



Studies in the News for



Children and Families Commission

Contents This Week

Introductory Material

IMPROVED CHILD DEVELOPMENT

[Effective early childhood programs](#)

[PK-3 education](#)

[Gender sensitive teacher education](#)

[Breakthrough to Literacy](#)

[State legislative action on pre-k](#)

IMPROVED FAMILY FUNCTIONING

[Children in poverty](#)

[Early childhood community change initiative](#)

[More generous parental leave in other countries](#)

[Food stamps and working families](#)

IMPROVED HEALTH

[Fire retardant chemicals in toddlers](#)

[Dental disease and poor children](#)

[Dental care in three Healthy Kids programs](#)

[Public-private partnerships for child mental health](#)

IMPROVED SYSTEMS OF CARE

[Big Ideas for Children - 20 papers](#)

[State child care assistance policies](#)

STUDIES TO COME

[Parenting program for low-income families](#)

[Eating fish while pregnant, breastfeeding and cognitive skills](#)

CONFERENCES AND FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES

[Conference call on state prekindergarten programs](#)

[PACE 39th Annual Fall Conference](#)

[Conference: Growing up Healthy and Green](#)

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 Information Resources & Government Publications at (916-654-0081; cslinfo@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

Impacts of Early Childhood Programs. By Julia B. Isaacs. (The Brookings Institution, Washington, DC and First Focus, Washington, DC) September 2008. 29 p.

[“Whether the objective is reducing crime, increasing high school graduation rates, or providing children with an equal shot at the American Dream, research shows that effective early childhood programs can make a real difference by starting children off on the right foot. This collection of research briefs, entitled ‘Impacts of Early Childhood Programs,’ summarizes existing evidence on early childhood interventions and their impact on children and families. The five briefs find that most early childhood programs have had positive impacts on children’s emotional and behavioral outcomes, including long-term reductions in criminal behavior, improvements in children’s health and safety, and positive impacts on children’s parents. Included in this publication are briefs about: - State Prekindergarten; - Head Start; - Early Head Start; - Model Early Childhood Programs; - Nurse Home Visiting.” First Focus.]

Full text at:

http://www.brookings.edu/~media/Files/rc/papers/2008/09_early_programs_isaacs/09_early_programs_isaacs.pdf

“Early Education, Later Success.” By Susan Black. IN: American School Board Journal, vol. 196, no. 9 (September 2008) pp. 61-63.

[“How do you sustain the momentum generated by your prekindergarten and full-day kindergarten programs? Start by considering an aligned and unified PK-3 unit.”.]

Full text at:

<http://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=a9h&AN=33958703&site=ehost-live> (NOTE: State employee access link.)

“Gender Sensitive Teaching: A Reflective Approach for Early Childhood Education Teacher Training Programs.” By Ahmed Zaman. IN: Education, vol. 129, no. 1 (Fall 2008) pp. 110-118.

[“It is evident from literature that boys, especially African-American boys are viewed as ‘troublemakers’ and this perception begins with teachers at the preschool level. In this paper, the author examines whether or not students in early childhood education from a community college receive adequate gender-sensitivity training. The students from a teacher education program established baseline by assessing their own attitude about teaching boys and girls using a Likert-type scale. Results revealed the existence of diverse attitude (neutral, negative, and positive). This paper proposes the infusion of nonsexist approach through a Reflective Based Observation (RBO) scheme to be incorporated in an observation course. This would help early childhood students to engage in self-reflection about their attitudes and expectations about boys, and the effect of these attitudes and expectations on their teaching.”]

Full text at:

<http://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=a9h&AN=34038356&site=ehost-live> (NOTE: State employee access link.)

Breakthrough to Literacy. By the Institute of Education Sciences. What Works Clearinghouse Intervention Report. (The Clearinghouse, Institute of Education Sciences, U.S. Department of Education, Princeton, New Jersey) August 2008. 3 p.

[“‘Breakthrough to Literacy’ is a literacy curriculum for preschool through third grade that introduces students to a book-a-week throughout the year. Students gain exposure to the book-of-the-week through multiple formats. They receive a Big Book, a Take-Me-Home Book, an audio book, and a computerized version. The book-of-the-week serves as the basis of classroom and independent learning activities for that week. Classroom activities that focus on the book include: (1) teacher-led whole group instruction, (2) teacher-led small group instruction, and (3) independent learning activities including individualized computer instruction that allows students to progress at their own pace. Activities for preschoolers are designed to teach oral language, phonemic awareness, phonics, vocabulary, and concepts of print. ‘Breakthrough to Literacy’ also includes

professional development activities for teachers that are designed to help incorporate the 'Breakthrough to Literacy' curriculum into their day-to-day activities and improve their classroom management skills."

Full text at: http://ies.ed.gov/ncee/wwc/pdf/wwc_btl_082608.pdf

Votes Count: Legislative Action on Pre-K Fiscal Year 2009. By Jennifer V. Doctors. (Pre-K Now, Washington, DC) September 2008. 28 p.

["In spite of worsening economic conditions across the country, the majority of states stood firm in their commitment to investing in pre-kindergarten programs, according to 'Votes Count: Legislative Action on Pre-K Fiscal Year 2009,' a state-by-state analysis of pre-k funding released by Pre-K Now with support from The Pew Charitable Trusts. This year's 'Votes Count' also unveils a new list of the places families would have the best and worst chances of enrolling their children in a high-quality, state-funded pre-k program; ten states make the notable lists."]

Full text at: http://www.preknow.org/documents/LegislativeReport_Sept2008.pdf

IMPROVED FAMILY FUNCTIONING

Children in Poverty. By First Focus. (First Focus, Washington, DC) September 2008. 3 p.

["Each August, the Census Bureau releases information regarding poverty and income in the United States for the previous year. This year's release included disturbing news for American families and their children. From 2006 to 2007, the number of America's children that live in poverty grew by nearly half a million. Indeed in 2007, the child poverty rate reached a level, 18%, not seen in this country for more than a decade.... This national trend can be seen in many states across the country.... A few states, however, bucked the national trend, and enjoyed decreases in the child poverty rate.... Most, but not all, states that suffered increases in child poverty rates can be found east of the Mississippi River, with almost all of the states in the Rocky Mountain West and the Pacific enjoying a decrease in child poverty rates from 2006 (the exceptions being Nevada and Washington)."]

Full text at: http://www.firstfocus.net/Download/children_in_poverty.pdf

Children's Futures' First Five Years: Lessons and Early Outcomes of a Community Change Initiative. By Karen E. Walker. (Public/Private Ventures, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania) August 2008. 12 p.

[“Can a focused effort to nurture community change make measurable differences across an entire city? Children’s Futures (CF), an early childhood initiative financed by The Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, set out to answer that question when it began operations in late 2002. Based in Trenton, NJ, CF focuses on children up to three years old - and their families - in hopes of improving the youngsters’ health and well-being and ensuring their readiness to enter school. The program relies on a range of strategies, many with established track records of effectiveness: - Home visiting and other programs to improve parenting practices; - Interventions to improve the quality of subsidized child care in centers and registered family child care homes across the city; - Activities to increase fathers’ involvement in their children’s lives; - Efforts to improve preventive care in pediatric and family practices; and - Policy efforts to ease access to health and other human services for children and their families.”]

Full text at: http://www.ppv.org/ppv/publications/assets/243_publication.pdf

Parental Leave Policies in 21 Countries: Assessing Generosity and Gender Equality. By Rebecca Ray and others. (Center for Economic and Policy Research, Washington, DC) September 2008. 23 p.

[This report “examines the parental leave policies of 21 high-income countries and finds the United States to be the least generous.... The United States finishes 20th out of 21st when it comes to the total length of leave guaranteed to a two-parent couple - 24 weeks. Only Switzerland provides less - 14 weeks - but 11 of those weeks are paid. The United States finishes last among the 21 countries when it comes to the generosity of paid leave.... ‘The United States has the least generous parental leave policies of all 21 economies compared in this study,’ said report co-author... Janet Gronick. ‘We pay a high price for our poor policy, though, because parental leaves improve the health and well-being of children and their parents and paid leaves provide families with crucial economic support at such an important time.’ ... The study identifies six countries with ‘best practices’ for parental leave: Finland, France, Greece, Norway, Spain, and Sweden. These countries all employ the following broad policies: - Generous paid leave; - Non-transferable quotas of leave for each parent; - Universal coverage; - Financing structures that pool risk among many employers; - Scheduling flexibility.” Center for Economic and Policy Research Press Release (August 30, 2008.)]

Full text at: http://www.cepr.net/documents/publications/parental_2008_09.pdf

Food Stamps, Federalism, and Working Families. By Kenneth Finegold. Brief No. 6. (The Urban Institute, Washington, DC) August 2008. 12 p.

[“The combination of a domestic economic slowdown and the recent worldwide rise in food prices threatens to increase the number of American households experiencing ‘food insecurity,’ which the government defines as lacking access to enough food for an active, healthy life at all times.... The same conditions reduce revenues and increase costs for

state governments... leaving them with few resources to alleviate family stress. They can, however, take advantage of state Food Stamp Program (FSP) policy options that increase eligibility and benefits. The state cost of expanding FSP is low because the federal government pays the entire cost of benefits and about half of state administrative expenses. This brief focuses on the Food Stamp Program options that particularly affect working families, defined throughout as households with earnings and children under age 18.”]

Full text at: http://www.urban.org/UploadedPDF/411752_food_stamps.pdf

IMPROVED HEALTH

Fire Retardants in Toddlers and Their Mothers. By Sonya Lunder and Dr. Anila Jacob, Environmental Working Group. (The Group, Washington, DC) September 4, 2008. 32 p.

[“In the first nationwide investigation of chemical fire retardants in parents and their children, Environmental Working Group (EWG) found that toddlers and preschoolers typically had 3 times more of the neurotoxic compounds in their blood than their mothers. The study suggests that U.S. children 1 to 4 years of age bear the heaviest burden of flame retardant pollution in the industrialized world. Laboratory tests - conducted in collaboration with Dr. Åke Bergman, a preeminent environmental chemist - found that in 19 of 20 U.S. families, concentrations of the toxic chemicals known as PBDEs were significantly higher in 1- to 4-year-old children than in their mothers. The tests found the fire retardant Deca, banned in Europe but unregulated by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, more often and in higher amounts in U.S. children than their mothers.” Environmental Working Group News Release (September 4, 2008.)]

Executive Summary: 3 p. <http://www.ewg.org/reports/pbdesintoddlers>

Full text at: <http://www.ewg.org/book/export/html/26900>

Medicaid: Extent of Dental Disease in Children Has Not Decreased, and Millions Are Estimated to Have Untreated Tooth Decay. By the United States Government Accountability Office. (The Office, Washington, DC) September 2008. 40 p.

[“Millions of poor American children have untreated tooth decay, some of them because they cannot find a dentist willing to treat them, a federal report... said. ‘Dental disease remains a significant problem for children aged 2 through 18 in Medicaid,’ the U.S. Government Accountability Office report concluded, referring to the federal/state health program for poor people. According to the report, which used data from 1999 to 2004, about 6.5 million children enrolled in Medicaid had untreated tooth decay in 2005 and were nearly twice as likely as children with private health insurance to have untreated tooth decay. The GAO report was ordered after widespread publicity of the case of

Deamonte Driver, a 12-year-old boy who died last year in suburban Washington when an untreated infected tooth led to a brain infection. Driver ‘had extensive dental disease and his family was unable to find a dentist to treat him,’ the report said. The report said 14.8 percent of Medicaid recipients said their children had not gotten necessary dental care because their dentist refused to accept Medicaid, which typically pays providers less than private insurers.” CNN.com (September 23, 2008.)

Highlights: 1 p. <http://www.gao.gov/highlights/d081121high.pdf>

Full text at: <http://www.gao.gov/new.items/d081121.pdf>

Three Independent Evaluations of Healthy Kids Programs Find Substantial Gains in Children’s Dental Health Care. By Dana Hughes, University of California, San Francisco, and others. In Brief, No. 2. (Mathematica, Princeton, New Jersey, University of California, San Francisco, and Urban Institute, Washington, DC) September 2008. 5 p.

[“This brief highlights rigorous, independent evaluations of the Healthy Kids programs in three California counties: Los Angeles, San Mateo, and Santa Clara. It describes some of the many positive impacts that Healthy Kids programs have had on children’s access and use of dental services. For children enrolled in the program, access to dental care improved and unmet need for dental care declined.” News from Mathematica (September 29, 2008.)]

Full text at: <http://www.mathematica-mpr.com/publications/pdfs/CHIIdental.pdf>

Iowa’s 1st Five Initiative: Improving Early Childhood Developmental Services through Public-Private Partnerships. By Sharon Silow-Carroll, Health Management Associates. Issue Brief, Vol. 47, No. 1176. (The Fund, New York, New York) September 2008. 16 p.

[“The Iowa Department of Public Health’s 1st Five Healthy Mental Development Initiative is bridging public and private health care systems to improve early detection of social-emotional delays and prevention of mental health problems among young children and their families. Key features of the 1st Five model include: user-friendly mental and developmental health screening and referral forms; ongoing education and support for medical office staff on healthy development and use of screening and referral tools; specially trained care coordinators to identify and address a wide range of children’s and families’ needs; relationships with community resources that provide early intervention; and timely notification of outcomes to the referring physician offices. With an evaluation under way, early 1st Five experience indicates that families identified through the program have a range of unmet needs: each physician referral results in an average of three to five follow-up referrals for services.”]

Full text at: http://www.commonwealthfund.org/usr_doc/Silow-Carroll_Iowa1stFiveinitiative_1176_ib.pdf?section=4039

IMPROVED SYSTEMS OF CARE

Big Ideas for Children: Investing in Our Nation's Future. By Brian D. Smedley and others. (First Focus, Washington, DC) [2008.] 242 p.

[“Economists, including Nobel Prize winner James Heckman, have repeatedly proven that early interventions in the lives of children will reap enormous long-term returns. As Heckman and authors David Kirp, Linda Darling-Hammond, Isabel Sawhill, Julia Isaacs, Art Rolnick, and Rob Grunewald show in ‘Big Ideas for Children: Investing in Our Nation’s Future,’ there are few public programs or investment opportunities that provide a greater rate of return toward a nation’s economic development than investing in children. What is often missing are the big ideas or the longer-term vision necessary to make improvements in the lives of children, including, as authors Sara Rosenbaum and Stan Dorn note, recognition that children have special development needs. This collection of more than 20 papers by numerous experts in economics and children’s public policy highlights a number of possible policy options to combat poverty: invest in early childhood and education programs, reform the health care system for children, improve child safety, child well-being, and home and community for children and families.”]

Full text at: <http://www.firstfocus.net/Download/BigIdeas.pdf>

Download individual papers at: <http://www.firstfocus.net/pages/3499/>

State Child Care Assistance Policies 2008: Too Little Progress for Children and Families. By Karen Schulman and Helen Blank, National Women’s Law Center. Issue Brief. (The Center, Washington, DC) September 2008. 28 p.

[“This nationwide annual analysis by the National Women's Law Center compares child care assistance policies in 2008 to 2007 and 2001 in four policy areas: income eligibility, waiting lists for assistance, copayment requirements and reimbursement rates for providers. Some states have made progress since 2007, but most states continue to be behind where they were in 2001. The report reveals that states continue to fall short of providing low-income parents the support they need to obtain good-quality child care, despite modest gains in some areas.”]

Full text at: <http://www.nwlc.org/pdf/StateChildCareAssistancePoliciesReport08.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 FAMILY FUNCTIONING

“The Family Check-Up with High-Risk Indigent Families: Preventing Problem Behavior by Increasing Parents' Positive Behavior Support in Early Childhood.” By Thomas J. Dishion, University of Oregon, and others. IN: *Child Development*, vol. 79, no. 5 (September/October 2008) pp. 1395-1414.

[“Low-income families who participated in a brief, tailored intervention program designed to improve parenting saw less problem behavior in their toddlers than families who did not take part.... The research was conducted at the University of Oregon, University of Pittsburgh, Case Western Reserve University, Oxford University, and the University of Virginia. The researchers studied 731 families who took part in the Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) Nutrition Program in three geographically and culturally diverse U.S. communities. Half the families were randomly assigned to participate in an intervention called the Family Check-Up - a brief, motivational program that identified and encouraged positive parenting practices - and half received services as usual. The Family Check Up is adapted and tailored to fit the individual circumstances of low-income families; in addition, it is less expensive than more traditional parenting interventions. The services a parent receives are based on the results of family assessments; they focus on encouraging change only in parenting practices that are found to be problematic or likely to lead to future adjustment problems in the young children.” Society for Research in Child Development Press Release (September 16, 2008.) NOTE: The Family Check-Up... will be available for loan.]

“Associations of Maternal Fish Intake during Pregnancy and Breastfeeding Duration with Attainment of Developmental Milestones in Early Childhood: A Study from the Danish National Birth Cohort.” By Emily Oken and others. IN: *American Journal of Clinical Nutrition*, vol. 88, no. 3 (September 2008) pp. 789-796.

[“Both higher fish consumption and longer breastfeeding are linked to better physical and cognitive development in infants, according to a study of mothers and infants from Denmark. Maternal fish consumption and longer breastfeeding were independently beneficial.... The study team looked at 25,446 children born to mothers participating in the Danish Birth Cohort, a study that includes pregnant women enrolled from 1997-2002.... The children whose mothers ate the most fish during pregnancy were more likely to have better motor and cognitive skills. For example, among mothers who ate the least fish, 5.7% of their children had the lowest developmental scores at 18 months, compared with only 3.7% of children whose mothers had the highest fish intake. Compared with women who ate the least fish, women with the highest fish intake (about

60 grams - 2 ounces - per day on average) had children 25% more likely to have higher developmental scores at 6 months and almost 30% more likely to have higher scores at 18 months. Longer duration of breastfeeding was also associated with better infant development, especially at 18 months. Breastmilk also contains omega-3 fatty acids.... Women in the U.S. have been advised to limit their fish intake to two servings a week because some fish contains high traces of mercury, which has demonstrated toxic effects. Information regarding mercury levels was not available in this population, but most women consumed cod, plaice, salmon, herring, and mackerel, fish types that tend to have low mercury content. In this study, consumption of three or more weekly servings of fish was associated with higher development scores, so in this case the nutrient benefits of prenatal fish appeared to outweigh toxicant harm.” Harvard Medical School News Alert (September 9, 2008.) NOTE: Associations of Maternal Fish... will be available for loan.]

CONFERENCES AND FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES

Conference Call: Governance Issues Related to Prekindergarten / Child Care Collaborations. Sponsored by the National Women’s Law Center. October 8, 2008. 11:00 a.m. Pacific Time.

[“This call will focus on the decision-making authority for state prekindergarten programs at both the state and local level, and will examine issues such as how funding decisions are made, how children enroll in various prekindergarten programs, and what mechanisms exist to coordinate among prekindergarten programs and across different early childhood programs and services. The call will be moderated by Karen Schulman, Senior Policy Analyst at the National Women’s Law Center. Presenters will include: William J. Grant, CEO, Hildebrandt Learning Centers, LLC Center; David Linsmeier, Executive Director, Mary Linsmeier Schools; Dee Almond, Owner and Director, Elite Child Development Center.]

For more information and to register:

[http://action.nwlc.org/site/Survey?SURVEY_ID=3800&ACTION_REQUIRED=URI ACTION_USER_REQUESTS&autologin=true&AddInterest=1024](http://action.nwlc.org/site/Survey?SURVEY_ID=3800&ACTION_REQUIRED=URI_ACTION_USER_REQUESTS&autologin=true&AddInterest=1024)

PACE 39th Annual Fall Conference. By the Professional Association for Childhood Education. October 17-19, 2008. San Francisco Airport Marriott in Burlingame, California.

[“If you are a teacher, owner, director, and/or administrator of a childcare center and would like to enhance your professional development and network with others in the field, this is the conference for you! Don’t miss our Pre-Conference seminar for administrators, owners, and directors!” ChildCareExchange.com.]

For more information and to register: <http://www.pacenet.org/conferences.html>

Growing Up Healthy and Green: A Dialogue. Environmental Health and Green Practice in Child Care. Sponsored by Seneca College. Markham, Ontario, Canada. October 24-25, 2008.

[“Environmental Health and Green Practice in Child Care. Seneca School of Early Childhood Education presents a provincial conference exploring environmental child health issues and showcasing innovative 'green' thinking that may impact policy and practice in the delivery of child care in Ontario. The conference brings together experts in children's environmental health and child care sectors. It will set the stage for further dialogue, the opportunity to examine our existing policies and practices, develop a body of province wide knowledge and future planning ideas.”]

For more information and to register:

<http://www.senecac.on.ca/ece/conference/index.html>