

# Working with families from culturally and linguistically diverse communities in Queensland

## An Australian exploratory study

Jatinder Kaur

*In Australia there is limited research and information regarding how Culturally and Linguistically Diverse (CALD) families are assessed within the child protection system. This paper explores assessment issues faced by child protection investigation officers when working with CALD families in the Queensland child protection system. The research examined the level of knowledge, training and experiences of child protection officers and whether they were 'culturally competent'. The study found that entry level officers did not receive adequate training and resources, and lacked CALD-specific knowledge on how to deal with cross cultural issues when working with CALD families. Respondents indicated that interpreters' services were effective during investigation and assessment of CALD families. The findings of this study highlight key concerns in the provision of child protection assessments, practice, policy and service delivery when working with CALD families.*

### ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The Queensland Department of Child Safety which provided in principle support for the research project and agreed to the participation of Department staff.

Dr Karen Healy, my supervisor, for providing useful comments on the development and preparation of this paper.

This paper attempts to explore how child protection authorities engage with families from culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) backgrounds. The term CALD is a holistic term of reference commonly used to describe people who have a cultural heritage different from that of the majority of people from the dominant Anglo-Australian culture (Department of Child Safety 2006a). In Australia the number of child protection notifications has doubled over the last six years (Australian Institute of Health and Welfare [AIHW] 2007). These statistics do not identify the number of notifications that concerned children and families from CALD backgrounds.

This research study was conducted in the south-east corner of Queensland as this region has experienced rapid growth in its population. The Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS 2006) reported that 17.9% (699,446) of Queensland's population (4.09 million) were born overseas. South-east Queensland has the highest proportion of overseas-born residents from both English speaking and non-English speaking countries, residing in Logan (24.9%), Brisbane (22.7%) and Gold Coast (24.5%) (Local Government Association of Queensland 2003). In Queensland, the rate of children aged 0-16 years who were subjects of child protection substantiations in 2005-06 was 10.9 per 1,000 investigated cases (AIHW 2007). Despite the significant proportion of Queensland's population who have a CALD background, there is little research on their representation within the Queensland child protection system. There is also limited research and information available Australia-wide on how CALD families engage with child protection systems and the issues they encounter.

There is a need for government and non-government agencies to consider the cultural perspectives and beliefs of CALD families when engaging with those families (Gopalkrishnan n.d.). Conducting assessments with CALD families requires a 'high standard of cultural competence' (Korbin 2002). 'Culture' is defined as:

... an integrated pattern of human behavior that includes thoughts, communications, actions, customs, beliefs, values and institutions of a racial, ethnic, religious, or social group (Cross, Bazron, Dennis & Isaacs 1989, cited in Lee 2003).

---

**Jatinder Kaur**  
M.Soc.Admin, Grad Cert Child Protection, BA (Psy)  
Department of Child Safety  
Queensland  
Email: jatinder.kaur@childsafty.qld.gov.au

Working with CALD families can be complex and practitioners need to have an understanding and cultural knowledge of the various CALD communities with which they work.

Addressing culture as part of child protection intervention is necessary given these demographic trends within Australia. New Zealand broke new ground in recognising the importance of cultural identity in child protection policy through the Children, Young Persons and their Families Act of 1989. This Act incorporated the Maori 'Whanau' understandings of kinship with emphasis on the maintenance of the child's link with family and cultural identity and Family Group Conferencing (FGC) modelled on Maori methods of problem resolution (Connolly 2006; Ernst 1999).

The second component of CALD focuses on linguistic diversity, whereby English is not the first language spoken. Australia is one of the most linguistically diverse countries in the world, where some 400 languages are spoken in the home (ABS 2006). Inevitably professionals employed by child protection authorities will come into contact with families from CALD backgrounds and encounter issues of linguistic diversity and language variations (see Multicultural Development Association & Queensland Council of Social Services 2005). Harrison (2006) contends that the co-existence of multiple languages was commonly cited as a language barrier to communication. She argues that it is important for Australian social workers to adopt a political perspective on language that moves beyond remedying problems in cross-lingual communication and acknowledges the importance of language rights. Communicating and engaging with immigrant and refugee families is difficult as they may closely guard information because of mistrust of authority, past experiences of oppression and fear of exposure (which may lead to the possibility of deportation) (Segal & Mayadas 2005). As over six million migrants have come to Australia since the end of World War II (Gopalkrishnan n.d.), and, since 2001, Australia has accepted immigrant and refugee families from countries affected by war and political unrest, including Sudan, Zimbabwe, Afghanistan and Iraq (ABS 2006), experiences of oppression and distrust are to be expected.

Language barriers present a significant problem for families from non-English speaking background when interacting with statutory authorities (Thoburn, Chand & Procter 2005). The Victoria Climbié inquiry (Laming 2003) in the United Kingdom (UK), highlighted the importance of 'language identity', where practitioners need to ensure they determine what is the first language that is spoken in the home. This failure was found to seriously compromise Victoria Climbié's ability to disclose, and subsequently resulted in her death (Reder & Duncan 2004). Lord Laming (2003) recommended that children whose first language is not English must have access to an interpreter when there are concerns about their welfare. However, there are

complexities involved when using interpreters, and Chand (2005) argues that interpreters need to be trained in the concepts associated with child maltreatment and neglect.

Some authors have noted that there is a tendency for child protection officers to use contradictory approaches when intervening with families from a CALD background. Some officers may use either a heavy-handed approach or display a reluctance to intervene (Maitra 2005). This binarism is illustrated by child protection officers either incorrectly assuming an act is abusive (i.e. 'false positive') or failing to recognise that the act is abusive (i.e. 'false negative').

*Working with CALD families can be complex and practitioners need to have an understanding and cultural knowledge of the various CALD communities with which they work.*

'False positive' assessment can occur as a result of an ethnocentric bias prevailing, where an officer's own beliefs and practices are deemed superior to differing cultural practices (Fontes 2005, p.64). Illustrations of 'false positive' cases are highlighted in research studies from the USA, whereby families from CALD backgrounds are subject to reporter bias (Ibanez, Borrego, Pemberton & Terao 2006), ethnocentric bias (Drake & Zuravin 1998) and resultant oppressive statutory interventions (Berger, McDaniel & Paxson 2005; Fluke, Yuan, Hedderson & Curtis 2003). This has produced an over-representation of African American, Native American and Latin American children in the child welfare system, in reported cases of child maltreatment and in foster care, as compared to their percentages in the population (Chibnall, Dutch, Jones-Harden, Brown, Gourdine, Smith, Boone & Snyder 2003). In a USA study, Pelczarski and Kemp (2006) found that there were considerable variations in referrals to child protection services between Asian and Pacific Islander children with Samoan and South-East Asian (Cambodian, Thai, Vietnamese and Laotian) children being over-represented in referrals to child protection authorities.

'False negative' assessment can occur when child protection officers fail to recognise a given practice as maltreatment, using cultural practice as justification (Fontes 2005, p77). A prominent case of false negative assessment concerned Victoria Climbié in the UK (Laming 2003). In this case, a number of professionals came into contact with the child but were reluctant to intervene, resulting in the continuation of the abuse. This reluctance to intervene reflects a pervasive 'rule of optimism' rooted in cultural relativism, whereby some child protection authorities in the UK have overlooked

the complexities of culture and minimised it to a discussion of black/white binary of colour racism (Garrett 2002, p.479). In O’Neale’s (2000) study in the UK, incomplete assessments of physical and sexual abuse cases for ethnic minority children were found across several authorities, which seriously compromised the safety and well-being of these children. The practitioners also failed to accommodate the diversity within black and ethnic minority communities (O’Neale 2000, p.12). Child protection practitioners need to be flexible and culturally sensitive when sexual abuse disclosures are made by Asian ethnic minority families (Gilligan & Akhtar 2005).

In any assessment framework, when determining possible cases of child abuse and neglect, it is necessary to look at the child’s needs, parenting capacity and the home environment (Thoburn, Chand & Procter 2005). During the investigation phase, the child protection officer’s goal is to determine whether abuse or neglect exists and to assess the risk factors (McCallum 1995). During this phase of assessment, it is important to ensure that child protection officers do not stereotype the family or child on the basis of their cultural identity which can lead to inappropriately idealising minority groups (Berger, McDaniel & Paxson 2005).

However, interpreting the differing standards of child rearing practices of CALD communities that have diverse racial, ethnic and religious backgrounds is complex and difficult ( Ibanez et al. 2006; Koramoa, Lynch & Kinnair 2002). The officer has to distinguish between whether the ‘abuse’ meets the definition of child abuse and whether to attribute it to unfamiliar child-rearing practices for that family (Cohen 2003; Fontes 2005). Therefore there is a need to ensure assessments allow for cultural, social, political and economic factors when determining whether or not child abuse has occurred, and to ensure that an imbalance in representation is not created between CALD and other families in the child protection system (Chibnall et al. 2003; Fontes 2005).

## PRESENT RESEARCH AND CONTEXT OF QUEENSLAND CHILD PROTECTION SYSTEM

This study was conducted in Queensland where the child protection system has undergone significant reform following two separate inquiries: the Forde Inquiry (1999) and the Crime and Misconduct Commission (CMC) Inquiry (2004). Following these inquiries, the Queensland Government brought in new legislation (*Child Protection Act 1999*) and created a new child protection department known as the Department of Child Safety.

In developing the *Child Protection Act 1999*, two provisions relating to cultural awareness of families from CALD backgrounds were included. Section 5 (e) (i) of the *Child Protection Act 1999* states:

Actions taken, while in the best interests of the child, maintain family relationships and are supportive of individual rights and ethnic, religious and cultural identity or values.

If the child is removed from the child’s family, Section 5 (g) (ii) states:

The child’s need to maintain family and social contacts and ethnic and cultural identity must be taken into account.

This study aims to highlight the gap in CALD research that currently exists, as there are few Australian or Queensland studies that explore cultural diversity and how families from CALD backgrounds interact with Government and non-government agencies. In particular, there is little research about how these families are assessed in the child protection systems either in Queensland or other states and territories.

This study aims to explore:

- assessment issues faced by child protection officers when working with CALD families;
- the level of knowledge, training and experience of child protection officers;
- the level of cultural competence of child protection officers;
- use of interpreters in child protection;
- structural barriers faced by child protection officers in ensuring culturally sensitive practice with CALD families.

This study received in-principle support from the Queensland Department of Child Safety in accordance with the Department’s Child Safety Research Strategy 2006-09 (Department of Child Safety 2006b), and was granted ethical clearance to enable departmental staff to be interviewed.

*... there is a need to ensure assessments allow for cultural, social, political and economic factors when determining whether or not child abuse has occurred*

...

## MEASURES

The author developed the Cross Cultural Child Protection Survey (CCCPS), and conducted a literature review of the pertinent issues in the child protection context, specifically focusing on assessment frameworks. Cross cultural competence infers that an individual or an organisation is able to work effectively with people from CALD backgrounds (Department of Child Safety 2006a). Cultural competence also has a political and activist component in

promoting empowerment and inclusion of culturally diverse professionals in decision-making positions (Cohen 2003; Korbin 2002) There are a number of existing measures of cultural competency, e.g. Cultural Competence Agency Self-Assessment Instrument (2001); Cultural Competency Self-Assessments Questionnaire (CCSAQ); and Multicultural Awareness Knowledge and Skills Survey (MAKSS) (D'Andrea, Daniel & Heck 1991, cited in Kocarek, Talbot, Batka & Anderson 2001). However, a review of these instruments found that there was no instrument to assess cultural competence within a child protection setting (Teasley 2005; Velde, Wittman & Bamberg 2003).

The CCCPS adapted McPhatter's (1997) Cultural Competence Attainment Model, in which she articulated a model incorporating the areas of Self Awareness, Acquiring Knowledge and Developing Cross Cultural Skills, these being essential skills in developing cultural competence and cultural effectiveness when working with CALD families. She argued that 'cultural competence' was:

... the ability to transform knowledge and cultural awareness into health, psychosocial interventions that support and sustain healthy client-system functioning within appropriate cultural context (p.261).

The CCCPS also incorporated elements from the Cultural Competency Agency Self-Assessment Instrument (Child Welfare League of America 2001).

The CCCPS is a 22 item survey containing a mixture of dichotomous questions, Likert scales and open-ended questions (Patton 2002). The survey was broken down into six sections:

- 1) background in child protection which examined the level of knowledge, training and experience;
- 2) agency perspective and how it valued culture and diversity;
- 3) practitioners' service delivery, case planning and assessment when working with CALD families;
- 4) use of interpreters and their effectiveness;
- 5) qualitative section looking at how practitioners ensured

the legislative cultural provisions in practice, the barriers they faced and what constituted culturally insensitive practice in

**Table 1. Participant demographics (N=66)**

GENDER	NO.
Male	12
Female	54
AGE	NO.
21-25	26
26-30	14
31-40	15
49-49	5
No response	6

**Table 2. Experience working in child protection**

	No.	%
Less than 12 months	23	35
12 months or more	43	65

**Table 3. Comparison of different training completed**

	YES	NO
Child Safety Officer	31	34
DHS ATSI Awareness	37	29
Other CALD Awareness	13	53

- child protection; and
- 6) demographic data (gender, age, cultural background, level of education).

The qualitative section of CCCPS, which explored how child protection officers ensured the application of the principles of the *Child Protection Act 1999*, is yet to be analysed and will be reported elsewhere at a later stage.

Further information on the development, design, reliability and validity of the CCCPS will be reported in a later paper.

## PARTICIPANTS

A total of 66 child protection officers and team leaders who worked in the investigation and assessment teams at the Department of Child Safety completed the survey. The investigation and assessment role is the first point of contact families have with child protection authorities. A non-random purposive sample was chosen to pilot the CCCPS. Each participant received a participant information sheet and an informed consent form prior to completing the survey. Ten (10) Child Safety Service Centres (CSSC) were selected from across south-east Queensland, predominantly based in urban and socially disadvantaged outer fringe suburbs of the Brisbane Metropolitan Area.

The demographic information is illustrated in Table 1. Indicative of human services personnel ratios, there were more females (81.8%) than males (18.2%). The response rate was 98% with 66 completed CCCPS completed out of a possible 67. Some data were missing in that 6 respondents did not provide their age, although they completed all other aspects of the CCCPS. The age of respondents (n=60) ranged from 21 to 49 years, with a mean of 29 years (SD 7.64).

The length of time spent working in child protection is shown in Table 2. The mean number of months worked in the child protection field (n=66) was 26.48 (SD 30.74). The mean number of months worked for the Department of Child Safety (n=66) was 23.14 (SD 23.83). The respondents had predominantly completed a Bachelor Degree (85%) and 15% of respondents had completed Master/Post Graduate qualifications.

The respondents' cultural backgrounds included 82% Anglo-Australian, 8% European, 6% CALD/NESB, 3% Other and 1% Aboriginal. Eleven (17%) could speak a second language.

**KEY FINDINGS**

**CCCPS: Section 1**

The CCCPS assessed the child protection officers' backgrounds in child protection, level of knowledge, training and experience. As shown in Table 3, 47% of respondents had completed Child Safety Officer (CSO) training; 56.1% had completed the Department of Child Safety Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Cultural Awareness training; and 20% had completed other cross cultural training.

Table 4 illustrates the frequency with which child protection officers had worked with families from CALD backgrounds. The findings indicate that the majority of respondents (52%) had contact with families from CALD backgrounds between once a week and once a month.

A Chi-square test revealed a statistically significant finding of  $\chi^2(1)=10.64, p<0.001$  alpha level, indicating a stronger probability of the child protection officer receiving Child Safety Officer training once they had been employed in the Department for more than 12 months.

Self awareness was explored by asking how well prepared the child protection officers were by their formal training for cross cultural child protection issues. The most frequent response was 'a little prepared' (43.9%). In the comments section, those who assessed themselves as 'quite prepared' indicated that 'university studies' and:

ATSI (Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander) Training had been useful when working cross culturally.

However, one of those respondents who selected 'a little prepared' commented:

... needed to be more training specific to CALD issues.

This is not surprising when you compare the number of officers who have completed the Child Safety Officer training and ATSI cultural awareness training to those who have not completed any training.

A second Chi-square test revealed a statistically significant relationship between child protection officers who had less than 12 months experience ( $n=23$ ) and those with more than 12 months experience ( $n=24$ ) and respondents' opportunities to learn about different CALD communities within their service area [ $\chi^2(2)=7.641, p<.05$ ]. An alpha level of 0.5

was used for this statistical analysis. This would indicate that those child protection officers who had been working in the Department for more than 12 months perceived that they had more of an opportunity to learn about different CALD communities within their service area.

**CCCPS: Section 2**

The second section of CCCPS assessed the agency (Department of Child Safety) perspective and how the agency valued culture and diversity. The majority of the respondents (83%) indicated that the Department respected the cultural diversity of its staff; whilst 14% of respondents were unsure, and 5% indicated that it did not.

The survey assessed how the Department considers the concepts of (a) language; (b) race; (c) ethnicity; (d) customs, and (e) family structure in its service delivery when working with CALD families. The findings indicated that the majority (80%) of respondents believed that the Department did consider cultural factors in its service delivery with CALD families, whilst 20% of respondents indicated that they did not believe that the Department considered language, race, ethnicity, customs and family structure in its service delivery with CALD families.

**CCPS: Section 3**

The third section of the CCCPS explored how the child protection officers conducted their service delivery, case planning and assessment when working with CALD families. Eighty per cent of respondents indicated that they were culturally appropriate when working with CALD families either 'all' or 'most' of the time. However, 20% of respondents indicated that they were not culturally appropriate when working with CALD families.

**CCCPS: Section 4**

**Use of interpreters**

This study also explored the use of interpreters and their effectiveness when working with CALD families, though it was noted that not all respondents had experience with interpreter services. The results as outlined in Table 5 indicate that 70% of respondents used an interpreter or translator service when working with CALD families either 'all of the time' or 'most of the time'. The comments section indicated that they would use an interpreter 'when needed'

**Table 4. Frequency of working with CALD families**

Never	12
Few times	18
Once a month	10
Once a fortnight	11
Once a week or more	11

**Table 5. Frequency of use of interpreter services**

	No.	%
All of the time	20	30.3
Most of the time	18	27.3
A good bit of the time	4	6.1
A little of the time	9	13.6
None of the time	3	4.5

**Table 6. Effectiveness of interpreter services**

	No.	%
Not effective	4	6.1
Little bit	6	9.1
Neutral	15	22.7
Effective	14	21.2
Very effective	6	9.1

and that 'most families spoke English'. Other comments included that the interpreters 'are effective when present' and 'assist in gaining information and support for the family'.

The respondents were asked to rate the interpreter/translator service for its effectiveness in helping the child protection officers to determine the child protection issues during the assessment phase with the CALD families. The findings are outlined in Table 6, and show that only 44% (n=20) indicated that the interpreter service was either 'effective' or 'very effective'. In the comments section, those respondents who indicated that the interpreter service was either 'effective' or 'neutral' made statements such as:

(They did not need to use interpreter as) the family had good English.

Not always necessary – interpreters have no child protection experiences which is good – remain impartial.

Interpreters are used when our staff are informed that the family requires an interpreter prior to the investigation

However, some respondents indicated that the interpreter service was not effective:

Did not provide information on cultural background or issues impacting on family.

(They) questioned their professionalism in providing neutral service and not summarising content of conversation according to their own interpretation.

Qualitative responses varied considerably with regard to interpreter services. Some respondents indicated that the use of interpreter was:

Helpful and committed to assist the Department, effective in interpreting, however little further information is available.

One specific service was described as follows:

Multi-Link are available to provide interpreter service within 24 hours notice – have used during home visit and was very effective.

On the opposite side, comments included that the 'justification of the use of interpreter to the Manager (regarding cost involved)' posed as a barrier to use of interpreter.

## DISCUSSION

One of the key findings of this study highlighted that there is a need for child protection officers to have the opportunity to attend CALD specific training and also a need for the development of cross cultural competence training specific to child protection. A Chi-square test revealed two statistically significant findings:

1. there was a stronger probability of child protection officers receiving Child Safety Officer training once they had been working in the Department for more than 12 months;
2. child protection officers who had been working in the Department for more than 12 months appeared to have more of an opportunity to learn about CALD communities within their service area.

This is a key issue for practice in child protection as the research has consistently shown that 'entry level' child protection officers need to be adequately trained to deal with the complexities involved in statutory casework. The findings of this study are consistent with the literature which suggests that some of the key barriers to achieving cultural competence within child protection work are the lack of availability of resources, lack of access to adequate training and time, and the inability to retain competent staff (McPhatter & Ganaway 2003; Mederos & Woldegiorgis 2003). Lack of cultural knowledge also impacts on the worker's capacity to access culturally responsive solutions (Connolly, Crichton-Hill & Ward 2006).

*One of the key findings of this study highlighted that there is a need for child protection officers to have the opportunity to attend CALD specific training and also a need for the development of cross cultural competence training specific to child protection.*

The findings of this study are consistent with numerous reports (Chibnall et al. 2003; Reder & Duncan 2004) which have expressed concerns over the limited skills of social services staff when undertaking assessments and designing interventions with ethnic minority children. However, O'Neale (2000) argued that ethnically sensitive and culturally competent services generally rested on the good assessments of individual workers (p.12). Where workers were knowledgeable and tenacious, they were able to achieve more positive results for families, through adequate training and multi-skilling of staff (Thoburn, Chand & Procter 2005).

The study highlighted the need for interpreters to be familiar with child protection terminology and issues. This study found that 44% of respondents (n=20) indicated that the interpreter service was 'effective' or 'very effective' when working with CALD families. Fontes (2005) argues that:

High-quality interpretation allows the practitioner to obtain information, to protect children, to gain families' confidence, reduce their isolation, understand their worldview and provide them with services (p.159).

However, a major problem was the lack of availability of interpreter or translator services when conducting assessments with CALD families. This is also consistent with the available literature that indicates a key issue is the lack of availability of interpreters, in part because of the emergency nature of child protection investigations (Owen & Farmer 1996, cited in Thoburn, Chand & Procter 2005).

Some respondents in this study highlighted the complexities involved in using interpreters when working with CALD families. Certainly, Chand (2005) argued that there are a number of complexities involved in using interpreters and that interpreters need to be appropriately trained in the concepts of child abuse and neglect. Further to this, Brophy, Jhutti-Johal and McDonald (2005) agreed that language difficulties compounded the communication problems with ethnic minority families in court-related cases due to the lack of familiarity with welfare and child protection services.

This study brought to light the current gaps in the research literature and information regarding CALD communities and the need to recognise CALD families as a separate demographic group.

Currently there are no statistics available to determine the number of CALD children coming into the Queensland child protection system or any other state child protection system across Australia (AIHW 2007). Anecdotal evidence from this study indicated that approximately half of the child protection officers came into contact with CALD families between 'once a week' and 'once a month' when conducting investigation and assessments. This is a key issue for policy and practice for child protection systems across Australia as, currently, there is no way of knowing how prevalent child abuse and neglect issues might be within CALD communities.

This study emphasised the importance of respecting cultural diversity at the organisational level; in this case within the Department of Child Safety. The majority of respondents (83%) in this study reported that the agency (Department of Child Safety) respected the cultural diversity of its staff. It is an important finding as it indicates that the Department continues to move forward and implement strategies to ensure that there are culturally diverse staff working in the Department and that their diversity is respected. Mederos and Woldegiorguis (2003) argue that child protection services managers need to enhance staff diversity as this is a key building block in achieving systematic change towards cultural competence and racial equity in child protection services. From an organisational perspective, a culturally competent system of care would incorporate the importance of culture at all levels, the assessment of cross cultural

relations, vigilance towards the dynamics that result from cultural difference, the expansion of cultural knowledge and the adaptation of services to meet culturally unique needs (Cohen 2003).

## LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

There were a number of limitations to this study. For instance, the sample comprised only child protection officers who worked in the Queensland child protection system, and the findings cannot be generalised to other states in Australia which have different legislation, policies and procedures in relation to child protection. The small sample size (N= 66) did not allow for further inferential statistics to be performed with this sample. The Cross Cultural Child Protection Survey (CCCPS) designed by the author would need to be further developed and assessed for reliability and validity. The CCCPS is a self report instrument and there are issues with self reported bias which would need to be addressed.

## CONCLUSION

As an exploratory study, this research identified key concerns in the provision of child protection practice, policy and service delivery when working with CALD families. This study found that 'entry level' child protection officers working in the Queensland child protection system did not receive adequate training and knowledge for working with CALD families. Further, it brought to light the need for more research into, and knowledge about, cross cultural competence in child protection practice, how CALD families are treated in child protection systems across Australia, and the role and use of interpreters when conducting assessments with CALD families. ■

## REFERENCES

- Australia Bureau of Statistics (ABS) (2006) viewed 19 October 2007, <[www.censusdata.abs.gov.au](http://www.censusdata.abs.gov.au)>.
- Australian Institute of Health and Welfare (AIHW) (2007) *Child Protection Australia 2005-06*, viewed 19 October 2007, <<http://www.aihw.gov.au>>.
- Berger, L., McDaniel, M. & Paxson, C. (2005) 'Assessing parenting behaviors across racial groups: Implications for the child welfare system', *Social Service Review*, 79:4.
- Brophy, J., Jhutti-Johal, J. & McDonald, E. (2005) *Minority ethnic parents, their solicitors and child protection litigation*, Department of Constitutional Affairs, UK, viewed 19 October 2007, <[www.dca.gov.uk/research/2005/5\\_2005\\_sm1.pdf](http://www.dca.gov.uk/research/2005/5_2005_sm1.pdf)>.
- Chand, A. (2005) 'Do you speak English? Language barriers in child protection social work with minority ethnic families', *British Journal of Social Work*, 35, 807-821.
- Chibnall, S., Dutch, N.M., Jones-Harden, B., Brown, A., Gourdine, R., Smith, J., Boone A. & Snyder, S. (2003) *Children of colour in the child welfare system: Perspectives from the child welfare community*, Department of Health and Human Services Children's Bureau, Administration for Children and Families, USA, viewed 19 October 2007, <<http://www.childwelfare.gov/pubs/otherpubs/children/index.cfm>>.

- Child Protection Act 1999, Queensland Government, viewed 19 October 2007, <[www.legislation.qld.gov.au](http://www.legislation.qld.gov.au)>.
- Cohen, E.P. (2003) Framework for culturally competent decision making in child welfare, *Child Welfare*, 82(2), Mar-Apr, 143-155.
- Connolly, M. (2006) 'Fifteen years of family group conferencing: Coordinators talk about their experiences in Aotearoa New Zealand', *British Journal of Social Work*, 36, 523-540.
- Connolly, M., Crichton-Hill, Y. & Ward, T. (2006) *Culture and child protection: Reflexive responses*, Jessica Kingsley Publishers, London.
- Crime and Misconduct Commission (2004) *Protecting children: An inquiry into abuse of children in foster care*, CMC, Queensland, viewed 19 October 2007, [www.cmc.qld.gov.au](http://www.cmc.qld.gov.au).
- Child Welfare League of America (2001) *Cultural Competency Agency Self-Assessment Instrument*, revised edition, CWLA Press: Washington, USA, viewed 19 October 2007, <[www.cwla.org/programs/culturalcompetence/culturalabout.htm](http://www.cwla.org/programs/culturalcompetence/culturalabout.htm)>.
- Department of Child Safety (2006a) *Working with people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds*, Practice Paper, DCS, Queensland, August, viewed 19 October 2007, <[www.childsafety.qld.gov.au/practice-manual/documents/prac-paper-working-cald.pdf](http://www.childsafety.qld.gov.au/practice-manual/documents/prac-paper-working-cald.pdf)>.
- Department of Child Safety (2006b) *Research Strategy 2006-2009*, Department of Child Safety, Queensland, March, viewed 19 October 2007, <[www.childsafety.qld.gov.au](http://www.childsafety.qld.gov.au)>.
- Drake, B. & Zuravin, S. (1998) 'Bias in child maltreatment reporting: Revisiting the myth of classlessness', *American Journal of Orthopsychiatry*, 68(2), 295-304.
- Ernst, J.S. (1999) 'Whanau knows best: Kinship care in New Zealand', in R.L. Hegar & M. Scannapieco (eds.) *Kinship foster care: Policy, practice & research*, Oxford University Press.
- Fluke, J., Yuan, Y., Hedderson, J. & Curtis, P. (2003) 'Disproportionate representation of race and ethnicity in child maltreatment: Investigation and victimization', *Children & Youth Services Review*, 25(5), pp.359-373.
- Fontes, L.A. (2005) *Child abuse and culture: Working with diverse families*, Guilford Press, New York.
- Forde, L. (1999) *Report of the Commission of Inquiry into abuse of children in Queensland Institutions*, Queensland Government, viewed 19 October 2007, <[www.communities.qld.gov.au/community/redress-scheme/publications/html](http://www.communities.qld.gov.au/community/redress-scheme/publications/html)>.
- Garrett, P. (2002) "'No Irish need apply": Social work in Britain and the history and politics of exclusionary paradigms and practices', *British Journal of Social Work*, 32, 477-494.
- Gilligan, P. & Akhtar, S. (2005) 'Cultural barriers to the disclosure of child sexual abuse in Asian communities: Listening to what women say', *British Journal of Social Work*, Oct, 1-17.
- Gopalkrishnan, N. (n.d.) *Cultural diversity and civic participation in Queensland*, Centre for Multicultural and Community Development, University of Sunshine Coast, viewed 19 October 2007, <<http://www.usc.edu.au/Research/Centres/CMCD/Publications.htm>>.
- Harrison, G. (2006) 'Broadening the conceptual lens on language in social work: Difference, diversity and English as a global language', *British Journal of Social Work*, 36, 401-418.
- Ibanez, E., Borrego, J., Pemberton, J. & Terao, S. (2006) 'Cultural factors in decision-making about child physical abuse: Identifying reporter characteristics in influencing reporting tendencies', *Child Abuse and Neglect*, 30, 1365-1379.
- Kocarek, C., Talbot, D., Batka, J. & Anderson, M. (2001) 'Reliability and validity of three measures of multicultural competency', *Journal of Counseling & Development*, 79(4), 486-495.
- Koramoa, J., Lynch, M.A. & Kinnair, D. (2002) 'A continuum of child rearing: Responding to traditional practices', *Child Abuse Review*, 11, 415-421.
- Korbin, J.E. (2002) 'Culture and child maltreatment: Cultural competence and beyond', *Child Abuse & Neglect*, 26, 637-644.
- Lee, M.Y. (2003) 'A solution focused approach to cross-cultural clinical social work practice: Utilizing cultural strengths', *Families in Society*, 84(3), 385-395.
- Local Government Association of Queensland Inc (2003) *Embracing cultural diversity: Action guide to community relations for Queensland local governments*, Brisbane, Queensland.
- Laming, H. (2003) 'The Victoria Climbié Inquiry: Report of an inquiry by Lord Laming', The Stationery Office, London, viewed 19 October 2007, <<http://www.victoria-climbie-inquiry.org.uk>>.
- Maitra, B. (2005) 'Culture and child protection', *Current Pediatrics*, 15, 253-259.
- McCallum, S. (1995) 'Child protection investigations as first interviews', *Children Australia*, 20(3), 11-14.
- McPhatter, A. (1997) 'Cultural competence in child welfare: What is it? How do we achieve it? What happens without it?', *Child Welfare*, 76(1), 255-278.
- McPhatter, A. & Ganaway, T.L. (2003) 'Beyond the rhetoric: Strategies for implementing culturally effective practice with children, families and communities', *Child Welfare*, 82(2), Mar-Apr, 103-124.
- Mederos, F. & Woldegiorgis, I. (2003) 'Beyond cultural competence: What child protection managers need to know and do', *Child Welfare*, 82(2), 125-142.
- Multicultural Development Association and Queensland Council of Social Services (2005) *Changing the wheels: Child safety concerns in multicultural Queensland*, Issues Paper for the Department of Child Safety, Queensland.
- O'Neale, V. (2000) *Excellence not excuses: Inspection of services for ethnic minority children and families*, viewed 19 October 2007, <[http://www.dh.gov.uk/en/Publicationsandstatistics/Publications/PublicationsInspectionReports/DH\\_4006913](http://www.dh.gov.uk/en/Publicationsandstatistics/Publications/PublicationsInspectionReports/DH_4006913)>.
- Patton, M.Q. (2002) *Qualitative research & evaluation methods*, 3<sup>rd</sup> ed, Sage Publications, USA.
- Pelczarski, Y. & Kemp, S. (2006) 'Patterns of child maltreatment referral among Asian and Pacific Islander families', *Child Welfare*, 85(1), Jan-Feb, 5-31.
- Reder, P. & Duncan, S. (2004) 'Making the most of the Victoria Climbié Inquiry Report', *Child Abuse Review*, 13, 95-114.
- Segal, U.A. & Mayadas, N.S. (2005) 'Assessment of issues facing immigrant and refugee families', *Child Welfare*, 84:5, 563-583.
- Teasley, M.L. (2005) 'Perceived levels of cultural competence through social work educations and professional development for urban school social workers', *Journal of Social Work Education*, 41:1, 85-98.
- Thoburn, J., Chand, A. & Procter, J. (2005) *Child welfare services for minority ethnic families: The research reviewed*, Jessica Kingsley Publishers, London.
- Velde, B., Wittman, P. & Bamberg, R. (2003) 'Cultural competence of faculty and students in a School of Allied Health', *Journal of Applied Health*, 32:3, 189-195.