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## Child Welfare Workforce

R2P compiles, on an ongoing basis, annotated bibliographies on various child welfare topics and related fields. The bibliographies are as inclusive and detailed as possible. Most entries include the following sections:

**The Study:** describes the project or program, location, number served, and purpose of the program.

**The Methods:** details how the study was conducted, who was involved, what instruments were used, and the rates of and reasons for attrition.

**The Findings:** lists outcomes of the study and possible implications for the field.

**R2P Evaluation:** helps the reader to evaluate the usefulness of the full publication. This section highlights, for instance, readability, the significance for practice, and the applicability of the results.

Not every article, book, or other publication in the annotated bibliography fits the above format. Some publications are not research driven but are nonetheless useful to the field. These entries may have only two sections: The Study and R2P Evaluation.

**Abramczyk, L. W., & Liberman, A. (1994). Should child welfare workers have an M.S.W.?**  
**In E. Gambrill & T. Stein (Eds.), *Controversial issues in child welfare* (pp. 174–186).**  
**Needham Heights, MA: Allyn & Bacon.**

- *This article featured a debate between two child welfare professors, as to whether direct service providers should have master’s degrees in social work (MSWs).*

### **The Study**

- Before the 1960s, most child welfare workers had MSWs and provided adoption services.
- As concern about child maltreatment rose, child welfare workers found themselves overwhelmed with families needing many different services.
- The child welfare workforce could not meet the demand, and workers without MSWs had to be hired to fill the void.
- There is a trend today toward “reprofessionalization” of the child welfare workforce.
- The pro-MSW position:
  - Research has shown that employees with MSWs are better suited for some tasks; therefore, all child welfare workers should probably have MSWs.
  - Those who need child welfare services deserve to have employees with MSWs working with them.
  - Workers with MSWs are needed for leadership in the child welfare field.
  - The agency’s cost of an employee with an MSW is defrayed by less need for supervision.
- Concern for the pro-MSW position:
  - Colleges need to revise the MSW curriculum to fit the needs of the field.
- The con-MSW position:
  - People with MSWs are better suited to cases involving clinical needs such as psychotherapy.
  - Entry-level professionals with bachelor’s degrees in social work (BSWs) are very well-suited for case management services.
  - State agencies have less worker turnover when a worker with an MSW is in an upper-level position and workers with BSWs are in direct service.

### **R2P Evaluation**

- This debate raised many questions about the educational needs for child welfare workers and offers solid arguments for both sides.

**Alwon, F. J., & Reitz, A. L. (2000). Empty chairs: As a national workforce shortage strikes child welfare, CWLA responds. *Children's Voice*, 9(6), 35–37.**

- *This article described workforce issues in child welfare and child care and listed keys for success in recruiting and retaining child welfare workers.*

### **The Study**

- The current workforce crunch is difficult for child welfare services due to ever-growing caseloads.
- There is no guarantee that improving recruitment strategies will mean that employees will actually stay at their jobs.
- Staff retention is directly linked to organizational climate and a positive working environment.

### **The Findings**

- Keys to child welfare workforce success include:
  - Connectivity among employees;
  - Communication;
  - Emphasis on relationships and teamwork;
  - Learning, innovating, and developing on all levels; and
  - Decisionmaking ability without bureaucratic interference.

### **R2P Evaluation**

- This was a basic article on the workforce crisis in child welfare and is a good reference point for collecting research on workforce issues.

**Alwon, F., & Reitz, A. (2000). *The workforce crisis in child welfare*. Washington, DC: Child Welfare League of America.**

- *This issue brief highlighted the crisis in the child welfare workforce, as well as issues discussed at the 1999 Child Welfare League of America (CWLA) symposium on the crisis.*

### **The Study**

- Child welfare agencies are experiencing high turnover rates, low employee morale, and competition from other human services sectors.
- The current situation: longer work hours, heavier workloads, and exposure to dangerous situations without adequate compensation or opportunities for professional development.
- The most severe shortages are in child and youth care staff, social workers, and support staff.
- The workforce crisis is evident in three ways: There are an insufficient number of qualified responses to advertisements, salary and benefits are not competitive, and agencies cannot keep the employees they do manage to recruit.
- There is a lack of educational programs that are relevant to the reality of child welfare work.
- Workers are hired and given proper training, but end up leaving too soon to make the extra training worthwhile.
- Other problems are the bureaucratic overload, difficult and rigid state licensing requirements, lack of expertise in human resources, and lack of funds for effective recruiting.

### **The Findings**

- Some agencies have partnered with educational institutions. This makes the agencies able to hire adequately trained workers and influence the curricula at the institutions.
- The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services supports collaboration between state child welfare agencies and universities to develop nondegree training programs.
- Staff professional development, uniform compensation, and pay raises without having to transfer to management are crucial.
- Agencies are starting to view workers as assets to keep rather than “mules to drive.”

### **R2P Evaluation**

- This was a good discussion of issues and innovative ideas currently being used in the field.

**American Federation of State, County, and Municipal Employees. (1998). *Double jeopardy: Caseworkers at risk, helping at-risk kids. A report on the working conditions facing child welfare workers.* Washington, DC: Author.**

- *The report presented useful data on the working conditions of public agency child welfare workers from multiple states.*

**The Study**

- The American Federation of State, County, and Municipal Employees (AFSCME) surveyed AFSCME affiliates that represent professional child welfare workers to learn more about the conditions in which child welfare workers work.

**The Methods**

- AFSCME sent a survey to affiliates in 17 states. Affiliates representing workers in 10 states returned 29 surveys. The surveys collected information on salaries, qualifications, caseloads, training, and violence in the workplace. Union representatives or staff in consultation with front-line workers completed the surveys.

**The Findings**

- Violence in the workplace and neighborhoods where workers do home visits was a serious problem. More than 70% of the respondents reported that front-line workers in their agencies had been victims of violence or had received threats of violence in the line of duty.
- Workers in more than half of the child welfare agencies represented carried average caseloads that exceed the recommended guidelines published by the Child Welfare League of America. More than 60% of the affiliates reported an increase in caseloads in recent years.
- Time spent in court filling out paperwork and time spent attending staff and case meetings consumed a sizable chunk of the workers' time, making it even more difficult for them to meet the demands of their heavy caseloads.
- The wages paid these professional workers—virtually all of whom must have at least four years of college—were not commensurate with the job. Most entry-level salaries fall in the mid-\$20,000 range.
- Training for many workers was inadequate, and workers lacked a voice in shaping the training received.

**R2P Evaluation**

- Although the sample was somewhat limited, the report presented useful data on the working conditions of public agency child welfare workers from multiple states. In addition, the report included examples of local strategies that address each of the issues in the report.

**Anderson, D. G. (1994). *Coping strategies and burnout among veteran child protection workers*. Unpublished doctoral dissertation, University of South Carolina, Columbia.**

- *This study examined the effects of coping strategies on those who stay in child welfare work.*

### **The Study**

- There are high stress levels in child protective services (CPS) work, yet many workers stay in this field for years. Researchers hypothesize that coping strategies are key to worker retention.

### **The Methods**

- The study included 151 child welfare workers and supervisors who had worked in a public agency for at least two years.
- The researchers administered three instruments at a stress management workshop: a demographic data questionnaire, primary and tertiary scales of Coping Strategies Inventory, and the Maslach Burnout Inventory (MBI).

### **The Findings**

- Workers who used coping strategies were less likely to feel depressed and more likely to feel a sense of personal accomplishment. Those who were less likely to use effective coping strategies were more likely to feel emotionally exhausted, feel depersonalized, and feel reduced personal accomplishment.
- There was a strong positive relationship between personal accomplishment and problem solving in a context of high emotional exhaustion.
- Despite high levels of emotional exhaustion, workers who had effective coping skills planned to stay in their current line of work.
- Stress management workshops may help with employee retention.

### **R2P Evaluation**

- This study was helpful in offering suggestions for employee retention through stress management training and positive reinforcement of coping skills.

**Annie E. Casey Foundation. (2003). *The unsolved challenge of system reform: The condition of the frontline human services workforce*. Baltimore: Author.**

- *This report provided a comprehensive picture of the workforce ultimately charged with serving America's children and youth.*

### **The Study**

- The survey collected information from a sample that represented the estimated 3 million workers in front-line, supervisory, and management positions providing services in child welfare, juvenile justice, child care, employment and training, and youth services agencies.

### **The Methods**

- The researchers used a random digital-dial telephone survey methodology.

### **The Findings**

- The research uncovered challenges common among the services areas::
  - Nonprofit, government, and for-profit employers cannot find sufficient numbers of quality staff.
  - When they do find quality staff, too many of those workers do not stay.
  - Workers are paid less than those in other jobs at comparable levels.
  - Limited opportunity exists for professional growth and advancement.
  - Workers receive poor supervision and little guidance or support.
  - Rule-bound jobs leave little latitude for discretion and drive out the most entrepreneurial workers.
  - The education and training these workers receive do not match the roles and demands actually encountered on the job.
  - Workers receive no reward for additional skills or extra effort.
- Despite these challenges, the research suggested that human service systems with the following attributes have a better chance of recruiting and holding the kinds of quality workers who make a difference for children and families:
  - Flexibility and freedom to recruit for the skills needed,
  - Rewards for superior performance and effectiveness,
  - Reasonable workloads that let workers deploy their skills,
  - Career paths that build on workers' skills rather than moving them "up and out,"
  - Clear performance expectations that relate to a coherent organizational mission,
  - Training and development opportunities on the job,
  - Ability to change bad management and supervision, and
  - Adequate base compensation that can help stem turnover.

### **R2P Evaluation**

- This report substantiated many concerns of those who work in child welfare. The research revealed a number of challenges and similarities among these groups, which could mandate careful consideration of how policy and program reform needs to be addressed.

**Bernotavicz, F. (n.d.). *Retention of child welfare caseworkers: A report*. Available from [www.muskie.usm.maine.edu/helpkids/pubstext/retention.html](http://www.muskie.usm.maine.edu/helpkids/pubstext/retention.html)**

- *This report summarized the findings of a workgroup to assess workforce issues in child welfare in Maine.*

### **The Study**

- In 1996, Maine completed an assessment of state turnover rates for child welfare workers.
- In March 1997, the Maine Department of Human Services (DHS) commissioned a workgroup on the issue to report findings to DHS management.
- The workgroup examined personnel, work, and agency factors.

### **The Methods**

- The workgroup conducted an informal poll of agency workers rather than conducting a full survey. The timeframe needed to conduct a survey did not fit the group's need for quick turnaround.

### **The Findings**

- Four factors were identified as influencing retention: mission, goodness of fit, supervision, and investment.
- Overall, the workgroup found that employees are likely to stay if they already have stayed for more than two years, have prior experience, have relevant education, are committed to the mission, and feel that their work is making a difference.
- The group recommended increased clerical support and reduced caseloads and paperwork.
- The group found that supervisors were critical to staff retention and lowering turnover.
- More rewards and promotion of professional growth help in retention.
- Flexible work conditions are also desirable.

### **R2P Evaluation**

- The report made short-term and long-term recommendations for personnel, agency support, benefits, and work conditions.
- This was a helpful report for those looking for background research on workforce issues done in 1980s and 1990s.



**Booz-Allen & Hamilton, Inc. (1987). *The Maryland Social Work Services job analysis and personnel qualifications study*. McLean, VA: Author.**

- *This article detailed a study conducted between October 1986 and January 1987 for the Maryland Department of Human Resources.*

**The Study**

- Maryland was having difficulty recruiting qualified candidates in social work. The state commissioned a firm to determine the minimum qualifications needed to perform social work jobs effectively.

**The Methods**

- The researchers surveyed employees and supervisors on a number of items, including tasks, education, performance, and supervisor judgment.
- Subject matter experts helped develop the survey tools.
- The researchers conducted a statistical analysis to determine the relationship between qualifications and job performance.
- They also analyzed the differences between job classification and educational group on tasks performed and level of job performance.

**The Findings**

- Overall, performance of workers with MSWs was significantly higher than those without MSWs.
- Education, specifically an MSW, was best predictor of overall performance.
- The researchers checked to see if there was “supervisor bias” toward workers with MSWs, but there was no evidence of this.
- Minimum qualification standards for each job were valid.
- Knowledge, skills, and abilities could be obtained either through education or job experience, but the researchers determined that some work should only be performed by employees with MSWs.

**R2P Evaluation**

- This was an older study on job qualifications for social workers. However, there is validity in studying older research to determine if improvements have been made in the systems based on the study results.

**Burton, A., Whitebook, M., Young, M., Bellm, D., Wayne, C., Brandon, R., et al. (2002, May). *Estimating the size and components of the U.S. child care workforce and caregiving population: Key findings from the child care workforce estimate.* Washington, DC: Center for the Child Care Workforce.**

- This report provided an interesting picture of the child care workforce and working conditions of those serving children from birth to age 5 in the United States.

### **The Study**

- The Center for the Child Care Workforce and the Human Services Policy Center conducted a two-year research project to develop a framework and methodology for quantifying the size and characteristics of the U.S. child care workforce that serves children from birth through age 5, excluding children in kindergarten.

### **The Methods**

- The project used a demand-based estimation model that draws on national data sets in which child care consumers (parents) describe their current use of child care services and child/adult ratios for children in the targeted age group. Estimates of the child care workforce included the following:
  - The teaching staff of center-based programs,
  - Family child care providers caring for unrelated children in their own homes,
  - Paid nonrelatives caring for children on a regular basis in the child's home, and
  - Paid relatives caring for children on a regular basis.

### **The Findings**

- Research estimates that 2.3 million caregivers of children from birth to age 5 are in the workforce at a single point in time, with a total of 2.5 million over the course of the year due to occupational turnover. These figures are substantially higher than the total of 1.7 million child care workers and preschool teachers for all children from birth through 12 that researchers can derive from Census Bureau and U.S. Bureau of Labor statistics data.
- Of the people paid to care for children from birth to 5 in the United States in a given week, 24% work in center-based settings, 28% provide family child care, 35% are paid relatives other than family child care providers, and 13% are paid nonrelatives other than those working in centers or family child care programs.
- Of the caregivers, 29% care for infants from birth to 18 months, 49% care for toddlers ages 19 to 36 months, and 22% care for preschoolers ages 3 to 5 years.
- In addition to the paid child care workforce, the total U.S. caregiving population serving children from birth to 5 also includes approximately 2.4 million individuals providing unpaid child care during a given week. Most (93%) are unpaid relatives.

### **R2P Evaluation**

- This report on the child care workforce provided an interesting picture of the settings and caregivers of the children from birth to age 5 in need of child care in the United States.

**Burton, A., Mihaly, J., Kagiwada, J., & Whitebrook, M. (2000). *The CARES Initiative in California: Pursuing Public Policy to Build a Skilled and Stable Child Care Workforce, 1997–2000*. Washington, DC: Center for the Child Care Workforce.**

- *This article detailed the creation of and funding for the California CARES (Compensation and Retention Encourage Stability) program in response to a workforce crisis in child day care.*

### **The Study**

- In 1997, California day care providers were struggling to find qualified child care workers.
- The Child Development Corps, a stipend program, established a link between training and compensation.
- After being vetoed twice by California governors, the organizers found local money to use for San Francisco and Alameda Counties.
- Once the two pilot programs were under way, 16 other counties developed their own CARES programs and Child Development Corps.
- The models can be adapted to meet local needs and demographics. CARES includes two programs: Child Development Corps (providers and staff) and Resources for Retention (support).
- CARES does not raise base salaries, it provides professional development rewards.
- Core principles of CARES:
  - The Child Development Corps is an open, home-based, licensed, and exempt family care provider;
  - Stipends reward individuals;
  - Stipend increments are based on the Child Development Permit Matrix; and
  - Stipends are for those in the job for a minimum one year, and for those with higher education levels.

### **R2P Evaluation**

- This article was more process evaluation–oriented than outcome evaluation–oriented. There was a lot of information about the funding of CARES and policy processes, but there was little detail on the success of the initiative.
- The authors discussed limitations of the program, difficulties in finding funding, and recommendations for future use.

**Center for Child Care Workforce. (2000). *Recruiting and retaining low-income child care workers in Wisconsin: The Wisconsin Child Care Mentor Project Evaluation, a summary of the findings*. Washington, DC: Author.**

- *This article detailed the findings of a mentoring project for low-income child care workers in Wisconsin.*

### **The Study**

- In fall 1998, the Center for Child Care Workforce was asked to evaluate the Wisconsin Child Care Mentor Project (WCCMP).
- The project addressed the provision of work opportunities for current and former welfare recipients, and the building of a stable supply of child care services.
- The objectives of WCCMP were to:
  - Promote work opportunities for recent welfare participants and other low-income people by assisting them to obtain child care jobs,
  - Increase the supply of child care center teaching staff, and
  - Improve the quality of child care services by increasing opportunities for entry-level teachers and retaining skilled personnel.

### **The Methods**

- WCCMP had pilot programs in five counties in Wisconsin.
- There were three data collection points:
  - Interviews with staff and community coordinators and written survey information from mentors and protégés,
  - Site visits, and
  - Interviews with the state and local coordinators.

### **The Findings**

- Protégés had been in child care for several years, but many had not advanced from entry-level positions due to specific educational requirements. Through this program, they increased their qualifications.
- Many protégés were low-income former welfare recipients.
- Recruitment of protégés and mentors was more difficult than anticipated.
- Many protégés did not receive higher wages or a bonus on program completion.
- The program attracted mentors committed to child care teaching and provided them with skill-building opportunities and stipends.

### **R2P Evaluation**

- This was an interesting study, but it had a weak research design and no structured research findings other than observational results.

**Child Welfare League of America. (2001). *The child welfare workforce challenge: Results from a preliminary study*. Washington, DC: Author.**

- *This article detailed the findings from a 2000 workforce study conducted by the Alliance for Children and Families, the American Public Human Services Association (APHSA), and CWLA.*

**The Study**

- In partnership, the three organizations sought to accomplish four goals:
  - Gather data on the workforce challenge in child welfare,
  - Gather data about effective recruiting and retention practices,
  - Prepare findings to share with the Administration and Congress in 2001, and
  - Lay the groundwork for future studies.

**The Methods**

- APHSA surveyed public child welfare agencies ( $n = 43$  states, 84% of states;  $n = 48$  counties in all states, not representative of counties as a whole).
- The alliance and CWLA surveyed private, nonprofit agencies ( $n = 151$ ).
- The partnership attempted to determine if there was a difference between agencies with low and high turnover rates.

**The Findings**

- It takes five to seven weeks to fill a vacant position in most agencies.
- CPS agencies have an average vacancy rate of 10%.
- Salaries had no significant effect on turnover rates.
- There were higher caseloads at state agencies than private agencies, although averages were similar between agencies with high turnover rates and agencies with low turnover rates.
- Other study findings were broken down by state, county, and private agency.

**R2P Evaluation**

- This was important preliminary research on workforce issues.
- There needs to be more documented evidence of promising practices in recruitment and retention.

**Cicero-Reese, B., & Black, P. (1998, February). Research findings suggest why child welfare workers stay on job. *Partnerships for Child Welfare*, 5(5), 5, 8–9.**

- *This study identified factors associated with continuity of child welfare service.*

### **The Study**

- This study collected demographic, education, work history, and perception information from workers who have remained with a public child welfare agency for more than two years.

### **The Methods**

- The authors sent an anonymous, self-report questionnaire to a cohort of 70 child welfare workers from one public agency. The respondents returned 50 questionnaires, and 38 met the inclusion criteria of having been employed at the agency for more than two years.
- The survey asked respondents to rank a series of factors in their continuing employment on a four-point scale.
- A small group of volunteers also participated in one-on-one interviews to gather more in-depth information on their motivation for continued employment.

### **The Findings**

- Almost one-third held a master's degree, and of those with master's degrees, 93% were in social work. Sixty-three percent had a bachelor's degree, 19% of which were in social work and 61% were in social work–related fields.
- The reasons for remaining on the job ranked as follows: commitment to well-being of children, desire to help children, personal fulfillment, job benefits, salary, supervision, personal life experiences, inability to change job due to family commitments, and inability to find other employment.
- Despite the fact that 92% of the respondents reported planning to continue employment in the field of child welfare, 45% characterized the work environment as being less than safe, and 84% reported experiencing high levels of work-related stress.
- The profile of workers who stayed at their agency indicated that workers were motivated to stay by internal factors of commitment to children and by personal fulfillment, rather than by external job variables and job market issues.

### **R2P Evaluation**

- Although it was difficult to draw generalizations from this small, targeted sample, the study did indicate motivations for child welfare workers choosing to remain on the job.

**Clark, S. (2003). The California collaboration: A competency-based child welfare curriculum project for master's social workers. *Journal of Human Behavior and the Social Environment*, 7, 135–157.**

- *This article examined the California Social Work Education Center (CalSWEC) Title IV-E project and the collaborative curriculum development process.*

### **The Study**

- Initially, CalSWEC created a financial assistance plan for master's of social work (MSW) students.
- Other components of CalSWEC included a competency-based curriculum, program and curriculum evaluation, resource support for the development of instructional materials, and active participation among public child welfare agencies and universities.
- Child welfare workers should have higher education degrees because of the need for specific skills and knowledge in child welfare jobs.
- California MSW schools must maintain an appropriate level of curriculum consistency.
- The competency-based curriculum included:
  - Clear descriptions of skills or knowledge that are measured,
  - Progress followed through intervention,
  - Empirical literature, and
  - Critical thinking skills.
- A mailed survey to child welfare experts concluded that the MSW curriculum could fall into one of the three categories: necessary, desirable, or unnecessary.
- Conferences to encourage collaboration among schools and agencies addressed curriculum competencies.
- Competencies for public child welfare MSW practice included:
  - Multicultural and ethnically sensitive practice,
  - Core child welfare skills;
  - Social work skills and methods;
  - Human development and behavior;
  - Workplace management; and
  - Child welfare administration, planning, and evaluation.
- Schools and agencies agreed on competency curriculum but now are working to integrate the curriculum into the existing curricula at the MSW schools.
- The recommended curriculum is only a suggestion, not a set of standards or guidelines.

### **R2P Evaluation**

- This article stressed only one component of the CalSWEC project, but provided an adequate description of the competency-based curriculum.
- The author's attention to describing the components made it easy for other state academic programs to consider the competency curriculum.

**Collins, P. (1994). Does mentorship among social workers make a difference? An empirical investigation of career outcomes. *Social Work*, 39, 413–419.**

- *This article featured a study conducted on the relationship of mentors and protégés to career success, satisfaction, and income. There was much anecdotal evidence supporting the success of mentor/protégé relationships, but there were few empirical studies on the topic.*

**The Study**

- The study explored careers of social workers who had mentor relationships.
- Outcome measures included career success, career satisfaction, and income level.
- The study also explores the experience of mentorship in four ways:
  - Being a mentor and being a protégé,
  - Being a mentor only,
  - Being a protégé only, and
  - None of the above.

**The Methods**

- Researchers mailed a survey to 689 social workers at more than 400 agencies in 1988. The workers had been field practice supervisors for MSW students.
- There was a 68% response rate ( $n = 430$  of 631; 58 surveys were returned as undeliverable).
- The final sample included 157 men and 273 women; 369 white respondents and 56 people of color. The average age was 42.4 years, with a range of 25 to 70 years.

**The Findings**

- Both mentor and protégé experiences affect career success (protégés  $p < .001$ ; mentors  $p < .01$ ).
- The researchers found the highest levels of career success and career satisfaction in participants who had been both mentors and protégés, with “protégé only,” “mentor only,” and “neither” following in that order.
- Career satisfaction was significantly affected by having been a protégé ( $p < .001$ ; mentors  $p < .01$ ).
- Being a mentor significantly affected income ( $p < .001$ ).
- The highest levels of income were seen in participants who had been both a mentor and protégé, with “mentor only,” “neither,” and “protégé only” following in that order.

**R2P Evaluation**

- This was one of the first attempts to add empirical data to anecdotal evidence on the power of mentor/protégé relationships. There was not a lot of detail on how the sample was divided into the four groups.



**Costin, L., Karger, H., & Stoesz, D. (1996). *The Politics of child abuse and neglect in America*. New York: Oxford University Press.**

- *The authors studied the declassification of child welfare staff and its effects on child abuse and neglect.*

### **The Study**

- Declassification in child welfare leads to:
  - A reduction of minimum education standards,
  - Assumption of interchangeability of employees with BSWs and MSWs, and
  - Equating education with experience.
- The negative consequences of declassification include workers' being unprepared to handle the job, burnout, and high turnover.
- Lower turnover rates are found in agencies that have degree requirements in general and MSW requirements for upper-level positions. There is contradictory research, however, that shows employees with MSWs may not be as prepared as believed.
- Therefore, although there are many studies on the issue, none have reached consensus on the problem definition.

### **The Findings**

- Many people who pursue MSWs do not go into the public sector, preferring more lucrative work in the private sector.
- Over the past few decades, social work curriculum has become more politicized and less concerned with teaching about child abuse and neglect.
- Because of the high volume of work and budgetary issues, many caseworkers are forced to prioritize cases: Children younger than three come first, and children older than 14 come last.
- Some agencies screen out cases deemed low priority, such as custody cases, delinquency, and mental health cases.

### **R2P Evaluation**

- This article raised some interesting points about the declassification of child welfare work and the prioritizing of child welfare cases.
- The bibliography listed other good articles on the topic.

**Decker, J. T., Bailey, T. L., and Westergaard, N. (2002). Burnout among childcare workers. *Residential Treatment for Children & Youth, 19(4)*, 61–77.**

- *This article included background information on theories related to burnout and alienation and described a study that investigated burnout among child care workers in a residential child care center in a rural state.*

### **The Study**

- High turnover due to stress-induced burnout among child care staff is a concern of administrators. The purpose of this study was to investigate the extent of burnout among workers and the relationship of demographic and situational variables to it.

### **The Methods**

- The authors mailed 160 surveys to full-time child care workers in licensed residential centers in a rural state, and 61 child care workers responded, for a 38% response rate.
- The authors also mailed a demographic and situational data sheet and Maslach Burnout Inventory (MBI) to the sample of child care workers.

### **The Findings**

- Due to the relatively small sample size, it is difficult to detect meaningful differences regarding child care workers' ages, genders, and types of experience.
- Overall, the sample was highly educated, with 56% of the respondents holding a baccalaureate degree.
- Age correlated with more experience—older workers were more likely to report feeling a lack of supervision.
- More educated workers were more likely to report feeling a lack of supervision.
- Of the races surveyed, African American child care workers were the most likely to report they had adequate supervision.
- Of the group, 55% reported feelings of low personal accomplishment, compared with 17% who say they experienced high feelings of accomplishment in their work.
- Forty-five percent reported low emotional exhaustion, 33% reported moderate emotional exhaustion, and 22% reported high emotional exhaustion.
- The study's findings indicated statistically significant correlations between lower scores on the MBI and such protective factors as institutional support, supervision, education, and age.

### **R2P Evaluation**

- This article provided background on theories of burnout and causal factors as well as on the theories and causes of alienation. Although somewhat limited by a small sample, the study provided a useful investigation of the extent of burnout among child care workers.

**Dhooper, S., Royse, D., & Wolfe, L. (1990). Does social work education make a difference? *Social Work, 35*, 57–61.**

- *This study examined whether social work education adequately prepares workers for the realities of social work.*

### **The Study**

- This study was different than others in that it compared employees with BSWs or MSWs in the public sector with those who worked for public agencies without these degrees.

### **The Methods**

- Data were obtained from:
  - Department quality assurance ratings ( $n = 459$  cases),
  - State merit exams ( $n = 50$ ),
  - Supervisors' assessments ( $n = 120$ , with 73% response rate),
  - Social work values ( $n = 120$ , with 69% completed), and
  - Self-ratings ( $n = 130$ ).
- Hypotheses tested:
  - Workers with social work education have higher quality assurance scores than those without social work training.
  - Workers with social work education score higher on the state merit exam.
  - Workers with social work degrees receive higher ratings from supervisors and have a deeper commitment to their work.
  - Workers with social work degrees say that education prepared them for their job.

### **The Findings**

- From July to December 1988, researchers reviewed data from 459 cases. Employees with BSWs received the highest quality assurance ratings ( $p = .008$ ). The researchers also ran analyses to ensure that there were no discrepancies in the number of cases for each degree level that might lead to bias for BSWs.
- Those with more experience received higher quality assurance ratings ( $p < .02$ ).
- Workers with BSWs/MSWs received higher test scores on the state merit exam, and workers with MSWs scored higher than those with BSWs ( $p < .0004$ ).
- Workers with BSWs/MSWs received higher ratings from supervisors, but this was not statistically significant.
- Workers with BSWs/MSWs were more committed to work, but not at a significant level.
- Workers with BSWs rated themselves most prepared for work, but this was not significant compared with ratings of them by workers with MSWs and other workers.

### **R2P Evaluation**

- This study showed some initial evidence that BSW and MSW workers tended to have higher job performance levels than those with degrees in other fields.

**Dickinson, N. S., & Perry, R. E. (2002). Factors influencing the retention of specially educated public child welfare workers. *Journal of Health & Social Policy, 15(3/4), 89–103.***

- *The authors conducted this study to determine which factors distinguished MSW graduates of a specialized social work education program who remained employed in public child welfare from those who did not.*

### **The Study**

- The authors conducted this research in California with a sample of students who had completed a Title IV-E-funded MSW program designed to prepare them for employment in public child welfare. The study examined factors that might contribute to the retention of such graduates beyond the two-year payback period they incurred as a condition of their educational stipends.

### **The Methods**

- The authors mailed a survey to the 368 MSW graduates who had completed their degrees and gone to work in public child welfare at least two years earlier. The survey instrument asked about the graduates' child welfare work experience and future plans, their perceptions of their work, and personal and sociodemographic variables.

### **The Findings**

- Of the respondents 78% (287) remained employed in public child welfare. The response rate was 63.9% ( $n = 235$ ), with those remaining disproportionately represented (88.5% or 208). Of these, 65 planned to leave in the next year. Thus, combined with those who had already left, 39.1% of the sample had left or intended to leave. The 60.9% who stayed or intended to stay were significantly different in the following ways:
  - They earned an average of \$2,778 more per year.
  - They had a higher percentage of African American clients in their caseloads.
  - They spent less time performing court-related tasks.
  - They had higher caseloads.
  - They experienced more support from their supervisors and work peers.
- Supervisory support was the factor most strongly associated with job satisfaction.

### **R2P Evaluation**

- This study was informative because it specifically focused on those who remain employed in public child welfare beyond the obligatory payback time for educational stipends. The identification of supervisory support as a critical factor was consistent with other research, but other factors identified (e.g., higher caseloads, less time spent in court-related tasks) suggest the need for further exploration.

**Drake, B., & Yadama, G. (1996). A structural equation model of burnout and job exit among child protective services workers. *Social Work Research, 20*(3), 179–187.**

- *The research in this article was based on MBI. The inventory contains three elements: emotional exhaustion (EE), depersonalization (DP), and personal accomplishment (PA).*

### **The Study**

- This study used MBI to examine job exit and burnout among CPS workers over a 15-month period.
- Researchers have tested MBI for reliability and validity.

### **The Methods**

- In March 1993, researchers mailed 230 questionnaires to CPS workers who were randomly selected from 1,147 workers ( $n = 177$  completed questionnaires).
- Caucasian women with bachelor's degrees completed the majority of questionnaires. The median age was 38 years, with five years experience in child welfare.
- The researchers compared the 177 participants with statewide worker rosters in July 1994. Those who were promoted were not counted as leaving their jobs.

### **The Findings**

- Overall, the MBI model was a good fit ( $p = .000$ ).
- PA had a significant effect on EE ( $p < .01$ ).
- EE and PA had direct effects on DP ( $p < .01$ ).
- PA had a direct negative effect on DP ( $p < .05$ ).
- PA had a significant indirect effect on DP through EE ( $p < .01$ ).
- Data support EE as the most important aspect of burnout in relation to job exit.

### **R2P Evaluation**

- This article introduced the reader to an interesting aspect of workforce research, in which the researcher had attempted to assign three elements of burnout to predict future behavior of workers.

**Ellett, A. J. (1996). *Policy analysis of de-professionalization of child welfare*. Unpublished paper, Louisiana State University School of Social Work, Baton Rouge.**

- *This paper described the changing nature of professionalism in child welfare, analyzed resulting policy, and offered suggestions for the reprofessionalization of child welfare.*

**The Study**

- There are no specific national policies on the minimum requirements for child welfare staff.
- The author highlighted the minimum requirements in the state of Louisiana. They have been changed to help supervisors address shortages of qualified employees with MSWs. Supervisors have had to replace MSW requirements with “bachelor’s level and some experience.”
- The author highlighted the history of child welfare from the early 1900s through the 1960s, when MSWs were required and social workers garnered respect.
- A national study found that individuals with social work degrees were better prepared on almost every skill and knowledge dimension of child welfare than people with other degrees.
- According to one researcher, there were four factors that will always influence child welfare:
  - The nature of the work requires tax-based funding.
  - Clients are often poor and are not valued by society. Child welfare workers are associated with this.
  - Clients have complex issues that are difficult to deal with in short time spans. Therefore, legislators and funders feel that the program has failed.
  - The public is sympathetic towards children but unwilling to fund solutions.
- In the 1980s, federal involvement and investment was at a minimum.
- Increased specialization has eliminated the older idea of child welfare workers having a holistic knowledge base.
- Risk assessment tools were developed for use by staff without social work degrees to assess clients without the staffs’ needing to have professional discretion.

**The Findings**

- There needs to be a connection between institutes of higher education, professional social work organizations, state agencies, and child welfare practitioners to establish a national movement for the reprofessionalization of child welfare.
- Child welfare workers need to be credentialed.
- There needs to be federal funding of child welfare.

**R2P Evaluation**

- This article gave a good history of the deprofessionalization of child welfare. There were also many ideas for those who wish to advocate reprofessionalization in child welfare.

**Ellett, A. J. (1999, March). *I quit! Can higher education diminish turnover in child welfare?*  
Paper presented at the annual program meeting of the Council on Social Work  
Education, San Francisco.**

- *This article examined the relevant literature for factors associated with turnover and retention, explored the role of social work education for improving retention, and explored gaps in knowledge.*

**The Study**

- Burnout consists of contextual, personal, and organizational factors.
- A review of the literature has shown that rather than trying to “save” those who have burned out, agencies need to establish preventative measures. This is accomplished by recruiting competent and qualified staff, supplying them with professional growth and development training, and if necessary supporting them in obtaining an MSW.
- Another study cited the lack of adequate supervision and bureaucratic distractions that are a leading source of staff burnout.
- Job satisfaction and organizational commitment independently contribute to turnover intention.
- Promotion, job challenge, and financial rewards are the best predictors of job satisfaction and turnover.
- Personal, social, psychological factors associated with remaining or leaving child welfare are probably different, and thus the factors are not mirror images of each other.
- States that require BSWs and MSWs have lower turnover rates.
- Social work curricula need to offer classes of real world significance and expose students to child welfare workers through guest lectures and internships.
- Mentoring new staff can help prevent burnout, and there needs to be a push to reprofessionalize social work.

**R2P Evaluation**

- This article raised several interesting points on dealing with burnout in child welfare. It is one of the few articles that examined why workers stay.

**Ellett, A. J. (2000). *Human caring, self-efficacy beliefs, and professional, organizational culture correlates of employee retention in child welfare*. Unpublished doctoral dissertation, Louisiana State University, Baton Rouge.**

- *This study of the child welfare workforce in Arkansas and Louisiana focused on the identification of factors predictive of child welfare employees' intent to remain employed in child welfare. The study hypothesized links between intent to remain and three constructs: (1) human caring, (2) self-efficacy, and (3) a professional organizational culture.*

### **The Study**

- The researchers derived from psychology literature the two psychological constructs (human caring and self-efficacy) and one organizational construct (professional organizational culture) that formed the independent variables for the study.
- The researchers collected data in the Spring of 2000 from all professional-level child welfare staff in two state-administered agencies.

### **The Methods**

- Researchers mailed a survey to 2,140 professional staff in the two states (Louisiana = 1,359; Arkansas = 781). The study had a response rate of 44.2% (956 usable surveys).
- The following measures used in the study were either newly developed or adapted from self-report measures used in prior research in child welfare, nursing, and education:
  - Employees' expressed intent to remain employed in child welfare,
  - The affective aspect of human caring,
  - Self-efficacy beliefs, and
  - Elements of professional organizational culture.
- The analysis of survey results used factored subscales of the measures; all of the subscales had acceptable levels of reliability.

### **The Findings**

- There was a positive relationship between child welfare employees' intent to remain employed in child welfare and their self-reported levels of human caring and self-efficacy.
- There was a negative relationship between employees' perceptions of the level of professional organizational deprivation (i.e., the degree to which the actual organizational culture was different from the preferred culture).
- All relationships were statistically significant at  $p < .05$ .
- Respondents with master's degrees reported higher levels of human caring and self-efficacy and higher levels of intent to remain than those with bachelor's degrees.
- Respondents with degrees in social work scored higher than those with degrees in other content areas.

### **R2P Evaluation**

- This was the only known study to date that examined the relevance of personal psychological variables of child welfare staff and of organizational culture to employee retention.



**Ellett, C. D., Ellett, A. J., Kelley, B. L., & Noble, D. N. (1996, February). *A statewide study of child welfare personnel needs: Who stays? Who leaves? Who cares?* Paper presented at the 42nd Annual Program Meeting of the Council on Social Work Education, Washington, DC.**

- *This paper described the results of a statewide professional personnel needs study conducted from 1994 to 1995 through the Louisiana State University, Baton Rouge.*

### **The Study**

- The paper gave a national review of child welfare, including the effects of CAPTA on the number of reported cases of child abuse and neglect. This was a key agent in the deprofessionalization of child welfare. The authors discussed the situation in Louisiana.

### **The Methods**

- The researchers administered a comprehensive survey to all professional personnel in Louisiana. They also completed a large number of on-site focus groups and individual interviews with child welfare staff. Finally, they conducted phone interviews with those who had recently left state child welfare agency jobs.
- The researchers mailed approximately 1,050 survey packets to all professional child welfare staff in each region of the state, and participants returned 768 (65%). Analysis varied depending on completion rates in each section.
- The researchers based focus groups and individual interviews on survey analysis results and input from key staff. Data collection from focus groups and individuals took place in July and August 1995 ( $n = 28$  individuals).

### **The Findings**

- The survey showed a normal distribution for demographics.
- The general level of employee morale was measured at 63.79%, and 74.7% felt they had personal competence to complete their job. The global job satisfaction rating was 58.14%.
- The researchers showed that job stress, burnout, and turnover was more complex than a simple understanding of job satisfaction.
- There was some relationship between job satisfaction and length of stay. There was lower satisfaction for those with between 4 and 12 years of service. Those with more than 12 years of service had the highest satisfaction level.

### **R2P Evaluation**

- This was one of few quantitative/qualitative studies that looked for patterns of job turnover/satisfaction in the child welfare workforce. It was a good reference for an empirically based study.

**Ellett, A. J., & Millar, K. I. (1996, September). *A phoenix rising: Creating a national movement for the re-professionalization of child welfare*. Paper presented at the Child Welfare Partnership Conference, Memphis, TN.**

- *This paper described the changing nature of professionalization in child welfare and offered suggestions on the need to develop a movement to reprofessionalize child welfare.*

### **The Study**

- It is more cost-effective to hire employees with MSWs because they require less training and less supervision.
- The author describes the history of the deprofessionalization of child welfare workers:
  - In 1974, the Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act (CAPTA) increased workloads, and many agencies could not fill all the needed positions with employees with MSWs. There were more positions open than workers with MSWs available.
  - During the 1960s and 1970s, there was competition from opportunities in clinical practice. Many workers with MSWs went into private practice rather than work for state child welfare agencies.
  - There was also a move toward increased specialization in child welfare, so fewer staff were able to cover all areas of child welfare work.
  - In 1980, the Adoption Assistance and Child Welfare Act led to inadequately funded mandates and lawsuits against public agencies unable to meet the new legal requirements.
- Some studies show that only 28% of child welfare staff have a social work degree.
- Social workers have lost power in the eyes of the courts and other organizations.
- Credentialing and compensation plans in child welfare are needed.

### **The Findings**

- The author offered several suggestions for the reprofessionalization of child welfare:
  - Degree requirements for all positions,
  - Professional career paths,
  - Credentialing as a core function of social work schools,
  - Legislation for adequate funding, and
  - Legislation making child welfare workers exempt from legal prosecution.
- More professionals may become available in the near future as managed care reduces mental health and private practices.

### **R2P Evaluation**

- This was a good reference for those who wished to develop advocacy campaigns around the workforce issue. There were several recommendations that could be used when meeting with state or national government representatives on the needs of the child welfare workforce.

**Ewalt, P. (1991). The trends affecting recruitment and retention of social work staff in human services agencies. *Social Work*, 36, 214–217.**

- *This article addressed factors related to the number of available social workers and trends that were likely to affect the expectations of those workers.*

**The Study**

- This study looked at all aspects of working conditions for social workers, including assigned roles and tasks and the expectations that individuals bring to those tasks.
- Population trends directly affect the labor pool and can affect the number of students of social work in college.
- Specialized agencies also affect the social work labor pool, in that they tend to draw away a number of potential state agency workers.
- There are some general assumptions that can be made about social work staff:
  - Societal trends that affect the general workforce will affect social workers as well,
  - Social workers have certain assumptions about the workplace, and
  - Satisfactory fulfillment of expectations is necessary to recruiting and retaining staff.
- There were some trends toward constricting the autonomy of MSW workers' decisionmaking ability, although their education and training allows them to work autonomously.

**The Findings**

- The author identified three trends that will affect recruitment and retention of social workers:
  - Career Orientation of Women—More women want a career with measurable promotions along the way.
  - Midlife Career Change—Many people go back to school and change from other careers to social work.
  - Newcomers to the United States—More people from other countries are becoming social workers in the United States, which could potentially change the climate of the workplace as they bring their cultural ideas to it.

**R2P Evaluation**

- This was an interesting article because it was published in 1991. Readers could determine if any of the trends came to pass. The article gave a good idea of the mindset of child welfare workforce researchers in the late 1980s.

**Fox, S. R., Burnham, D., Barbee, A. P., & Yankeelov, P. A. (2000). School to work—Social work that is: Maximizing agency/university partnerships in preparing public child welfare workers. *Journal of the National Staff Development and Training Association, 1*(1), 13–20.**

- *This article described a Kentucky program that links university social work schools with public agency trainers to enhance the educational experience of BSW students and prepare them to fill positions in the public sector of child welfare.*

### **The Study**

- In fall 1999, the pilot program combined the experience of seven undergraduate social work programs and public child welfare agency trainers to prepare students for immediate entry into the public sector at an advanced practice level.
- The partnership identified three things that incumbent staff need to emphasize:
  - Preservice preparation,
  - In-service training, and
  - Advanced learning opportunities.

### **The Methods**

- From 1996 to 1997, faculty and trainers developed curricula and practica for two special child welfare courses.
- Components of the pilot included:
  - Six universities,
  - Joint faculty/agency trainers forming curricula and teaching,
  - The same texts and tests at all universities,
  - Simultaneous delivery of courses via television,
  - Full tuition paid for participating students,
  - Employment at an agency at a high classification level,
  - A two-year commitment to the agency or the student had to pay back tuition, and
  - Process and outcome evaluations.

### **The Findings**

- Final  $n = 27$  (original  $N = 30$ ).
- Students in the program scored significantly higher on the family services, competency-based training ( $p < .0001$ ) than comparable BSW students.
- Trainees thought the program was extremely successful and recommended that all BSW students have exposure to it.

### **R2P Evaluation**

- This was a helpful study to demonstrate preparedness education for potential new staff. Unfortunately, the study was too recent to be able to determine if it will affect the overall length-of-stay in the child welfare field. Follow-up data will need to be collected.

**Fox, S. R., Miller, V. P., & Barbee, A. P.(2003). Finding and keeping child welfare workers: Effective use of Title IV-E training funds. *Journal of Human Behavior and the Social Environment*, 7(1/2), 67–81.**

- *This article reported on an evaluation of the pilot of the Public Child Welfare Certification Program (PCWCP), a Title IV-E-funded baccalaureate social work education and skills development program that Kentucky's public child welfare agency and a consortium of the state's schools of social work jointly created and sponsored.*

### **The Study**

- The Kentucky Cabinet for Children and Families and nine university social work programs created PCWCP to prepare baccalaureate social work students for competent practice in public child welfare.
- A design team of representatives from the cabinet and the university consortium developed the program.
- Core components of the model were two child welfare practice and theory courses; joint syllabi, tests, and texts for all participating universities; shared faculty; use of agency trainers as adjunct faculty for courses; intense field practicums in public child welfare agencies; agency/faculty/student retreats; completion of the agency's competency training before graduation; tuition and stipends for participants; entry into the agency at a higher level; and a two-year employment commitment.

### **The Methods**

- Six universities volunteered to participate in the PCWCP pilot. The team selected 30 junior or senior students, five at each university, through a process developed by the design committee. Of these students, 27 completed the program.
- The outcome evaluation included comparison of pre- and posttest scores of the 27 PCWCP students and a randomly selected cohort of 27 new employees in the agency competency training, and structured interviews with graduates and their supervisors six months after graduation. The interviews included open-ended questions and a rating scale that assessed graduates on 26 job skills. Supervisory ratings were done on the graduates only and did not include the comparison group.

### **The Findings**

- PCWCP graduates scored significantly higher on the pretest and posttest. Supervisory ratings of graduates' job skills averaged 4.1 on a 5-point scale. Responses to open-ended questions were also positive, with most supervisors agreeing that PCWCP graduates were better prepared to handle their job responsibilities than other new employees.

### **R2P Evaluation**

- This was a helpful account of the development of a unique agency-university program to prepare BSW students for competent child welfare practice. An especially interesting aspect of the model was the adoption of uniform course syllabi, tests, and texts, and sharing of faculty among the participating universities.

**Fryer, G. E., Miyoshi, T. J., & Thomas, P. J. (1989). The relationship of child protection worker attitudes to attrition from the field. *Child Abuse & Neglect, 13*, 345–350.**

- *This article detailed a study of child protection worker satisfaction and termination of careers in child welfare.*

### **The Study**

- Three hundred workers from 33 states and Washington, D.C., participated in the study.
- The researchers asked CPS workers to fill out a survey that noted attitudes toward child welfare work and attributes of workers.
- One year later, the researchers contacted all 34 participating agencies again for a status update on workers in the original sample.

### **The Methods**

- The researchers piloted and modified the survey with select CPS worker recommendations.
- Of the original 300 participants, the researchers included 187 in the follow-up. Another 110 had responded to the survey anonymously, and 3 others were only temporary workers.

### **The Findings**

- Of the 187 in the follow-up study, 15 (8%) had left child welfare work.
- Turnover was lower than expected and, compared with answers from anonymous respondents, those who responded with their contact information were less likely to leave.
- Workers who departed had not planned long-term careers in the field ( $p = .021$ ).
- Workers who departed were younger ( $p = .005$ ) and had less experience ( $p < .001$ ).
- The following two relationships approached significance as well:
  - Workers who were confident in their abilities were more likely to stay ( $p = .053$ ).
  - Peer support was of greater value to those who stayed ( $p = .069$ ).
- Overall, however, there were no real significant differences between those who stayed and those who left.

### **R2P Evaluation**

- Although this article was from 1989, many of its points are still salient. There was some preliminary exploration of retention variables.

**Gambrill, E. (1997). Social work education: Current concerns and possible futures. In M. Reisch & E. Gambrill (Eds.), *Social work in the 21st century* (pp. 317–327). Thousand Oaks, CA: Pine Forge Press.**

- *The author identified current areas of concern in social work education and recommended steps that would better ensure the transfer of the knowledge, skills, and values necessary for competent professional performance.*

### **The Study**

- The following problems prevalent in social work education were a basis for action:
  - Indoctrination rather than education: Discordant points of view may be punished rather than encouraged. Students are encouraged to rely on authority instead of questioning and thinking critically.
  - Promotion of ignorance: Arguments in opposition to popular points of view may be ignored or suppressed.
  - Ignoring research findings: Social work programs are not designed based on the best methods of learning.
  - Not assessing competencies and outcomes: Educators rarely conduct assessments using measures of baseline knowledge and ongoing learning.
  - Prevalence of fads and rituals: Untested methods are disseminated.
  - Lack of focus on development of self-directed learning skills and integration of knowledge: Students are unprepared to take responsibility for own professional development and to integrate learning about methods, policy, and research.

### **The Findings**

- The following recommendations were made to address the concerns identified above:
  - Shift to problem-focused education model: Social work should focus learning on client problems. Critical discussion and scientific testing should be emphasized.
  - Value criticism as the route to knowledge: Students should be encouraged to question, think critically, and take a falsification approach to knowledge development. Emphasis must be placed on the evaluation of programs and policies to garner evidence about their effect.
  - Use findings of educational research: Use teaching methods supported by research and evaluate their effectiveness.
  - Identify competencies: Conduct systematic analysis of social work jobs to determine requisite competencies, rather than relying on opinion.
  - Social work institutions such as National Association of Social Workers (NASW) and Council on Social Work Education (CSWE) should support the critical investigation of program effectiveness and assessment of learning

### **R2P Evaluation**

- This piece did not pertain specifically to child welfare, but provided a critical overview of important issues in social work education, which are meaningful for any field of practice.

**Graef, M. I., & Hill, E. L. (2000). Costing child protective services staff turnover. *Child Welfare, 79*, 517–533.**

- *The purpose of this article was to demonstrate agency costs due to staff turnover using 1995 data. The article provided some of the cost centers needed to calculate this cost for any agency.*

### **The Study**

- New staff are a great expense to agencies in both time and money. New employees often need extensive training before they are ready to take on a full caseload.
- Researchers created a cost-benefit analysis based on worker attrition. This article listed components that make up the total cost per vacant position.
- There are three specific cost elements related to CPS turnover: separation costs, replacement costs, and training costs.
- For each of the three factors, there is a time cost, a payment to staff, and materials cost.
- If a less experienced person replaces a more experienced, departing staff member, there is a cost associated with the difference in productivity, called the *productivity differential*.
- The authors conservatively estimated a cost of \$10,000 per vacancy in 1995 dollars.

### **The Findings**

- One way to avoid turnover is to provide a realistic preapplication job preview to potential applicants, which would cost less to create than the cost of one CPS vacancy.
- Another way is to develop sophisticated screening methods before an applicant is hired.

### **R2P Evaluation**

- This article listed the cost centers needed for an agency to estimate the costs per staff vacancy. The recommendations at the end of the article offered the agency director cost-effective ways to avoid high turnover.



**Harrison, S. G. (1995). Exploration of factors related to intent to leave among child welfare caseworkers. *Dissertation Abstracts International, Humanities and Social Sciences*, 56.**

- *This article examined workers' intent to leave before actual job termination.*

### **The Study**

- This article explored several theoretical perspectives, including exchange theory, conflict theory, and reasoned action theory.

### **The Methods**

- The author performed an exploratory study of 226 child welfare workers employed at a public agency in an Ohio county using a 98-item, self-administered questionnaire.

### **The Findings**

- The researcher conducted correlation analysis and found 19 variables were significantly associated with intent to leave.
- Using multiple regression, the researcher was able to find nine predictor variables that would explain 50% of the total variance.
- Key predictors included:
  - Commitment to organization,
  - Commitment to career,
  - Years in public child welfare,
  - Adequacy of training,
  - Psychological rewards,
  - Caseworkers with own children aged 13 to 18,
  - Administrative support,
  - Student placements or internships in child welfare, and
  - Current assignment.

### **R2P Evaluation**

- This research would be helpful to Ohio administrators looking at recruitment and retention of child welfare workers. Caution should be used when applying this research to other areas of the county because the study was small and concentrated in Ohio.

**Helfgott, K. (1991). *Staffing the child welfare agency: Recruitment and retention*. Washington, DC: Child Welfare League of America.**

- *This book was part of the CWLA Biennial Implementation Task Force Subcommittee on Staffing Child Welfare Services. Included are recommendations and sample surveys for staffing and retaining competent child welfare workers.*

### **The Study**

- Chapter one detailed the many challenges of staffing child welfare agencies, including:
  - Increasingly complex demands for services;
  - Lack of resources for clients;
  - Increasing workloads, inadequately trained workers, and inadequate compensation; and
  - Limited liability protection and negative public image.
- Chapter two detailed how agencies can resolve the staffing crisis, including:
  - Enhancing public relations;
  - Recruiting, with several agency examples;
  - Screening and interviewing successfully;
  - Selecting competent staff and recruiting minority staff;
  - Creating culturally supportive work environments;
  - Orienting new staff and having ongoing staff development;
  - Building careers and using performance-based evaluations;
  - Providing financial compensation, flexible work schedules, and realistic workloads;
  - Improving worker safety and reducing the threat of liability;
  - Providing affirmation, recognition, competent management, and staff participation; and
  - Providing collegial work environments and resources for meeting client's needs.
- Chapter three examined and addressed workforce issues using several instruments, including:
  - A checklist of factors in recruitment and retention,
  - A job satisfaction survey of current staff,
  - Exit interviews, and
  - Calculation of staff turnover and vacancy rates.

### **R2P Evaluation**

- This book offered helpful examples of what agencies are doing to combat workforce issues. Each section detailed examples that are worth exploring further. Very helpful tools were included in Chapter Three, which could be adapted and used by agencies interested in surveying their workforce.

**Hopkins, K. M., Mudrick, N. R., & Rudolph, C. S. (1999). Impact of university/agency partnerships in child welfare on organizations, workers, and work activities. *Child Welfare, 78*, 749–773.**

- *This article used findings from focus groups with supervisors and workers to explore the effect of MSW education on changes in personal behavior, structure, and technological organization.*

### **The Study**

- Problems identified in most agencies include training and worker skill level, organizational structure, and procedural rigidity.
- Focus groups were held in two urban and two rural county child welfare agencies in New York that were engaged in university/agency partnerships for MSW education of workers.
- Studies have shown that there are links between education and decisionmaking and between decisionmaking and effective job performance.

### **The Methods**

- This study was based on 1985 research that suggested there were three components in assessing organizational change:
  - Personal behavior change,
  - Structural change, and
  - Technological change.
- All participants ( $n = 26$  workers with MSWs or about to graduate with an MSW;  $n = 16$  supervisors) had been with the agency more than five years. The samples were similar to the social worker population in the community.
- Two people transcribed the focus group tapes, and the authors reviewed the transcripts. This process helped ensure interrater reliability.

### **The Findings**

- Both workers and supervisors said the workers who participated in the project had increased confidence, greater sensitivity to clients, enhanced skills, better sense of empowerment, and better understanding.
- There were modest changes in patterns of communication, and workers were able to take on more responsibility and experienced more freedom.
- A problem was that workers were taught a strengths-based perspective in school but worked with a deficit orientation to clients. They felt frustration with the old way of doing things.
- The MSW students were ready for the new New York State computer system.
- Challenges included retaining newly trained staff, providing continuing education, and stimulating newly educated workers.
- Challenges for the school included developing curricula for those with social work experience and internships at other agencies instead of their own agency.

### **R2P Evaluation**

- This article was a good example of agency/university partnership to improve outcomes for social workers.

**Jayaratne, S., & Chess, W. (1984). Factors associated with job satisfaction and turnover among child welfare workers. In J. Laird & A. Hartman (Eds.), *A Handbook of child welfare: Context, knowledge, and practice* (pp. 760–766). New York: Free Press.**

- *This chapter examined job satisfaction rather than burnout for child welfare workers.*

### **The Study**

- This study examined job satisfaction for three reasons:
  - There was little research on social workers' perceptions of their jobs,
  - Job satisfaction and worker burnout were very different issues, and
  - Job satisfaction had been conceptualized and operationalized better than burnout.

### **The Methods**

- The dependent variables included global indicators of job satisfaction and intent to leave.
- The researchers also used seven predictor variables:
  - Comfort,
  - Challenge,
  - Finance rewards,
  - Promotions,
  - Role ambiguity,
  - Role conflict, and
  - Workload.
- Researchers mailed surveys to the original 1,173 randomly selected social workers who had NASW membership. They received a 72.7% return rate.
- The analysis was based on the child welfare workers in the sample. Criteria for inclusion included working full-time and being currently in practice. This resulted in a final sample of 99 participants.

### **The Findings**

- Many respondents were satisfied with their jobs, yet many expressed their desire to look for other employment within one year.
- Many believed that their compensation was fair.
- The seven predictor variables did not account for turnover. The researchers concluded that there must be some unknown variables affecting turnover rates.
- Challenge, promotion, and financial rewards emerged as significant predictors of job satisfaction.

### **R2P Evaluation**

- Despite the age of the study, it was one of the few studies on job satisfaction among child welfare workers. The sample was larger than other studies' samples, and the results were consistent with other, similar studies.
- This was a good article for those conducting survey research in child welfare workforce issues.

**Jayaratne, S., & Chess, W. (1984). Job satisfaction, burnout, and turnover: A national study. *Social Work, 29*, 448–453.**

- *This study compared job perceptions of family service workers, community mental health workers, and child welfare workers to see if there were any significant differences among the three groups.*

**The Study**

- The authors noted that most of what has been published on the child welfare workforce is conceptual, theoretical, or anecdotal in nature.
- In this study, the authors compared self-reports of job satisfaction, burnout, and a variety of organizational variables related to work stress.

**The Methods**

- Researchers used the stress variables: role ambiguity, role conflict, and workload.
- Data were collected from the national survey of NASW members in 1981.
- The study only looked at employees with MSWs working in community mental health ( $n = 144$ ), child welfare ( $n = 60$ ), and family service ( $n = 84$ ).

**The Findings**

- Similarities were found among the groups based on marital status, time in position, income, and gender.
- Differences arose among the groups in age and year of MSW award. Also, 67% of workers younger than age 40 were in community mental health.
- The researchers also measured job satisfaction and feeling of success.
- Despite a lot of positive feelings toward the above two, 40% felt they would look for a new position in the next year.
- Child welfare workers felt the most environmental and job stress. They also felt unchallenged by their work.
- The researchers recommended that to prevent worker attrition, employers must define the job clearly and improve the workspace.
- Those with the highest caseload were mental health workers, but the child welfare workers, who had the smallest caseloads, felt their caseloads were unmanageable.
- No group reported significant levels of burnout.
- A one-size-fits-all approach to staff retention will not work because of different perceptions and needs of the workers.

**R2P Evaluation**

- This article raised important points about the perceived differences in MSW workers who work in various settings but as an older study, the results must be taken in context.

**Kagan, S., & Neuman, M. (1996, January). The relationship between staff education and training and quality in child care programs. *Child Care Information Exchange*, 107.**

- *This study compared three national child care studies to identify the relationship between general and focused education on the quality and appropriateness of child care.*

### **The Study**

- This article compared three national child care studies:
  - the National Day Care Study (NDCS), which investigated the quality and cost of child care centers for preschool children, toddlers, and infants from 1975 to 1977;
  - the National Child Care Staffing Study (NCCSS), which explored how staff characteristics and working conditions influenced the quality of center-based child care in 1988; and
  - the Cost, Quality, and Child Outcomes Study (CQCO), which examined the relationships among the cost of child care, its quality, and its concurrent effects on children in centers in 1993.

### **The Methods**

- The analysis of three different studies conducted over almost three decades presented a number of methodological challenges. To limit the difficulties the authors established general definitions for use in the article.

### **The Findings**

- **General Education:** NDCS found that test scores of preschool children did not rise as a result of an increase in the number of years of general education completed by the staff, but that the number of years of staff general education was positively correlated to several factors for infants and toddlers. NCCSS and CQCO found that high levels of general education were correlated with appropriate caregiving.
- **Early Childhood Education (ECE) and Related Training:** NDCS identified ECE-related training as the key ingredient for more appropriate caregiving. NCCSS did not identify ECE-related training as a strong predictor of preschool teacher's behavior, but noted that it provided infant and toddler teachers with knowledge to understand the unique, rapid, episodic development of infants and toddlers.
- **In-Service Training:** The limited sample of the NCCSS study that had received in-service training indicated that such training increases the sensitivity and appropriateness of caregiving and decreases detachment and harshness.
- **Interaction of Levels of Specialized and General Education:** All the studies demonstrated that it is difficult to attribute more appropriate caregiver behavior to just one aspect of professional background.

### **R2P Evaluation**

- This provided a useful summary of several projects that researched the effect of education on quality and appropriateness of caregiving with very young children. The results were hard to interpret, however, and seemed to contradict one another.

**Kravitz, S. (1991, April). *Professional social work education in public child welfare: Where do we stand? Where are we going?* Presented at the National Child Welfare Symposium, Alexandria, VA.**

- *This article reported on a qualitative study of the status of education for public child welfare practice in schools of social work.*

### **The Study**

- The researcher interviewed faculty and representatives of public child welfare agencies in 14 southern and western states and two provinces of western Canada.
- The researcher identified salient factors in the relationship between public child welfare agencies and schools of social work and also addressed the roles of national professional organizations and the federal government in child welfare education and training.

### **The Findings**

- Three main issues emerged:
  - There was substantial variability in the amount and quality of communication between public agencies, schools, professional associations, and the federal government, with some agencies and schools having strong, close relationships and others having little contact.
  - Schools of social work and agency leaders must work together on a long-term basis.
  - Funding must be long-term and support professionalization of child welfare.
- Subissues included leadership, faculty qualifications, curriculum (both field practicum and curriculum materials), and the role of the federal government and professional organizations.
- The study offered the following strategies to improve the capacity of schools and agencies to prepare child welfare practitioners:
  - Encourage more research in public child welfare practice,
  - Make continuing social work education more available to child welfare workers, and
  - Reward faculty who update their practice and teaching skills in areas relevant to child welfare.
- Agencies and schools must jointly create strong child welfare course content and practicum experiences.
- The author also called for greater leadership on the part of the U.S. Children's Bureau and better education and coordination concerning the availability of training materials and funding for further training.

### **R2P Evaluation**

- This study identified several important issues related to education of public child welfare staff and suggested strategies for addressing them. Because it was written in 1991, some changes have taken place in the circumstances it described; however, most are still relevant.

**Leighninger, L. (1987). Social work and public service: Efforts toward a professional public welfare program. In L. Leighninger (Ed.), *Social work: Search for identity* (pp. 77–101). Westport, CT: Greenwood.**

- *This chapter examined the history of social work starting in the 1930s, when social work began to evolve into its current form.*
- **The Study**
- In the 1930s, there were few opportunities for educated women to work. Many became social workers because it was acceptable.
- In 1920s Chicago, two women began to shape today's social work. They believed that a successful and professional field needed people with education.
- Other women joined them in working toward the professionalization of social work. They helped develop case record filing and confidentiality procedures.
- At this time, the government created the Bureau of Public Assistance and the Children's Bureau. These two agencies had fundamentally different opinions on child and public welfare. Their disagreements stemmed from a difference of opinion over whether the federal public welfare program should be comprehensive or just for certain groups.
- Both bureaus agreed that an educated and competent staff was needed for success.
- A large problem in the 1930s was that many social and public welfare positions were political appointees. Many state and county personnel lacked education and expertise. The Bureau of Public Assistance pushed for in-service training for these employees.
- On a positive note, by the end of the 1930s, many schools had accepted public welfare courses as part of their social work curricula. In contrast, states set their own minimum education requirements for social work, which were often lower than what was recommended.
- By the end of the 1930s, there was a shift toward establishing state and local standards, not federal ones. Many social work positions were still politically motivated.
- There was a backlash against social workers, who were considered "outsiders" to both families and politicians. Some of this backlash was eliminated by the 1939 amendments to the Social Security Act.

### **R2P Evaluation**

- This article gave the reader a comprehensive history of the social work field, including names and dates of importance. The article was helpful for those who want to place modern social work in a historical context.



**Leighninger, L., & Ellett, A. (1998, March 7). *De-professionalization in child welfare: Historical analysis and implications for social work education*. Paper presented at the Annual Program Meeting of the Council on Social Work Education, Orlando, FL.**

- This paper traced the historical development of the child welfare workforce in the United States and identified factors that led to deprofessionalization in the current system.

**The Study**

- The following are part of the concept of *professionalization*, as it pertains to child welfare:
  - Upgrading child welfare staff via preservice education,
  - Establishing and maintaining high standards for professional credentialing,
  - Making a commitment to ongoing professional development, and
  - Creating more societal and political concern for children and their needs.
- Deprofessionalization is the reduction or elimination of minimum education requirements.
- The U. S. Children’s Bureau placed strong value on the use of professionally educated social workers and provided the impetus for counties and states to set high standards.
- After the 1950s several events resulted in a decline in social workers:
  - The 1962 service amendments to the Social Security Act, resulting in combining child welfare with public assistance, a largely nonprofessional workforce;
  - The 1964 enactment of CAPTA, which resulted in a huge increase in reporting child abuse and neglect without a proportionate increase in resources;
  - Development of specializations in child welfare;
  - Competing clinical opportunities in social work;
  - Shift to a case management model; staff were seen only as brokers of services;
  - Class action lawsuits, which consume large amounts of time and resources and create an environment that makes child welfare less attractive to social workers;
  - Allegation models, which apply a law enforcement model to CPS;
  - Rationing services by limiting eligibility and expanding criteria for discharge; and
  - Focus of resources on family preservation programs at expense of other services.
- The following effects of deprofessionalization were discussed:
  - Civil service credentialing, which promotes labor rather than professional model;
  - Increased turnover among child welfare staff;
  - Lost status of child welfare among social workers and the public; and
  - Societal beliefs about the value of child welfare services, which reflect the perception that programs are often ineffective and not worth funding.
- Several implications for social work education were identified:
  - The need to strengthen child welfare content in curricula,
  - The need to advocate for professional social workers in child welfare,
  - Advocacy for credentialing and collaboration between schools and agencies, and
  - Research focused on job performance and requisite skills and education.

**R2P Evaluation**

- This paper provided a detailed historical analysis of workforce issues in child welfare. The implications identified for social work education were consistent with those of other writers.

**Lewandowski, C. (1998). Retention outcomes of a public child welfare long-term training program. *Professional Development: International Journal of Continuing Social Work Education*, 1, 38–46.**

- *This descriptive analysis of outcomes of a Title IV-E–funded BSW and MSW education program examined the preparation of graduates for work in child welfare and their retention in a public agency. Retention of minority graduates was also discussed.*

### **The Study**

- The Title IV-E training program that was the focus of this article was designed to prepare graduates for work in public child welfare, to fill positions in underserved areas, and to increase the number of minority social workers. The study sought to identify benefits of the program, which operated in Kansas from 1990 to 1996 before being discontinued when child welfare services were privatized.

### **The Methods**

- The researcher collected data from the program’s records and from the public agency’s personnel database. Program graduates, agency administrators and supervisors, and social work educators participated in a mailed survey to assess the program’s benefits.

### **The Findings**

- During the six years of its existence, the program admitted 203 (55.5%) of 363 applicants. Twelve of them withdrew or were terminated from the program before graduation, leaving a total of 191 (116 BSWs; 66 MSWs). The public child welfare agency employed 95% (182) of the graduates. Other findings reported are:
  - Two years later, 67 (58%) remained with the agency.
  - Graduates employed by the agency prior to admission to the training program tended to remain longer than those who became employed only after graduation.
  - BSW graduates were retained by the agency at a higher rate than MSW graduates.
  - Some agency administrators felt that Title IV-E graduates were better prepared for their jobs than others; other administrators felt that they were equally well prepared.
- The author pointed out that the provision of appropriate education and training is only part of the solution to the workforce problem in child welfare. Other issues must be addressed:
  - Declassification, which minimizes the importance of professionalism;
  - Administrative support of employees;
  - Better financial compensation and opportunities for job advancement;
  - Adoption of a clinical focus;
  - Flextime focused on needs of clients; and
  - A client-centered approach to paperwork.

### **R2P Evaluation**

- The descriptive design did not allow for the systematic examination of differences between Title IV-E and non–Title IV-E child welfare staff. The study did, however, provide a good overview of workforce issues.

**Lieberman, A., Hornby, H., & Russell, M. (1988). Analyzing the educational backgrounds and work experiences of child welfare personnel: A national study. *Social Work, 33*, 485–489.**

- *This article assessed the current relationship of the profession of social work with the field. The assessment used results from a National Child Welfare Resource Center on Management and Administration study from of the University of Southern Maine.*

### **The Study**

- The researchers compared 10-year-old data with the data in this study. In this study,  $n =$  approximately 5,000 participants in 16 states.
- The role of social work in public child welfare services had been complicated due to four things:
  - Professionalization,
  - Privatization,
  - Declassification and reclassification, and
  - The absence of inducements to enter public welfare.

### **The Methods**

- Researchers mailed the survey to development directors in the 16 participating states.
- There was a 46% response return rate.
- The dependent variable was perceived preparedness, the independent variable was educational background, and the control was years of experience.

### **The Findings**

- There were more workers with bachelor of arts or science degrees than BSWs, despite evidence that workers with BSWs are more prepared for the job.
- This study reinforced findings of other studies on the value of MSW degrees in the field.
- The article suggested the establishment of workload standards, humanization of the workplace, and respite assignments.
  - Schools of social work must promote the idea of working in the public sector rather than in private practice.

### **R2P Evaluation**

- Although the study was more than 10 years old, the research is still pertinent for the field. There are other organizations conducting similar research today, and it may be helpful to compare current and 1988 results.

**Midgley, J., Ellett, C. D., Noble, D., Bennett, N., & Livermore, M. (1994). *Preliminary study of professional personnel needs: For the Louisiana state office of community services.* Baton Rouge, LA: Louisiana State University.**

- *This report described a study of factors related to employee retention and turnover in Louisiana's public child welfare agency.*

### **The Study**

- The researchers used mixed methods (quantitative and qualitative) in this study.
- Researchers interviewed 58 professional staff either individually or in small focus groups. Interviews were semistructured. They also mailed surveys to 120 staff members.
- The researchers drew the sample from direct services staff in one urban and one rural office and from administrative/managerial staff in the state's central office.

### **The Findings**

- Results of focus group interviews with local staff were grouped into the following categories:
  - Worker Expectations: Job expectations were explained; paperwork was not.
  - Promotional Opportunities/Remuneration: No opportunity for promotion without moving out of direct services, mistrust of performance evaluations and the civil service system, and a need for differential job duties for employees with MSWs. Pay and benefits were acceptable.
  - Public Perception: Negative image was a problem; lack of public understanding of responsibilities and limits of authority.
  - Organizational Support: Supervisors and colleagues strongly supported employees; employees received inadequate support from the larger organization.
  - Work Environment: Inadequate clerical support, crowded buildings, inadequate equipment, and employees had personal safety concerns.
  - Workload: Caseloads were variable but generally too high; on-call work intruded into personal lives. Workers received inadequate service resources.
  - Legal Liability: Lack of organizational support related to civil liability.
- Findings from administrative/management staff were similar in all categories except in the areas of work environment, in which views were generally more positive.
- Results of the mailed survey identified sources of job satisfaction and dissatisfaction:
  - Caseworkers: Satisfaction—salary, relationships with supervisor and coworkers, effect on clients. Dissatisfaction—salary, paperwork, not treated as professionals.
  - Supervisors: Satisfaction—salary, organizational support. Dissatisfaction—salary, “job is impossible to do,” responsibility without authority.
  - Management: Satisfaction—salary, relationships with coworkers, “job is possible to do.” Dissatisfaction—organizational support, communication structure, legalities/technicalities.

### **R2P Evaluation**

- This was a preliminary study with a small sample, but it used good methodology and provided insights into employee retention that were consistent with other research in this area.

**Morton, T. D. (1999). *Dumbing down the system betrays children and families*. Atlanta, GA: Child Welfare Institute.**

- *This article was about professionalism in child welfare.*

### **The Study**

- There is a history of agencies employing social workers without proper education and training. A 1977 survey showed that 75% of children received services from workers without BSWs, MSWs, or master of arts degrees in related fields.
- Title XX and, later, Title IV-E funding provided money for training. Many questioned the relevance of this training to daily work, however.
- Examples showed that the system was “dumbing down” rather than hiring more qualified staff. Examples included:
  - Instead of using sound judgment based on education and experience, many social workers were asked to use the number of children in a home or family income level to decide whether a child should be removed from the home. Child welfare is not that simple, and there are always other factors involved.
  - Many staff were unprepared to conduct assessments. Therefore, services were prescribed without adequate assessment.
- The author offered two final thoughts on this issue:
  - Poor children do not deserve poor services, and
  - Agency executives need to look at their staff with the question in mind, “Would I want these people working with my family?”

### **R2P Evaluation**

- Although this article was a short opinion piece, it did offer insight into personal and professional aspects of the workforce.

**Mueller, C. W., & Orimoto, L. (1995). Factors related to the recruitment, training, and retention of family child care providers. *Child Welfare*, 74, 1205–1221.**

- *This article identified factors related to recruiting, training, and retaining family child care providers in two rural communities.*

**The Study**

- The authors found that it was difficult to get family child care providers to become licensed, although research suggests that those who are licensed provide better services and more quality care.
- The hardest part of recruiting, training, and retaining family child care providers was retention. Many providers only stayed in business until their own children were old enough to go to school.
- In this study, the researchers examined two training models with a mixed-evaluation design.

**The Methods**

- The sample was 96% female participants; 47% were Caucasian; the majority of the rest were Asian or Pacific Islander.
- The researchers used the first 125 people to join the program.
- Both rural programs received state money as demonstration projects.
- Each day care home and all occupants had to pass safety, criminal, and health checks.
- The study gave small grants to participants to help defray the costs associated with starting their businesses.
- Data collection:
  - The researchers used pretraining and posttraining measures in seven categories of knowledge,
  - They completed telephone or in-person interviews with a random selection of participants within two months of program completion, and
  - They conducted in-person interviews with a smaller group of participants 12 to 18 months after program completion.

**The Findings**

- There were significant gains ( $p < .05$ ) in:
  - Schedules and routines,
  - Group guidance and child management,
  - Bookkeeping and taxes, and
  - Child development.
- Of the original 125, 92 completed the program, and within two months they were providing services.

**R2P Evaluation**

- This study was a good start on using a mixed-method evaluation model to examine training programs for child care workers. It would have been helpful if the two sites had been identified by location.

**O'Donnell, S. (1992). Re-thinking accountability in child welfare. *Child and Adolescent Social Work Journal*, 9, 261–270.**

- *The author commented on developments in child welfare accountability from the standpoint of public administration. The author emphasized legislative control and external monitoring of child welfare services by the courts and viewed citizens' groups as having the potential for adverse effects. The author advocated a revised approach to accountability that better supported the provision of skilled and effective child welfare services.*

### **The Study**

- The Adoption Assistance and Child Welfare Reform Act of 1980 (P.L. 96-272) relied on increased oversight of the child welfare system as a means of ensuring that adequate efforts were made to reunify families or to make alternative permanent plans for children.
- The author suggested that the limits of what regulation can accomplish may have been reached and that true accountability should focus on the development of a system that can deliver good services to children and families. The author argued:
  - Monitoring does not address the central concern, which is quality social work practice.
  - Tight control and loss of autonomy may drive most qualified staff away from the field.
  - Unless the role of monitors (i.e., courts, reviewers, court-appointed special advocates, etc.) is clearly delineated, accountability may actually be diminished due to blurred lines of authority.
  - Legislatively prescribed casework protocols result in misdirected resources and wasted time.
  - Emphasis is shifted from service delivery to documentation.
- An alternative approach would better achieve accountability through the following:
  - Shift focus to the development of a service delivery system built on knowledge of what works (i.e., small caseloads, intensive casework services, trusting client-worker relationships).
  - Professionalization of practice must be made a reform priority.
  - Shift the quality assurance focus from the review of work after the fact to doing it well in the first place (i.e., a total quality management approach).
  - Legislators must be responsible for the elimination of cross-system barriers to the delivery of comprehensive services to child welfare clients.
  - Internal and external stakeholders must work together to share responsibility for accountability in a way that promotes cooperation and eliminates hostility.

### **R2P Evaluation**

- This article offered useful insights into attempts at child welfare reform from the standpoint of public administration. A fundamental premise of the author's position was the importance of a skilled and stable workforce.

**Okamura, A., & Jones, L. (2000). Re-professionalizing child welfare services: An evaluation of a IV-E training program. *Research in Social Work Practice, 10*, 607–621.**

- *This article described a study conducted in the San Diego County Department of Social Services, Children’s Services Bureau (CSB). The sample consisted of graduates of a Title IV-E MSW program at San Diego State University who were hired by CSB between 1994 and 1996, and a comparison group hired during the same period who did not attend the Title IV-E program. Results showed significant differences between the groups on some key variables.*

### **The Study**

- This evaluation sought to determine whether Title IV-E–trained staff differed from others hired during the same time period on the following:
  - Basic child welfare knowledge measured prior to initial training,
  - Job satisfaction, and
  - Retention rates.
- The study also attempted to identify other predictors of staff retention such as demographic factors and satisfaction with salary, level of responsibility, and self-perceived competency.

### **The Methods**

- The sample comprised 266 caseworkers, 39 of whom were Title IV-E graduates and 227 of whom were not. The entire sample completed the CSB five-week initial training.
- Of the total sample, 77% had master’s degrees, with 48% being MSWs and the remainder being in related fields, primarily marriage and family counseling. Most of those holding MSWs had graduated from San Diego State University, but those in the comparison group were not enrolled in the Title IV-E program.
- Members of the comparison group, although new CSB employees, tended to have greater related experience.

### **The Findings**

- Title IV-E program graduates scored significantly higher on basic child welfare knowledge and self-perceived child welfare competencies, and they tended to remain with the agency longer.
- Non–Title IV-E workers tended to be more satisfied with their coworkers and to experience less stress associated with court appearances, whereas Title IV-E workers were more satisfied with their level of responsibility, the amount of respect received from others, and their salary, and they experienced less stress associated with home visits.

### **R2P Evaluation**

- This study represented a good addition to the body of knowledge emerging from evaluations of Title IV-E programs around the country. It pointed out areas for further work, such as the need to examine the effects of changes in the work environment as well as those in the preparation of workers.



**Pasztor, E., Saint-Germain, M., DeCrescenzo, T. (2002). *Demand for social workers in California*. Unpublished report commissioned by the California Assembly through the California State University Faculty Research Fellows Program, Sacramento, California.**

- *This descriptive study was commissioned in response to growing concern about the critical shortage of persons available to fill public sector social services positions in California.*

### **The Study**

- Researchers were charged with clarifying the need for social workers and social services positions in order to provide information and recommendations to the state legislature for ways to meaningfully address the growing shortage of staff.

### **The Methods**

- A review of the literature and of California statutes was conducted as a basis for better understanding the need for social workers.
- The following data were collected from social services agencies:
  - Number of positions and their distribution across programs;
  - Educational requirements for positions and the number filled by waiver of educational requirements;
  - Number of vacancies;
  - Anticipated increases or decreases in positions; and
  - Agency's definition of "social worker."

### **The Findings**

- Social work was one of the fastest growing areas of employment.
- There were some California statutes and regulations concerning educational requirements and training.
- Wide variation existed among county agencies in the definition of "social worker"; the most critical skill identified was the ability to perform an assessment to determine the need for services.
- The vacancy rate in California public sector social services jobs was 9.5%, approximating the national rate.
- Education and training requirements for social services positions varied widely.
- Based on the above findings, the report made these recommendations: (1) Positions not requiring formal social work education should not carry a "social worker" title. (2) Opportunities for social work education should be expanded. (3) Improvements are needed in (a) public image, (b) working conditions (i.e., smaller caseloads, flexible work schedules, more support staff). (4) Compensation and benefits should be more commensurate with the demands of the job.

### **R2P Evaluation**

- This newly completed study identified critical factors which were supported in the larger literature on workforce in child welfare. The methodology used to project future needs for social services positions may provide a useful model for other states.

**Pecora, P., Briar, K., & Zlotnik, J. (1989). *Addressing the program and personnel crisis in child welfare* (Technical Assistance Report, Commission on Family and Primary Associations). Silver Spring, MD: National Association of Social Workers.**

- *This report discussed the child welfare workforce and identifies barriers to the recruitment and retention of well-qualified staff. Research supported the authors' recommendations.*

### **The Study**

- The authors pointed to research that suggested that employees with BSWs or MSWs were best suited for work in child welfare. Throughout the 1980s, funding for child welfare services diminished as the demand increased. This led to barriers in recruiting and retention:
  - **Low Minimum Qualifications:** Lack of a degree has been linked to greater turnover in child welfare. Recommendations: Job analysis to document requisite knowledge and skills, and education of administrators about increased long-term costs associated with underqualified staff.
  - **Poor Work Environment:** Child welfare agencies are often housed in crowded buildings and lack privacy; equipment and support staff may be lacking. Recommendations: Improved physical environment, supports, and equipment; flexible hours; and strategies to reduce paperwork.
  - **Very High Workloads:** Workloads render staff unable to provide adequate services and lead to increased turnover. Recommendations: National caseload standards, workload studies, and legislation of caseload limits.
  - **Low Salaries and Lack of Promotional Opportunities:** Salaries of child welfare staff tend to be lower than for other jobs of comparable difficulty. Recommendations: Advocacy, reclassification efforts that better delineate job duties and competencies required, and development of career ladders.
  - **Lack of Opportunities for Professional Development:** Funds that provided stipends for social work education during the 1960s and 1970s were eliminated. Recommendations: MSW programs, field placements, more child/family focus in courses, and use of federal grants/Title IV-E to provide tuition stipends.
  - **Poor Public Image:** Child welfare agencies are often criticized in the media, both unfairly and as a result of poor services. Recommendations: Increase in research to refine intervention efforts and create public relations campaigns.
  - **Liability Issues:** Child welfare staff may be the subject of personal lawsuits arising from their work, even when they have acted appropriately. Recommendations: Risk management and liability protection.

### **The Findings**

- The report concluded that a comprehensive strategy was needed to repair the child welfare system. Furthermore, resources must be provided that support prevention and reunification services rather than primarily foster care, as is now the case.

### **R2P Evaluation**

- This report gave an overview of problems affecting the child welfare workforce and offered strategies for addressing them.

**Pecora, P., Whittaker, J., Maluccio, A., & Barth, R. (2000). Organizational requisites for child welfare services. In P. J. Pecora, J. K. Whittaker, A. N. Maluccio, R. P. Barth, & R. D. Plotnick (Eds.), *The child welfare challenge* (2nd ed., pp. 437–457). New York: Aldine De Gruyter.**

- *This chapter delineated major child welfare workforce issues that have been identified in the literature and offered strategies to address them.*

### **The Study**

- Issues in recruitment, selection, and training:
  - Need for job descriptions that accurately reflect the knowledge, skills, and attitudes necessary for competent performance in child welfare;
  - Diminishing educational requirements in most states since 1978, in contrast with the growing number of studies that support the relevance of SW education;
  - Wide agency variance in addressing cultural competence; and
  - Lack of clear guidelines for supervision, supervisor-to-worker ratios, and essential knowledge, skills, and attitudes.
- Challenges to professionalization:
  - Low minimum qualifications,
  - High caseloads and worker turnover,
  - Diminished opportunities for education and training,
  - Poor working conditions,
  - Poor public image, and
  - Need for reforms in social work education.
- Performance criteria and appraisal methods:
  - Measurable performance criteria and practical performance appraisal methods.
- Evaluation of services:
  - Ensure that services are in accord with agency purpose,
  - Assess adequacy of agency resources in relation to service objectives,
  - Measure outcomes, and
  - Focus on service quality as well as outcomes.
- Quality supervision is a prerequisite for effective worker practice. A good supervisor:
  - Promotes family-centered philosophy,
  - Empowers,
  - Balances direction with need for worker autonomy,
  - Is available,
  - Serves as an ally and advocate for staff,
  - Acknowledges effective job performance,
  - Prevents workers' accumulation of large amount of overtime, and
  - Helps set priorities.

### **R2P Evaluation**

- This was a good overview of salient child welfare workforce issues supported by the literature.

**Reagh, R. (1994). Public child welfare professionals: Those who stay. *Journal of Sociology and Social Welfare*, 21(3), 69–78.**

- *This article was based on a 1990 study that looked at professionals who stayed in child welfare.*

### **The Study**

- During the 1980s, there was a decrease in employment opportunities in child welfare and an increase in reclassification, which led to fewer education requirements for jobs.
- A 1988 study showed that 28% of a child welfare sample had a BSW or MSW.
- The child welfare job routine made it difficult for workers to use flextime, take vacations, or attend training.
- In the 1980s, research tended to focus on burnout.
- The researcher designed this study to explore real work experiences of child welfare workers.

### **The Methods**

- The researcher drew the sample from current child welfare workers in Ohio.
- The researcher used several methods to recruit participants, including word-of-mouth and discussions with child welfare agencies.
- The sample ( $n = 18$ ) was evenly distributed geographically by population size. The workers had all been in child welfare for a minimum of five years.
- The researcher collected biographical data.

### **The Findings**

- Those who stayed did so because they wanted to help families and make life better for children.
- The workers who stayed incorporated their work into their daily lives.
- Some went into the field due to a spiritual calling, and many felt personal accomplishment.
- Many pointed out the fine line that existed between staying and burning out.
- Workers' suggested recommendations:
  - Legislators should consider the effect of laws on all parties, not just children.
  - Systems need to balance “peoplework” and paperwork.
  - Employers need to take issues of employee retention and recruitment seriously.

### **R2P Evaluation**

- This was a valuable article, that highlighted why people stay, as opposed to why they leave.
- The sample size was very small, and the results probably lacked generalizability.

**Rittner, B., & Wodarski, J. S. (1999). Differential uses for BSW and MSW educated social workers in child welfare services. *Children and Youth Services Review, 21*, 217–238.**

- *This article attempted to group social worker job tasks into categories that could best be performed by employees with BSWs and MSWs.*

### **The Study**

- The authors recognized the fact that not every agency can afford to staff their organization entirely with MSWs. Therefore, as this article suggests, although some duties need to be performed by a worker with an MSW, not all duties require this.
- The authors suggested that families can be placed on a continuum from low to high risk. Workers with BSWs have adequate training to aid low to moderate risk families.

### **The Findings**

- Employees with BSWs were prepared to be:
  - Hotline screeners,
  - Foster care case managers,
  - Caseworkers for low to moderate risk families, and
  - Recruiters for foster and adoptive parents.
- Employees with MSWs were prepared to:
  - Be initial investigators,
  - Be caseworkers for high-risk families,
  - Terminate parental rights,
  - Place children with adoptive parents, and
  - Supervise.

### **R2P Evaluation**

- This article was a good reference for agencies restructuring their staffing duties and requirements. It could also be a good guide for schools of social work to ensure they are meeting the basic educational needs of BSW and MSW students.

**Rome, S. H. (1997). The child welfare choice: An analysis of social work students' career plans. *Journal of Baccalaureate Social Work*, 3(1), 31–48.**

- *This article presented the results of a large-scale, empirical study to identify what makes bachelor's of social work (BSW) and master's of social work MSW students interested in pursuing child welfare work.*

### **The Study**

- The National Association of Social Workers (NASW) conducted a study that asked a large sample of social work students about their interest in pursuing child welfare careers, their perceptions of child welfare practice, and the effects of various incentives.

### **The Methods**

- The author mailed a survey instrument with 39 multiple-choice questions and one open-ended question to a systematic sample of student members of NASW (1,400 BSW students and 2,000 MSW students). The return rate was 54% (757) for BSW students and 25.5% (664) for MSW students, for an overall response rate of 35.5%.

### **The Findings**

- Of respondents, 22.2% said they hoped to be employed by a child welfare agency after graduation, whereas nearly twice as many (43.3%) definitely did not plan to seek child welfare work.
- Older students showed a disinclination to pursue child welfare employment, and those planning to pursue child welfare employment were slightly more likely to be single than married, divorced, or widowed.
- Students attending school in rural areas were more likely to pursue child welfare employment than those in urban or suburban settings.
- When asked to identify negative aspects of the child welfare field, respondents cited a variety of deficits in the field, including high caseloads, lack of interest, low salaries, unpleasant work environment, and rare positive outcomes.
- The study asked students not planning to seek employment in child welfare, and those who were undecided, whether various incentives would make them more likely to enter the child welfare field. The most popular responses were smaller caseloads, better salaries, ample preservice and in-service training, and forgiveness of student loans.
- Exposure to child welfare was critical; students with child welfare courses, field placements, and previous or current experience were equally likely to choose or not choose child welfare work, whereas students without these experiences are unlikely to enter the field.
- Most of the reasons cited for choosing child welfare reflected idealistic motives. Conversely some respondents were troubled by what they believed to be the mission of the child welfare system or were interested in another area of social work.

### **R2P Evaluation**

- The study was somewhat limited by the modest return rate, a sample limited to students who were members of NASW, and a small percentage of nonwhite social work students in sample.

**Russell, S., Lyons, J., Grigoriuc, M., & Lowman, B. (2001). *Working in child care in North Carolina*. Chapel Hill, NC: Child Care Services Association.**

- *This study provided a comprehensive picture of the qualifications, compensation, and working conditions of child care providers throughout North Carolina.*

### **The Study**

- The North Carolina Partnership for Children contracted with the Child Care Services Association (CCSA) to conduct a comprehensive study of the early childhood workforce in all 100 counties in North Carolina.

### **The Methods**

- The authors used written questionnaires to obtain information. These forms were modifications of forms CCSA previously developed.
- The authors selected child care centers and homes for participation from licensing reports of the North Carolina Division of Child Development.
- The authors mailed survey packets that included business reply envelopes to 3,069 centers, with enough surveys for 3,069 directors and 27,922 teachers; and to 2,972 family child care providers. They sent follow-up postcards, made phone calls, and sent survey mailings to programs that did not respond. They also asked local child care resource agencies to help secure responses.

### **The Findings**

- A range of questions pertained to working conditions and personal characteristics of child care providers, as well as employment benefits and professional support provided by centers.
  - Of centers, 44% did not offer paid sick leave, and 20% of center teachers and 28% of family child care providers did not have health insurance.
  - Of center-based teachers, 34% had received some type of public assistance in the last three years.
  - Teachers working in nonprofit centers earned higher wages than teachers in for-profit and faith-based centers. Teacher turnover was lowest in nonprofit centers.
  - Center directors and teachers surveyed in 2001 had more education in the child care field than those surveyed in the 1998 statewide workforce survey.
  - This survey reported an increase in compensation to a median hourly wage of \$7.25 per hour for center-based child care teachers.
  - Results indicated an increase in workforce stability, including the percentage of teachers with college degrees who said they planned to stay in the field.

### **R2P Evaluation**

- This study provided a comprehensive picture of child care providers in North Carolina and was rich in information. The report also included a set of multidimensional strategies to improve working conditions for the child care workforce and to enrich learning environments for children in their care.

**Rycraft, J. (1994). The party isn't over: The agency role in the retention of public child welfare caseworkers. *Social Work, 39*, 75–80.**

- *This article reported findings from an exploratory study to identify factors that may influence some caseworkers to continue their employment in public child welfare.*

**The Study**

- The author believed that too much emphasis was placed on turnover rates and not enough was placed on why people stay in child welfare employment.

**The Methods**

- The researcher developed a 54-question instrument to be used in comprehensive, one-on-one interviews.
- The sample included 23 child welfare workers in six agencies in a state-supervised, county-administered, public social service system.
- Inclusion criteria included a minimum of two years' experience in public child welfare, current work on direct caseloads, and employment by the county social services department.
- The sample averaged 11 years of work in public welfare, with a range of 2 to 25 years. Interviewees included 17 women and 6 men aged 29 to 61 years, with a mean age of 43. Of the respondents, 61% had social work degrees—8 held MSWs, and 6 held BSWs. The last two figures were not representative of nationwide public child welfare.
- The researcher identified four factors of employee retention:
  - Mission,
  - Goodness of fit,
  - Supervision, and
  - Investment.

**The Findings**

- Mission—Interviewees were very dedicated caseworkers who believed in their work.
- Goodness of Fit—Suitability to the job was extremely important for each caseworker.
- Supervision—Most described their interaction with their supervisor as guidance, rather than instruction and monitoring.
- Investment—The caseworkers described their investment as personal and professional.

**R2P Evaluation**

- This was an interesting qualitative study. Unfortunately, the sample size was very small and limited to one state. National applicability was limited.



**Samantrai, K. (1992). Factors in the decision to leave: Retaining social workers with MSWs in public child welfare. *Social Work*, 37, 454–458.**

- *This article examined factors that could influence the decision of employees with MSWs to leave public child welfare. The author interviewed a group who stayed and a group who left public child welfare.*

**The Study**

- The study had two purposes:
  - To ascertain workers' perceptions of job and work conditions, their personal motivations, and the adequacy of academic preparation for child welfare work.
  - To identify factors for those who stayed versus those who left.

**The Methods**

- The researcher drew the sample from people who had worked for the child welfare department of a large, urban California county for at least one year.
- The final, nonrandom sample included 20 people who continue to work there and 7 who left. Initially, the researchers asked 129 people who continue to work for the agency to participate.
- The researcher collected data through semistructured interviews and, from a review of the literature, identified four reasons people leave:
  - Nature of the work,
  - Working conditions,
  - Personal motivation, and
  - Educational preparation for the job.

**The Findings**

- Many felt their work was isolating and tedious because of paperwork.
- Many felt that the system as a whole worked against children and families.
- When asked if their degree prepared them for their job, many expressed unhappiness with their educational preparedness for the “real work.”
- For those who left, there were two crucial reasons: no viable alternative jobs in the agency and unsupportive supervisors.
- The article offered suggestions for agencies and schools of social work on how better to prepare and retain an MSW workforce.
- The author also acknowledged the need for more research in this area with more diversified groups.

**R2P Evaluation**

- This article highlighted research that had been done in other areas with similar results. However, the reader must take caution, because these studies were often exclusive in nature. The author did acknowledge the limits of the small sample size and location.

**Savicki, V. (2002). *Burnout across thirteen cultures: Stress and coping in child and youth care workers*. Westport, CT: Praeger.**

- *This book explored cross-cultural burnout in child and youth care workers.*

### **The Study**

- The book was divided into five parts:
  - Part one: Themes of the book included:
    - Conceptual basis for the field of child and youth care work,
    - Burnout, and
    - Culture.
  - Part two: Process, practice, and cultural comparisons included:
    - Structure of research,
    - Some descriptive results, and
    - Characteristics of the sample.
  - Part three: Culture and determinants of burnout included:
    - Pancultural analysis of burnout and
    - Configural analysis to consolidate findings.
  - Part four: Cross-cultural comparisons included country comparisons and in-country comparisons between cultures.
  - Part five: Themes related to burnout and recommendations for burnout prevention, treatment, and recovery.

### **R2P Evaluation**

- This book searched for commonalities across several cultures in the area of child and youth-worker burnout. The implications included a broader understanding of the similarities between cultures. The book offered recommendations on how to help workers achieve success and avoid burnout.

**Scannapieco, M., & Connell-Corrick, K. (2003). Do collaborations with schools of social work make a difference for the field of child welfare? Practice, retention, and curriculum. *Journal of Human Behavior and the Social Environment*, 7, 35–51.**

- *This article addressed the evaluation of Title IV-E funding for professional development of child welfare workers based on curriculum, practice, and retention.*

### **The Study**

- A review of the literature found job performance and preparedness, service delivery, retention, effect of a social work degree, and social work values as areas workforce research has covered.
- The authors discussed the Title IV-E partnership between the University of Texas at Arlington School of Social Work and the Texas Department of Protective and Regulatory Services (TDPRS).
- Study One:
  - Studied the effect of MSW Title IV-E program on students and community,
  - Included mailed surveys to current MSW students who were employed in child protective services,
  - Reflected student participants' positive feelings about the program's training, and
  - Increased relationship with TDPRS, especially among minority workers ( $p < .10$ ).
- Study Two:
  - Addressed the retention level of Title IV-E child welfare workers,
  - Showed a significance for salary rate and increased professionalism for Title IV-E program participants, and
  - Interviewed graduates who left child welfare services because of the low salary rate.
- Study Three:
  - Addressed the inclusion of child welfare content in the MSW curriculum,
  - Surveyed MSW students, and
  - Examined advanced courses that reflected more quality child welfare content than foundation courses.
- According to the studies, an MSW degree made a difference.

### **R2P Evaluation**

- This article took the perspective of the student, worker, and administrator, however, it might be interesting to see if client outcomes were different with the inception of the Title IV-E project (i.e. more cases closed and better outcomes for clients).

**Schneider, B., White, S. S., & Paul, M. C. (1998). Linking service climate and customer perceptions of service quality: Test of a causal model. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 83, 150–163.**

- *The purpose of this article was to see if organizations that provide proper working conditions for employees also have a proper service climate for customers.*

### **The Study**

- This study extended research in this field in three ways:
  - By not considering human resources practices and service climate separately,
  - By using structural modeling techniques, and
  - By using both employee and customer data from multiple points in time.

### **The Methods**

- The authors used survey data collected from employees and customers of 134 branches of a large northeastern bank.
- The authors collected survey responses from 2,134 employees in 1990 and 2,505 in 1992.
- The authors collected customer ratings of the banks from 3,100 people in 1990, 2,266 in 1992, and 1,900 in 1993. They then aggregated data from both employees and customers.
- They studied foundation issues, climate for service, and customer perceptions.
- The final  $n = 126$  branches of the bank.

### **The Findings**

- When employees struggled against organizational policies, their ability to satisfy customer needs was diminished.
- Both employees' and customers' "cycles of success" interacted, to the long-term benefit of both.
- Employee surveys that focused on organizational policies, practices, and procedures appeared to be valid. They related to important organizational outcomes.
- There was a direct positive relationship between interdepartmental service and customer feedback. Internal assistance was key.
- Management must build a strong foundation for employee support and listen to employees, because they were more in tune with the organization.
- Limitations of the study: There was no evidence of how long organizational change takes, sample size issues, or the validity of employee data.

### **R2P Evaluation**

- This article had implications for many fields, including social work and child welfare.
- The article was written at an advanced level and is suited for researchers and administrators.

**Seaberg, J. (1982). Getting there from here: Revitalizing child welfare training. *Social Work*, 27, 441–447.**

- *This article highlighted federal attempts to revitalize child welfare training with new curricula and training materials. The author of this article disagrees with the federal approach.*

### **The Study**

- The article reviewed child welfare over the past few decades, from child welfare staff primacy in the 1940s and 1950s to declassification in the 1970s.
- Initially, the federal government response to declassification was to create regional training centers for child welfare staff.
- According to the author, the field already had plenty of curricula and training materials. Therefore, training centers did not revitalize the field.
- Over the years, there were various modes of dissemination, but many were set up as projects that did not last long enough to have measurable effects.
- The author questioned whether regional centers could enhance schools of social work.
- Unions for public employees pushed for reclassification of social work. Agencies agreed, because it meant they did not need to pay as much for non-MSW staff. There was some research that indicated that MSW degrees did not make much difference in child welfare.
- The author asks, Could these proposed training centers fill the void left after reclassification? The author believed they could not. Child welfare workers have large caseloads and little time for training.

### **The Findings**

- The author stated that the government should concentrate on giving technical assistance to local organizations that were trying to revitalize child welfare training.

### **R2P Evaluation**

- Although this article was published in the 1980s, it is worth reviewing for those interested in child welfare training and curricula development and dissemination. The author raised many good questions that need to be answered.

Söderfeldt, M., Söderfeldt, B., & Warg, L. E. (1995). Burnout in social work. *Social Work, 40*, 638–646.

- *This article looked at studies in social work burnout to determine what was needed to improve this area of research.*

### **The Study**

- The authors initially determined there were not many research studies on burnout in social work.
- Some researchers felt that the term *burnout* was overused and often used incorrectly to describe those who do not feel like performing a duty any longer.
- The authors conducted a literature review and examined different theories on burnout. They cited MBI.
- Most of the studies reviewed for this article used MBI in their research.
- Looking at studies in aggregate, the authors could not determine patterns for all social workers. The samples did not match each other, and many response rates were low. Not every study came to the same conclusions as to the causes of burnout.
- Some researchers felt that studies in social worker burnout were nothing more than “data mining.”
- The authors compiled suggestions for preventing burnout from the various studies examined and suggested ideas for future research in the field.

### **The Findings**

- The authors suggested that researchers should eliminate the word *burnout* from social work research, unless studies were designed to indicate that there is a burnout phenomenon occurring.
- Instead of simply conducting burnout studies, studies should be based on the demand-control-support model of research.
- Researchers should design proper research studies instead of haphazard fishing expeditions.

### **R2P Evaluation**

- The authors of this article were very straightforward in their opinions of social work research on burnout. They raised many questions for those who are researching this field.
- This article raised the point that many people conduct research but there are few high-quality studies.

**Steel, R. P., & Ovalle, N. K. (1984). A review and meta-analysis of research on the relationship between behavioral intentions and employee turnover. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 69, 673–686.**

- *This article examined behavioral intentional and employee turnover. A review of the literature and a meta-analysis were included.*

### **The Study**

- The authors reviewed literature on behavioral intentions and employee turnover.
- Many researchers had attempted to link the two (intent and turnover), but the correlation had a wide variability.
- This study attempted to create a statistical estimate of the magnitude and stability of the relationship between intent and turnover.

### **The Methods**

- The authors borrowed and modified earlier meta-analytic models.
- A preliminary search found 34 studies. The researchers screened all studies for relevance and eliminated studies with duplicate samples.
- The researchers converted the results from the various studies for easy comparability.

### **The Findings**

- This meta-analysis showed that behavioral intention to stay was a better predictor than other relevant variables.
- Intent and turnover correlations produced in the field were smaller than correlations produced in a psychological laboratory.
- Timing of data collection in various studies played a role in study results.

### **R2P Evaluation**

- This article did not deal with social work exclusively. The study examined intent and turnover across fields. However, the results reflected findings in social work and child welfare workforce research. There were implications for the field of child welfare.
- This article was highly technical and is not recommended for the average reader. Those with a background in statistics would benefit from the article.

**Sullivan, R., & Needell, B. (1994). Should child welfare workers be required to pass periodic competency tests? In E. Gambrill & T. Stein (Eds.), *controversial issues in child welfare* (pp. 187–198). Needham Heights, MA: Allyn & Bacon.**

- *This article was a debate between a professor of social work and a doctoral candidate on the merits of child welfare workers' being required to pass periodic competency examinations.*

### **The Study**

- The professor argued in favor of periodic testing.
  - He claimed that child welfare workers should be required to pass competency tests because the decisions they make profoundly affect children and families.
  - Although many states have licensure requirements, MSW schools do not teach to requirements in the field. Many schools only introduce theories behind social work. They do not link the theories to practical application, leaving agencies to fill this void.
  - Therefore, competency tests are needed to ensure that staff are able to use decisionmaking skills.
- The doctoral candidate argued against competency testing.
  - She believed that this would discourage many from entering the field, and at this time, it is very hard to recruit quality staff.
  - It is impossible for one test to capture all of the intricacies of the work.
  - Also, many in the field cannot agree on what measures would indicate staff competence.
  - Schools are trying to make programs more responsive to real world practice.
  - Continuing education and training should be self-directed, not ordered or tested.

### **R2P Evaluation**

- This article raised interesting points in a debate that has been argued many times. Each side was well-researched and stated the argument in clear, concise language.



**Tett, R., & Meyer, J. (1993). Job satisfaction, organizational commitment, turnover intention, and turnover: Path analysis based on meta-analytic findings. *Personnel Psychology, 46*, 259–293.**

- *This article used meta-analysis to examine job satisfaction, organizational commitment, turnover intention, and turnover across studies. The researchers applied path analysis to meta-analytic correlations. This allowed for a more powerful study.*

### **The Study**

- The authors identified the three main theoretical models in workforce studies:
  - The satisfaction-to-commitment mediation model,
  - The commitment-to-satisfaction mediation model, and
  - The independent effects model.
- The authors defined the variables *job satisfaction* and *turnover intention*.
- This study used newer data and methods than other meta-analyses of workforce.

### **The Methods**

- The researchers reviewed psychological abstracts from 1968 to 1992 based on the variables *job satisfaction* and *organizational commitment*.
- They conducted statistical conversions (example: *t* tests to *r* tests).
- They excluded turnover rates from meta-analysis because the results were too disparate.
- They used moderator analysis and path analysis. Path analysis permitted direct comparisons among studies.

### **The Findings**

- Commitment to job did not necessarily strongly correlate with intentional cognitions any more than satisfaction did.
- This study was consistent with other studies, in that turnover intention and withdrawal were the strongest predictors of turnover.
- Global satisfaction with one's job did not correlate with other variables more strongly than facet (piecemeal) satisfaction.

### **R2P Evaluation**

- This article offered good insight into several workforce articles and studies. It brought together the results of many different studies and compared them for patterns.
- The article was extremely technical and was oriented toward researchers more than line staff or executives.

**Texas Department of Protective and Regulatory Services. (2001). *DASH: Delivering Accountable Services from Home: Regional 6 teleworking pilot final evaluation.* Austin, TX: Author.**

- *This article described an attempt by a public agency in Texas to address the high turnover rate of CPS caseworkers. The theory behind the pilot project was to have workers develop their own work schedules from their homes, allowing them the flexibility needed for meeting clients.*

### **The Study**

- The pilot included four units of six workers and their supervisors.
- The program allowed flexible schedules while maintaining unit meetings and face-to-face contact among staff.
- Supervisors worked on rotating schedules so there would always be supervisory support for workers.
- The pilot equipped home offices with all needed office supplies and machines. There was also office space available at the central office for those who needed it.
- All participants attended a one-day training on teleworking and learned about the program.

### **The Methods**

- The researchers chose four comparison groups with similar caseloads.
- Data collection included surveys, focus groups, data extracts from automated systems, human resources records, mileage records, information technology purchase records, and agency lease records.
- The researchers conducted pretests and posttests for the treatment and comparison groups.

### **The Findings**

- The study found that, for those in the treatment group:
  - Job satisfaction was improved,
  - There was a significant increase in compliance with quality standards,
  - Turnover decreased,
  - Supervisory relationships were strengthened,
  - There was no improvement in productivity and timeliness, and
  - Equipment expenses may contribute to future cost avoidance.
- The authors also examined future cost savings potentials.

### **R2P Evaluation**

- The DASH program was a promising alternative for CPS workers.
- The researchers needed to strengthen the empirical data and explore the cost issues.

**Tracy, E., & Pine, B. (2000). Child welfare and training: Future trends and influences. *Child Welfare, 64*, 93–113.**

- *The authors discussed trends in the social, economic, and political environment in relation to their implications for child welfare. Particular emphasis was placed on the need for collaborations between child welfare agencies and schools of social work.*

### **The Study**

- Important issues include:
  - Differences in levels of education (i.e., BSW vs. MSW),
  - Generalist versus specialist approaches in social work education, and
  - Differences between education (school-based) and training (agency-based).
- Major trends influencing the knowledge, skills, and attitudes needed by practitioners were:
  - Globalization,
  - Political conservatism,
  - Devolution of responsibility from federal to state governments,
  - Growth of technology,
  - Increased violence, and
  - Increased accountability.
- These trends implied the need for the following skills:
  - Understanding of cultural issues and multilingualism,
  - Planning,
  - Advocacy,
  - Policy development, and
  - Research and evaluation (including the development of measurable outcomes).

### **The Findings**

- Education and training in child welfare should emphasize collaboration, multiculturalism, family and community involvement, and the development of meaningful measures of child well-being.

### **R2P Evaluation**

- Although not research-based, this article brought together important social trends influencing the child welfare field and interpreted their implications for education and training of staff.

**U.S. Government Accounting Office. (2003). *Child welfare: HHS could play a greater role in helping child welfare agencies recruit and retain staff* (GAO-03-357). Washington, DC: Author.**

- *This government report highlighted gaps in the child welfare workforce.*

### **The Study**

- This study showed that to effectively provide child welfare services and meet federal performance goals, child welfare agencies must meet the challenge of a stable and highly skilled workforce.

### **The Methods**

- This report was based on:
  - Analysis of nearly 600 exit interviews from former child welfare workers,
  - A review of more than 27 state child welfare agency reviews, and
  - Interviews the U.S. General Accounting Office conducted with public and private child welfare agencies.

### **The Findings**

- The safety and permanence of children is hampered by large caseloads and worker turnover. This delays the timeliness of investigations and limits the frequency of worker visits with children.
- Workforce deficiencies, such as high caseloads, training deficiencies, and staffing shortages, affect outcomes for children and families in care.
- Child welfare staff have insufficient time to conduct the types of home visits necessary to assess a child's safety and make well-supported decisions.
- Trust between the child and the caseworker is critical, and the negative effect of turnover can be especially problematic in residential facilities, in which children and youth experience around-the-clock care. Worker turnover disrupts this trust and makes it difficult to get the information needed to make sound decisions. Transitions also make it difficult to maintain case records.

### **R2P Evaluation**

- This comprehensive study documented the effect workforce deficiencies have on the achievement of federally mandated outcomes for children, youth, and families involved with the child welfare system.

**Vinokur-Kaplan, D. (1987). Where did they go? A national follow-up of child welfare trainees. *Child Welfare*, 66, 411–421.**

- *This article was a follow-up to the 1981 study on child welfare traineeships.*

### **The Study**

- The goal of the program was to provide education and training for people committed to child welfare. The federal government made traineeship and teaching grants available.
- A review of the program in the early 1980s cast doubt on its efficacy.
- Some evaluators began to wonder if BSW or MSW degrees were actually useful for social welfare work.

### **The Methods**

- Of those in the study, 84% were employed in social work, including child welfare and other fields.

### **The Findings**

- Employees with BSWs were more likely to be working in fields outside social welfare than MSWs ( $p < .001$ ).
- More employees with MSWs worked in child welfare–related agencies compared with workers with BSWs ( $p < .05$ ).
- In social welfare agencies, there was a difference in the proportion of MSWs and BSWs/bachelor’s of arts ( $p < .05$ ).
- Overall, 70% of those in the original study were not working in child welfare agencies. That number declined, however, when child welfare was defined more broadly—more were in child welfare–related fields.

### **R2P Evaluation**

- This was a helpful follow-up to the original study. The findings showed that many remained in child welfare or other similar fields.

**Vinokur-Kaplan, D. (1991). Job satisfaction among social workers in public and voluntary child welfare agencies. *Child Welfare*, 70, 81–91.**

- *This article reviewed a national survey of social workers who received child welfare traineeships. The survey indicated that the workers were generally satisfied with their jobs.*

**The Study**

- The researcher surveyed people who graduated with either a BSW or an MSW and had received a child welfare traineeship. Interviews took place one year after their traineeship ended, with the goal of gauging their job satisfaction levels.

**The Methods**

- Those eligible for inclusion completed their traineeships between 1979 and 1980. Nationally, the author sent out 872 surveys in February 1981.
- The final sample of returned questionnaires was 413, a 58% response rate.
- The researcher compiled the results for a subsample of the 413 who were employed in social services agencies ( $n = 279$ ).
- Of the 279, 35% held BSWs, and 64% held MSWs, with 1% holding a doctorate in social work.

**The Findings**

- The researcher measured levels of work satisfaction on a five-point scale. The mean score of job satisfaction was 3.74. There was no statistical difference between MSWs and BSWs.
- Those in child welfare or child welfare–related agencies were the most satisfied. Those in social work were the least satisfied ( $p < .04$ ).
- The following factors were most frequently cited as contributions to job satisfaction:
  - Work with clients,
  - Work with colleagues, and
  - Feelings of accomplishment.
- Less frequently cited factors for those who were most satisfied were:
  - Working conditions,
  - Salary, and
  - Other things.
- Others cited dissatisfaction with the following:
  - Salary,
  - Work conditions, and
  - Feelings of accomplishment.
- All answers were consistent across work sites. There were no real statistically significant differences between public and private agency answers.

**R2P Evaluation**

- This article, although older, did cite data that could be relevant for today’s child welfare workforce issues. Job satisfaction levels and areas of satisfaction were important for child welfare workforce issues.

**Winefield, H., & Barlow, J. (1995). Client and worker satisfaction in a child protection agency. *Child Abuse & Neglect, 19*, 897–905.**

- *This article looked at client and staff satisfaction in a multidisciplinary child protection agency. The goal was to discover the nature and strength of the helping relationship between service recipients and providers.*

**The Study**

- The authors believed that one of the hardest relationships to form is between a social or child welfare worker and their client. Often, the client is very distrustful and isolated. It is a challenge to get them to trust anyone.

**The Methods**

- The 24 participants were from the client rosters. The researchers ran an analysis to ensure that the participant population was not significantly different from nonparticipants.
- All families were single, female-headed households, and there were 58 children included.
- All 21 staff members participated in this study.
- Outside evaluators conducted interviews of clients and staff. Interviewers read clients the questionnaire, but they asked the staff to fill out their own questionnaires.

**The Findings**

- Overall, clients seemed satisfied with the services they received from the staff.
- The staff were dissatisfied with pay, promotional opportunities, and organizational management but were very satisfied with supervisors and hours of work.
- There was a statistically significant inverse relationship between job satisfaction and caseload ( $p < .05$ ).
- Burnout was not an important issue for staff. Only 38% responded feeling emotionally drained by the work. The low number could be attributed to the fact that the agency only began the project 19 months earlier.

**R2P Evaluation**

- The authors did not spend much time reviewing client satisfaction and its effects on clients' relationships with caseworkers.