

Abstracts for Presentations in the Child Welfare Category at the 2003 APM

Child Welfare Staff in Rural, Sparsely Populated Areas: The Role of Supervision in Job Satisfaction and Intent to Change Jobs

The role of supervision in turnover of child welfare staff in rural, sparsely populated areas has not been explicated. Supervision plays a key role in successful child welfare practice and satisfaction with supervisors has been found to be related to overall job satisfaction in other populations (Bernotavicz, 2000; Martin & Schinke, 1998; Sumantrai, 1992). Overall job satisfaction in turn impacts on job turnover (Rycraft, 1994).

This study, a cross sectional survey of child welfare workers in two rural, sparsely populated states, describes the relationship between satisfaction with supervision, overall job satisfaction, and intent to leave. It answers the questions: 1) What is the correlation between satisfaction with one's supervisor and overall job satisfaction? 2) What is the correlation between overall job satisfaction and intent to leave a job? 3) What facets of job satisfaction are most likely to predict intent to leave?

Most of the 298 employees were white, female, with an average age of 36. Standardized scales were combined to examine the relationship between supervision (Williamson, 1996), overall job satisfaction (Jayaratne & Chess, 1983; Koeske, Kirk, Koeske, & Rautkis, 1994; Shore & Martin, 1989; Williams & Green, 1987), and intent to leave (Williamson, 1996). This study is part of a larger study examining a wide variety of facets of job satisfaction, such as characteristics of the worker and intrinsic and extrinsic factors, that may contribute to overall job satisfaction and their relationship to intent to leave.

Satisfaction with one's supervisor was the facet that explained the most variance in overall job satisfaction ($R=.50$, $p<.001$). Overall job satisfaction explained 31% of the variation in intent to seek a new job ($R=.56$, $p<.001$). When overall job satisfaction and each of the facets of job satisfaction were entered into a step-wise regression, with intent to seek a new job as the dependent variable, overall job satisfaction entered the model first. The other two facets that contributed to intent to seek a new job were the importance of promotion (intrinsic) and age (characteristic of the worker). The total amount of variance in intent to seek a new job explained by these three variables was .62. People were more likely to state they intended to seek a new job if they had lower overall job satisfaction, rated the importance of promotion highly, and they were younger. Results were reported back to the staff in the child welfare agencies for their feedback.

Final recommendations are built on the results of this study, the responses from the agencies, and findings from previous research. Recommendations present ways that child welfare agencies can address: the role of supervision in turnover and of turnover in rural child welfare agencies, the importance of supervision in child welfare in rural, sparsely populated areas, the recruitment of appropriately educated staff, ongoing continuing education, benefits packages that make the position of supervisor desirable, and ways in which child welfare and social work education partnerships in rural areas can work together to address issues regarding child welfare supervision.

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Reframing Conceptions of Burnout: Implications for the Preparation of Child Welfare Professionals

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Problem: The problem address in this paper is three-fold. First, the extant literature concerned with **burnout** in child welfare (CW) presents mixed understandings that need greater conceptual clarity. Second, the empirical literature addressing whether burnout is a viable explanation for turnover of CW is confusing. Third, there is little discussion of how those educating and preparing CW professionals can help ameliorate this national concern in social work (SW). This paper addresses these important gaps in knowledge.

Conceptual Framework: The literature in child welfare is replete with discussions linking employee turnover to burnout (Arches, 1991; Himle & Jayarante, 1990; Jayarante & Chess, 1984; Tracy & Bean, 1992; Van Dierendonck, Schaufel, & Buunk, 1998).

Burnout has become rather vernacular in the language of social work. However, most studies describing burnout as a chronic problem lack a clear conceptualization of this phenomenon (Geurts, 1998). Many researchers have simply opted for an *operational definition* of burnout using Maslach's Burnout Inventory. The extensive literature review in this paper documents a paucity of concern for an adequate *conceptual definition* of burnout, a fundamental and critical element of construct validation and theory development, and the importance of developing a clear and consistent conceptual definition of burnout (Gall, Borg, & Gall, 1996; Messick, 1995; Ruben & Babbie, 2002; Soderfeldt, Soderfeldt, & Warg, 1995; Sower-Hoag & Thyer, 1987)

This paper includes a new conceptual framework derived from our extensive review of the literature that adds clarity to the meaning of burnout in CW. Our findings suggest that burnout may be a misnomer for many individual and organizational factors

that contribute to CW staff leaving the profession. For example, burnout may be an artificial substitute for inadequately prepared CW workers that is used as a face-saving mechanism by individuals who are untrained and/or ill-suited for, or who have unreasonable expectations for, work in CW. Interestingly, concern for burnout in CW began concurrently with the de-classification of CW positions and changes in education and professional experience requirements (Lieberman, Hornby, & Russell, 1988). De-professionalization in CW has resulted in the employment of many untrained individuals who are expected to carry out complex policies framing the delivery of services to the nation's most needy and troubled population.

Importance to SW Education: Examining research on burnout as a correlate of turnover and scrutinizing the concept and measurement of burnout advances the knowledge base for SW educators. This paper describes our conceptualization of burnout as derived from the extant literature of the past two decades and discusses the importance of this conceptualization for future research and the development of curricula by SW educators preparing CW professionals are discussed relative to : a) preventing employee turnover and increasing employee retention; b) enhancing existing curricula to strengthen core CW knowledge, skills, and abilities; c) work with CW agencies to establish professional mentoring programs (Collins, 1994), to teach CW staff the value of professional, reflective practice, to establish a professional career path and differentiated credentialing system in CW (Costin, Karger, & Stoesz, 1996; Helfgott, 1991; Lieberman, Hornby, & Russell, 1988; Pecora, Briar, & Zlotnik, 1989; Pecora, Whittaker, & Maluccio, 1992), and to improve employee selection procedures; and d) conduct theory-based research on personal, organizational, and work context factors that contribute to CW employee turnover, and more importantly, to employee retention rates.

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Child Welfare Educational Experience: A Qualitative Analysis Marcella Atkins & Patrick Leung, University of Houston

Child protective services (CPS) workers have often been criticized when incidents, such as a child's death, occurs due to the failure of the worker to remove the child from an abusive home. Jones and Okamura (2000) indicate that due to enormous caseloads, diminished resources, and lack of training, CPS workers may commit critical practice errors, which leaves an impression that the CPS agency cannot provide professional services. Leung and Cheung (1998) indicate that in order for child welfare workers to perform their duties and remain on the job longer, they need professional education and the skills that Master's level education provides.

The Child Welfare Education Project (CWEP), funded by Title IV-E, grew out of a need for a graduate school of social work and the Department of Protective and Regulatory Service (DPRS) in a southern state to develop a program in which student seeking Master's degrees in Social Work would be able to obtain the necessary skills to enable them to provide high level of expertise to children and families. The goals of CWEP are to: (1) increase the supply of trained professional social workers from employment in public child welfare agencies; (2) increase the number of students in social work with a commitment to careers in public child welfare services; (3) enhance the capacity of the graduate school of social work to build knowledge, skill, and professional competencies of students for leadership in public child welfare social settings.

This study used both process and outcome measures to assess whether the goals and objectives of the program were effectively and efficiently met. A CWEP evaluation committee was formed to address three areas of concern: (1) review of the literature pertaining to child welfare education; (2) development of operational definitions for the process and outcome measures; and (3) identification of instruments and processes to measure the process and outcome variables.

This study, conducted in 2000 and 2001, was primarily qualitative with inputs from 40 students, 12 CPS supervisors, nine field instructors, nine CWEP staff members, and nine DPRS staff members. By means of a ground theory analysis approach, the

results indicated that the CWEP students had a positive experience in CWEP, felt supported by the CWEP staff, and believed that CWEP would allow them to be competent CPS workers. The majority of the program staff, DPRS staff members, field instructors, and CPS supervisors believe that CWEP is an excellent program that educates and recruits child welfare workers; offers CPS workers an opportunity to acquire a Master's degree; and provides career enhancement and professional growth. Limitations include stipend reimbursement process and the payback process. Recommendations made for improvement of the CWEP program.

The strengths and limitations in this title IV-E program provided feedback to both the public child welfare agencies and the public child welfare workers. An evaluation model has been developed to assist Title IV-E program staff in developing evaluation processes to enhance future educational programs.

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Looking to the Future: Enhancing IV-E Centers by Including Disability Curriculum Requirements

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Over the past decade child protection agencies and schools of social work have received increased federal monies designed to increase the effectiveness of services for the abused and neglected children within this country. This effectiveness of services is often measured in terms of the safety, well-being, and permanency of children.

Child protection agencies serve people from a wide range of ethnic and racial backgrounds, socioeconomic rankings, and differing levels of cognitive and physical abilities. Reports from Crosse et al. (1993) and Sullivan et al. (1997) have indicated that the overall incidence of abuse and neglect (all types) of children with disabilities is between 1.7 to 1.9 times that of non-disabled children. Sullivan et al. (1997) further reported that 64% of the maltreated children in their survey had some type of impairment or disability. These children with disabilities are an extraordinarily large percentage of the total number of children being served by the child protection system (Wescott & Jones, 1999).

Children with disabilities are not the only people with disabilities that the child protection system serves on a daily basis. The child protection system also sees the children of parents who have a disability. An estimated 120,000 children are born every year to parents with a disability, and approximately half of those children remain with their birth parents (Kennedy, Garbus, & Davis, 1999). It has been estimated that 40-60%

of parents who have a disability have their children removed from their home at some point during child-rearing (Booth & Booth, 1998; Muenzer-Doy & Anderson, 1998).

In consideration of the preponderance of persons with disabilities involved in the child welfare system, child welfare workers must be knowledgeable and skilled in assessing and working with clients who have a disability. With the recent increase of federal monies designated for child protection issues, it makes sense that training and education regarding disability issues be at the forefront of course requirements. Unfortunately, the amount of required disability content in child welfare programs is limited in schools of social work.

The role of federally funded IV-E Centers within schools of social work has been critical in the structuring of child welfare curricula over the past twenty years (Zlotnik, 1996). Throughout this time, Centers have gathered to discuss course content and curricula inclusion within the child welfare educational tract. For example, in 1991 a California consortium of social work schools and child welfare agencies presented a set of practice competencies that has been incorporated into each school's child welfare curriculum (CalSWEC, 1995). Such efforts have been instrumental in determining appropriate and comprehensive curriculum that constitutes the education provided in child welfare emphasis areas. However, to this point, the requirement of comprehensive curricula on disability issues has not been a primary focus.

This presentation will discuss the importance and relevance of providing disability curriculum to future child protection workers through IV-E centers at schools of social work. The presentation will assist IV-E center faculty and staff in identifying ways they can incorporate current theoretical and practice approaches to disability (Gilson & Depoy, 2002; Kropf, 1996; Liese, Clevenger, & Hanley, 1999); Mackelprang & Salsgiver, 1996) into their core curriculum requirements.

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A University-Agency Partnership to Upgrade Services in Response to a Social Policy Change

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This presentation will outline the stages in the development of a university-agency partnership that evolved from the need to upgrade child welfare services as a result of a shift in child welfare policy. This change was occasioned by the passage in 1997 of the Adoption and Safe Families Act (ASFA) resulting in the need for more timely planning for permanent homes for children, an emphasis on safety, health and well being of the child, for concurrent planning, the prompt and accurate assessment of situations in which reasonable efforts could be waived and expedited termination of parental rights (Tracy & Pine, 2000). As a result of the collaboration, a unique intervention was implemented in a large bureaucratic organization serving families characterized by the highest rates of poverty, unemployment and family disintegration in the United States.

Such collaborations between educators and agency staff offer many challenges as well as opportunities (Hopkins, Mudrick, & Rudolph, 1999); Maluccio & Anderson, 2000; Seaberg, 1982). This presentation will outline a five-stage model describing

- The establishment of the partnership
- Joint planning for an initial intervention as a starting point
- The implementation of the intervention and spin-off projects
- The research component, including the evaluation of the intervention and the establishment of related action research projects
- Post-training activity and on-going collaboration

In this collaboration, an innovative training intervention was jointly planned, implemented and evaluated. The viability of training as a vehicle for change is well documented in the literature. (Bibus & Rooney, 1998; Christ & Sormanti, 1999; Salcido & Cota, 1998; Young, 1994) Yet training in and of itself will usually not effect organization change (Cohen & Austin, 1994). The uniqueness of this innovation is that it was embedded in a larger context of collaborative efforts.

Staff working with foster care cases were targeted to receive the training. The focus on small, manageable work units as change targets is consistent with current thinking about models for success (Cohen & Austin, 1994). Steps in the joint planning and delivery of the training will be discussed. These include 1) an interdisciplinary format: caseworkers and attorneys attended a program team taught by a lawyer and social worker, and 2) the use of an active learning style, a new training methodology for this public agency.

The active learning format employed in this program engaged trainees in the subject matter by providing the opportunity to practice skills that can be translated to

the work environment. This approach is based on the premise that students learn more from active engagement with the material (Keller, Whitaker, & Burke, 2001) and is part of a long pedagogical tradition devoted to educating students to be critical thinkers (Bradford, S., 1987; Gambrell, 1997). This approach is particularly relevant for caseworkers and attorneys who need to transfer social work knowledge into evidence in a legal case.

The research component included an evaluation of the training using a knowledge-based pre-post test, a consumer satisfaction questionnaire, and a follow-up study with a third of the trainees 60 days after completion of the program. An important spin-off was the implementation of a needs assessment to further service planning. On-going collaborative efforts will be described as a case example of stage five in this model.

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Ecological Correlates of Physical Abuse and Neglect in Infants and Toddlers Maria Scannapieco, University of Texas at Arlington, Kelli Connell-Carrick, University of Texas at El Paso

In 1999, 826,000 children were victims of maltreatment in the United States (USDHHS, 2001). Over 58% of victims suffered neglect, and over 21% suffered physical abuse. Overall, children in the 0 to 3 age group suffered maltreatment more than any other age group, and were also more likely to experience a recurrence of maltreatment than older aged children (USDHHS, 2001). Most fatality victims due to maltreatment are

also very young. In 1999, children under the age of 6 accounted for 86% of fatality victims, and 42% of victims were under the age of 1. The majority of the victims died from neglect (38.2%) and physical abuse (26.1%); and the combination of physical abuse and neglect comprised over 22% of deaths (USDHHS, 2001).

Child maltreatment affects children of all ages, but children three years of age and younger are the most vulnerable. Only 10% of child deaths are of children over four. Most fatality victims are under the age of two and 41% are under the age of one (McClain, et al, 1993; Levine, et al, 1995). Child fatality due to neglect ranges from 32% (Delambre & Wood, 1997) to 48% (Daro & Wang, 1998; Baumann, et al., 1998) of all reported child death cases.

A review of the peer-reviewed literature from 1990 to 2001 found that only eight articles out of 66 focused on predictors of maltreatment in children under the age of four (Kotch, Browne, Ringwalt, Dufort, and Ruina, 1997; Kotch, Browne, Ringwalt, Stewart, Ruina, Holt, Lowman, and Jung, 1995; Kotch, Browne, Dufort, and Winsor, 1999; Halsey, Covington, Gilbert, Sorrentino-Kelly, Renoud, 1993; Reams, 1999; Burrell, Thompson, and Sexton, 1994; Brayden, Atlemeier, Tucker, Dietrich, and Vietze, 1992). Given the increased risk of death and maltreatment for this age group, more research is warranted to explore the unique factors that contribute to abuse and neglect for young victims.

This workshop will present the findings of a research study that examined the risk factors for physical abuse and neglect in children ages zero to four. The workshop will present the unique correlates of physical abuse and neglect in order to identify the predictors that are similar and different for both types of maltreatment. The study used the ecological model as a theoretical guide, and explores (1) child characteristics, (2) home characteristics, (3) caregiver characteristics, (4) social characteristics, and (5) maltreatment characteristics. Variables within each factor were found to be significant; and unique differences were identified that distinguish abuse and neglect. A large random sample (n=389) was obtained from a metropolitan community in the southwest that includes urban, rural, and suburban areas. The review of the existing research and the presentation of the findings of the current research inform curriculum, policy, and future research.

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Public Law Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act (CAPTA) (1974)

Child Abuse in Immigrant Korean Families: Characteristics and Implications for Practice

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Recent immigrants who have limited English skills are less likely to be familiar with American customs and laws and to have much more difficulties in adjusting to their new environment in general compared to other Asians who have been in this country for many generations. There are significant differences in child rearing practices between immigrant Korean and mainstream families (Mass and Geaga-Rosenthal, 2000). Physical punishment of children as part of their discipline at home and school is generally permitted in Korean culture. Many traditional immigrant Korean parents believe that the "rod cures," and that child maltreatment is not a serious public or social issue among them. The number of Korean child maltreatment reports in the United States during the past ten years has increased sharply.

The purpose of this research is to examine types of child abuse in immigrant Korean families; to describe socio-demographic and behavioral characteristics of victims and perpetrators; to identify some of the most critical variables that contribute to the selection of the type of placement made by the child protective service system; and to identify significant implications for social work practice in general and child protective services in particular.

Data were extracted by reviewing and analyzing 170 entire active open case files maintained by special unit of the Child Protective Services (CPS) during July through September 2001. The review of case files was supplemented by open-ended interviews with Asian/Pacific child protective service workers about their experiences and difficulties in working with monolingual Korean speaking families and about major factors considered in making foster care placement decisions.

The gender of abuse victims was equally distributed (50.6% male; 49.4% female), and their age range was one day to 18 years with an average age of 9 years. About 39% of cases were referred for physical abuse, 25% for neglect, 24% for emotional abuse, 9%

for substantial risk for abuse, 2.3% for sexual abuse, 0.5% for sibling abuse, and 1% for other types of maltreatment. More than half of total cases experienced moderate to severe maltreatment (51.8%) and the rest were found to have suffered mild levels of abuse (48.2%).

The majority of the victims (59.4%) lived with their biological parents with or without siblings when they were referred to the DCFS. Approximately a quarter of them lived with either single parent (14.1%) or stepparent (8.8%). In addition, the great majority of abuse victims (74.1%) were found not to have any behavioral problems.

With regard to perpetrators' relationships to the victims, 38.5% were the victim's biological father, 31.4% were the biological mother, and 17.8% of cases involved abuse from both parents. The gender of perpetrators was equally distributed, and the age of them ranged from 27 to 74 years (Mean age=43.7 years). Significant circumstances and psychosocial stressors leading to perpetual abuse or neglect included excessive disciplining via corporal punishment (42 incidents), witnessing spousal domestic violence (37 incidents), family problems related to divorce or separation (17 incidents), incapacity to provide care (12 incidents), language and cultural barriers (10 incidents), parent's mental illness (8 incidents).

As to DCFS disposition upon completion of investigation of child abuse allegation, 70.6% of Korean cases obtained the decision of Family Maintenance (victims continue to live in their own homes while perpetrators are removed from their homes or ordered to receive treatment), 22.4% Family Reunion (victims are removed from their homes and placed in others' home), and 7.1% Permanency Planning adoption.

The type of placement for children whose abuse allegations were substantiated varied from staying in the parents' home (71.8%), being put into kinship care (9.4%), placement in a non-Asian foster home (9.4%), Asian foster home (1.8%), and emergency shelter (1.8%). The findings show that about a quarter of total Korean cases were placed out of their own homes. Among those children who were removed from their homes, approximately 50% were placed in non-Asian foster homes, which were described by the child protective service workers as being culturally and linguistically incompatible for victims. According to CPS workers interviewed, many Korean children in those foster care facilities experience serious maladjustment problems.

This study provides baseline information about child maltreatment among immigrant Korean families. Many of the findings in this research are different from those found in nationwide and state-level surveys. For instance, physical abuse is the most frequently reported abuse type in the Korean cases followed by emotional abuse while child neglect is highest in national samples (Crosson-Tower, 1998; Downs, Costin, & McFadden, 1996). Some of the significant social work/ child welfare practice implications include: a) the importance of community education in child protection laws; and b) systematic evaluations regarding the appropriateness of non-Asian foster care when victims are removed from their homes.

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Why Do They Stay? Correlates of Employee Retention in Child Welfare **Alberta J. Ellett, University of Georgia**

Research Problem: The media, courts and public are quick to heap criticism on public child welfare agencies and their staff. Criticism adds to the problem of employee turnover and ability to retain competent staff. This study was designed to explore individual and organizational factors useful in explaining retention of professional staff in public child welfare agencies. The study examined linkages among a set of theoretically grounded personal/ psychological and organizational variables and child welfare professionals' expresses intentions to remain employed in child welfare. Typically, studies in human services organizations have focused on issues pertaining to employee *turnover* and *burnout* such as salary, caseload size, and paperwork (Costin, Karger, & Stoesz, 1996; Drake & Yadama, 1996; Ellett, Ellett, Noble, & Kelley, 1996; Helfgott, 1991; Jayaratne & Chess, 1986; Kern, McFadden, Baumann & Law, 1993; Midgley, et al., 1994; Pecora, Whittaker, and Maluccio, 1992; Russell & Hornby, 1987, Samantrai, 1992; Walkey & Green, 1992). Alternatively, **this study addressed personal and organizational factors related to employee retention in child welfare** (Dickinson & Perry, 1998; Helfgott, 1991; Jayaratne & Chess, 1984; Rycraft, 1994; Vinokur-Kaplan, 1991). The hypotheses framing this study were:

1. There is a statistically significant ($p < .05$), positive relationship between professional child welfare staff members' self-reported levels of human caring and their expressions of intents to remain employed in public child welfare.
2. There is a statistically significant ($p < .05$) positive relationship between child welfare staff members' self-reported self-efficacy levels and their expressions of intents to remain employed in child welfare.
3. There is a statistically significant ($p < .05$) positive relationship between child welfare staff members' perceptions of professional organizational culture and their expressions of intents to remain employed in child welfare.

Methodology: Large sample surveys of child welfare employees in two states (N=2140, n=941) and quantitative data analysis methods to examine relationships among elements of professional organizational culture, human caring, self-efficacy, and professional level employees' intentions to remain employed. Measures of intent to remain (employed) in child welfare settings, human caring, self-efficacy beliefs, and professional organizational culture were developed to explore linkages among the study variables. Differences between groups of respondents' characteristics and the two sample states (e.g. degree level, years of employment) were also examined. Data analyses included descriptive statistics, factor analyses of all measures, reliability analyses, bivariate correlations, stepwise regressions, t-tests of state comparisons, and ANOVAs.

Results: The study showed that intention to remain employed in child welfare is largely explained by staff members' positive perceptions of administrative ($r=.34$) and self-efficacy beliefs about completing work tasks ($r=.32$). Cronbach Alpha reliabilities ranged from .81 to .92. There were large differences in employee demographics when comparing the two states i.e., age, length of employment, educational degrees. The independent variables of *human caring, self-efficacy beliefs, and professional organizational culture* were positively and significantly ($p,.001$) correlated with the employees' intentions to remain employed in child welfare.

Implications: The findings for social work practice include pre-service preparation, recruitment, selection, retention and professional development of child welfare staff and social work education's growing role in each. Suggestions for future research and theory building within the context of child welfare are described. *This research is the first known, large quantitative study of correlates of employee retention in child welfare.* The results expand the SW knowledge base and present a rich alternative to more traditional studies of employee turnover and burnout.

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