“Whoever you are”

An exploration of learning and development models for professional staff in statutory child protection across the United Kingdom, Canada and the USA.

“Little one, whoever you are, wherever you are, there are little ones just like you all over the world.”

Mem Fox
The Winston Churchill Memorial Trust of Australia

Report by Robert RYAN

2009 Churchill Fellow

To investigate training models for professional staff in statutory child protection

“People make organisations work and they determine the quality of the output. The effectiveness of services provided is largely dependent on the way in which the organisation supports and leads those people employed to do the work (Social Services Inspectorate, 2000, p.3).

An exploration of learning and development models for professional staff in statutory child protection across the United Kingdom, Canada and the USA.

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Signed…………………………….. Dated………………………….
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Acknowledgements and introduction

I would like to start by acknowledging the support of the Churchill Trust for making this research possible. I have been extremely impressed with the dedicated hours of staff and volunteers of the Churchill Trust and I appreciate the faith in my abilities to undertake this program. I am so grateful for this opportunity and I am also very aware of the privilege that has also been provided to me. Particular thanks to Meg Gilmartin at the Churchill Trust and Peter Lucas from Qantas for their invaluable assistance in planning the trip.

I wish to acknowledge the enormous generosity of all the researchers, academics, government staff and private organisations that I met with on my travels. Their insight and reflective discussions helped me to shape my recommendations and ideas in relation to this paper. Thanks also to Phil Reed, Director of the Churchill War Rooms for the behind the scenes tour of the War Rooms – an experience I will never forget.

I want to thank Dr. Leah Bromfield and Dr Sandy Wilson for their support in providing referee reports for my fellowship. I would also like to acknowledge Lynne McPherson (Churchill Fellow 1997) and Lisa Hillan (Churchill Fellow 2005) for their support in shaping the early parts of my research. I would like to acknowledge Paul O’Neill, Dave Bradford and the dedicated staff at the Training and Specialist Support Unit, Department of Communities. I would like to thank my colleagues at the South East Region who were very supportive of my fellowship and gave me the time to undertake this work. I would particularly like to acknowledge Pamela Steele-Wareham, Regional Executive Director, Karyn Smith and Nick Ryan, Regional Directors for their support in my undertaking of this program. I would also like to thank Catherine Moynihan (Churchill Fellow 2009) for the collaboration and connections across the course of this Fellowship.

There are also many family, friends and colleagues who have provided support, assistance, encouragement and kind words during the last eighteen months and I would like to thank each and every one of you for your contribution to helping make this fellowship a reality. Thanks to our parents Terry, Diane, Judith and Mike for looking after the house and to Terry and Diane thanks also for looking after our wonderful dog Zen and taking such good care of him.

Finally and most importantly I would like to thank my wife, Rachel and son Liam who accompanied me on my travels and put up with the many hours at night over the last eighteen months pottering away on the internet and phone in the development of the itinerary and kept me company during the trip listening to the ramblings of a person.
intoxicated on the ideas and initiatives I was fortunate enough to experience across the world.

During our travels one of the books we brought for our son was called “Whoever You are” by Mem Fox (2001).

The introduction to the book is as follows:

“Every day all over the world, children are laughing and crying, playing and learning, eating and sleeping. They may not look the same. They may not speak the same language. Their lives may be quite different. But inside they are just like you”

This simple book acknowledges the commonality of humanity. In the course of my Churchill Fellowship I discovered that across 45,000 kilometres of travel in the area of child protection we have a lot in common and in many cases we are all working on similar strategies to enhance learning programs for staff in child protection. If we can build on these similarities and connections there is the potential to improve training programs in child protection across jurisdictions and ultimately this will help to improve the lives of the children, young people and families we support.
Executive Summary

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Project Description

An exploration of learning and development models for professional staff in statutory child protection across the United Kingdom, Canada and the USA.

Highlights

Over the course of three months I had the opportunity to meet with hundreds of experts in the field of child protection and to share in their approaches to training, learning and development in this complex area. Perhaps the most striking observation for me was that across the world we have more in common than different in the area of learning and development. In most jurisdictions we are struggling with the same challenges and creating systems and models that are very similar, the variance is usually legislation and local policy and procedure. However the fundamentals and principles that underpin what we do are consistent.

One of the highlights was the opportunity to have a behind the scenes tour of the Churchill War Rooms. The opportunity to walk around the map room and to feel the spirit of Winston Churchill in this amazing place was a great beginning to my travels – at times I felt as if Churchill himself was standing alongside me and it set the scene for what was to be an incredible three months. It is almost impossible to have only a few highlights as I learnt something in every visit I conducted. However the key experiences that have had a strong bearing on my findings and recommendations include:

- Visiting the Tavistock and Portman
- Meeting with Professor Eileen Munro at the London School of Economics
- Attending Child Stat in New York City
- Observing the work of the staff at Corner House in Minneapolis
- Attending the Symposium on Fairness and Equity in Child Protection Training at Berkeley, California.
- Touring the mock court rooms and house at the National Child Protection Training Centre in Winona, USA.
- Meeting with staff at the National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children and hearing about the variety of programs and services offered by the agency.
- Visiting the Andrus Children’s Centre in New York and spending time with staff in the houses and at the school.
- Meeting with Cindy Blackstock and her team at the First Nations Children’s Society in Ottawa, Canada and hearing about the “Be a witness” campaign.
- Conducting a lecture for students and professionals at the University of Bangor in Northern Wales.
- Learning about the many on-line programs that provide support to staff across the world such as the Multi Agency Resource Service, Scottish Child Care and Protection Network, Centre for UK wide learning in child protection, National Child welfare workforce institution, Children’s workforce development council and the Social care institute for excellence.
The recommendations below reflect the key points I identified during my travels that would make the biggest difference for Queensland and Australia in terms of enhancing child protection learning and development programs.

1) A consistent theme across all places I visited was the need to include advanced child development within the child protection field both at a statutory and community service level.

2) The model of ChildStat used in New York was an excellent example of proactive learning and quality assurance and this should be trialled in Australia.

3) The Australasian Statutory Child Protection Learning & Development forum (ASCPL&D) should continue to be supported at a state and federal level and funding should be maintained to ensure maximum participation from all jurisdictions.

4) There is a need to improve the multi-disciplinary learning models across all people working in the child protection field. Any model needs to be integrated across Government and non-Government.

5) National competencies and learning modules for child protection should be identified and linked to the ASCPL&D forum and qualifications framework.

6) There needs to be a focus on a suite of primary prevention learning and development tools for communities in child protection.

7) All jurisdictions involved in training staff to work in the field of child protection should consider the implementation and use of mock Court rooms and a mock house.

8) Further international work needs to occur between Indigenous communities and advocacy agencies to learn from each other and to ensure the implementation of cultural competencies is prioritised in the child protection area.

9) Partnerships with Universities and Vocational institutions are critical to extend learning (particularly practitioner/academic research).

10) Ongoing funding for agencies such as the National Child Protection Clearinghouse and the Australian Centre for Child Protection to ensure research continues to be conducted on best practice in child protection.

11) There is a need in Queensland to implement and trial child advocacy centres.

12) There is a need to build and enhance international learning highways in the area of child protection to maximise the existing resources across the world and avoid duplication.

13) Across the world every jurisdiction has had at least one major review by Government. The findings of these reviews are consistent and share similar themes. Prior to the implementation of any future reviews a first step should be to conduct international research and learning to identify the recommendations that have been made in previous enquiries.

I have already commenced a range of strategies to share my learning’s and I will utilise these forums to further extend my findings and build a network of colleagues who are interested in working on ways to implement as many of the recommendations as possible.

I will be disseminating the learning’s in the follow way:

- Attendance at the Australasian Statutory Child Protection Forum with colleagues from Australia & New Zealand (in early 2011)
- Presentation of my findings to the Board and key staff of NAPCAN Australia
- Presentation of my findings to staff in the Department of Communities (across a range of different forums)
- Presentation of my findings to community partners, vocational institutions and academics.
- Sharing my report with all the people I met across the world during my research
PROGRAM / ITINERARY

LONDON, APRIL 2010

1. Tavistock Centre, Belsize Lane, LONDON Contact – Professor David Lawlor and Professor Andrew Cooper
3. Children’s Workforce Development Council, LEEDS – Sue Brook
4. Social Care Institute for Excellence – Patricia Kearney
5. London School of Economics – Professor Eileen Munro
6. London Metropolitan University – Liz Davies, Senior Lecturer
7. Phil Reed – Director, Churchill Museum and Cabinet War Rooms

WALES, APRIL 2010

8. University of Bangor, Senior Lecturer - Fiona Macdonald
9. Action for Children, Group Manager - Mark Roberts
10. Childrens Team Ewyncedd, Team Manager - Mel Panther
12. NSPCC, David Chambelayne, Denbighshire, Wales

EDINBURGH, MAY 2010

13. MARS – Multi Agency Resource Service, Beth Smith, Director & Jane Scott
14. University of Stirling, Dr Brigid Daniel
15. Scottish Child Care and Protection Network, Fiona Mitchell
16. University of Stirling, Duncan Helm, Senior Teaching Fellow
17. Centre for UK wide learning in Child protection (CLiP) – Catherine Burns and Dr Sharon Vincent

NEW YORK, MAY 2010

18. Andrus Children’s Centre, Kamilah Francis, Tyrone Hodge, Residential Program Manager
19. Siobhan Masterson, Director of Sanctuary and Treatment Services, Yonkers and Michael Thomas, Sanctuary Consultant
20. Andrus Children’s Centre, Sandra Vilar, Clinical Social Worker

22. New York City (NYC) James Satterwhite Training Academy, NYC Administration for Children’s Services - Ervine Kimberley Executive Director

23. NYC Childstat – NYC Administration for Children’s Services, Andrea Reid Assistant Commissioner

24. NYC Reference Group – Christina, Helena, Diane, Celina Higgins, Cynthia, Andrea Reid (In service training, Foster care team, Emergency Children’s Services, Quality Assurance team, Training designer, Professional development team)

**OTTAWA, CANADA, MAY 2010**

25. First Nations Child and Family Caring Society of Canada, Dr Cindy Blackstock

26. Andrea Auger, Caring across the boundaries co-ordinator

**TORONTO, CANADA, MAY 2010**

27. University of Toronto, Centre of Excellence for Child Welfare- Dr. Ivan Brown

28. Ontario Children’s Aid Societies – Education Services (Ontario Ministry of Children and Youth Services) Hannah McIntyre, Co-ordinator Learning Resources Development

**WINONA, MINNESOTA, USA, JUNE 2010**

29. National Child Protection Training Centre – Amy Russell

**MINNEAPOLIS, USA, JUNE 2010**

30. Corner House, Child Advocacy Centre - Miriam Maples

**VANCOUVER ISLAND, CANADA, JUNE 2010**

31. Learning Education and Development, Ministry for Children and Family Development, Annemarie Travers

32. University of Victoria – Maxine Gibson, Field Education Consultant, Department of Social Work

33. University of Victoria – Dr. Daniel Scott, School of Child and Youth Care
VANCOUVER, CANADA, JUNE 2010

34. Regional Child and Family Development Consultant, Vancouver Coastal Region, Office of the Director of Integrated Practice – Kim Dooling

OAKLAND/BERKLEY/SAN FRANCISCO, JUNE 2010

35. Statewide Training and Education Committee– Barrett Johnson – Child Welfare in Service Training Project
36. Children and Family Services Division – State of California, Christine Mattos, Manager.
37. Symposium - Fairness and Equity Issues in Child Welfare Training and Education – Dr. Carl Bell (Risk factors are not predictive factors due to protective factors); Barbara Needell, Juvenile Court Assistance Team (Bench card – reflective questions for Judges) Tribal STAR – Tom Lidot, Parents Anonymous, Dr Lisa Plon-Berlin
38. Bay Area Academy – Enhancing Professional Development - Dr Rodger Lum, Director; Jamie Evans, Mary Garrison – Garrison and Associates OD Consultants
39. Academy for Professional Excellence – Program Coordinator – Liz Quinnett
40. Elizabeth Gilman, Curriculum Specialist, California Social Work Education Centre
“Learning goes on in context and usually the context involves interaction with the broader environment” (Lawrence, 1993).

Child abuse investigation and intervention is a high-risk area in the public service. Dowlen (1995) identifies the issue of managing risk as a growing concern for managers who are faced with legislative change, financial constraint and more scrutiny. Work on the area of identifying critical factors for successfully functioning child protection services has been high on the agenda of countries across the world for many years. Much of this research identifies that the key to successful delivery of services to children is that organisational policies no matter how well written cannot ensure positive outcomes for children alone. Factors that are critical include a positive culture where learning is identified as a constant part of everything that is done. It is also important to have staff with experience sharing knowledge and practice wisdom to assist in on the job learning. Barton & Welbourne (2005).

In terms of the transfer of learning authors such as Joyce and Showers (1980; 1981) and Royer (1979) have identified the importance of locating learning as close as possible to the workplace to ensure “near” transfer. Billett (2000; 2001) also focuses on the importance of goal directed workplace activities as a mechanism for enhancing learning.

International and Australian literature describes the significance of severe recruitment difficulties and very high attrition rates in child protection (Rycraft, 1990, 1994; Barraclough 2000; Gibbs 2001a; 2001b). Whilst much has been written about the problems, and it is clear that the consequences are significant for staff and the community, it appears hard to find solutions. The inherently stressful nature of child protection and the importance of systems of learning and support for staff are critical in strategies to address this problem (Gibbs 2005).

The identification of the importance of training and education for professionals involved in child protection work continues to be central to the recommendations of the numerous inquiries into instances of fatal or serious child abuse and the accumulated findings of research on child abuse and the child protection system. The highlighting of serious system and practice failures (Gibbs 2005) has been strongly linked to the recognition that child protection workers require training and guidance beyond that offered in generic qualifying programs in order to identify and respond effectively to cases of child abuse and neglect. In particular, recognising children in need, related processes in risk assessment and a greater understanding and clarification of the roles and responsibilities of different agencies and professionals have been benchmarked as areas where perceived deficits in knowledge and
skills require redress through learning and development strategies (Gibbs 2001/2005; Munro 2002).

**History of the Australasian Statutory Child Protection Learning and Development Group**

“The Australasian Statutory Child Protection Learning and Development Group comprises of representatives with learning and development responsibilities in every Australian state and territory, and New Zealand. In addition, there are representatives from the Australian Centre for Child Protection (at the University of South Australia) and the National Child Protection Clearinghouse (at the Australian Institute of Family Studies). The Group meets twice a year to:

- facilitate the sharing of training resources;
- discuss approaches to training in each jurisdiction;
- discuss what works and what doesn’t works
- share initiatives and innovation;
- avoid duplication of effort;
- identify commonalities and differences between approaches in different jurisdictions;
- articulate the link between training, and recruitment and retention;
- discuss approaches and strategies for responding to shared problems; and
- support research to facilitate the above goals.

Each meeting is hosted by a different jurisdiction across Australia/New Zealand. Historically, the Group arose because representatives from two of the larger jurisdictions (Victoria and New South Wales) saw the need for such a forum. These individuals were the drivers behind the initial meeting. The Group was originally a meeting of state and territory learning and development organisations and was held in conjunction with the Australasian Conference on Child Abuse and Neglect.” (Bromfield 2006)

In 2007 Dr. Leah Bromfield of the National Child Protection Clearinghouse and Robert Ryan, Department of Child Safety, published a national comparison of statutory child protection training in Australia in conjunction with the Australasian Statutory Child Protection Learning and Development Group. The aim of the project was to provide a national audit of statutory child protection learning and development units and the programs provided by such units at a point in time (October 2005 – March 2006). (Bromfield and Ryan 2007)

The ASCPL&D forum has saved countless hours in the development and implementation of learning programs over the years. The connections and relationships forged with members of this group have been sustained across distance, changing work roles and increasingly tight fiscal constraints. As I travelled across the world it was refreshing and uplifting to meet with many like minded professionals who also shared a passion for quality learning and
development programs for staff in child protection. In every location I visited this energy and drive was connected to a fundamental belief that if we support and train staff to be the best they can be, we can influence and change the practice of our child protection systems. Given the Productivity Commission’s (2008) Report on Government Services that found approximately $1.7 billion was spent across Australia on child protection and supported placement services in 2006-07 it is imperative that our child protection systems are working as effectively as possible and the development of organisational human capital is a critical element in that process.

The findings of my Churchill Fellowship will be shared with members of the Australasian Statutory Child Protection Learning and Development Forum as an opportunity to continue the collaborative partnerships across Australia and New Zealand. In turn hopefully the agencies highlighted in this report can continue to build connections across the world to reduce duplication and build on the many great learning initiatives that already exist and collaborate on the innovations of the future.
The Tavistock Clinic was established in 1920 in Tavistock Square in London by Dr. Hugh Crichton-Miller. The aim of programs at the Tavistock is to provide “the best possible training for good mental health practice at all levels from primary care to specialist services”. A significant proportion of the training that is conducted is multidisciplinary and based on expertise derived from the clinical practice of more than 290 clinical trainers including child, adult and systemic psychotherapists, clinical psychologists, nurses, psychoanalysts, social workers and psychiatrists. The programs support the concept of a skills escalator allowing students “to step off and on with the educational process, according to their circumstances from foundation through to advanced programs. The training is designed in such a way as to provide “space in which individuals learn to think, to experiment and to develop a greater capacity for observation and reflection”. Training usually takes place in small groups (rarely larger than 15) and the groups capacity for reflection can be the primary tools for the learning that takes place.

The courses are accredited through partnerships with universities and close links with professional bodies. The aim is to develop knowledge, skills, capacities and competence through core professional training.

In discussions with Professor Andrew Cooper and Professor David Lawlor the key gaps identified in the training of staff in the child protection area are as follows:

1) Staff lacking the skills to engage effectively and directly with traumatised children.
2) Staff not having practical strategies in terms of managing conflict and working with conflicted families.
3) A limited knowledge of child development and a need for a sophisticated understanding of who you have in front of you (including training to realise what is extreme and what is normal).

Some of the key deficits identified in child protection training in the United Kingdom included:

1) High levels of bureaucracy
2) Very high levels of defensive practice
3) Very procedurally driven
4) Difficult space to work
5) Low trust and eroding from practice
6) Politicians anxious and reactive
Some of the strategies to address the gaps in learning models for child protection staff included:

1) Promoting the introduction of space for practice reflection for staff
2) Create mediating opportunities to manage conflict (internal)
3) Reflecting team models of practice so that no one person has to manage a case on their own – multiple frames of reference.
4) Asking key questions such as “How do you create space for alternative perspectives”
5) Understanding complexity theory
6) A spread of work for frontline staff– even caseloads to work with some voluntary families so no one worker has all complex/extreme or dysfunctional families.
7) An emphasis on experiential learning for all staff (and carers).
8) Including a component of child observation as part of early training programs (infant/young child for 1 year) for all staff working with children. Students write observations and reflect on the total experience including developmental milestones and their emotional experience as an observer.
9) A significant training focus to build skilled carers and residential staff to manage and intervene effectively with young people suffering complex and extreme trauma.
10) Ensuring multidisciplinary team work and learning so that staff can have a range of different paradigms when considering intervention with families.

Key considerations for Australia:

1) There is a need to ensure adequate attention is given to sophisticated child development learning opportunities for staff and carers working in the child protection field in Queensland.
2) Consideration should be given to including periods of child observation in learning/training programs to ensure practical skills development and self awareness for staff.
3) Opportunities for multidisciplinary team learning should be included in curriculum development to ensure shared access to different frameworks.
4) Models of learning and workplaces need to have a significant component of practical skills development – with time for reflection, understanding complexity and space for alternative perspectives.
5) Training programs need to provide up skilling for staff in the management of conflict and how to intervene effectively with families in crisis.

Source: http://www.tavistockandportman.nhs.uk/

The London Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children was established on the 8th July 1884. By 1889 the London Society had 32 branches throughout England, Wales and Scotland. Each branch raised funds to support an inspector, who investigated reports of child abuse and neglect. At the 1889 annual general meeting the Society changed its name to the National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children. The first Prevention of Cruelty to Children Act was passed in 1889. This was largely the result of five years’ vigorous lobbying. Since its establishment in London in the 1880s, the NSPCC has helped more than 10 million children in the UK.

The NSPCC has a vision that they can make a difference for all children. The aim of the NSPCC is to end cruelty to children in the UK, even if it takes many generations to realise this goal. All services, advice, support, campaigning and education activities of the NSPCC are driven by four principles:

- Focus on areas in which the NSPCC can make the biggest difference
- Prioritise the children who are most at risk
- Learn what works best for them
- Create leverage for change.

The NSPCC’s local services focus on seven key issues and groups of children most at risk:

1. Those who experience neglect
2. Physical abuse in high-risk families
3. Those who experience sexual abuse
4. Children under the age of one
5. Disabled children
6. Children from certain black and minority ethnic (BME) communities
7. Looked after children.

The work of the NSPCC includes:

**ChildLine** - the UK’s free, confidential helpline for children and young people. Trained volunteers provide advice and support, by phone and online, 24 hours a day. Children can also receive advice by text.
**Services for children and families.** Projects in local communities that offer a range of services for children who have experienced or are at risk of abuse.

**Advice for adults and professionals.** Services include the NSPCC help lines, general enquiries and specialist advice and information for adults and professionals in order to help them protect children.

**Strategy and development.** Research examining the issues around abuse, in order to develop services, campaigns and other new ways to end cruelty to children.

**Consultancy services.** Work with organisations and professional networks to help them do everything they can to protect children.

**Campaigning.** Work at a national, regional and local level, influencing, mobilising and educating so child protection is at the forefront of people's minds.

The NSPCC offers a range of courses designed to meet the needs of children, families and professionals. They are grounded in up-to-date research, theory and practice to support staff in all aspects of safeguarding children.

Training programs include the following topics:

- Basic child protection training
- NSPCC EduCare child protection awareness programmes
- Creating safer organisations
- Designated safeguarding children officer training
- Designated senior person for safeguarding children training (schools)
- Safer interviewing skills
- Safer recruitment: risk assessments and Criminal Records checks
- Analysis and professional judgement
- Conducting Section 47 Enquiries
- Designated safeguarding children officer training
- Child development
- Child neglect
- Communicating with children
- Diversity modules for early years settings
- Domestic abuse and its impact on children
- Practical approaches to valuing diversity and safeguarding children
- Safeguarding disabled children
- Achieving best evidence
- Child protection supervision skills
- Postgraduate certificate in therapeutic work with children
- Value Based Interviewing (VBI)
The NSPCC has also developed a range of distance learning programs designed to teach everybody about their role in protecting children. These programs include:

- Child protection awareness
- Child protection: staying aware
- Child protection awareness in education
- Child protection awareness in health
- Children's rights
- Creating a culture of safety
- Keeping children safe
- Keeping children safe in sport
- Preventing bullying behaviour
- Safer recruitment and selection

The NSPCC also provide a range of training packs, DVD’s and guides including:

1. What if...? An electronic board game on CD for practitioners engaged in therapeutic work with children and young people from seven to 12 years
2. Safeguarding children: a shared responsibility – a training pack that supports current government guidance and is designed for anyone working with children and families.
3. Seeing and hearing the child: rising to the challenge of parental substance misuse
4. A child development resource pack for practitioners working with children and families, their managers and trainers.
5. Make a difference: tools for developing and assuring quality in inter-agency relationships and training
6. A user friendly CD comprising two tools to support the complex process of evaluating inter-agency training and understanding the core dimensions of effective inter-agency relationships.
7. CORE-INFO leaflets. A series of information leaflets on aspects of physical child abuse.
9. Children and the net. A basic awareness training programme on the safeguarding implications of information and communication technology (ICT) for practitioners working with children or adult offenders.
10. Safety in learning: essentials in safeguarding training for the education community
11. A resource pack for the designated person / child protection coordinator delivering training in safeguarding children to staff working in schools or colleges.
12. Learning to protect: a child protection resource pack for teacher training
13. Learning to protect is designed for tutors of primary and secondary initial teacher training courses who have responsibility for providing basic child protection awareness training for student teachers.
15. A comprehensive programme of basic child protection awareness training.
16. Fragile: handle with care - protecting babies from harm
17. The child's world: assessing children in need
18. Two way street. This DVD pack aims to improve skills in communicating and consulting with disabled children and young people.
19. The social baby: understanding babies' communication from birth. This innovative DVD looks at the development of infant communication and helps parents to understand their babies from birth.
putting the Keeping Children Safe standards into place at international, national and local levels.

21. Safeguarding through audit: a guide to auditing case review recommendations

In 2000 the NSPCC launched the “Full Stop Campaign”. This campaign was supported by a major fund raising initiative with the goal of raising two hundred and fifty thousand pounds. This milestone was reached after a period of eight years. The aim of the campaign was to end cruelty to children within a generation. Ninety percent of the services delivered by the NSPCC are funded by the NSPCC and ten percent of funds are obtained through Government sources. The NSPCC currently has 180 teams operating throughout networks across the UK. The organisation has approximately 3000 staff.

In my discussions with staff of the NSPCC the top strategies to improve child protection systems include:

1. More effective and targeted resources to focus on primary prevention and focused advertising/media to build the communities understanding of ways to protect children.
2. Improved remuneration for staff who undertake the most complex work with chaotic and vulnerable families.
3. Better skills development in the area of listening to children and understanding child development milestones for trauma.
4. Improved skills development in communicating with children.
5. Increasing the range of therapeutic treatment services available to provide a suite of service delivery options.
6. A move away from live-in residential services to a focus on therapeutic centres or communities of support with day programs.
7. A focus on child protection being everyone’s responsibility.

Key considerations for Australia:

1. Exploration of opportunities to align existing services across Queensland and Australia under one agency banner (e.g. the model of NSPCC and Child Line working together).
2. Identification of strategies to create learning programs for the whole community (professionals, other Government agencies and the wider public), with consideration of Federal and State funding for either Community Based organisations or Government programs to service this training.
3. Consideration is given to accessing pre-existing tools through the NSPCC and using these resources in an Australian context (rather than re-inventing the wheel).
4. Consideration of a program of fund raising similar to the “Full Stop Campaign” in Australia.

5. Exploration of best practice/evidence of what works and trials of these programs in Australia.

6. Ongoing attention and funding for primary prevention models and programs to divert children and young people away from the statutory system (including the use of advertising campaigns and multi-media to make child protection everyone’s business).

Source: www.nspcc.org.uk/training

The Children’s Workforce Development Council (CWDC) was established in 2005. The role of the CWDC is two-fold, a Sector Skills Body supporting around 500,000 people and a workforce reform body supporting change across the children and young people’s workforce. The CWDC works with local authority Directors of Children’s Services, the Training and Development Agency for Schools (TDA), the National College for School Leadership (NCSL), and other partners in the Children’s Workforce Network (CWN) to address common issues across the wider children and young people’s workforce.

The CWDC has a newly qualified social worker programme which is a 12 month support package to ensure that newly qualified social workers have access to the best possible opportunities, enabling them to broaden the skills and knowledge they have gained through initial training. The program clarifies expectations of newly qualified social workers by the end of their first year of employment, defines the requirements of staff who work with and support new social workers, establishes a more consistent baseline of experiences, expertise and abilities for those working in children’s settings. The program builds on The Children’s Plan: Building brighter futures (DCSF, 2007) which is a vision that hold children and young people at the centre of all thinking, where they are valued and this is translated into activities that help them achieve their potential. This program is open to all organisations both statutory and voluntary that support children and young people, their parents and families in England.
The Integrated Qualifications Framework (IQF) ensures that the qualifications developed for the children and young people’s workforce reflect an integrated working culture. Various partners are working together to make sure that new and revised qualifications support shared values, and that the common core is reflected effectively in all IQF qualifications. The IQF will also support progression and mobility across the children’s workforce, as qualifications are developed with improved links between them. By the end of 2010 the development stage of the IQF will be complete, and qualifications will gradually be added to the framework as they are developed.

The common core describes the skills and knowledge that everyone who works with children and young people (including volunteers) is expected to have. The six areas of expertise in the common core offer a single framework to underpin multi-agency and integrated working, professional standards, training and qualifications across the children and young people’s workforce. The common core is used locally in developing job descriptions, induction, and training and development provisions. It is also used in workforce development strategies. The common core includes the following six areas:

- Effective communication and engagement with children, young people and families
- Child and young person development
- Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of the child or young person
- Supporting transitions
- Multi-agency and integrated working
- Information sharing

The CWDC website hosts “Share Street” a community for sharing resources and discussing best practice in the workplace, for building networks and communicating with colleagues. The site has movies, documents, forums, case studies and children’s views.

**Key considerations for Australia:**

1) Consideration of the implementation of an integrated qualifications framework for child protection learning and development programs across Australia to ensure consistency in models and jurisdictional staff mobility.

2) Consideration of the implementation of a common core in the development of job descriptions, induction, and training and development programs across Australia for staff and carers.
3) Consideration of the implementation of a common core/framework to underpin multi-agency and integrated working, professional standards, training and qualifications across the children and young people’s workforce in Queensland and Australia.

Source:
http://www.cwdcouncil.org.uk/
https://sharestreet.cwdcouncil.org.uk/
http://www.dcsf.gov.uk/everychildmatters/strategy/deliveringservices1/commoncore/commoncoreofskillsandknowledge/

Social Care Institute for Excellence (SCIE)

The Social Care Institute for Excellence (SCIE) is an independent charity, funded by Government through the Department of Health in England and the devolved administrations in Wales and Northern Ireland. The SCIE mission is to identify and spread knowledge about good practice to the social care workforce to support better outcomes for people using services, personalised social care services. The aim of the SCIE is to reach and influence practitioners, managers and the sector leadership who have responsibility for service delivery in adults’ and children’s services.

SCIE aims to:

- Capture and co-produce knowledge about good practice, commission research reviews and work with other leading organisations to produce information and practical guidance about what works in social care
- Communicate knowledge, evidence and innovation. Share knowledge about what works in partnership with the sector including improvement agencies, networks of providers, groups of people who use services, including children, young people, their families and carers, regulators and government departments.
SCIE provides free, up-to-date and thoroughly-researched guidance and practical tools on issues in social care.

- Social Care online - Online practice guides for frontline practitioners and managers that include detailed guidance on how to deliver and manage good care services. They also include examples of existing practice and related legislation
- People Management website - People management resources to establish or improve existing policies and practices
- Research Register for Social Care - Guides and research reviews to help set priorities and assess whether staff/contractors are acting in accordance with good practice
- Education and research resources, such as Social Care Online, to develop education and training programmes
- Good Practice Framework - a web based self-audit tool to encourage the identification and dissemination of evidenced practice

**Key considerations for Australia:**

1) Explore opportunities to link existing research portals in Australia to other sites across the world to ensure maximum access to learning, sharing of resources and best practice.

2) Development of a compendium of web-sites of interest that can support international linkages and connections in the child protection area.

3) Consideration of options for shared people management resources for leadership positions across Australia.

**Source:** [http://www.scie.org.uk/](http://www.scie.org.uk/)
Centre for Excellence and outcomes in child and young people’s services

The Centre for Excellence and Outcomes in Children and Young People's Services provides a range of support to drive positive change in the delivery of children's services, and ultimately outcomes for children, young people and their families.

C4EO draws on a consortium of core partners: National Children’s Bureau (NCB); National Foundation for Educational Research (NFER); Research in Practice (RIP) and the Social Care Institute for Excellence (SCIE). Excellence in local practice is combined with research and data about 'what works' creating a single comprehensive centre of evidence. C4EO supports and constructively challenges the sector by sharing high quality, up-to-date evidence and effective practice, making it easily accessible to those who need to work in a 'low cost-high impact' environment.

"Our aim is to gather and share evidence about what makes the most significant difference to outcomes for vulnerable groups of children, young people and their families, supporting the sector to narrow the gap in society." Christine Davies, Director C4EO.

Key considerations for Australia:

1) Exploration of strategies to link excellence in practice across Australia through existing services such as the National Child Protection Clearinghouse and the Australasian Statutory Child Protection Learning and Development Framework.

2) Explore opportunities to link existing research portals in Australia to other sites across the world to ensure maximum access to learning, sharing of resources and best practice.

3) Development of a compendium of web-sites of interest that can support international linkages and connections in the child protection area.

Source: [http://www.c4eo.org.uk/default.aspx](http://www.c4eo.org.uk/default.aspx)
Eileen Munro is Professor of Social Policy at the London School of Economics. Professor Munro qualified and then practised as a social worker for several years and has since gone on to gain a wide range of research experience in child protection and mental health risk assessment, as well as building professional expertise in child abuse. She is well published in the area of child protection and completed her PhD in *The role of scientific methods in social work* and undertook a study of child abuse inquiries. This work was taken up by many child protection services in several countries. She has also written and published extensively on child protection, including *Learning Together to Safeguard Children*, *Learning to reduce risk in child protection* and a co-authored report: *Children’s Databases: Safety and Privacy*. When asked the question, “what critical skills are required for the perfect child protection worker?” Professor Munro responded by stating that we should not consider the critical skills of an individual worker in child protection but rather the cumulative skills of a multi-disciplinary team.

Professor Munro argues that a systems approach to learning is critical to improve performance and that some of the key elements of the ideal system include:

1. Acceptance of the complexity of the work
2. Enhancing the role of professional judgement
3. The need for feedback loops in the system where entry-level workers are not afraid to share their experiences, both positive and negative and senior staff consider their feedback as a valuable source of learning.

Professor Munro discussed a unique model of work being trialled in Hackney, UK called the “Unit of Five”. This model involves the use of a practice team of five staff in the management of all cases. As such no one person is responsible for cases which reduces the risk and improves decision making. The unit of five consists of a consultant social worker, social worker, therapist, child development worker and an administrator all of whom are
closely involved in the case. To date the outcomes of the unit of five include a reduction by one third in the number of children taken into care. The unit has a rotating role as “devil’s advocate” to ask alternative questions and consider different frames of reference in the case. When asked about what key things could be done to improve child protection systems Professor Munro presented the following suggestions:

1. Senior Management need to operate in a non-punitive atmosphere so people can learn (encouragement rather than discouragement).
2. Relationships and multidisciplinary approaches to work are fundamental.
3. Role plays and practical learning for frontline staff in how to challenge families and how to have difficult conversations.
4. Implementation of a signs of safety approach (consideration of dangers and strengths).
5. Recognition that working in the field of child protection is something that requires continual development and that time for reflection is critical to avoid rigid ways of working.
6. Senior management should periodically spend time on the front line so they can reality test the situation at the service end of the work.
7. The most imaginative software designers should be brought into child protection to develop systems that assist in making better judgements and aid practice rather than creating administrative burdens. (Governments need to avoid badly designed systems).
8. Senior Politicians need to support professionals in child protection practice as their first response to issues that present in the media.
9. Ongoing work in relation to differential responses is required to explore what works.

On 10 June 2010, the Secretary of State announced the launch of a review of children’s social work, headed by Professor Eileen Munro. The review is to be wide-ranging and will:

- Build on the work of Lord Laming’s Progress Report (March 2009) and the Social Work Task Force, drawing on the evidence submitted to these reviews and the extensive analysis undertaken.
- Pursue new lines of inquiry in order to identify innovative examples of good practice, with the aim of understanding how they were made possible and what obstacles had to be overcome.
Professor Munro is travelling across jurisdictions gathering evidence during August and September 2010 and is due to submit an initial report in September 2010 and the final report in April 2011.

**Key considerations for Australia:**

1. The findings of Professor Munro's review should be considered across jurisdictions in Australia so we can learn from the volume of evidence that will be gathered in this process.
2. Considerations should be given to the trial of a “Unit of Five” model in Queensland to see the impact of such an approach in an Australian context.
3. Consideration should be given to providing opportunities for staff to role play and practice having difficult and challenging conversations in safe environments prior to working with families in the child protection system.
4. Consideration should be given to all senior management and central office staff periodically rotating through frontline practice to keep grounded in the reality of challenges to direct service delivery.
5. Ongoing funding needs to be provided to the area of systems and technology development to ensure the best resources to support practice and decision making are utilised.
6. Acknowledgement that child protection work requires ongoing learning and that regular processes should be maintained to up skill all staff in frontline practice. This includes the need to encourage professional judgement, consideration of risks and strengths in families and how to manage complexity.
7. Ongoing support for multidisciplinary ways of working and learning.

**Liz Davies, Senior Lecturer, London Metropolitan University**

Liz Davies is a registered social worker who, following a career in frontline child protection social work, has worked since 2002 at London Metropolitan University as Senior Lecturer in Children and Families Social Work. She teaches on the BSc and MSc Social Work and is module leader for ‘Effective Communication in Social Work’, ‘Planning Care’ and ‘Safeguarding Children’. She also teaches a post qualifying course entitled ‘Critical themes and perspectives in child protection’. Liz has also designed on-line child protection training.
courses and offers a range of post qualifying short courses both through the University and in her own business.

Her specialism is the investigation of child abuse and investigative interviewing of children particularly in the context of organised and network abuse of children. She has recently completed a PhD by prior output entitled ‘Protecting Children: a critical contribution to policy and practice development’. Liz has written widely on the subject of protecting children and is a consultant to television, radio and print media. She also conducts serious case reviews and acts as an expert witness for social workers in high profile child protection cases. When asked the question “what are the key skills required of child protection staff?” Liz identified the following:

1. An ability to think, challenge and question.
2. To go beyond the obvious (you can get all the basics from books - facts are easy to find but an in depth analysis is harder).
3. Scenario based learning (role play interviewing children and questioning).
4. Skills in making effective judgements is critical – gathering information is the easy part of the work, making the judgement is the much more challenging skill set and in the complexity of the work it is critical to learn this skill.
5. Need to draw out staff and carers own experiences of abuse/harm – if we don’t workers will either over react or under-react. The focus needs to be balanced between a family focus and child protection and how a worker reacts to families can be significantly shaped by their own family of origin.
6. Implementation of child protection conferences with professionals and parents to ensure parents can be provided with clear advice about what is not acceptable.

When asked about what key things could be done to improve the child protection systems Liz identified the following:

- There is a need to sit around the table with multidisciplinary teams for regular strategy meetings. These meetings would include a variety of specialists who can share learning’s and accept that it is alright to be different but there is a need for collective wisdom to get the best outcomes for children and families.
- Child protection registers should be available to all professionals.
- Exploration of models such as the Scandinavian model of child protection with children’s houses that combine medical, therapeutic and residential services
All facilities and professionals for children are located in one spot which is a child centred protective model.

- Increasing joint training between child protection professionals and the Police to build better relationships between agencies and break down barriers.

**Key considerations for Australia:**

1. It is important to ensure space is provided for strategy meetings/discussions within the child protection system to build collective learning for professionals and to get the best outcome for children.

2. Ongoing consideration should be given to the trial of a child advocacy/children’s centre that provides a “one stop shop” with all aspects of medical, therapeutic and residential services. This also creates a joint learning space for multi-disciplinary teams.

3. Training and development for staff in child protection needs to extend beyond base level data gathering to an in depth ability to analyse and go beyond the basics and ask the tough questions. This includes practicing the skills required to have difficult conversations prior to working on the frontline. Supervisory relationships should also offer space to explore family of origin impact on decision making and how this can influence and bias practice for staff.

**Source:**

http://www.lizdavies.net/index.html
http://www.londonmet.ac.uk/depts/dass/staff/lizdavies/

**Bangor University, Wales**

The Welsh Assembly Government has adopted seven core aims to ensure that all children and young people:

- Have a flying start in life,
- Have a comprehensive range of education and learning opportunities;
Enjoy the best possible health and are free from abuse, victimisation and exploitation;
Have access to play, leisure, sporting and cultural activities;
Are listened to, treated with respect, and have their race and cultural identity recognised;
Have a safe home and a community which supports physical and emotional wellbeing; and
Are not disadvantaged by poverty.

These aims are also embodied in the five key outcomes for improving the wellbeing of children from conception to adulthood that are set out in section 25(2) of the Children Act 2004. The All Wales Child Protection Procedures 2008 reflect recent changes in legislation. The new procedures combine the shared knowledge and experiences of Wales' 22 Local Safeguarding Children Boards (LSCBs) and reflect the changes required as a result of high-profile child protection reports like the Laming Report. They address a wide range of safeguarding issues, including new mediums in which abuse can occur, such as the internet, and incorporate learning from research and practice from other parts of the world.

The Bangor University – School of Social work has introduced a new unit called “supporting families and safeguarding children”. This module is being introduced in response to the findings of the Care Council for Wales’ audit of the teaching of children and families social work in the degree across Wales. The Welsh Assembly Government has also introduced the requirement that the common core of skills, knowledge and understanding for the Children and Young People’s Workforce be embedded in the education and training of social workers to ensure that there are consistent standards across children’s services in Wales. Children’s rights are a significant feature of the common core, following the Welsh Assembly requirement that all developments in relation to children be underpinned by children’s rights. Feedback from Local Authority Partners, graduates and current students had also suggested that there was insufficient teaching of children and families work in the previous version of the degree.

The new module offers a broad foundation in the key aspects of work with children and families, and addresses some aspects of practice in more depth. It builds on learning about child poverty, child development and use of research to inform practice. It is also complemented by the Development of the Personal Social Services unit which runs
concurrently in the second year. Other aspects of services to children are addressed in the third year module called Looked after Children and Leaving Care.

My time with the Bangor University included an opportunity to present two lectures to students and professionals. My notes were converted to Welsh and I was impressed with the bi-lingual approach to learning and documents at the University. During my time at the Bangor University I was able to meet with a variety of professionals from agencies across Wales who attend regular professional development sessions at the University. In meeting with staff from the University, Action for Children, the Children’s teams, Barnardo’s and NSPCC the following key skills were identified as critical in the development of learning for staff in the child protection field:

1. The critical importance of child protection strategy meetings with all professionals at the frontline prior to interviewing children and young people.
2. Ensuring caseloads are manageable for staff (the average staff caseload is 14 per worker). New staff have protected caseloads under 10 for the first year.
3. Ensuring staff are trained across all areas of practice and have a good working knowledge of the full system rather than just expertise in one part.
4. Enhancing multi-lingual capabilities across the workforce.
5. Mentoring/supervision of new staff (staff can choose their mentor)
6. Advanced training on communicating with children (using interactive practice based models and tools).
7. Understanding assessment and how to interpret information
8. Integrated service delivery and joint training across partnerships (Community agencies, Government Departments including Health, Education, Social Services and carers)
9. Ongoing focus is required on training and learning programs to ensure the approach is getting the desired outcomes in terms of practice improvement.

Key considerations for Australia:

1. Exploration of caseload sizes and the implementation of capped caseloads should be considered in the context of optimal environments for reflection and learning.
2. Protected caseload sizes for staff in their first year of practice should be considered as a strategy to ensure appropriate learning space.
3. Training programs across Australia should be regularly evaluated to ensure the programs are having the impact in terms of skills development in line with current evidence of best practice.

4. Ongoing attention is required to integrate learning opportunities across Government and community based services.

Source:

http://www.bangor.ac.uk/
http://www.barnardos.org.uk/who_we_are/in_your_region/wales/wales_projects.htm
http://www.actionforchildren.org.uk/
www.opsi.gov.uk/acts/acts2004/40031--d.htm#25

The Social Services Improvement Agency (SSIA) in Wales has a web site with a link to the notable practice database. This database has almost 250 case studies and examples of good practice ranging across all service areas. This site also includes notable practice compendiums that can be downloaded. There is also an SSIA Learning library where the SSIA produce a learning product for each piece of work it creates.

Key considerations for Australia:

1) Staff across Australia and other countries should be encouraged to access websites such as the notable practice database so learning can be shared across the world.

Source:

http://www.ssiacymru.org.uk/index.cfm?articleid=298
http://www.ssiacymru.org.uk/index.cfm?articleid=4049
http://www.ssiacymru.org.uk/index.cfm?articleid=3135
Centre for Learning in Child Protection

The University of Edinburgh/NSPCC Centre for UK-wide learning in child protection (CLiCP) was created to conduct research, and to provide analysis and commentary on child protection policy and developments across the UK.

The Centre for Learning in Child Protection was set up to address the lack of systematic examination of developments in child protection at a UK level.

- The unit monitors and analyses the content and direction of child protection systems, across the UK and in each of the UK jurisdictions.
- Conducts primary research addressing gaps in existing child protection knowledge
- Dissemination of findings and contribute knowledge to inform the policy process.
- Conducts comparative analysis of specific developments in child protection policy, across the UK and in each of the UK jurisdictions.

Recent projects conducted by the unit include:

- Overview of policy in child protection (1968 – 2002)
- New directions in child protection
- The support needs of children and young people who leave home because of domestic violence.
- Mapping therapeutic services for sexually abused children and young people: Services in Scotland.

When asked about what key things could be done to improve the child protection systems the following areas were identified:

- More longitudinal research in aspects of child protection
- More outcome based research
- More focus on what is being done well across the world
- Implementation of space for blue sky work considering what would the ultimate child protection future look like.
When asked about examples of good practice in Scotland the Children’s Hearing System in Scotland was identified as a positive model.

Scotland's Children's Hearings system represents one of the radical changes initiated by the Social Work (Scotland) Act 1968, now incorporated in the Children (Scotland) Act 1995. There was a concern in the late 1950s and early 1960s that change was needed in the way society dealt with children and young people in trouble or at risk. A Committee was set up in 1960 under Lord Kilbrandon to investigate possible solutions.

The Committee found that children and young people appearing before courts, whether they had committed offences or were in need of care and protection, had common needs. The Committee considered that the existing courts were not suitable for dealing with these problems because they had to combine the characteristics of a criminal court with an agency making decisions on welfare. Separation of these functions was therefore recommended. The establishment of facts (where they were disputed) was to remain with the courts, but decisions on what action was needed in the welfare interests of the child were to be the responsibility of a new and unique hearing.

On 15 April 1971 children's hearings took over most of the responsibility for dealing with children and young people under 16, and in some cases under 18, who commit offences or who are in need of care and protection.
The Children's Panel

The children's panel is a group of people from the community who come from a wide range of backgrounds. Panel members are unpaid and give their services voluntarily, but are carefully selected and highly trained. They must be at least 18 years old but there is no upper age limit. There are approximately 2500 children's panel members across Scotland. Panels vary in size, ranging from the smallest in Shetland with 15 members to the largest in Glasgow with around 540 members.

Every local authority has a children's panel, and panel members sit on hearings on a rotating basis. A children's hearing has three panel members, of which there must be a mixture of men and women. The hearing must decide whether compulsory measures of supervision are needed for the child and, if so, what they should be.

Members of a children's panel are appointed by Scottish Ministers. Every local authority has a Children's Panel Advisory Committee (CPAC), which is responsible for recommending individuals for appointment as panel members. For new panel members this normally involves attending information sessions, completing application forms and attending interviews and group discussions. References are also followed up, and an enhanced police check is carried out. The initial period of appointment is three years and is renewable on further recommendation from the CPAC, following monitoring of performance.

Panel members attend a programme of training to prepare them for the role. The organisation and delivery of core panel member training is the responsibility of the Children's Hearings Training Units (CHTUs), housed within four Scottish universities. CHTUs are funded by the Scottish Government, but staff employed in the units are university employees and most have been panel members.
Panel member training is an intensive learning process and covers topics such as:

- leadership
- teamwork
- effective communication
- analytical thinking
- decision making
- influencing/negotiating.

**Key considerations for Australia:**

1) As previously identified Staff across Australia and other countries should be encouraged to access websites such as the Centre for Learning in Child Protection so learning can be shared across the world.

2) Further exploration of the Children’s Panel model should be explored and considered in an Australian context.

3) Ongoing funding and resources should be provided to ensure further longitudinal and outcome based research is conducted in Australia and that this research examines what is working well and why.

4) Opportunities to bring together experts in child protection should be considered as a strategy to design the “blue sky” model of child protection for the future.

**Source:** [http://www.chscotland.gov.uk/index.asp](http://www.chscotland.gov.uk/index.asp)

**Multi Agency Resource Service**

'M*Lessons from inquiries all point to the fact that only a strong and confident workforce can make the right decisions, and provide the right support for vulnerable children*’ (Laming 2009).

The Multi-Agency Resource Service or MARS is the first child protection hub in the UK. Initially funded by Scottish Government, it aims to facilitate access to child care and protection expertise to help agencies deal with issues of neglect and abuse. Agencies, councils or organisations can approach the MARS for help with specific cases or situations.
where a child death has occurred or there is concern about possible or substantiated injury or abuse. Staff can also contact MARS if they need to source research, or need support implementing findings and recommendations from evaluations or inspections.

The MARS was set up in response to the report *An Inspection into the Care and Protection of Children in Eilean Siar* (2005). The MARS aim is to build communities of expertise across Scotland. The MARS identifies that whilst many communities of expertise already exist not everyone can be an expert in everything. As such there are times when frontline practitioners, middle or senior managers, and local policymakers will identify a lack of expertise when addressing a particular issue. Sharing the expertise of others through MARS is designed to help to address these gaps. The MARS aims to build and improve communities of expertise across Scotland. The external expertise is being drawn from agencies working in child protection, including the statutory, voluntary, academic and private sectors.

**Key considerations for Australia:**

1) As identified above staff across Australia and other countries should be encouraged to access and contribute to websites such as the MARS so learning can be shared across the world.

2) Linkages across the world should be made between various web based programs such as MARS to reduce duplication, share resources and to ensure good practice, research and learning is shared.

Source: [http://www.mars.stir.ac.uk/index.php](http://www.mars.stir.ac.uk/index.php)

**Scottish Child Care and Protection Network**

The Scottish Child Care and Protection Network was first proposed in 2006. Its initial development was fostered through a series of meetings where interested and proactive individuals came together and formed a network. It gained some momentum in 2007 when pooled funds presented the opportunity to undertake a number of small scale projects, including an audit of Scottish child care and protection research. Both the SCCPN coordinator and the MARS team are hosted at the University of Stirling. The Scottish Child Care and Protection Network fosters connections, collaboration and the coordination of activities that will promote access to and use of evidence in practice.
The SCCPN is currently working on the following projects in partnership with MARS:

- A study that will explore the impact of interventions on outcomes for children and young people
- A quarterly joint newsletter
- A web site research link/index
- National Conference 2010
- Connections (a web site to bring together information about organisations and initiatives)
- Events links

Key considerations for Australia:

1) As identified above staff across Australia and other countries should be encouraged to access and contribute to websites such as the SCCPN so learning can be shared across the world.

2) Linkages across the world should be made between various web based programs such as the SCCPN to reduce duplication, share resources and to ensure good practice, research and learning is shared (similar to the approach used in connections on the SCCPN site).

Source: [http://www.sccpn.stir.ac.uk/index.php](http://www.sccpn.stir.ac.uk/index.php)

University of Stirling

There is unprecedented policy development in Scotland aimed at addressing the needs of children whose development and well-being may be compromised by social, family and individual circumstances. The professionals from all disciplines working in this challenging and complex field require access to high quality training and education.
In response to this need for specialised professional development the University of Stirling has invested in a new suite of programmes in the field of Child Welfare and Protection. The latest development in this field is a new MSc award. There are also modules in “Working with Families Affected by Substance Misuse”, “Leadership and Management”, and “Adult Protection”.

Course Content includes:

- Current Issues and debates in Child Welfare and Protection
- Developing Practitioner and Organisational Capacity
- Risk and Decision Making
- Collaborative Practice

The Certificate in Child Welfare and Protection is aimed at professionals working in the field of child welfare and protection. It is designed to be accessible and relevant to workers from Health, Social Work, Education, Police and associated disciplines. The programme is delivered over one year of part-time study, with a mixture of direct teaching and guided study through the use of course materials and web-based learning opportunities.

High quality supervisory practice has been identified as being vital to support the provision of good quality practice and better outcomes for children and adults, along with continuous professional development through mentoring and a range of other activities.

This supervising, managing or mentoring module is relevant for supervisors from different areas of social services and utilises student’s diverse experiences to enhance the learning. It explores generic and core skills, as well as differences and boundaries between roles. The module includes:

- theories, research and literature relevant to supervising, managing and mentoring;
- the relevance of adult learning;
- the emotional impact of practice and the role of supervision;
• relevant attachment and resilience theories;
• the outcomes of supervision.

All of these have a strong focus on working with practice experience and applying a knowledge base to advance skills. The module will support students to critically analyse specific issues that apply to their specialist area.

When asked the question “what are the key skills required of child protection staff? The following skills were identified:

1) Staff must have a critical understanding of child development (not practice wisdom or experience alone).
2) Staff need opportunities to understand the impact of adversity and a theoretical framework and skills to manage conflict and complexity.
3) Staff need an advanced understanding of attachment
4) Improving the quality of assessment and analysis (incorporating history and the impact of the past and providing tools to assist with analysis).
5) Reinforcing and building confidence in making decisions
6) Improving professional authority, judgement and decision making
7) Encouraging staff tenacity and creativity and allowing flexibility with rules to ensure best outcomes rather than procedures and policies driving bureaucratic practice.
8) Advanced training in therapeutic relationships and the capacity to make connections with complex families.
9) Time for critical reflection in the supervisory context and the importance of regular supervision for staff that goes beyond task.
10) Ensure that programs of learning have opportunities for direct observation of practice.
11) Ensuring that multi-disciplinary work does not result in a “watered down” response to outcomes for children and families and that no one agency should have their view take priority.
12) Building in systems to practice to ensure a “critical friend/devil’s advocate” to challenge decisions and consider other perspectives.
When asked about what key things could be done to improve child protection systems the following were identified:

1) Creating a collaborative approach to learning across Scotland/UK and having a strong commitment on maintaining a best practice approach.

2) Building on the Multi Agency Resource Service

3) Moving beyond the unrealistic expectation by Governments and communities that we can and will manage all risk and an acceptance that risk is a reality of working with complex and vulnerable families.

4) A clearer understanding of risk from the child’s perspective and further research to review what it is we are trying to avoid in terms of loss for the child.

5) Ongoing attention across all agencies to ensure the child is the focus of all service interactions.

6) An ability to focus on care and planning focused around developmental outcomes and time scales for children and young people to ensure we have a clear map to know where we want them to get to (to avoid the drift in the system that occurs now)

7) Creating opportunities for sharing of best practice particularly the everyday examples where workers make a significant difference and using this as the basis for learning and policy development.

Key considerations for Australia:

1) Building more effective partnerships with Universities and Vocational institutions across Australia is critical to enhancing the interface between academia/research and practice.

2) Ongoing attention needs to be focused on skilling up staff in the management and assessment of risk and that learning programs have an observation component with practical skills development.

3) Ongoing attention needs to focus on staff developing critical skills in understanding child development, attachment and trauma.

Source: http://www.socialwork.stir.ac.uk/category/courses/cpd/
ChildStat

Initiated in July 2006, ChildStat has been one of the most effective staff accountability initiatives implemented in New York City. These three hour, weekly sessions are modelled after the New York Police Department's CompSTAT. Child protective leaders from each of the City’s twenty geographic zones meet with the Commissioner and other Administration for Children’s Services (ACS) leaders from every division of the agency. Wide-ranging zone performance data is analysed, and an open child protective case is reviewed in-depth. The case reviews are framed by quality child protective investigatory practice – such as reviewing prior investigations, interviewing all household members and other relevant parties, and ensuring supervisory oversight. The discussion encompasses what did and did not happen, as well as what should happen.

One specific example of change resulting from ChildStat is the increased access to preventive services from child protective referrals. The Division of Family Support Services worked with providers to increase preventive service availability in targeted neighbourhoods by closing out longstanding cases which no longer needed services. In response to issues raised in ChildStat, ACS revises practice policies to guide investigative work and discusses issues in managerial/supervisory sessions within each borough. Children Services also releases Child Safety Alerts via email as a method of instant communication to both remind and update staff about specific practice issues.

James Satterwhite Academy for Child Welfare Training

On the 16th August 1984 the New York City Board mandated the establishment of a child protective services training academy. The academy opened in 1987 and has provided ongoing training to more than 6000 Children’s Services staff and to staff who work for a number of provider agencies. In 1997 a scholarship program was created for caseworkers and supervisors with experience in child welfare. This program provides those who qualify the opportunity to earn their Masters of Social Work (MSW) degree. The focus on continuing education, research and best practice allows them to bring advanced expertise to direct
service delivery. One hundred full MSW scholarships are awarded annually to ACS staff, with a total of 200 staff in the scholarship program at any one time. Almost 100 partial scholarships are awarded to staff in the agencies that ACS contracts with, and 375 non-matriculated agency and ACS staff have the opportunity to take graduate credit courses via distance learning classrooms.

The Academy has a number of Departments including – Assessment and Evaluation, Community Education, Provider Agency Training, Curriculum Development, In-Service Training, Legal Training unit, Professional Development program, Registration and the Training Department.

Training programs conducted by the Academy include:

- Core Phase I – Common Core Training Program (CCTP)
- Core Phase II – Training Program for New Child Protection Specialists
- In-Service Training – Working with Gay and Lesbian youth in child welfare, Immigration issues; Child Evaluation specialist specialty training; Family Preservation program speciality
- Supervisory Core; Core Essentials for experienced supervisors and managers;
- Professional Development

New child protection staff go straight to the Academy and then move backwards and forwards between their field office and the Academy. Following this period of training new staff spend three months slowly taking on cases in a training unit environment where specialist training facilitators mentor and build the skills of the staff. After this period they then move into regular units and commence a series of second level courses. The ACS has also implemented a series of competency tools that are used in the recruitment stage to determine if an applicant has the qualities and suitability to work in the area of child protection.

**Key considerations for Australia:**

1) After observing the ChildStat process in action a trial of this model in Queensland and other jurisdictions in Australia should be considered given the benefit in terms of learning, quality improvement and the integrated nature of service improvement
2) As discussed in previous sections consideration should be given to the development of a set of common core competencies for staff working in child protection across Australia with a consistent curriculum.

3) Consideration should be given to the introduction of Masters level scholarships and part scholarships to build professional skills across Queensland and Australia.

4) Consideration should be given to the model of staff who first commence in child protection following basic training with a period of practice with experienced training professionals in a training environment for three months prior to moving to a regular child protection centre.


CornerHouse was founded in 1989 as a private, non-profit organization in public-private partnership. CornerHouse Interagency Child Abuse Evaluation and Training Center is committed to improving the assessment and investigation of child abuse, specifically in those cases involving sexual abuse. CornerHouse is an integral component in facilitating the coordination of an interagency multidisciplinary team consisting of County professionals from law enforcement, child protection, and the county attorney’s office. The collaboration that takes place among professionals provides an opportunity to share knowledge and expertise pertaining to issues of investigation and the needs of children.

Forensic interviews are conducted in a child friendly environment by professionals trained in a wide spectrum of areas related to childhood development, sexual abuse dynamics, and other issues pertaining to questioning children regarding allegations of abuse. CornerHouse has adopted the “Child First Philosophy” which states that the needs of a child are given the first priority during the forensic interview process.

**Forensic Interview Services**

CornerHouse attempts to conduct forensic interviews in a manner that is considerate of a child’s culture and ethnicity. In cases where English is not the child’s primary language, CornerHouse will arrange for a court-certified interpreter to be involved in the interview. The
anatomical drawings and dolls utilized by CornerHouse in the forensic interview are age and culturally appropriate to the child. The forensic interview is based on the semi-structured RATAC® protocol that has been designed through clinical experience and the review of empirical research to maximize the child’s ability to communicate his or her experience. The Forensic Interviewer conducts the interview in a manner that is developmentally appropriate for a child’s cognitive, social, and emotional abilities.

Members of the multidisciplinary team observe the forensic interview through closed-circuit television. CornerHouse videorecords every forensic interview and provides a copy to the primary investigator. Following the forensic interview, the multidisciplinary team members participate in a post-interview meeting for the purpose of coordinating the roles that each professional will assume in the investigation and protection of the child. The responsibility of the CornerHouse Forensic Interviewer is one of maintaining his or her objectivity as a neutral fact finder about a child’s experience. The CornerHouse Forensic Interviewer will provide a written synopsis regarding the finding of the interview, child’s affect and ability, and the multidisciplinary team’s recommendations. CornerHouse's vision is that “Children grow up free from abuse.”

Training

Since 1990, CornerHouse has been providing child sexual abuse forensic interview training to investigative professionals throughout Minnesota and across the USA. To date CornerHouse has trained over 23,000 professionals from a number of countries around the world. Although there is no such thing as a perfect interview, a competent interview takes place when a child is interviewed in a child-friendly environment, with developmentally and linguistically appropriate language and by someone who is adequately trained. CornerHouse's training curriculum is designed to produce competent forensic interviewers who can defend their interviews in court and effective mandated reporters who can provide
investigating professionals with essential information. Corner House also produces DVD’s such as “Healing Young Lives” and “Give them a voice” – Forensic interviews of child victims and witnesses.

When asked the question “what are the key skills required of child protection staff? The following skills were identified:

1. Understanding and embracing a multidisciplinary approach to work
2. All teams must have the same basic training and understanding of child protection work in the context of their own professional disciplines.
3. Comprehensive training is needed specific to interviewing children of different ages.
4. Comprehensive training in child development, linguistics and suggestibility
5. Capacity for regular peer review (observation of work practices and feedback). This should be done on a structured basis at least once per month.
6. Ongoing training and development to maintain core skills.
7. Ability to keep children as the focus and provide consistent supportive adult relationships for children and young people.

Key considerations for Australia:

1) After observing the forensic interview process at CornerHouse I believe strong consideration should be given to the implementation of a trial of a similar model in Queensland. The benefits of a one stop service are clearly evident in terms of the improved outcomes and impact on children. Furthermore the approach to collaboration with multi-disciplinary work clearly demonstrates the benefits of all stakeholders working together from the start of an investigation and having dedicated child friendly locations for the assessment and interview of children.

2) Consideration should be given to the establishment of specialist forensic interviewing services that operate independently from the Department.

3) Consideration should be given to opportunities to provide joint training and development for professionals across service streams.

Source: http://www.cornerhousemn.org/
In 2003, the American Prosecutor's Research Institute and Winona State University collaborated to create the National Child Protection Training Center (NCPTC) on the Winona State University (WSU) campus in Winona, Minnesota, USA. In January 2004, the NCPTC assisted by WSU faculty members from nursing, social work and criminal justice began to develop three undergraduate courses that would represent a concentration in child maltreatment and that would confer a certificate in Child Advocacy Studies. An extensive review of the literature provided the faculty with an initial content outline. The first step in the process was an evidenced-based practice review of recent research using the concepts of child maltreatment, child welfare, child abuse, child neglect, child protection, child advocacy, child interviewing, child abuse prevention, child abuse effects, child mental health, mandated reporting, history of child abuse, and investigative and legal terminology related to child abuse and neglect.

The National Child Protection Training Centre now assists universities in developing model undergraduate and graduate curriculums to better prepare tomorrow's child protection professionals. In 2010 twenty universities will participate in a program to replicate the minor in their institutions across the USA.

The National Child Protection Training Centre strives to significantly reduce and seek an end to child abuse, neglect and all other forms of child maltreatment in three generations through education, training, awareness, prevention, advocacy and the pursuit of justice. The Centre promotes reformation of current training practices by providing an educational curriculum to current and future front-line child protection professionals around the USA so that they will be prepared to recognize and report the abuse of a child.

Since its inception, NCPTC staff have trained more than 40,000 child protection professionals in all 50 states of the USA and 17 countries. The NCPTC is located in a state of the art training complex on the campus of Winona State University. The complex includes five mock court rooms, four forensic interview training rooms, and a "mock house" in which to conduct simulated child abuse investigations.

The Child Protection Training Act established in 2010 granted $20 million over 4 years to the NCPTC to establish regional training centres to provide child protection professions with quality training and technical assistance.
The NCPTC also provides a range of programs that include:

- National Training Conferences
- Speakers Bureau
- Child Advocacy Studies (Minor at University)
- Publications/DVD’s
- Webinars

**Key considerations for Australia:**

1) After observing the mock house and Court rooms at the NCPTC jurisdictions in Australia should strongly consider the establishment of similar models to enhance the practical learning opportunities for staff in entry level and advanced training. The ability to use video technology to observe and record practical sessions clearly enhances the skills development capacity of workers.

2) Consideration should be given to opportunities for joint training across professional service streams (legal, police, welfare, education, health and community services).

3) Consideration should be given to the implementation of learning webinars for staff to manage the large distances in Australia.

4) Staff should be encouraged to access webinars in other Countries and jurisdictions such as those at the NCPTC to build cross State and Country learning opportunities.

The First Nations Child and Family Caring Society of Canada

The First Nations Child and Family Caring Society of Canada was developed at the Squamish First Nation in 1998 at a national meeting of First Nations child and family service agencies. Meeting delegates agreed that a national non profit organization was required to provide research, policy, professional development and networking support to the First Nations child and family service agencies in Canada.

In 2001, the First Nations Child and Family Caring Society of Canada, in partnership with the Centre of Excellence for Child Welfare, established the first research site devoted to the affirmation and support of First Nations child welfare research. The research site disseminates research information to First Nations child and family service agencies, provides professional development programs on research, and oversees national First Nations child and family service related research projects.

Building on the existing infrastructure, the Caring Society with the support of the voluntary sector established a head office in Ottawa in 2002. The First Nations Child and Family Caring Society believes Aboriginal communities are in the best position to design and implement their own child safety solutions and that as a national organization the best role the society can play is to provide quality resources for communities to draw upon. The key functions of the First Nations Caring Society include:

Research

- Caring Across Boundaries Conference
- First Peoples Child and Family Review journals
- Collaboration

Policy

- Jordan's Principle campaign
- Human Rights Case on First Nations Child Welfare Funding
- 7 ways to make a difference campaign
Education

- Quarterly newsletter
- Resource rich website with 1.8 million hits per year
- Over 60 presentations reaching 12,000 people in 3 countries
- Caring Across Boundaries photography exhibit

Training

- Touchstones of Hope learning symposium
- Train the Trainers sessions for Caring Across the Boundaries

Be a Witness Campaign

On February 27, 2007, the Assembly of First Nations [AFN], a political organization representing all First Nations in Canada, and the First Nations Caring Society of Canada took a complaint to the Canadian Human Rights Commission for its treatment of First Nations children. The complaint alleges that the Government of Canada had a longstanding pattern of providing less government funding for child welfare services to First Nations children on reserves than is provided to non-Aboriginal children.

In October of 2008, the Canadian Human Rights Commission ordered a tribunal to determine whether or not discrimination had occurred pursuant to the Canadian Human Rights Act. The AFN and the First Nations Caring Society will present the case supporting the allegation that the Canadian Government is discriminating against First Nations children and then the federal government will respond. The Tribunal will then decide if discrimination happened or not.

Touchstones of Hope


The result of this gathering was the creation of the document called “Reconciliation in Child Welfare: Touchstones of Hope for Indigenous Children, Youth and Families”. This document draws on the conversations from individuals in Niagara Falls and outlines the concept of reconciliation that is comprised of four phases. Reconciliation engages both Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples in a process of:

- Truth telling
- Acknowledging
Participants identified key values to guide these four phases of reconciliation in child welfare. These values are seen as essential to the success of a renewed child welfare system, and to set in play a basis for a respectful and meaningful relationship between Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples working in child welfare.

**Key considerations for Australia:**

1. Staff should be encouraged to sign up to be a witness to the historic human rights case in Canada at [http://www.fnwitness.ca/](http://www.fnwitness.ca/)
2. Links should be made between Australia and Canada in terms of work with Indigenous peoples and the interface in the child protection/welfare arena. There are significant similarities between the two countries and we should learn from each other.
3. Further exploration should occur in terms of learning strategies such as the Touchstones of Hope, Caring across Boundaries and the First Peoples Child and Family Review journals and how these models could be trialled in Queensland and Australia.

**Source:** [http://www.fncfcs.com/home.html](http://www.fncfcs.com/home.html)

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**Andrus Children’s Centre**

In 1928, philanthropist John E. Andrus created an orphanage on a property overlooking the Hudson River, in memory of his wife, Julia. The Andrus Children's Centre is located on 110 acres of property.
Sanctuary – Andrus Philosophy

Andrus works with some of the most vulnerable children including those who struggle with the effects of psychiatric illness, learning disabilities or who have experienced trauma from loss and abuse. The programs at the campus are grounded in an understanding of the effects of such challenges and of the treatment interventions most likely to bring about positive change. Staff engage with children and their families using innovative strategies to promote recovery and resilience. The Sanctuary Model provides the trauma informed treatment philosophy for the campus. Sanctuary has been effective with both children and adults across a range of human service organizations, including residential treatment centres and public and private schools.

Residential Treatment Program

On average between 70 and 80 five to sixteen year-old children live in Andrus' cottages under the full-time support of trained staff. The main goal of the Residential Treatment Program is to help children and their families set and meet treatment goals that will enable them to live together upon completion of the program. Nearly 90% of children rejoining their family at the end of the program.

Day Treatment Program

Andrus' Day Treatment Program provides a resource for families trying to avoid their children coming into residential care. Children and their families take part in educational, social and psychological services that help them to address the issues and behaviours that are disrupting their lives while continuing to live at home. Approximately 80 children and young people are enrolled in this program.
The Orchard School

Every child enrolled in Andrus' treatment programs attends the Orchard School. Students at the Orchard School receive highly specialized instructional services. The staff-to-student ratio at the Orchard School is a maximum of 1:4 assuring each child is afforded tailored attention. Using the Sanctuary model of treatment, the Orchard School provides children with a safe place to address affective issues and acquire academic skills. The emphasis of the program is hands-on projects that encourage children to see themselves as capable and creative; and individualized computer-managed reading, writing and math instruction, permitting students to work at their own pace, without feelings of stigma.

The school also integrates neurodevelopment psychology with classroom instruction and related service provision based on current research in relation to brain development. Furthermore a multidisciplinary instructional team allows for continuous assessment of student functioning.

The Andrus Children’s Centre and The Orchard School have responded to the growing need for appropriate educational planning and placement for children diagnosed with Autism Spectrum Disorders (ASD). The “E-Building” caters to middle school and high school students on the Autism Spectrum. This service has evolved into a specialized program designed to meet the needs of children who may have primary or co morbid diagnoses of Asperger’s Disorder, Autism, or Pervasive Developmental Disorder. Children’s behaviour is managed using a functional behavioural assessment model and an operant system of reinforcement is used during the day. All programming follows the guidelines of the Sanctuary Model while heavily incorporating empirically based behavioural interventions. In addition, individual student learning challenges are met using direct instruction curriculum programs, curriculum modifications, and hands-on interactive delivery of academic material.

The program at the campus also includes opportunities for artistic and athletic exploration including an adventure-based counselling program, chorus, dance and the National Youth Program Using Minibikes (NYPUM).
Andrus Centre for Learning and Innovation

The Andrus Centre for Learning and Innovation operates as a hub of information facilitating ideas between organisational and individual practitioners, funders, policy makers, researchers, and children/families. The Andrus Centre for Learning and Innovation aim is not only to improve the care of children at the Andrus Centre, but also to share the knowledge.

The mission of the Andrus Centre for Learning and Innovation is to provide professional leadership on issues, practices and policies affecting vulnerable children and families. The goals of the Andrus Centre for Learning and Innovation are:

- To share the knowledge Andrus has acquired after 75 years of service to vulnerable children and families
- To provide a forum where information relating to vulnerable children and families can be collated and share
- To contribute to the knowledge base by conducting and supporting research on vulnerable children and families

The five core function of the Andrus Centre for Learning and Innovation are:

1. Professional training – the centre provides practice-based courses on areas of expertise cultivated among Andrus staff e.g. Implementing the Sanctuary model
2. Program evaluation and consultation
3. Research and publication – interdisciplinary research projects
4. Symposia – hosting a national symposium at least every two years to share best practice
5. Information sharing – a virtual resource centre for information, research, services and programs related to vulnerable children and families by providing links to data sources, directories, publications, working papers, professional news and advocacy sites.
Key considerations for Australia:

1. Further exploration of integrated models of education, therapeutic intervention and residential placements need to be considered in the context of the pressure currently on the placement system in Queensland and Australia.

2. Ongoing links with the Andrus Centre for Learning and Innovation should be considered to learn from models that are currently operating successfully in other jurisdictions in terms of working with families, learning and practice wisdom.

Source: http://www.andruschildren.org/index.htm

National Child Welfare Workforce Institute (NCWWI)

The purpose of the National Child Welfare Workforce Institute is to build the capacity of the child welfare workforce in the USA and to improve outcomes for children and families through activities that support the development of skilled child welfare leaders in public and tribal child welfare systems, and in private agencies that are contracted by the State to provide case management services that are traditionally provided by the public child welfare system. The goal of the organisation is to identify promising practices in workforce development, deliver child welfare leadership training for middle managers and supervisors, facilitate BSW and MSW traineeships, engage national peer networks, support strategic dissemination of effective and promising leadership and workforce practices, and advance knowledge through collaboration and evaluation.

The NCWWI Leadership Academy has two components:

- A Leadership Academy for Supervisors (LAS) that provides online leadership training to child welfare supervisors who provide direct supervision to front line workers.
- A Leadership Academy for Middle Managers (LAMM) that provides residential and web-based leadership training to child welfare managers who oversee programs and manage teams that implement programs.
The Leadership Academy for Middle Managers

The Leadership Academy for Middle Managers goal is to enhance the ability of middle managers to apply leadership skills for implementation of sustainable systems and change to improve outcomes for children, youth and families. The LAMM is coordinated by the Centre for Improvement of Child and Family Services at Portland State University School of Social Work.

The Leadership Academy for Middle Managers conducts a five-day residential training program followed by online support and teleconference peer networking offered to mid-level managers over a period of five years. In Year 5, a modified 3-day version of the training will be offered to managers in state and county training positions, so that LAMM training can be incorporated into ongoing child welfare training infrastructures, to build the capacity of the states to continue leadership training after the project ends.

The Leadership Academy for Supervisors (LAS) provides online training that draws on adult learning and leadership principles tailored to the role of the supervisor and also preparing supervisors for advancement as part of succession planning. The training framework includes four major components: A core certification curriculum addressing all competency areas; stand-alone training modules on specific topics of related interest; facilitated peer networking; and a catalogued inventory of resources. The content is delivered through self-paced, web-based modules with embedded learning activities.

Social Work Education Consortium

The mission of the New York State Social Work Education Consortium is to improve the quality, professional status, and stability of the public sector child welfare workforce, including better ways to recruit and retain qualified workers.

The primary goal of the consortium is the identification and implementation of programs and activities, which promote a forward-looking approach to training and education, emphasising workforce stabilization and professionalization.
Key considerations for Australia:

1. The model of a National Leadership Academy should be explored in the context of Australia as a strategy to share resources, reduced duplication and build cross State collegial networks in the child welfare workforce.

2. Ongoing links need to be made with existing services such as the NCWWI to share resources and to reduce duplication.


The Centre of Excellence for Child Welfare (CECW) fosters research and disseminates knowledge about the prevention and treatment of child abuse and neglect. The CECW supports research, gathers and analyses child welfare information and support the development of research capacity through training and consultation. The centres website disseminates information sheets, research reports and conference documents. All products can be downloaded free of charge. The CECW is one of four centres in the Centres of Excellence for Children’s well-being program an initiative of the Public Health Agency of Canada and had been running for ten years. Unfortunately at the time of my visit the funding for this program had ended.

The website originally developed by the CECW is now hosted by the Canadian Child Welfare Research Portal (CWRP). The website provides access to up-to-date research on Canadian child welfare programs and policies. The Portal is a partnership supported by the McGill Centre for Research on Children and Families (CRCF), the Factor-Inwentash Faculty of Social Work at University of Toronto and the Alberta Centre for Child, Family and Community Research.

The Portal also maintains links with the Child Welfare League of Canada (CWLC), the First Nations Child and Family Caring Society, the Groupe de recherche et d’action sur la victimisation des enfants (GRAVE-ARDEC), and other groups and organizations that collaborated with the CECW.

The Portal is designed to provide child welfare professionals, researchers, and the general public with a single point of access to Canadian child welfare research, i.e. research on abused and neglected children and on the programs and policies developed to support and
protect these children and to support their families. The Portal includes a searchable data base of Canadian research publications, a data base of Canadian researchers, and information and statistics about provincial, territorial, aboriginal and national child welfare policies, legislation and programs.

Key considerations for Australia:

1) As identified above staff across Australia and other countries should be encouraged to access and contribute to websites such as the CWRP so learning can be shared across the world.
2) Linkages across the world should be made between various web based programs such as CWRP to reduce duplication, share resources and to ensure good practice, research and learning is shared.

Source: [http://www.cecw-cepb.ca/](http://www.cecw-cepb.ca/)

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Ontario Association of Children’s Aid Societies (OACAS) – Education Services

In the OACAS curricula, the emphasis is on the application of child focused, family centred, strengths based practices that protect children and respect families. OACAS courses are designed to generate practical and action-oriented knowledge about child welfare in Ontario. Critical themes and relevant issues pertaining to the daily practice of child welfare are examined.

The curricula promotes current promising practices related to child safety, diversity and anti-oppression, parent collaboration, resiliency, community development, and permanency planning. Supplementary research materials are provided to learners after the course has been completed. A core philosophy of the OACAS is that education in child welfare is not a one-time event but rather a life-long learning process. OACAS believes that the transfer of learning from the classroom to the work environment is vital to the professional development of participants. The following courses are offered through the OACAS:
Foundations of Child Welfare Practice

Child Welfare Professional Series

- Collaborations in Child Welfare - Past, Present and Future
- Protecting Children and Strengthening Families, Part 1
- Protecting Children and Strengthening Families, Part 2
- Understanding and Responding to Children’s Needs
- Engaging Families (3 days)
- Permanency Planning and Continuity of Care
- Legal and Court Processes
- Wellness and Self-Care
- Ontario Looking After Children (OnLAC)
- Understanding PRIDE
- Advanced Child Welfare Practice

These courses are to be taken after the participant has completed the Foundations of Child Welfare Practice training course. The advanced courses are designed to enhance the participants’ capacity to address complex clinical issues in child welfare and provide the opportunity to engage in more detailed study about issues of child mortality, use of authority, critical decision making, child safety and family capacity building.

- Forensic Interviewing
- Critical Decision Making in Child Protection
- Advanced Service Planning
- Assessing Parenting Capacity
- Protection Investigations within Custody and Access Disputes
- Working with High Risk Infants and Their Families
- Working with Adolescents

Management and Leadership

These courses are designed to provide the essential knowledge and the practical opportunity for participants to develop effective leadership skills in a child welfare setting.

- Management, Leadership and Administration within Child Welfare
- Managing Work Through Other People: Performance Management
- Transfer of Learning: The Supervisor’s Role as an Adult Educator
- Supervising and Managing Group Performance: Developing Productive Work Teams
• Clinical Supervision in Child Welfare
• Supervising Investigative Forensic Interviews
• Project Management

Specialised Child Welfare Practice Training Courses

These courses are designed to meet the needs of child welfare professionals whose primary role is to assess families and their capacity to provide children with quality out-of-home care, support children/youth in care and to support children and families through the adoption process. Understanding and supporting the permanency continuum of care is a specialized field of practice in child welfare and is the primary focus of the courses in this category.

• Structured Analysis Family Evaluation (SAFE)
• Adoption Practice: Facilitating Lifetime Connections
• Children’s Services Worker: Facilitating Permanent Connections for Children and Youth

Resource Families

Resource Families courses are design to strengthen the quality of resource care by providing a standardized, structured framework for recruiting, preparing and selecting foster, kin, customary care and adoptive parents. It also provides resource families with in-service training and ongoing professional development.

• Parent Resources for Information, Development and Education (PRIDE)
• Connecting with PRIDE Teamwork towards Permanence
• Meeting Developmental Needs
• Meeting Developmental Needs – Loss
• Strengthening Family Relationships
• Meeting Developmental Needs – Discipline
• Continuing Family Relationships - Planning for Change
• Making an Informed Decision
• Parent Resources for Information, Development and Education (PRIDE)
• The Foundation for Meeting the Developmental Needs of Children at Risk
• Using Discipline to Protect, Nurture and Meet Developmental Needs
• Addressing Developmental Issues Related to Sexuality
• Responding to the Signs and Symptoms of Sexual Abuse
• Supporting Relationships Between Children and their Families
• Participating as a Member of a Professional Team
• Promoting Children’s Personal and Cultural Identity
• Promoting Permanency Outcomes
• Managing the Fostering Experience

Key considerations for Australia:

1) Ongoing linkages need to be created across the world to share resources and programs in child protection to reduce duplication and build consistency in core curricula.

Source: http://www.oacas.org/

California Social Work Education Centre (CalSWEC)

The California Social Work Education Centre is the USA’s largest state coalition of social work educators and practitioners. It is a consortium of California's twenty accredited social work graduate schools, its 58 county departments of social services and mental health, the California Department of Social Services, and the California Chapter of the National Association of Social Workers.

The California Social Work Education Center (CalSWEC) was created in 1990. The state’s then-ten graduate schools of social work, the county departments of social services and mental health, the California Department of Social Services (CDSS), and the California Chapter of the National Association of Social Workers (NASW) formed this consortium to:

• Promote the preparation of social workers for employment in public child welfare systems;
• Upgrade the professional background of some already-employed public welfare workers interested in gaining additional skills and knowledge in child welfare;
• Increase numbers of minorities in professional social welfare positions to reflect the populations served; and
• Open the doors to innovation by integrating university research with county services and graduate social work curriculum development.
CalSWEC initiated the Regional Training Academy Coordination Project in 1997 through a contract with the California Department of Social Services. The Regional Training Academy Coordination Project is a state-wide collaborative vehicle for in-service training and continuing professional education of public child welfare agency staff. Six co-ordinating partners provide a continuum of training and professional education to county staff across the state. This coordinated delivery model reduces duplication of training, increases consistency, promotes professionalism and competency, and supports child welfare staff retention in California’s 58 counties.

Curriculum Development

The Curriculum and In-Service Training Committee of the CalSWEC Board of Directors was established to implement and oversee the curriculum evaluation process to ensure that classroom and field work are integrated. The committee approves curriculum development projects:

- To create curricula that will take existing knowledge about a topic and put it into a form that can be used to teach public child welfare, and
- To cover specific competency gaps in the graduate social work programs identified through the annual curriculum evaluations.

The Common Core Curricula is the result of a multi-year state-wide collaborative effort to develop standardized curricula for California’s newly hired child welfare workers. Development and implementation of the Common Core Curricula was mandated by California’s Program Improvement Plan (PIP) as part of the 2003 federal Child and Family Services Review (CFSR). Although in-service core training had historically been provided by the Regional Training Academies (RTAs) and county staff development departments, the PIP stipulated that the California Department of Social Services (CDSS) “develop a common core curriculum for all new child welfare workers and supervisors that is delivered by all training entities state-wide.”

The California Common Core Curricula for Child Welfare Workers is funded by the California Department of Social Services (CDSS) and administered by CalSWEC, using federal funds. Its central purpose is to provide the state-wide, standardized training for new child welfare workers and new child welfare supervisors as mandated by state regulation. California’s
counties, Regional Training Academies and the Inter-University Consortium in Los Angeles deliver the training, and are also instrumental in its development and revision.

**California Common Core Curricula for Child Welfare Workers**

The California Common Core Curricula for Child Welfare Workers is the culmination of a collaborative development process among California’s child welfare training institutions. The current topics for the California core curricula are as follows:

- Framework for Child Welfare Practice in California
- Child and Youth Development in a Child Welfare context
- Child Maltreatment identification (Part 1: Neglect, physical abuse and emotional abuse)
- Child Maltreatment identification (Part 2: Sexual abuse and exploitation)
- Critical thinking in Child Welfare assessment: Safety, risk and protective capacity
- Family Engagement in Case planning and case management
- Placement and permanency
- Structured decision making and critical thinking in child welfare assessment

Standardised competencies and learning objectives:

- Basic interviewing
- Caregiver substance abuse and child welfare practice
- Child welfare practice in a multicultural environment
- Court procedures
- Child Welfare system - Documentation for use in the legal system
- Domestic violence
- Health care needs of children and youth in the child welfare system
- Mental Health and Mental disorders
- Indian Child Welfare Act
- Multiethnic placement act /Interethnic adoptions provisions
- Self care for new child welfare workers (Time management, stress management and worker safety in child welfare practice)
- State-wide automated case management system
- Supporting educational rights and achievements
- Values and ethics
State-wide Training and Education Committee (STEC)

The State-wide Training and Education Committee (STEC) developed the initial series of Common Core Curricula in 2004/05, marking the first implementation of new worker training that was standardized for the state of California. The purpose of state-wide standardization is to achieve consistency and equity in the application of best and evidence-based practice in all 58 California counties. Each of the content areas of the Common Core has a set of measurable learning objectives for knowledge, skills and values essential to the provision of excellent service to families and children who participate in California’s county child welfare programs.

STEC mission is to develop and/or recommend standards for state-wide public child welfare training and coordinate their implementation. STEC used the following underlying values in developing recommendations for common core training:

- Common core training is grounded in social work values and ethics.
- Common core training builds upon, but is not limited to, new worker training currently underway in California, and utilizes existing training structures.
- Standards encourage flexibility in the way counties meet identified training needs.
- Standards encourage the application of best practices aimed at improving outcomes for children and families, by training strategies that progress from knowledge acquisition to building and demonstrating skills.
- Standards endorse training delivery methods for common core training that yield measurable learning objectives and that provide the basis for evaluation of knowledge, skills, and attitude acquisition in order to promote positive outcomes for children and families.
- Standards are consistent with those endorsed by California’s Title IV-E university programs for the bachelor’s and master’s degrees in social work.
- Common core training encourages inclusion of community partners, whenever possible, in order to share responsibility for child safety, permanency, and well-being.

Key considerations for Australia:

1) Ongoing linkages need to be created across the world to share resources and programs in child protection to reduce duplication and build consistency in core curricula.
2) There is a need to upskill statutory staff, staff of residential agencies and foster carers beyond basic child development to a more advanced level including the impact of complex trauma, mental health and attachment. These skills need to commence at University and entry level training programs but should be part of an ongoing requirement for professional development of all staff in this field of work.

3) A symposium should be conducted for staff in the field of training, learning and development across Australia & New Zealand to further enhance the work of the ASCPL&D forum and build connections with other disciplines.

4) Serious consideration should be given to National competencies and learning modules for child protection, linked to the ASCPL&D forum, a qualifications framework and the National Child Protection framework. This would allow greater sharing of resources across jurisdictions and reduce duplication.

5) The Australasian Statutory Child Protection Learning & Development forum should continue to be supported at a state and federal level and funding should be maintained to ensure maximum participation from all jurisdictions.

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Fairness and Equity Issues in Child Welfare Training – Eighth annual symposium – Rebuilding the village

The annual Symposium on Fairness and Equity Issues in Child Welfare Training brings together training professionals from around California to strategise about this issue. The keynote address in 2010 was by Carl C. Bell, M.D., Director, Institute for Juvenile Research, Director of Public and Community Psychiatry, and Professor of Psychiatry and Public Health, Department of Psychiatry, University of Illinois at Chicago. The topic called “Risk Factors Are Not Predictive Factors Due to Protective Factors” presented findings on the relationship between multiple, adverse childhood experiences and negative adult outcomes, such as alcoholism, drug abuse, depression, and other debilitating health conditions. Using examples from the child welfare system, he outlined how a paradigm shift towards prevention science and implementation research can put knowledge into practice through comprehensive neighbourhood and community interventions, promoting a society in which young people can lead healthy, happy and productive lives.
The symposium program also included the following presentations:

**A Quick and Dirty Take on NIS-4**  
Barbara Needell, M.S.W., Ph.D., Principal Investigator/Research Specialist, and Erin Clark, Graduate Student Researcher, both of the Center for Social Services Research, University of California, Berkeley. After 3 waves of the National Incidence Study of Abuse and Neglect (NIS-1,2,3) that found no differences in the rate of child maltreatment.

**California Statewide Overview**  
Phyllis Jeroslow, Training & Curriculum Specialist, California Social Work Education Center (CalSWEC), University of California, Berkeley. In spring 2010, members of the Symposium’s Steering Committee and other regional academy partners conducted a voluntary statewide telephone survey of county administrators to gather descriptive information about the promotion of fairness and equity in child welfare training and practice.

**Heller Patio**  
**California Department of Social Services: California Disproportionality Project**  
Joyce Dowell, Chief, Child Welfare Policy and Program Development Bureau, Children and Family Services Division, California Department of Social Services. The California Disproportionality Project Breakthrough Series Collaborative (BSC) was initiated in fall 2008 with 15 teams representing 12 counties and the State Interagency Team workgroup representing 9 state agencies. Over the past 18 months, the county teams have developed and tested a variety of efforts to reduce disproportionality. Through the use of the project extranet, methods and outcomes have been shared among the teams and four “Learning Sessions” have been held to bring all participants together.

**Administrative Office of the Courts, Centre for Families, Children & the Courts: The Roles of the Juvenile Court Assistance Team (JCAT) Liaison**  
Marymichael Miatovich, J.D., CWLS, Attorney, Centre for Families, Children & the Courts, Administrative Office of the Courts/Judicial Council of California. Ms. Miatovich will discuss the roles of the Juvenile Court Assistance Team (JCAT) liaison in each of the counties. The discussion will include her agency’s duties in organizing and developing curriculum for trainings, conducting file reviews, and providing assistance to the local collaborative teams in each county to implement recommendations of the California Blue Ribbon Commission on Foster Care and the legislatively mandated California Child Welfare Council.

**California Leadership Panel**  
**Youth Engagement: No Decision about US, without US!**  
Janay R. Swain, M.S.W., Youth Advocate Social Worker, Sacramento Child Advocates. It is important that foster youth are engaged in all decisions made regarding their lives. “Make no decisions about us without us,” declares Ms. Swain, a former foster youth. Foster youth deserve their experiences and viewpoints to be valued and acknowledged by all systems that serve them. Youth and families involved in the foster care system confront stigmas and mistrust. It is time to rebuild trusting relationships based on respect, dignity, and the expertise that youth and families have about themselves.

**Achieving Shared Leadership©: Meaningful Strategies for Impacting Fairness & Equity in Child Welfare Practice**  
Lisa Pion-Berlin, Ph.D., President and CEO, and Leah Davis, California State Parent Team, both of Parents Anonymous© Inc. Shared Leadership© is the driving force behind the work of Parents Anonymous©. This workshop presents the basic tenets of the Shared Leadership © approach in the prevention of child abuse and neglect.
Workshop participants will examine the benefits and challenges of how to work in Shared Leadership© with parent leaders to improve fairness and equity in child welfare practice.

ICWA Today: Internal Strengths and External Influences
Rose-Margaret Orrantia, M.S, and Tom Lidot, Curriculum Coordinator, both of Tribal STAR
How do tribal programs respond to the need of Indian children in the system? A brief overview of changes in ICWA and how they are affecting California counties will be addressed during the presentation: how counties are responding and how our Indian children benefit.

Source:
http://calswec.berkeley.edu/CalSWEC/FESymposium.html
http://calswec.berkeley.edu/calswec/STEC.html
http://calswec.berkeley.edu/

The Ministry of Children and Family Development operates under a “Five Pillars” integrated framework for children and youth. The key components of this framework are:

- **Prevention** – The BC Government will place a primary focus on preventing vulnerability in children and youth by providing strong supports for individuals, families and communities

- **Early Intervention** – The BC Government will provide early intervention services to vulnerable children and youth within their families and communities

- **Intervention and support** – The BC Government will provide intervention services and supports based on assessment of individual needs

- **The Aboriginal approach** – Aboriginal people will be supported to exercise jurisdiction in delivering child and family services

- **Quality Assurance** – Child, youth and family development services will be based on evidence gathered through strong quality assurance systems.

The Ministry of Children and Family Development has a focus on providing services that effectively meet the basic and developmental needs of children and youth whilst focusing particularly on the needs of vulnerable children and youth.

The Child Welfare Practitioner Training program offered by the Ministry of Children and Family development has recently undergone a redesign process. The new model has seen the same courses maintained but a decrease in the number of classroom days (formerly 51
days) to 34 days with a current field placement component of learning over a period of 90 days. The total program is offered over three blocks.

The courses covered in the program include:

- Introduction to Ministry for Children and Family Development
  Culture and Diversity
- Working with Aboriginal Children and Families
- Child Welfare legislation and standards
- MIS
- Understanding abuse, neglect and family violence
- Understanding trauma and attachment
- Communicating for collaborative practice
- Approach to practice
- Assessing safety strengths, needs and risks
- Investigations and investigative interviewing
- Role of the guardian
- Reunification of children in care
- Overview of Adoption planning
- Gender and identity issues
- Youth as parents
- Preparing youth for independence
- Integrated case presentation
- Legal skills and procedures
- Fundamentals of substance misuse
- Understanding FASD
- Fundamentals of mental health
- Understanding suicidal ideation

The Justice Institute of BC delivers child welfare training for employees of the Ministry of Children and Family Development (MCFD). The program is administered through a partnership between the Social Work Education and Child and Youth Care Education Consortia, the Justice Institute of BC and MCFD. The Justice Institute site also hosts the competencies for child welfare workers in British Columbia. A summary of the competencies are outlined below:

Foundational Competencies for Child Welfare Workers

Culture and Diversity
1. Culture Awareness
2. Diversity
3. Cultural Responsiveness and Culturally Competent Services

**Aboriginal Children and Families**
1. Collaborative Relationships with Aboriginal Communities
2. Preserving and Promoting a Child’s Aboriginal Heritage

**Organizational Framework**
1. Organizational Awareness
2. Organizational Role and Mandate

**Approach to Practice**
1. Child and Youth Development
2. Working with Families

**Professionalism**
1. Professional Behaviour and Ethics
2. Professional Development
3. Professional Judgment
4. Problem Solving
5. Advocacy
6. Awareness of Personal Values
7. Occupational Safety

**Relationships and Collaboration**
1. Relationship Development
2. Teamwork
3. Collaboration
4. Cooperative Planning
5. Interdisciplinary Practice

**Communication**
1. Written and Verbal Communication
2. Interpersonal Communication
3. Technology

**Self-Care**
1. Self-Care
2. Adaptability

The Child, Family and Community Services Act (2002) also provides a legislative mandate for what work students and staff working in child protection can undertake. Students and new staff are initially provided with information only in terms of delegations and gradually increase delegations to partial and then full child protection delegations. A delegation exam is conducted at the completion of the child welfare practitioner training program and staff must pass this exam to be able to undertake full delegations and casework responsibility.

**Key considerations for Australia:**

1. Consideration should be given to the implementation of integrated learning modules through University or Vocational programs and aligned with Departmental programs. In turn the option of incremental delegations should be explored in conjunction with
exams or other strategies to ensure staff are fully aware of the legal responsibilities when they undertake a full child protection caseload.

2. Ongoing linkages need to be created across the world to share resources and programs in child protection to reduce duplication and build consistency in core curricula.

3. There is a need to up skill statutory staff and staff of residential agencies beyond basic child development to a more advanced level including the impact of complex trauma, mental health and attachment. These skills need to commence at University and should be part of an ongoing requirement for professional development of all staff in this field of work.

4. Serious consideration should be given to National competencies and learning modules for child protection, linked to the ASCPL&D forum, a qualifications framework and the National Child Protection framework. This would allow greater sharing of resources across jurisdictions and reduce duplication.

Source:

http://www.jibc.ca/cccs/MCFD/CWcert.html

http://www.gov.bc.ca/mcf/

In 1998 the Ministry of Children and Family Development initiated an extensive curriculum review of several human service degree programs. This evaluation led to the degree in Child and Youth Care and Bachelor of Social work being designated as two of three degrees meeting the entry-level requirements for employment with the Ministry of Children and Family Development. The Child Welfare Specialisation is a concentration of course work and a Child Welfare practicum within certain University programs that provides students with the opportunity to follow a pre-selected pattern of studies for entry into practice in the child welfare (and specifically child protection) field.

The Child Welfare Specialisation was introduced in response to recommendations of the Gove Inquiry that looked into Schools of Social work to give more attention to child welfare. The recognition by the schools was that the practice gap between the generic curriculum and child welfare practice was often wider than many students could effectively bridge. The designated Child Welfare Specialisation courses cover areas of study such as social services and the law, legal skills, investigation, evidence and advocacy, child welfare and
child protection practice, child welfare policy, child development, disability and substance use.

When asked the question “what are the key elements required for effective child protection? The following skills were identified:

1) Critical thinking
2) Anti oppressive practice
3) Strengths based and transparent practice
4) History – understanding why child protection exists
5) The need to pay attention to the issue of poverty in the context of child abuse
6) The need for child protection staff to be respected by Senior Executives and Ministers
7) The need to ensure any new initiatives are given time to work prior to implementing a new program or model
8) The importance of multi-disciplinary work and interdisciplinary practice
9) Understanding addictions and mental health
10) Ongoing attention to supervision and developing effective supervisory process plus skills development for supervisors.

Key considerations for Australia:

1) Ongoing partnerships with Universities and Vocational institutions to identify gaps in curriculum and practice and learning strategies to address these areas.

Source: http://www.hsd.uvic.ca/programs/index.php
CONCLUSIONS

I have worked in the area of statutory child protection now for over seventeen years. As I reflect on my career I realise that one of the most important aspects of my development has been the access to opportunities to learn. This learning has taken many forms from face to face programs of formal training, to mentoring and coaching, university and vocational study. I certainly do not believe that I would have had the capacity to undertake this Fellowship if it was not for these opportunities.

Across the world in the area of child welfare we are all focused on a common goal to protect children and support families and our strategies to train staff to do this have many similarities. So in the area of learning and development in child protection it makes logical sense to learn from each other and build on what we already know.

If we consider the capital outlaid in the development and implementation of child protection learning programs across the world the cost would be staggering. In many cases on my travels I saw examples where agencies who were almost side by side in terms of geography were both working on strikingly similar products – and yet neither knew the other was on a similar path. I took the opportunity where possible to connect people and I hope that in sharing this report with those I met that further links can be made. However there is a real potential with modern technology to learn from each other and share resources to reduce duplication and get the best bang for the resources in the area of learning and development in child protection.

I certainly don’t envisage such a task will be easy as often good will from staff does not necessarily mirror at a political level and barriers such as intellectual property can be a challenge. However I take heart from the Australasian Statutory Child Protection Learning and Development forum and the shared learning that this group has modelled across Australia and New Zealand. This group has demonstrated that it can be done. States such as New York and California also have great models that build connections and programs such as the Multi Agency Resource Service, Centre for UK wide learning in Child Protection and the Canadian Child Research Portal demonstrate the great initiatives already being delivered across the world. In many respects if we all join the dots between us the picture will become so much clearer and our ability to enhance our products and services will be significantly improved.
At a national level Australia and New Zealand certainly has some great beginnings in terms of learning and development in child protection. Yet we are in our infancy when we compare on an international stage and our ability to continuously improve the models we develop should be built around learning from our colleagues across the world. The recommendations below reflect the key points I identified during my travels that would make the biggest difference for Queensland and Australia in terms of the training and development of staff in statutory child protection.

**RECOMMENDATIONS**

1. A consistent theme across all places I visited was the need to include advanced child development in all programs within the child protection field both at a statutory and community level. There is a need to up skill statutory staff, staff of residential agencies and foster carers beyond basic child development to a more advanced level including the impact of complex trauma, mental health and attachment. These skills need to commence at University and entry level training programs but should be part of an ongoing requirement for professional development of all staff in this field of work.

2. The model of Child Stat used in New York was an excellent example of proactive learning and quality assurance. The option to trial this approach to learning about case practice in Queensland and Australia should be considered to ensure case practice is reviewed in a systemic and structured way. A key success of this model was the very high level of Senior Executive Support and attendance at Child Stat to demonstrate and model the commitment to this initiative.

3. The Australasian Statutory Child Protection Learning & Development forum (ASCPL&D) is unique in the countries I visited. The closest similar examples are in New York and California where State based models of shared learning operates. The ASCPL&D provides cross Australian and New Zealand learning in child protection development. This forum was acknowledged by many of the people I interviewed as a unique opportunity to share learning and avoid duplication. This group should continue to be supported at a state and federal level and funding should be maintained to ensure maximum participation from all jurisdictions.

4. There is a need to improve the multi-disciplinary learning models across all people working in the child protection field. Any model needs to be integrated across Government and non-Government and provide opportunities to build relationships and shared practice wisdom. Serious consideration should be given to a National
Academy of Child Protection learning and development as a federally funded initiative.

5. A symposium should be conducted for staff in the field of training, learning and development across Australia & New Zealand to further enhance the work of the ASCPL&D forum and build connections with other disciplines.

6. Serious consideration should be given to National competencies and learning modules for child protection, linked to the ASCPL&D forum, a qualifications framework and the National Child Protection framework. This would allow greater sharing of resources across jurisdictions and reduce duplication.

7. There needs to be a focus on a suite of primary prevention tools for communities in child protection – learning tools to support every member of the community to understand how to keep children safe and strategies to assist families who need help. These tools should be built using modern technology and include access to some of the contemporary social media sites. Many of these tools already exist both in Australia and across the world but there is a need to co-ordinate the resources and implement an Australian wide model to ensure child protection becomes a part of everyone’s business.

8. All jurisdictions involved in training staff to work in the field of child protection should consider the implementation and use of mock Court rooms and mock house for training. This training in simulated environments should also be available to a range of professionals working in the child protection field and these professionals should be trained in partnership.

9. A dedicated focus on the implementation of supervision models for staff working in the area of child protection is critical to the improvement of the child protection system.

10. Further international work needs to occur between Indigenous communities and advocacy agencies to learn from each other and to ensure the implementation of cultural competencies is prioritised in the child protection area.

11. Further investigation needs to be conducted in relation to the team of five model used in London and whether such a model could be trialled in Australia.

12. Partnerships with Universities and vocational institutions are critical to extend learning & research/practitioner based research.

13. Ongoing funding for agencies such as the National Child Protection Clearinghouse and the Australian Centre for Child Protection to ensure research continues to be conducted on best practice in child protection. This funding needs to include support for State and Territory site visits to share learning and support practitioner based
research. The funding should also ensure the ongoing provision of secretariat support to the ASCPL&D forum.

14. There is a need for Queensland to implement and trial a number of child advocacy centres.

15. There is a need to explore nationally the alternative placement models across the world and significantly invest in wrap around models that integrate therapy, placement, education and support of families similar to the program offered by Andrus.

16. A series of webinars should be conducted across Australia and New Zealand to build learning opportunities across States and Territories. These webinars could also link and be shared with other existing agencies who conduct similar programs across the world to avoid duplication.

17. Across the world the number of resources including information sheets, books, DVD’s, CD’s, research papers in the child protection area is significant. However the connection across jurisdictions and countries is poor. This results in duplication of work and poor use of public monies. There is a real need to build and enhance international learning highways in the area of child protection to maximise the resources used in this area and ensure learning can move beyond the basics to more advanced realms. An international approach to sharing of resources would also allow jurisdictions that are not as well funded to improve their systems for the protection of children.

18. There is a need to ensure that where possible future research links to practitioners and assists practitioners to connect with academics so that the learning’s are based in practice wisdom and academic rigour.

19. Across the world every jurisdiction has had at least one major review by Government. The findings of these reviews are consistent and share similar themes. Prior to the implementation of any future reviews a first step should be to conduct international research and learning of existing reviews to identify the recommendations that have been made in previous enquiries. In many cases it appears that reviews are conducted but the implementation of these reviews are not carried out or they are only partially completed.

20. All programs in the area of learning and development in child protection need to have an investment of funds for external academic evaluation to review and research what works and what doesn’t in this area. The results of these reviews should be made public so that other jurisdictions can enhance practice and learn from each other.
21. The findings of Catherine Moynihan’s Churchill Fellowship report (2009) into the study of advocacy and legal representation for children and young people in care should also be considered in conjunction with this report. Particular attention should focus on:

- Implementation of a clearly articulated complaints process for children and young people,
- Further funding for the Create Foundation in terms of advocacy and individual support of children and young people,
- A mechanism of review of transition from care planning and
- Professional development opportunities for lawyers practicing in child protection law in partnership with the Department of Communities.

Thank you once again to the Churchill Memorial Trust Australia for this wonderful opportunity.

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