

- Race, ethnicity, gender, sexuality and disability in family placements
- Attachment, therapeutic help and life story work.

Each chapter is divided into further useful sections – for example, the chapter on adoption and permanent foster care is divided into permanence; infant adoption; contact; birth family; search and reunion; support services; and books for children and parents/carers.

The book also contains author and title indexes for all entries.

Reviewed by:
Dr Cas O'Neill

RELATIVE BENEFITS ... PLACING CHILDREN IN KINSHIP CARE

Bob Broad and Alison Skinner

BAAF, 2005

Kinship care placements are steadily increasing in the UK as they are in Australia (see www.aihw.gov.au, Child Protection 2004-05, for the latest Australian statistics). I am currently undertaking research in Victoria with kin and kin carers and young people – and this book confirms many of my local findings, particularly those around finances; loss of independence for carers; the complexity of contact between children, birth parents and carers; and the need for different kinds of support.

Relative Benefits is aimed at professionals. It reviews the literature, summarises the messages from research and looks at the legal framework for kinship care in the UK. It then goes on to cover policy and practice issues; family support (including financial support); family relationships and contact; health support; education; and therapeutic work with kinship care families. It is firmly based in Bob Broad's research and is clearly concerned for the wellbeing of kinship carers and children. For example, the authors state:

All the kinship care research undertaken in the UK and USA indicates that kinship carers are materially disadvantaged and are in need of, and do not receive enough, support services (p.46).

One of the things I really like about this book is the way in which research findings, professional practice and consumer views are an intrinsic part of each chapter, with sections in each broad area entitled:

- 'Good practice principles'
- 'Kinship carers: what they think', with examples from the authors' research in the area.
- 'Local authority examples' – how different Local Authorities handle the complexity of their work in this area.

For example, in the chapter on contact between child and birth parents, one of the 'good practice recommendations' states:

Be aware that when kinship care grandparents ask for help from social services, they are likely to be in priority need, given the many deterrents which may prevent them making this request earlier, and should be responded to quickly (p. 75).

Similarly, in the chapter on 'support structures', the authors share a local authority's approach to devising a 'support plan', at the same time stressing the need for at least six monthly reviews of the plan (p. 47).

Australian professionals are likely to find particularly useful the sections on assessment:

- The discussion of why kinship care assessment is intrinsically different to foster care assessment (p. 23)
- Issues in assessing grandparents (pp. 29-32)
- Assessment of risk and protective factors (p. 40)

There are also good discussions on the issues around family group conferences (p. 25 and Appendix A) and working with kinship care families in therapy.

There is very little published research on kinship care in Australia, which makes this book both timely and useful.

Reviewed by:
Dr Cas O'Neill

ONE OF THE FAMILY ... A HANDBOOK FOR KINSHIP CARERS

Hedi Argent

BAAF, 2005

Reviewed in conjunction with:

WHEN THE CHILDREN ARRIVE

Mirabel Foundation, 2003
(www.mirabelfoundation.com)

One of the family is a comprehensive small book aimed at kinship carers and those who are considering becoming carers. I read it in conjunction with the excellent local resource book for carers *When the children arrive*, published in 2003 by the Mirabel Foundation in Victoria. While the two books cover some of the same ground, they also have some different emphases (as well as legal information which is specific to each country) and kinship carers would be well served by having access to both.

One of the family covers the reasons why children may need kinship care, the pros and cons of kinship care, the emotional roller coaster of becoming a carer in this way, children's needs and behaviours, and the kinds of support which carers are eligible for and may need.