



Cultural Diversity & Child Protection Research Report

Wednesday 24 October 2012

Bradley Forum, University of South Australia,
Hosted by Elizabeth Ho OAM, Director of the Hawke Centre,
University of South Australia

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Australian Research Review

- ▶ National Research Audit in 2011 identified that there is a significant gap in Australian research regarding cultural issues within CPS.
- ▶ Australian Government provided funding for this research review to establish a 'baseline knowledge' on CALD and refugee families in the Australian CPS.
- ▶ This review was able to identify 13 Australian publications/studies between 1996–2012.

Multicultural Australia

- ▶ ABS Census 2011 data showed:
- ▶ 1 in 4 Australians are born overseas (5.3 million people of 21.5 million resident population)
- ▶ 82% of overseas born population live in capital cities with Sydney, Melbourne & Perth with highest proportion.
- ▶ Over 260 languages spoken (inc Indigenous)
- ▶ In 2010–11, Australia accepted 13 799 Refugee & Humanitarian entrants.

Gap in Child Protection Policy Frameworks in meeting needs of CALD & Refugee families

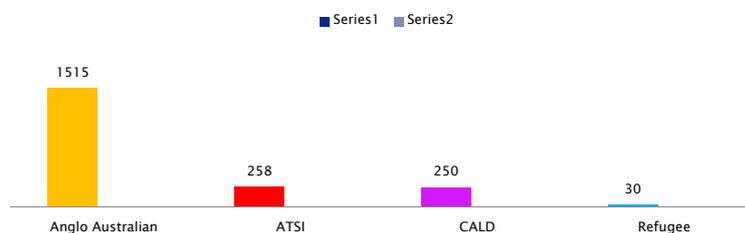
- ▶ Government (state & federal) have developed multicultural policy frameworks which aim to address the needs of migrants and refugees who settle in Australia.
- ▶ Knowledge from multicultural policies and refugee sector has not necessarily been incorporated into Child Protection Practice, Policy frameworks and Legislation.
- ▶ This has led to a significant gap in the research and practice knowledge in meeting the needs of CALD & Refugee families.

'Hidden' CALD & Refugee children & young people in CPS

- ▶ Across Australia there 37,000 children and young in OOHC, of which 12,358 are from Aboriginal Torres Strait Islander background [AIHW 2010-11 report], remainder 24,462 children/YP.
- ▶ The number of children and young people from CALD and refugee backgrounds coming to the attention of CPS and in OOHC is UNKNOWN.
- ▶ In SA there are 2,368 children/YP in OOHC, of which 630 are Indigenous background.
- ▶ The remainder 'Non Indigenous' children/YP N=1, 690 we don't know how many are from CALD or Refugee backgrounds.

Victorian Scoping Study on CALD & Refugee children and young people in OOHC

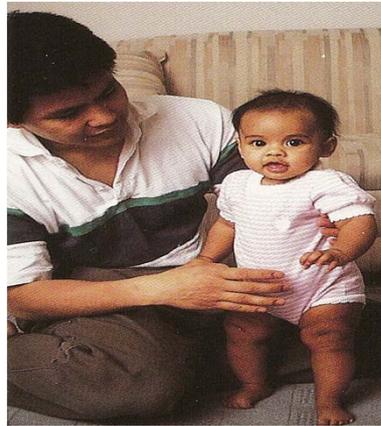
Cultural Demographics of Victorian Children/Young people in OOHC



See page 18 of the Report

Diverse child rearing practices

- Gender roles between family members (patriarchal & matriarchal societies);
- Domestic and Family Violence
- Relationship between children and parents;
- Roles and Social arrangements for the care and development of children/young people;
- Discipline of children/young people;
- Concept of honor/shame
- **See Table 1 in Report Examples of Diverse Child Rearing Practices in booklet.**



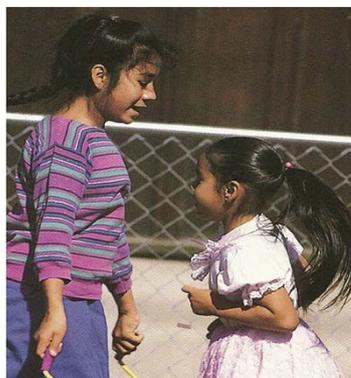
Misdiagnosis of suspected bruises – example

- ▶ Mongolian Spots



Settlement Issues

- ▶ Migration & Acculturative stress
- ▶ Culture shock & dislocation
- ▶ Rapid change in family roles and intergenerational conflict
- ▶ Absence of traditional family, social & community supports;
- ▶ Impact of language barriers;
- ▶ Access to basic settlement services;
- ▶ Experiences of racism & discrimination
- ▶ Limited understanding of Laws, expectations, systems relating to parental responsibility & child protection
- ▶ Socioeconomic disadvantage



Refugee experience

- ▶ Since 2001, Australia has accepted immigrant and refugee families from countries affected by war and political unrest (Sudan, Zimbabwe, Afghanistan and Iraq) (ABS, 2006).
- ▶ In 2010–11, Australia accepted 13 799 Refugee Humanitarian entrants. Refugees are likely to have experienced any/all of the following:
 - Denial of human rights;
 - Exposure to violence;
 - Physical, emotional, sexual abuse;
 - Illness & starvation;
 - Exploitation;
 - Some children/young people being forced to fight as soldiers;
 - Forced separation from family members;
 - Witness family members being tortured/killed.



CALD & Refugee communities in Child Protection System

There have been 2 major research studies in Australia which have explored the prevalence of abuse/harm type within both CALD & refugee families:

1. Working with Refugee families in Child Protection (South Australia) by Lewig, Arney & Salveron (2005–2009)
2. CALD children and families in NSW Child Protection System by Dr Pooja Sawrikar (2007–2009)

Vulnerable factors for CALD families

In Sawrikar Research Literature review (2009), common issues that CALD children and families experience or perceive generally in Australia were identified, these can include (but are not limited to):

- ▶ Migration and acculturative stress
- ▶ Displaced sense of belonging and cultural identity
- ▶ Perceived or experienced racism & discrimination
- ▶ Intergenerational conflict
- ▶ Low English proficiency
- ▶ Insufficient awareness of institutional systems & local services available
- ▶ Loss or lack extended family & social community supports
- ▶ Poor settlement experience in period after arrival in new country
- ▶ Socioeconomic disadvantage.

Risk factors for refugee families

The SA study (Lewig et al 2009) identified the following risk factors which brought refugee families to the attention of CPS:

- ▶ Communication and language barriers
- ▶ Pre-migration experience including trauma and separation of extended family
- ▶ Issues associated with domestic violence such as alcohol abuse, mental illness and in some families acceptance of physical violence towards women
- ▶ Cultural differences in parenting style
- ▶ Lack of family support, particularly for women who are sole parents with large number of children
- ▶ Traditional patriarchal family structures
- ▶ Lack of information about acceptable family practices.



Presentation of CALD & Refugee families to Child protection system

Physical Abuse:

- NSW study found physical abuse most common in CALD & refugee families.
- SA Study identified that physical abuse was second harm type for refugee families.

Neglect:

- SA study found neglect (supervisory) was most common harm type.
- NSW study found that this was second most common harm type where children left alone without adult supervision was common in both CALD & refugee families.



Presentation of CALD & Refugee families to Child protection system

Witness Domestic & Family Violence:

- ▶ Both studies found that DV was most common issues issue facing both CALD & refugee families



Sexual Abuse:

- ▶ There were limited research to indentify incidents of sexual abuse however this does not mean that it does not occur in CALD/refugee communities.

Emotional Abuse:

- ▶ Was most common secondary harm type for CALD group not for refugee families.

Domestic and Family Violence within CALD communities

- ▶ There is significant literature which identifies that woman from CALD & Refugee backgrounds are at higher risk and vulnerability of experiencing domestic and family violence when residing in developed western countries.

The following factors have been identified:

- ▶ cultural difference,
- ▶ gender roles,
- ▶ familism, shame and collectivism combined with factors related to migration experience, social isolation, low-socioeconomic status, racism, inadequate access/knowledge of support services (Rees & Pease, 2006).

Experience of CALD & Refugee families with CPS

▶ The NSW study found that the key issues that brought CALD families to CPS were:

1. Lack of awareness about CPS and their statutory power
2. Fear of authority because of shame on family
3. Fear of breach of confidentiality despite having ethnic-matched interpreters/multicultural caseworkers.

Both studies found that CALD & refugee families would benefit from more early intervention & awareness about accepted parenting practices in Australia & they emphasised the importance of cultural competency in child protection practice.



Experience of CALD & Refugee families with CPS

▶ The SA study found that refugee parents faced a number of challenges parenting in Australia:

1. Changing roles & expectations of refugee children
2. Tensions between Australian laws & cultural norms
3. Supports in the parenting role & wider community



Unaccompanied Humanitarian Minors in OOHC

- ▶ In Australian any UHM child/YP once assessed & granted refugee visa is placed in foster care by relevant state CPS.
- ▶ Barrie & Mendes (2011) review found there is limited research & awareness in Australia on experiences of UHM children in OOHC and leaving the care system.
- ▶ There approx 745 UHM in care system as at Feb 2010 – this number would have increased.



Cross Cultural Child Protection Survey (CCCPS) – what is it?

- ▶ The CCCPS (2007) is a tool explored cross cultural in child protection.
- ▶ The CCCPS (2007) was developed based on Ann McPhatter's (1997) Cultural Competence Attainment Model & the Cultural Competency Agency Self Assessment Instrument (Child Welfare League America, 2001)
- ▶ Currently there was No survey instrument which explored cultural competency in child protection
- ▶ The CCCPS (2007) is a tool which provides child protection agencies information on the training, professional development needs of practitioners when working with CALD families.

Two published papers:

- ▶ Kaur, J. (2007) *Children Australia*, 32(4),p17-24
- ▶ Kaur, J. (2009) *Developing Practice*, Autumn/Winter, No:23,p22-35.
- ▶ Third paper is currently being reviewed



CCCPS (2007) : Research study

- ▶ A Non-Random purposive sample was chosen to pilot the CCCPS (2007). Data collection occurred in November & December 2006.
- ▶ A total sample of (N=66) child protection officers & team leaders who worked in the investigation & assessment team within Qld child protection system in selection in South East Qld.
- ▶ This was first Australian research to explore cultural competency of caseworkers employed in the child protection system.

Key Findings:

- ▶ Frontline child protection workers did not receive adequate training, resources to work with CALD families .
- ▶ CP workers lacked CALD specific knowledge on how to deal with cross-cultural issues when working with CALD families.
- ▶ Identified Key concerns in the provision of child protection practice, policy & service delivery when working with CALD families in Australian Child Protection System.
- ▶ Highlighted need for further research into cross cultural competence in child protection practice across Australia, role & use of interpreters



Developing Cultural Sensitive Practice – Summary

- ▶ Kaur (2009) published the qualitative responses on ‘Developing culturally Sensitive Practice’.
- ▶ CP workers highlighted the need for CP workers to engage, to be respectful and build responsive relationships when working with CALD families.

These Cross-cultural skills included:

- ▶ Respectful engagement with CALD families
- ▶ Use of Interpreter
- ▶ Ascertaining cultural supports within community
- ▶ Linking with Cultural Liaison officers
- ▶ Referral for appropriate support services
- ▶ Kinship or Culturally matched placements



Key Messages from Australian research

- ▶ collect data on CALD and refugee communities
- ▶ develop culturally responsive service delivery specific to CALD and refugee communities
- ▶ develop community education and awareness campaigns targeting CALD and refugee communities
- ▶ develop cultural competence training for frontline caseworkers,
- ▶ develop culturally responsive placement options for CALD and refugee (unaccompanied humanitarian minors (UHM) children and young people who require OOHC .



What we know

- ▶ While risk factors common to all families are prevalent, (e.g. domestic and family violence, substance abuse and mental illness) CALD and refugee families face a number of unique risk factors and challenges which may lead to their involvement with the Australian CPS.
- ▶ Both CALD and refugee communities would benefit from early intervention and prevention strategies focusing on: 'accepted parenting practices in Australia', specifically targeting physical discipline and neglect.
- ▶ Parents from CALD or refugee backgrounds were not aware of the statutory role of the child protection system and would benefit from a community education on the role of statutory child protection authorities (in their language).



What we know – continued

- ▶ The need for culturally tailored community awareness program for both CALD and refugee communities on Australian laws relating to domestic and family violence.
- ▶ The need for frontline child protection caseworkers to develop cultural competency when working with both CALD and refugee communities in CPS; and
- ▶ Children from inter-racial backgrounds who were in OOHC displayed cultural identity confusion and self esteem issues.



What we don't know

- ▶ What the prevalence of child abuse and neglect is amongst both CALD and refugee communities in Australia.
- ▶ The placement needs of CALD and refugee and Unaccompanied Humanitarian Minors (UHM) children and young people in OOHC.
- ▶ What early intervention and prevention strategies are effective in working with both CALD and refugee communities in addressing child maltreatment?



JK Diversity Consultants

- ▶ Established in 2011 to bridge the gap between multicultural issues and mainstream government agencies and departments
- ▶ Developed the Cross Cultural Child Protection Survey (CCCPS) tool and is being further developed to be accessed online.
- ▶ Developed 1 day training workshop on 'Working with CALD and refugee in Child & Family Welfare Setting' endorsed by AASW, has been delivered in Qld, NSW, Victoria, and through CCWT in 2013 Training Calendar.



References/Resources

- ▶ Kaur, J (2012) Cultural Diversity & Child Protection: A Review of the Australian research on the needs of culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) and refugee children and families, online:
http://www.jkdiversityconsultants.com.au/Cultural_Diversity_Child_Protection_Kaur2012_A4.pdf
- ▶ Lewig, K., Arney, F., Salveron, M. (January 2009), 'The Working with Refugee Families Project', Australian Centre for Child Protection, accessed online:
http://www.unisa.edu.au/childprotection/documents/124112%20ACCP_Refugee%20Report.pdf
- ▶ Sawrikar (2009), Culturally appropriate service provision for CALD children and families in the NSW child protection system, Interim Report 1: Literature Review, Social Policy Research Centre, accessed online:
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QUESTION & ANSWERS



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