



Studies in the News for



Children and Families Commission

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Introduction to Studies in the News

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

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- When available on the Internet, the URL for the full-text of each item is provided.
- California State Employees may contact Information Services at (916-654-0261; 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

Early Childhood Education and Children with Disabilities (Feature Issue.) By Camille Catlett and others. **Impact**, vol. 22, no. 1 (Institute on Community Integration (UCEDD) and Research and Training Center on Community Living and Employment, University of Minnesota, Minneapolis, Minnesota) Summer/Fall 2009. 35 p.

Full text at: <http://ici.umn.edu/products/impact/221/221.pdf>

[“How can families and early childhood professionals provide quality, inclusive early childhood education for young children with and without disabilities? That’s the question posed in this ‘Impact’ issue. In its pages, parents reflect on their experiences with early childhood education and inclusion for their children - what was helpful, what was not, and lessons learned from the experience. Researchers and practitioners discuss practical strategies for supporting quality early education experiences for young children with

disabilities, as well as the necessity and benefits of inclusion for all students. Innovative inclusive early childhood programs from around the country talk about what they're doing and the outcomes. And complementing the stories and strategies are listings of a wide range of resources that may be of use to families and professionals who are parenting or working with young children with disabilities.”]

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“Does Higher Quality Early Child Care Promote Low-Income Children's Math and Reading Achievement in Middle Childhood?” By Eric Dearing, Boston College, and others. IN: Child Development, vol. 80, no. 5 (September/October 2009) pp. 1329-1349.

[“As children head back to school and attention turns to strategies for boosting reading and math achievement for low-income youth, a... study says the quality of early child care may play a role.... The researchers looked at reading and math achievement of more than 1,300 children in middle childhood from economic backgrounds ranging from poor to affluent. They used information from the longitudinal Study of Early Care and Youth Development.... Children who spent more time in high-quality (that is, above-average) child care in the first five years of their lives had better reading and math scores, the researchers found. This was especially true for low-income children; in fact, their scores were similar to those of affluent children, even after taking into account a variety of family factors, including parents' education and intelligence.” Society for Research in Child Development, Press Release (September 15, 2009.) NOTE: Does Higher Quality Early Child Care... is available for loan.]

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Education Reform Starts Early: Lessons from New Jersey's PreK-3rd Reform Efforts. By Sara Mead. (New America Foundation, Sacramento, California) December 2009. 37 p.

Full text at:

http://www.newamerica.net/sites/newamerica.net/files/policydocs/Education%20Reform%20Starts%20Early_0.pdf

[“A... report by Sara Mead for the New America Foundation focuses on New Jersey's preschool program as a model for the nation. But while the report acknowledges the precarious nature of the state's finances, it still recommends the expansion of preschool to more children. The report offers a history of preschool in the state, starting with the Abbott vs. Burke Supreme Court ruling that led to preschool in 31 urban districts. It addresses how the state has incorporated private preschools into the system, and worked to develop a high-quality program that has resulted in improved performance in elementary grades.” The Press of Atlantic City, Diane D'Amico's Education Blog (December 13, 2009.)]

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“Preschoolers’ Search for Explanatory Information within Adult-Child Conversation.” By Brandy N. Frazier and others. IN: Child Development, vol. 80, no. 6 (November/December 2009) pp. 1592-1611.

Full text at: <http://www3.interscience.wiley.com/cgi-bin/fulltext/122683301/PDFSTART>

[“At some point, most people who spend time around young children encounter a youngster who likes to play the ‘Why?’ game. For those who are not familiar with the ‘Why?’ game, a child asks a question and an adult answers, to which the child asks a second question: Why? The adult explains the answer and gets the question again: Why? For a long time, researchers believed that most questions young children ask were being asked in order to prolong a conversation, and not because the child wanted an actual explanation about something. Why? The belief was that children don’t have an understanding of causality until they are between 5 and 8 years old; meaning that they don’t see how one thing can happen or exist because of something else. However, as research continues to dig deeper into the minds of young children, many researchers are starting to believe that very young children - possibly infants - can make causal inferences about the relationship between objects in their environment. Psychologists writing in... ‘Child Development’ probe the relationship between young children and their surroundings by taking a look at what questions they ask and how they react when someone responds in order to explain why. Their findings provide new evidence of the power of language interactions between adults and children - driving home the point that the strongest learning environments are those in which adults engage in rich conversations with children, even those as young as 2.” Early Ed Watch (December 1, 2009.)]

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2009 CAEL QIS (California Early Learning Quality Improvement System) Interim Report. Draft. By the American Institutes for Research and others. (California Department of Education, Sacramento, California) December 11, 2009.

Full text at: <http://www.cde.ca.gov/sp/cd/re/sb1629committee.asp>

[“The purpose of the California Early Learning Quality Improvement System (CAEL QIS) Advisory Committee... is to develop a plan to improve outcomes for children and narrow the school readiness gap by improving the quality of early learning and care programs for children from birth to five years old. A broad partnership created the legislation... that established the 13-member Advisory Committee and called for the creation of the new quality rating and improvement system (QRIS).... As envisioned by State Superintendent of Public Instruction Jack O’Connell’s P16 Council in 2007, any effort to close the achievement gap must begin with a system that includes high-quality preschool and other early learning programs. The Governor’s Committee on Education Excellence (2008) called for a comprehensive early childhood system as a foundation for school reform, noting that a culture that puts students first should start with its youngest

children. This interim report describes the Advisory Committee’s progress in assessing California’s existing early learning and care infrastructure and in designing a new system.”]

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IMPROVED FAMILY FUNCTIONING

“The Impact of Background Television on Parent-Child Interaction.” By Heather L. Kirkorian, and others, University of Massachusetts, Amherst. IN: *Child Development*, vol. 80, no. 5 (September/October 2009) pp. 1350-1359.

[“More than a third of American infants and toddlers live in homes where the television is on most or all the time, even if no one’s watching. A new study looks for the first time at the effect of background TV on interactions between parents and young children - and finds that the effect is negative..... The researchers studied about 50 1-, 2-, and 3-year-olds, each of whom was with one parent, at a university child study center. Half of the one-hour session, parents and children were in a playroom without TV; in the other half-hour, parents chose an adult-directed program to watch (such as ‘Jeopardy!’). The researchers observed how often parents and children talked with each other, how actively involved the parents were in their children’s play, and whether parents and children responded to each other’s questions and suggestions. When the TV was on, the researchers found, both the quantity and the quality of interactions between parents and children dropped. Specifically, parents spent about 20 percent less time talking to their children and the quality of the interactions declined, with parents less active, attentive, and responsive to their youngsters. ‘Although previous research found that background television disrupts young children’s solitary play, this is the first study to demonstrate its impact on the quantity and quality of parent-child interactions,’ according to the researchers. ‘Given that high-quality parent-child interaction plays an important role in children’s development, the study challenges the common assumption that background TV doesn’t affect very young children if they don’t look at the screen,’ the researchers added. ‘We need to pay greater attention to children’s early, chronic exposure to TV.’” Society for Research in Child Development, Press Release (September 15, 2009.)

NOTE: The Impact of Background Television... is available for loan.]

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“Promoting Fathers’ Engagement with Children: Preventive Interventions for Low-Income Families.” By Philip A. Cowan, University of California, Berkeley, and others. IN: *Journal of Marriage and Family*, vol. 71, no. 3 (August 2009) pp. 663-679.

Full text at: <http://www.supportingfatherinvolvement.org/jmf-2009-article.pdf>

[“Family service agencies are missing huge opportunities to help children by focusing only on mothers and ignoring fathers, according to a groundbreaking study by some of

the nation's top family and child development researchers. The scientific study... found that when mothers and fathers enrolled together in 16-week sessions to work on their relationships as parents and partners, their children were much less likely to show signs of depression, anxiety and hyperactivity. 'The vast majority of family services - from parenting classes to home visits - are really aimed at mothers, while fathers are almost completely overlooked,' explained Dr. Kyle Pruett, clinical professor of psychiatry at the Yale School of Medicine and a co-author of the study. 'The research is clear that the best way to create a healthy environment for children is to engage dads and moms together.'" The Supporting Father Involvement Program, Press Release (July 31, 2009.)]

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The Need for Paid Parental Leave for Federal Employees: Adapting to a Changing Workforce. By Kevin Miller and others. (Institute for Women's Policy Research, Washington, DC) 2009. 18 p.

[The "Federal government could save \$50 million by adopting private sector paid leave benefits used by Fortune 100 corporations. 'The government is splurging on turnover costs - by skimping on paid leave benefits that most Fortune 100 companies use to keep their best employees loyal and avoid costly recruitment and retraining,' according to Kevin Miller. Dr. Miller is one of the authors of a report on parental leave released... by the Institute for Women's Policy Research (IWPR). Most Fortune 100 companies offer paid maternity leave, and a third also offer paid paternity leave, according to the report. The federal government, America's single largest employer, offers neither. The lack of parental leave benefits costs the government thousands of trained workers every year, according to the new report. IWPR calculates that the federal government could prevent 2,650 departures per year just among female employees by offering paid parental leave, preventing \$50 million per year in turnover costs." Institute for Women's Policy Research, Press Release.]

Executive Summary: 2 p. <http://iwpr.org/pdf/FEPPLAExecSumm.pdf>

Full text at: <http://iwpr.org/pdf/FEPPLAA141.pdf>

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Parents as Child Care Providers: A Menu of Parental Leave Models. By Vicky Lovell and Allison Suppan Helmuth. Briefing Paper. (Institute for Women's Policy Research, Washington, DC) 2009. 5 p.

Full text at: <http://www.iwpr.org/pdf/A136Models.pdf>

[“Public policy efforts to strengthen the early care and education system in the US could benefit by placing greater emphasis on the role that working parents can play. One policy advance that would reduce pressure on the early child care market is to expand support for employees caring for their newborns at home. In the United States, many workers

have a job-protected right to 12 weeks of parental leave, but some cannot afford to forego income during that period, and fewer than 60 percent of private-sector workers are eligible for leave under the Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA). Offering paid parental leave to employees allows parents to spend crucial time bonding with their children after birth or adoption, while boosting productivity and reducing turnover and employee training costs.”]

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IMPROVED HEALTH

Cord Blood Contaminants in Minority Newborns. By the Environmental Working Group. (The Group, Washington, DC) 2009. 61 p.

[“Chemicals from cosmetics, perfumes and other fragrances were detected along with dozens of other industrial compounds in the umbilical cords of African American, Asian and Latino infants in the United States, according to a national study.... Laboratory tests paid for by the nonprofit Environmental Working Group and Rachel's Network found 232 chemicals and pollutants in the umbilical cords of the 10 babies tested in five states between December 2007 and June 2008. ‘It is not a surprise because studies for many years have shown synthetic and industrial chemicals in humans, but it is particularly concerning that the developing fetus is being exposed,’ said Megan Schwarzman, a family physician at San Francisco General Hospital and a research scientist in environmental public health at UC Berkeley. ‘This is a particularly vulnerable time, and there is no reason for the chemicals to be there.’... Seven of the 10 babies had in their umbilical cord blood synthetic musks known as Galaxolide and Tonalide, which are toxic to aquatic life and have been shown in preliminary studies to cause hormonal changes. The musk is used in scented soaps, perfumes and colognes, indicating the infants were contaminated by cosmetics their mothers used.... Another chemical found in the umbilical cords was bisphenol A, or BPA, a synthetic estrogen used in plastics that has been linked to breast cancer and hormonal problems.” San Francisco Chronicle (December 3, 2009.)]

Executive Summary: <http://www.ewg.org/minoritycordblood/executivesummary>

Full text at: <http://www.ewg.org/files/2009-Minority-Cord-Blood-Report.pdf>

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Substance Exposed Infants: State Responses to the Problem. By Nancy K. Young and others. (Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, Rockville, Maryland) 2009. 89 p.

Full text at: <http://www.ncsacw.samhsa.gov/files/Substance-Exposed-Infants.pdf>

[“This study assessed State policy from the broadest perspective: prevention, intervention, identification, and treatment of prenatal substance exposure, including immediate and

ongoing services for the infant, the mother, and the family. It reviewed States' policies regarding:

- Pre-pregnancy prevention efforts;
- Screening and assessment in the prenatal period;
- Testing at birth and notification of child protective services (CPS) in cases in which infants are identified as substance-affected;
- The provision of services to SEIs and their parents after a CPS referral is made or other agencies become involved; and
- The processing of SEI-related referrals to developmental disabilities agencies.”]

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“Thirdhand Smoke’ Exposure another Threat to Children.” By Caitlin O. Smith. IN: AAP News, vol. 30, no. 11 (November 2009) 1 p.

Full text at: <http://aapnews.aappublications.org/cgi/reprint/30/11/8-a>

[“Most parents are well aware that smoking in the presence of their children can harm the health of their little ones. Now, another invisible threat has been identified - thirdhand smoke. The term was coined to describe cigarettes’ lingering aftereffects, which are just as harmful to children as secondhand smoke. A few days or even weeks after a cigarette is smoked, particulates remain on countertops, floors and other surfaces. Curious children crawling on the floor, pressing their faces against walls and tables, and putting objects into their mouths are at increased risk of coming into contact with these third-hand toxins.”]

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Unaffordable Dental Care Is Linked to Frequent School Absences. By Nadereh Pourat and Gina Nicholson. Health Policy Research Brief. (UCLA Center for Health Policy Research, Los Angeles, California) November 2009. 6 p.

Full text at:

http://www.healthpolicy.ucla.edu/pubs/files/Unaffordable_Dental_Care_PB_1109.pdf

[“This policy brief examines the number of children in California who miss school due to lack of affordable dental care. Specifically, the authors found that of the 7,240,000 school age children ages 5-17 in California, an estimated 504,000 missed at least one day of school due to a dental problem in the past year. The majority of these children report one missed day of school due to a dental problem, while the remaining 40 percent report missing two or more days. In total, California children report missing an estimated 874,000 school days due to dental problems. The ability to afford needed dental care is the key difference between those children who miss school due to a dental problem and those who do not. The authors note that frequent absences may have significant negative societal and economic consequences and suggest that policymakers consider addressing gaps in coverage and access, as well as school-based dental care, among other recommendations.”]

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“Effect of Music by Mozart on Energy Expenditure in Growing Preterm Infants.”
By Ronit Lubetzky and others. IN: *Pediatrics*, published online December 7, 2009.
pp. e24-e28.

Full text at: <http://pediatrics.aappublications.org/cgi/reprint/peds.2009-0990v1>

[“The rate of weight gain in preterm infants who are exposed to music seems to improve. A potential mechanism could be increased metabolic efficiency; therefore, we conducted this study to test the hypothesis that music by Mozart reduces resting energy expenditure (REE) in growing healthy preterm infants. Design: A prospective, randomized clinical trial with crossover was conducted in 20 healthy, appropriate-weight-for-gestational-age, gavage-fed preterm infants. Infants were randomly assigned to be exposed to a 30-minute period of Mozart music or no music on 2 consecutive days. Metabolic measurements were performed by indirect calorimetry. Results: REE was similar during the first 10-minute period of both randomization groups. During the next 10-minute period, infants who were exposed to music had a significantly lower REE than when not exposed to music ($P = .028$). This was also true during the third 10-minute period ($P = .03$). Thus, on average, the effect size of music on REE is a reduction of ~10% to 13% from baseline, an effect obtained within 10 to 30 minutes. Conclusions: Exposure to Mozart music significantly lowers REE in healthy preterm infants. We speculate that this effect of music on REE might explain, in part, the improved weight gain that results from this ‘Mozart effect.’”]

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Shaping a Healthier Generation: Successful State Strategies to Prevent Childhood Obesity. By Joyal Mulheron and Kara Vonasek, National Governors' Association Center for Best Practices. (The Center, Washington, DC) September 2009. 64 p.

Full text at: <http://www.nga.org/Files/pdf/0909HEALTHIERGENERATION.PDF>

[“Childhood obesity has reached epidemic proportions in the United States. Today, more than 23million - or nearly one in every three - American children are overweight or obese. These numbers have only increased over the past four decades and the problem continues to take a physical and financial toll on children, families, and the nation. This trend reaches across multiple demographics - spanning race and ethnicity, income, and region. A recent U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) study found that nearly 15 percent of low-income children ages 2 to 4 are obese, meaning that they are in the 95th percentile for weight among their peers.... This report, which puts forth a call to action and sets the context for gubernatorial decisionmaking and the role of state agencies, aims to offer direction to governors and other policymakers who want to craft children’s health policies that prevent obesity and advance the well-being of all families.”]

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Preventing Obesity in the Child Care Setting: Evaluating State Regulations. By Duke University. (The University, Durham, North Carolina) [2009.] 57 p.

[“The report examines policies regulating healthy eating and physical activity in child-care settings in all 50 states, the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico, the Virgin Islands and Department of Defense programs, comparing them to model regulations. It found that many states could be doing more to support healthy eating and physical activity in child care, but also that making such changes should be straightforward given widespread agreement among experts on the model regulations.” RWJF Content Alerts (December 9, 2009.)]

Full text at: http://cfm.mc.duke.edu/wysiwyg/downloads/State_Reports_FInal.pdf

State report cards: http://cfm.mc.duke.edu/modules/cfm_ehs_resrch/index.php?id=6

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IMPROVED SYSTEMS OF CARE

Child Care and Development Block Grant Participation in 2008. By Hannah Matthews. (Center for Law and Social Policy, Washington, DC) December 1, 2009. 3 p.

Full text at: <http://www.clasp.org/admin/site/publications/files/ccdbg-08-participation.pdf>

[“The number of children receiving CCDBG assistance decreased in 2008. CCDBG served a monthly average of 1.6 million children in 2008, a decline of 106,300 children from 2007. This was the smallest number of children served by CCDBG this decade.... State data on children served vary. A majority of states (29) served fewer children in 2008 than in 2007, while 19 states served more children. Several states reported large decreases in numbers of children served in 2008: - California served 39,600 fewer children, a 27 percent decrease.... All families that qualify for child care assistance cannot access subsidies. According to research from the National Women’s Law Center, as of early 2009, 19 states had waiting lists or had frozen intake for child care assistance. Waiting lists were as high as 220,069 children in California and 57,671 children in Florida.”]

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“Best-Practice Guidelines for Physical Activity at Child Care.” By Christina McWilliams and others. IN: *Pediatrics*, vol. 124, no. 6 (November 2009) pp. 1650-1659.

Full text at: <http://pediatrics.aappublications.org/cgi/reprint/124/6/1650>

[“Research has indicated that the child care center is a very strong predictor of preschool-aged children’s physical activity levels, making this an important setting to help young children obtain physical activity that is appropriate for their health and development. However, some evidence suggests that organized child care may not adequately support children’s physical activity needs. Although many organizations provide recommendations, guidelines, or standards for motor skill development and physical activity opportunities, no set of guidelines exist that directly target the overall physical activity environment at child care. Because of the lack of comprehensive recommendations, the Nutrition and Physical Activity Self-assessment for Child Care best-practice guidelines for healthy weight development were created on the basis of an extensive review of existing guidelines, research evidence, and expert review. The purpose of this article is to present these physical activity best-practice guidelines and provide data on how these guidelines compare to current practice in a large sample (N = 96) of child care centers in North Carolina. These best-practice guidelines include recommendations for 8 unique components of the child care environment, including active opportunities, fixed play environment, portable play environment, sedentary opportunities, sedentary environment, staff behavior, staff training/education, and physical activity policies. Establishing comprehensive guidelines for physical activity at child care could result in higher activity levels and healthier children, but more research is needed.”]

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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 HEALTH

“A National Survey of Obesity Prevention Practices in Head Start.” By Robert C. Whitaker, Temple University, and others. IN: Archives of Pediatrics and Adolescent Medicine, vol. 163, no. 12 (December 2009) pp. 1144-1150.

[“Almost 1 million preschool children from low-income families are enrolled in Head Start, a national program for young children that readies them for school. While the program provides them with educational and social skill enhancement, a study authored by Temple University researchers finds that it also goes above and beyond the current federal recommendations for promoting healthy eating and exercise habits among this group of children who are at high risk for obesity. For the study... researchers surveyed all Head Start programs in the country about practices related to healthy eating and physical activity. Across the 1583 Head Start programs surveyed, researchers found: Seventy percent of programs were serving only non-fat or 1 percent milk, and 59 percent

never served chocolate milk. Three-quarters of programs reported having children participate in at least 30 minutes of adult-led physical activity per day. Ninety-four percent of programs reported serving some vegetable every day, other than French fries. Ninety-seven percent reported serving some fruit every day, other than 100% fruit juice. More than half (56 percent) provided children with at least 60 minutes each day of unstructured physical activity in addition to the 30 minutes of adult-led physical activity.” Temple University, News Release (December 7, 2009.) NOTE: A National Survey of Obesity... will be available for loan.]

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CONFERENCES AND OPPORTUNITIES

2010 State Budget Workshops. Sponsored by the Child Development Policy Institute and On the Capitol Doorstep. January 21, 2010, Sacramento, California, January 26, 2010, Oakland, California, January 28, 2010, Los Angeles, California, January 29, 2010, San Diego, California.

For more information and registration:

<https://www.cdpi.net/cs/cdpi/print/htdocs/events.htm#budget>

[“The budget workshops allow professionals to learn the mechanics in the state budget process and get informed about the January version of the Governor’s fiscal year budget. Four workshops are held throughout the state...”]

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24th Annual International Conference on Child and Family Maltreatment. Sponsored by the Chadwick Center for Children and Families. January 24-29, 2010. Town and Country Resort and Convention Center, San Diego, California.

For more information and registration: <http://www.chadwickcenter.org/conference.htm>

[“Mark your calendar for the San Diego International Conference on Child and Family Maltreatment in warm, sunny San Diego, California. Our 24th annual conference program is ready, so we are excited to share the wealth of knowledge and experience of our renowned speakers with you. The San Diego Conference focuses on multi-disciplinary best-practice efforts to prevent, if possible, or otherwise to investigate, treat, and prosecute child and family maltreatment. The objective of the San Diego Conference is to develop and enhance professional skills and knowledge in the prevention, recognition, assessment and treatment of all forms of maltreatment including those related to family violence as well as to enhance investigative and legal skills. Issues concerning support for families, prevention, leadership, policy making and translating the latest research into action are also addressed.”]

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If you have a report, conference or funding opportunity that you would like us to consider for this publication, please send it to our attention.

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