

# **SOCIETY FOR SOCIAL WORK RESEARCH ANNUAL MEETING**

January 16-19, 2003 Washington, DC.

## **CHILD WELFARE RESEARCH**

### **INTEREST GROUP MEETING**

*Saturday January 18, 2003*

*12:30 pm – 1:30 pm Bancroft Room*

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#### **Summary of Meeting Comments**

**Participants** – see attached list of those persons signing an attendance sheet. Approximately 50 individuals were in attendance. Please excuse any mistakes in word processing of names, affiliations, and addresses, which were not always legible on the sign-in sheet. Discussion note summary by Barbara Thomlison from Florida International University.

**Introduction:** Dr. Barbara Thomlison, Florida International University, and Dr. Alberta Ellett, University of Georgia  
Purpose of meeting was to bring together all those interested in child welfare research to ensure a strong presence of this special social work area, which has traditionally received less research attention. As well, the meeting may serve to discuss ways to have a continued discussion of child welfare research network at the SSWR Annual Meeting.

**Dr. Richard Barth** Professor, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, (NSCAW Research Team

Dr. Barth presented briefly on how child welfare researchers may access the National Data Set of the *National Survey of Child and Adolescent Well Being (NSCW)*.

The Nations' first Probability Survey of Children Investigated for Abuse and Neglect contains data from 36 states, and 6,000 children, who were assessed at entrance into the child welfare system. The children were followed and assessed at 18-month intervals. Comparison groups are available, for example, those receiving no service, home service, and out-of-home service. There are 700 children in care for more than one year for permanency research.

The data set is released to researchers obtaining an Institutional Review Board (IRB) Approval Certificate and a fee of \$75. Contact is through Cornell University. More detailed information is available for a fee of \$2,000, and an IRB approval. This information contains specific data on counties, coding, and true values but this data is also subject to strict scrutiny through unannounced site visits to ensure protection of data. A presentation of the study findings by Dr. Barth occurred on January 18, 2003 at the SSWR conference.

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## **Child Welfare Research Interest Group Meeting (cont'd)**

### **Child Welfare League of America.**

Presented by:

Dr. Wendy Whiting Blome, Director, National Center for Research and Data (NCRD),  
Child Welfare League of America (CWLA)

Dr. Sue Steib, Senior Staff Consultant, Research to Practice Initiative, NCRD, CWLA

Dr. Michele Livojevic-Davis, Director of Research & Evaluation, NCRD, CWLA

- CWLA's National Center for Research and Data has several initiatives in research, evaluation, and research to practice knowledge of interest to researchers, educators, practitioners, and administrators of child welfare agencies.
- There is a National Data Analysis System on CWLA.org website NCANDS and AFCARS child welfare data. The site readily allows for manipulation of data by comparing states on variables in the data set.
- A National Working Group has been established to increase reliability among the states on categories and definitions.
- The Research To Practice Initiative and website – [www.cwla.org/programs/r2p](http://www.cwla.org/programs/r2p)  
Website contains current publications in both PDF and HTML formats, annotated bibliographies, and a Toolkit Series describing sampling strategies, program evaluation and outcome measurement in simple terms
- The National Council of Researchers in Child Welfare (NCRCW) planning committee for the combined Tools That Work/Research Conference held its first conference call meeting in December, 2002. Look for the *Tools That Work/Research Conference to be held in Miami, Florida from November 12 - 14, 2003.*

### **Institute for the Advancement of Social Work Research**

Dr. Joan Zlotnik, Coordinating Research Executive Director, Washington, DC. IASWR sponsored the preconference special meetings with federal funding agencies. Also working toward grant proposal on Social Work Research Center; A review of meeting the mental health needs of children in child welfare system; need to prepare social work students for child welfare work – what competencies are needed? IASWR works with CDC injury prevention, violence prevention programs. NCAAN Conference is both practice oriented and research based.

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## Child Welfare Research Interest Group Meeting (cont'd)

### Future Plans for SSWR Child Welfare Research Interest Group.

Suggestions emerging from feedback for future initiatives of the CW Research Interest Group:

1. There appeared to be agreement for continuing to have an *annual SSWR Child Welfare Research Interest Group meeting*.  
Action Taken: I have contacted Lynn Sherman, the 2004 Conference Program Chair and the 2<sup>nd</sup> Child Welfare Research Interest Group will have a meeting time in New Orleans, January 15- 18, 2004. Please let me know of agenda items or focus for the meeting.
2. Submit abstracts for focused *Symposia Papers* to permit a large number of similarly focused papers to be presented as a group. *Symposia abstract submissions on intervention research, research methodology issues and challenges* in child welfare populations were suggested. Other child welfare Symposia were on the Conference Agenda this year and these were well attended. Find colleagues and make themed presentations of your research.  
Action Taken: Contact your colleagues for joint submissions.
3. Development of criteria for *what constitutes evidence for a practice approach in child welfare to be considered evidence-based*.  
Action Taken. There are a number of ways this dialogue may be considered. In a journal, or perhaps even through the CWLA Research Council can also consider.
4. Edit a *special issue of Research on Social Work Practice* – on child welfare research – disseminate research through focused publications.  
Action Taken: I contacted Dr. Bruce Thyer, editor, *Research on Social Work Practice*, he is prepared to devote a special issue on child welfare research. Papers must meet the following criteria to a high degree (no conceptual papers or correlational studies):
  - Empirical outcome studies on social work practice.
  - Empirical reports on the development and testing of methods of assessment for social work research or practice.
  - Evidence-based reviews of psychosocial interventions, or of psychosocial approaches applied to particular problems.I will work with him to send out the call for papers to conference attendees and others who have relevant articles for submission. So look for a call.
5. Have a *preconference special issues research session*  
Action Taken: An inquiry was made to the SSWR conference planning committee and it was learned that pre conference workshops are not part of the regular conference fees or registration, and therefore, to go forward with a special preconference workshop financial support would be needed through either a

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workshop fee or a sponsor. I am open to pursuing this further if there is interest from a sponsor or members are prepared to pay an additional fee (room and registration etc).

Thanks to all the presenters and attendees for making this both an interesting and informative session. Thanks to Jill Levenson, doctoral candidate, Florida International University for assisting with the notes during the presentation.

Please email Barbara Thomlison ([Barbara.Thomlison@fiu.edu](mailto:Barbara.Thomlison@fiu.edu)) for further comments or suggestions.

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