

2019 Quarter 1 News update



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ICPS welcome new staff



The beginning of 2019 has been a busy period for ICPS with projects nearing completion, including kContact and the completion of the MESSI project (funded by the Australian Research Council), and the completion of the Family Foundations Evaluation, submitted to the funding body ACT Community Services Directorate in March. This project was a two-year evaluation that evaluated the extent to which the program Family Foundations, which was established at Belconnen Community Service in the ACT to provide evidence-based early intervention services to vulnerable families with children up to 5 years of age, has been implemented as intended, and the extent to which it has made a positive difference to families.

The evaluation will inform the development of policy and practice, particularly in regards to the way that the program understands, relates to, and supports children and families, ultimately improving the service outcomes for these groups in the community.

ICPS research staff have been busy presenting our work at key national conferences towards the end of 2018 (see page 6). The presentations were received very well and generated lots of discussion and interest from other delegates. Staff will also be presenting at the upcoming ChildAware conference in Brisbane in May, including on the recently completed Family Foundations Evaluation. For more info see <https://kaigi.eventsair.com/QuickEventWebSitePortal/2019-child-aware-conference/info/Speaker>

The Australian Department of Social Services (DSS) engaged the ICPS to complete a project under the *Working with children* initiative. The overarching aim of the initiative is to improve service responses to women and children experiencing violence. The ICPS project involved the design and delivery of learning and professional development resources. *Keeping Kids Central* is the project output. ICPS developed the *Keeping Kids Central* online modules and complementary facilitator-led workshops. *Keeping Kids Central* explores the conditions and factors that facilitate child-safe environments when working with families experiencing domestic and family violence.

ICPS is currently delivering various trainings including the *Keeping Kids Central* workshops in Western Australia, New South Wales, Victoria and the Australian Capital Territory. For more information see page 5.

A warm welcome to new staff member James McDougall, Senior Policy Officer and returning staff member Sharyn Guerin, Research Officer.

More information about ICPS projects and research studies are provided in this issue. All the research studies, and our current research and evaluation work highlights the key strengths of ICPS in promoting children's participation, strengthening service systems and informing practice, and supporting child safe communities.

Professor Daryl Higgins
Director, Institute of Child Protection
Studies

The ACU Institute of Child Protection Studies (ICPS) aims to enhance outcomes for children, young people and families through quality research, evaluation, training and community education. ICPS research strengths include:

- promoting children's participation,
- strengthening service systems and informing practice, and
- Supporting child-safe communities.

Managing Ethical Studies on Sensitive Issues (MESSI)



The MESSI (Managing Ethical Studies on Sensitive Issues) study used hypothetical scenarios, presented via a brief online survey, to explore whether payment amounts influenced Australian children and young people to participate in social research of different sensitivity.

In Australia and other developed countries, it is common to provide payments to research participants (Gelinas et al, 2018). Whilst contentious, research payments for children are generally acceptable when provided as compensation or reimbursement, and where research involves low or negligible risk, but not when they become an inducement that is likely to encourage participants to take risks they would not be willing to accept with smaller payments (Appelbaum, Lidz, & Klitzman, 2009; Wendler, Rackoff, Emanuel, & Grady, 2002; Spriggs, 2010; Singer & Couper, 2008). A lack of specific guidance has led some ethics committees to refuse research payments for children (Bagley et al., 2007), which may in turn reduce the likelihood of children participating in research about issues that affect them.

The MESSI study aimed to address:

- The lack of specific guidance around research payments for children.
- If a specific amount at which a payment is deemed likely to act as an inducement to undertake risks.

The full article can be found at Taplin, S., Chalmers, J., Hoban, B., McArthur, M., Moore, T. & Graham, A. (2019, in press) Children in social research: Do higher payments encourage participation in riskier studies? *Journal of Empirical Research on Human Research Ethics*. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1556264619826796>

Findings and Discussion

Children and young people were more likely to participate in the lower sensitivity study than in the higher at all payment levels (A\$200 prize draw, no payment, \$30, or \$100). Offering payments to children and young people increased the likelihood that they would agree to participate in the studies and, in general, the higher the payments, the higher the likelihood of their participating. No evidence of undue influence was detected. Payments can be used to increase the participation of children and young people in research without concerns of undue influence. While the results of this study do not provide evidence to support a level of payment, the higher the amounts children or young people were paid the more likely they were to participate in any of the hypothetical scenarios presented in this study, including the higher risk (sexting) study. However, we also found that significant numbers of children and young people who were invited to participate in a study will do so for no payment. Interestingly, there is no evidence from this study that children and young people with fewer economic resources are differentially influenced by payments, although those with fewer economic resources were more likely to participate whether they were paid or not. Those with adverse experiences in the research area still generally wanted to participate and should be given the opportunity to contribute their views and experiences.

The MESSI study was funded by an Australian Research Council Discovery Grant (DP150100864). Chief Investigators: Prof Morag McArthur (ACU); A/Prof Stephanie Taplin (ACU); Dr Jenny Chalmers (UNSW); Prof Anne Graham (SCU); A/Prof Tim Moore (ACU/Uni SA) Project Managers: Dr Bianca Hoban & Dr Mary Ann Powell

PEER REVIEWED JOURNAL ARTICLES AND BOOK CHAPTERS

Higgins, D., & Moore, T. (2019). Keeping an eye on sex, power, relationships and institutional contexts in prevention institutional child sexual abuse. In I. Bryce, Y. Robinson, & W. Petherick (2018). *Child abuse and neglect: Forensic issues in evidence, impact and management (Ch. 3)*, pp. 45-62. London: Elsevier.

<https://www.elsevier.com/books/child-abuse-and-neglect/bryce/978-0-12-815344-4>

Harwin, J., Broadhurst, K., Cooper, C. & Taplin, S. (2018, in press) Tensions and contradictions in family court innovation with high risk parents: The place of family drug treatment courts in contemporary family justice. *International Journal of Drug Policy*.

<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.drugpo.2018.04.019>

O'Donnell, M., Taplin, S., Marriott, R., Lima, F. & Stanley, F.J. (2019) Aboriginal infant removals: in the best interests of the child or another stolen generation? *Child Abuse & Neglect*. 90, 88-98.

<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.chiabu.2019.01.017>

Powell, M., McArthur, M., Chalmers, J., Graham, A., Moore, T., Spriggs, M. & Taplin, S. (2018) Sensitive topics in social research involving children. *International Journal of Social Research Methodology*. 21:6, 647-660.

<https://doi.org/10.1080/13645579.2018.1462882>

Taplin, S., Chalmers, J., Hoban, B., McArthur, M., Moore, T. & Graham, A. (2019) Children in social research: Do higher payments encourage participation in riskier studies? *Journal of Empirical Research on Human Research Ethics*. 14(2), 126-

140. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1556264619826796>

The Family Foundations Program was established at Belconnen Community Service in the ACT to provide evidence-based early intervention services to vulnerable families with children up to 5 years of age

The Family Foundations Evaluation has been delivered and will be publicly released shortly:

Trew, S., Stewart, J., Thorpe, R., Tewson, A., & Higgins, D. (2018). *Family Foundations outcome evaluation*. Melbourne: Australian Catholic University, Institute of Child Protection Studies.

In the media

Indigenous babies being removed from parents at rising rates study finds

<https://www.theguardian.com/australia-news/2019/feb/25/indigenous-babies-being-removed-from-parents-at-rising-rates-study-finds>

Aboriginal children in out of home care

<https://nit.com.au/rising-rate-of-aboriginal-children-in-out-of-home-care/>

Researchers call for urgent action to prevent further intergenerational trauma

<https://thesector.com.au/2019/03/05/researchers-call-for-urgent-action-to-prevent-further-intergenerational-trauma/>

Spike in aboriginal child removals spark call for action

<https://www.miragenews.com/spike-in-aboriginal-child-removals-spark-call-for-action/>


Paying children for research does not lead to undue influence

<http://getstem.com.au/paying-children-for-research-does-not-lead-to-undue-influence/>

Paying children for research

<https://soundcloud.com/ultra1065fm/paying-children-for-research-stephanie-taplins>

Practice based publications



Do payments encourage children into riskier research? Findings from the MESSI study

Issue 23: Research to Practice Series

Issue 23 of the ICPS Research to Practice series reports on the major findings of the MESSI study. The *Managing Ethical Studies on Sensitive Issues (MESSI)* study explored how adults and children make decisions about children's participation in social research. The centerpiece of the study consisted of online surveys using hypothetical scenarios to explore the differences between participants, particularly when risk and payment levels changed. This paper outlines the responses from children and young people.

Research To Practice Series

The Institute of Child Protection Studies Research to Practice Series is supported by a grant from the ACT Community Services Directorate. The grant aims to enhance outcomes for children, young people and families through enhancing the skills and practice of workforces, increasing awareness in the community, and contributing to evidence-based policy outcomes.

[Issue 21 - Triple concurrent planning for long-term kinship care, short-term foster placement, and family reunification for children: practice standards from research](#)

Concurrent planning involves planning for both reunification and placement from the time it is first decided that a child must be separated from their caregivers. This issue explores themes and issues from emerging research into the practice. Key content includes facilitators and inhibitors to the adoption of concurrent planning from the perspective of children's service managers, social workers, supervisors, legal practitioners and judges.

[Issue 22 – How to foster participation of children and young people in safeguarding activities in youth-serving organisations](#)

This issue explores how youth-serving organisations can foster and sustain a culture of child safeguarding in ways that prioritise the participation and empowerment of children and young people.

[#Issue 23: Do payments encourage children into riskier research? Findings from the MESSI study](#)

Issue 23 of the ICPS Research to Practice series reports on the major findings of the MESSI study. The *Managing Ethical Studies on Sensitive Issues (MESSI)* study explored how adults and children make decisions about children's participation in social research. The centerpiece of the study consisted of online surveys using hypothetical scenarios to explore the differences between participants, particularly when risk and payment levels changed. This paper outlines the responses from children and young people.

Policy Submissions

ICPS was invited to submit for a number of consultation processes including a:

- Review of the Victorian Child Safe Standards.
- ACT's Community Services Directorate Adoption Reform: Dispensing with Consent. The investigation of the dispensation of consent provisions in the Adoption Act 1993 represents one of the final pieces of work in a review of the domestic adoption process in the ACT. See the [Adoption Reforms Discussion Paper](#) for more information.
- Submission to the Productivity Commission. The Secretariat for the Steering Committee for the Review of Government Service Provision ("Secretariat") sought input into "what is known about systems that enable the 'public health approach' to protecting children". ICPS shared insights into systems that protect children from abuse and neglect that occurs within families.





2018 Youth Roundtable – What we learnt

Last November, Children, Youth and Families (CYF) hosted a Youth Roundtable to hear directly from young people about their experiences of being in care and what they think would make a difference. The roundtable included young people currently in care or who have recently left care because they turned 18. It was facilitated by the Youth Coalition, CREATE and Rhys and Sebastian from the Institute of Child Protection Studies.

The roundtable focused on the question, ‘What has been your experience of case planning?’ The main things young people told us, and want considered in future policy and practice development, were:

- to have greater involvement and participation in decision-making
- to understand why decisions were made
- time to process and consider feedback and questions
- to be provided with multiple opportunities to consider information
- greater access to information
- to be involved in policy development
- more frequent and direct access with case managers
- case managers to be powerful advocates
- case managers to act with empathy and be trained in matters that impact young people, such as mental health
- to be matched with their case manager and have continuity with them.

You can learn more about what young people told us by reading the:

• Full report – https://www.communityservices.act.gov.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0008/1346516/Youth-Roundtable-Final-Report.pdf

• Summary report – https://www.communityservices.act.gov.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0011/1346636/Youth-Roundtable-2018-Final.pdf

In the media

• <https://www.canberratimes.com.au/canberra-news/i-am-pleading-act-s-kids-in-care-the-nation-s-least-happy-20190402-p519x6.html>

www.acu.edu.au/icps

For more information about trainings and projects and research updates



Keeping Kids Central

The Australian Department of Social Services (DSS) engaged the ICPS to complete a project under the *Working with children* initiative. The overarching aim of the initiative is to improve service responses to women and children experiencing violence. The ICPS project involved the design and delivery of learning and professional development resources. These resources needed to build the capabilities of workers to work with and support children who have experienced and/or witnessed family and domestic violence. The workers may be from specialist or mainstream services that frequently work with women and children experiencing family and domestic violence.

Keeping Kids Central is the project output. ICPS developed the *Keeping Kids Central* online modules and complementary facilitator-led workshops. *Keeping Kids Central* explores the conditions and factors that facilitate child-safe environments when working with families experiencing domestic and family violence. It features practice tools for engaging and supporting children and young people. The content is informed by ICPS research with children and young people experiencing vulnerabilities.

ICPS is currently delivering the *Keeping Kids Central* workshops in Western Australian, New South Wales, Victoria and the Australian Capital Territory. For more information visit: https://safeguardingchildren.acu.edu.au/qualifications_professional_learning/keeping_kids_central

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Training and grants

Training

Kids centred practice

Overview: This one-day action-focused workshop is designed to provide insights into children and young people's lived experience of domestic and family violence and practical supports for engaging with families in ways that both address immediate safety and wellbeing needs and support children and young people to flourish.

Intended audience: All professionals that work with families at risk of, or experiencing, domestic and family violence and other challenging issues.

Duration: 1 day (9.30 am to 4.30 pm)

Date: TBA 2019

Location: TBA

Cost: Nil

Contact: icps@acu.edu.au or 03 9953 3644 support tools with children and families.

Leading the way

Overview: This one-day workshop addresses implementing policies, practices and strategies that provide the foundations for the delivery of child-centred practice. It covers to incorporating children and young people's voices into service design, ensuring that service responses are safe, supportive and focused on children and young people's needs.

Intended audience: Program Leaders

Duration: 1 day (9.30 am to 4.30 pm)

Date: TBA 2019

Location: TBA

Cost: Nil

Contact: icps@acu.edu.au or 03 9953 3644

Training

ICPS is currently offering a free online (eLearning course) called *Keeping Kids Central*. The online course is designed to help individuals and organisations understand and apply child-centred approaches in their work with children and young people, particularly those who have experienced domestic and family violence. The ICPS developed the course with support from the Australian Department of Social Services. The course content draws on research ICPS conducted with and for children and young people. For more information see

https://safeguardingchildren.acu.edu.au/qualifications_professional_learning/keeping_kids_central

Grants

The first national study of child abuse and neglect in Australia: prevalence, health outcomes, and burden of disease. Australian Government National Health and Medical Research Council, Project Grant, 2019-2023. Funded amount: \$2,311,217.00. Chief Investigators: Dr Rosana Pacella (University of Chichester), Professor Michael Dunne (QUT), Professor Ben Mathews (QUT), Associate Professor James Scott (UQ), Professor David Finkelhor (University of New Hampshire), Professor Franziska Meinck (University of Oxford), Professor **Daryl Higgins** (Australian Catholic University), Dr Holly Erskine (UQ), and Dr Hannah Thomas (Queensland Centre for Mental Health Research).



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Conferences and Presentations

Higgins, D. (2018, 6 December). The effect of child abuse and prevention strategies and tools in sports organisations. Child Safe Sport Forum. (Melbourne: VicSport).

Higgins, D. (2018, 27 November). Leading the change: Safeguarding children in Catholic Schools. Invited address to the National Catholic Education Child Safety Education Working Group (Melbourne: Catholic Leadership Centre).

Higgins, D. (2018, 16 November). Safeguarding children: Implications of the Royal Commission for school psychologists and counsellors. Keynote address: *2018 School Counsellors & Psychologists Conference*. Melbourne (Melbourne Convention & Exhibition Centre, 15-16 November).

Higgins, D. (2018, 13 November). Child-safe, child-focused organisational environments workshop: Applying the situational prevention approach. *Local Government Association – Child Safe Standards Network*. City of Melbourne: Community Hub at the Dock (Docklands, Melbourne).

Higgins, D. (2018, 23 October). Parental conflict and absence: Overview of key issues for wellbeing of children and families. Panel introduction, and facilitator. *Parenting, child wellbeing and development (UNICEF and Doha International Family Institute)*. Doha, Qatar (St Regis Hotel, 23-24 October).

Higgins, D. (2018, 7 September). Protecting children from abuse in organisations. *Defence Youth Safety Forum*. Canberra: Department of Defence.

Higgins, D. (2018, 4 September). A public health approach to prevention of child maltreatment. *National Child Protection Week – Preventing child abuse forum*. Darwin Convention Centre: NAPCAN/Northern Territory Government.

Higgins, D. (2018, 3 September). Preventing child abuse – Q&A panel discussion. *National Child Protection Week – 2018 National Child Abuse Prevention Forum*. Department of Education Theatre, Canberra: NAPCAN/ARACY.

Taplin, S. (2018) *Parents having supervised contact with their children*. European Scientific Association on Residential and Family Care for Children and Adolescents (EUSARF) XV Conference. October 2018. Porto.

Taplin, S. (2018) *Does money encourage children to participate in riskier research? Findings from the MESSI study*. International Society for the Prevention of Child Abuse and Neglect (ISPCAN) XXII Congress. September 2018. Prague.

Taplin, S. (2018) *kContact: Main outcomes from a cluster randomized controlled trial*. International Society for the Prevention of Child Abuse and Neglect (ISPCAN) XXII Congress. September 2018. Prague.

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ICPS has offices in Canberra & Melbourne, and staff also working from Sydney and Brisbane.

The Institute of Child Protection Studies (ICPS) at the Australian Catholic University aims to enhance outcomes for children, young people and families through quality research, evaluation, training and community education.

ICPS research strengths include promoting children's participation, strengthening service systems and informing practice, and supporting child-safe communities.

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