their child and other adults more likely, but there was no statistically significant effect on the incidence of self-care. Students in the program reported feeling safer after school, but their academic outcomes were not affected, and they had more incidents of negative behavior. The elementary

study was conducted in 12 school districts and 26 afterschool centers." News from Mathematica (January 2, 2008.)]

Full text at: http://epa.sagepub.com/cgi/reprint/29/4/296

Process Evaluations: A Guide for Out-of-School Time Practitioners. **By Lillian Bowie and Jacinta Bronte-Tinkew. Research-to-Results Brief. Publication No. 2008-01. (Child Trends, Washington, DC) January 2008. 8 p.**

["Program practitioners or participants may believe that a program is effective, but it is important to assess this objectively. Process evaluations focus on whether programs and activities are operating as planned. This brief describes why process evaluations are important, when they should be used, and how they can be a useful tool for out-of-school time program practitioners. The brief also focuses on guidelines and strategies for implementing process evaluations and provides some concrete examples that illustrate their usefulness. It concludes with a list of helpful resources for out-of-school time program practitioners." Child Trends E-Newsletter (January 7, 2008.)]

Full text at:
http://www.childtrends.org/Files//Child_Trends-2008_01_07_%20ProcessEvaluations.pdf

Outcome Evaluation: A Guide for Out-of-School Time Practitioners. By Tiffany Allen and Jacinta Bronte-Tinkew. Research-to-Results Brief. Publication No. 2008-2. (Child Trends, Washington, DC) January 2008. 12 p.

["Many out-of-school time programs want to learn more about how the children and youth they serve are faring. Outcome evaluations allow programs to do just that. This brief provides a basic review of outcome evaluations, discusses why they are important and when they are useful, and discusses ways they can be implemented in out-of-school time programs. The brief also highlights the experience of an out-of-school time program that has conducted an outcome evaluation and provides a list of helpful evaluation resources." Child Trends E-Newsletter (January 7, 2008.)]

Full text at:
http://www.childtrends.org/Files//Child_Trends-2008_01_07_OutcomeEvaluation.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.]

“Household Food Insecurity: Associations with At-Risk Infant and Toddler Development.” By Ruth Rose-Jacobs and others. IN: Pediatrics, vol. 121, no. 1 (January 2008) pp. 65-72.

[“In this study, we evaluated the relationship between household food security status and developmental risk in young children, after controlling for potential confounding variables. Methods. The Children's Sentinel Nutritional Assessment Program interviewed (in English, Spanish, or Somali) 2010 caregivers from low-income households with children 4 to 36 months of age, at 5 pediatric clinic/emergency department sites (in Arkansas, Massachusetts, Maryland, Minnesota, and Pennsylvania). Interviews included demographic questions, the US Food Security Scale, and the Parents' Evaluations of Developmental Status. The target child from each household was weighed, and weight-for-age *z* score was calculated. Results. Overall, 21% of the children lived in food-insecure households and 14% were developmentally ‘at risk’ in the Parents' Evaluations of Developmental Status assessment. In logistic analyses controlling for interview site, child variables… and caregiver variables… caregivers in food-insecure households were two thirds more likely than caregivers in food-secure households to report that their children were at developmental risk. Conclusions. Controlling for established correlates of child development, 4- to 36-month-old children from low-income households with food insecurity are more likely than those from low-income households with food security to be at developmental risk. Public policies that ameliorate household food insecurity also may improve early child development and later school readiness.” NOTE: Household Food Insecurity… will be available for loan.]

Educating Children without Housing: A Primer on Legal Requirements and Implementation Strategies for Educators, Advocates and Policymakers. Second edition. By Barbara J. Duffield and others. (Amercian Bar Association Commission on Homelessness and Poverty, Washington, DC) 2007. 76 p.

[This book “addresses the federal educational mandates related to homeless students under the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act. The manual provides innovative strategies for educators and school administrators, state coordinators and policymakers, and advocates and attorneys to play a role in ensuring the education rights of children and youth experiencing homelessness. The revised edition includes additional strategies designed to assist communities to exceed compliance and move toward greater commitment - to embody not only the letter but also the spirit of the law. Additions include new sections on: homeless students with disabilities; students involved in the child welfare system; application of the Act in response to disasters; as well as expanded sections on definitions, preschool children, and unaccompanied youth. The book also includes an updated directory of resources.” NOTE: Educating Children… will be available for loan.]

CONFERENCES AND FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES

California Even Start Family Literacy Conference. Sponsored by California Even Start and WestEd's Center for Child and Family Studies. January 22 – 24, 2008. Hyatt Regency San Francisco Airport, Burlingame, California.

["This two-day conference, organized by Maria Trejo, California Department of Education, and Rebeca Valdivia, WestEd's Center for Child and Family Studies, will address the following goals of the Even Start Program: Helping parents improve their literacy or basic education skills; Helping parents become full partners in educating their children; Assisting children in reaching their full potential as learners. Conference participants will include: Early childhood teachers; Parents and families; Program administrators; Adult educators; Family educators; Policymakers; Community-based organizations; Title I administrators and teachers; Corporate sponsors interested in supporting families and children; Migrant Education Even Start; Family Even Start; Adult Education; American Indian Early Childhood Education Program; First 5; State Preschool; Head Start; County Office of Education; Early Reading First; Title I programs. Conference sessions will offer evidence-based information based on current research or formulated on evidence from practice…. Topics will include research-based or effective adult education/English as a second language models; research-based or effective adult-child interactive activities; and research-based or effective parent education curricula, approaches, and models."]

For more information: http://www.wested.org/cs/we/view/we_e/688

Closing the Achievement Gap: Using Parent Involvement to Increase Student Success and Academic Achievement - A Leadership Development Conference for School, Family and Community Partnerships. Sponsored by the California Parent Center. February 7-8, 2008, Norwalk, California; February 28-29, 2008, Sacramento, California; March 13-14, 2008, Oakland, California; May 22-23, 2008, San Diego, California.

["The California Parent Center will provide a series of 16-hour Leadership Development Training conferences, designed to assist parents and school staff work more effectively together as partners to support student achievement. Conferences are in consultation with Joyce Epstein of Johns Hopkins University, the California Department of Education, the California State PTA, and the California Association of Compensatory Education (CACE)…. Participants learn the basic components of Epstein's Six Types of Parent Involvement, research-based strategies and how to develop programs that connect family and community involvement to school goals for increased student achievement."]

For more information: http://parent.sdsu.edu/services/conferences/default.htm