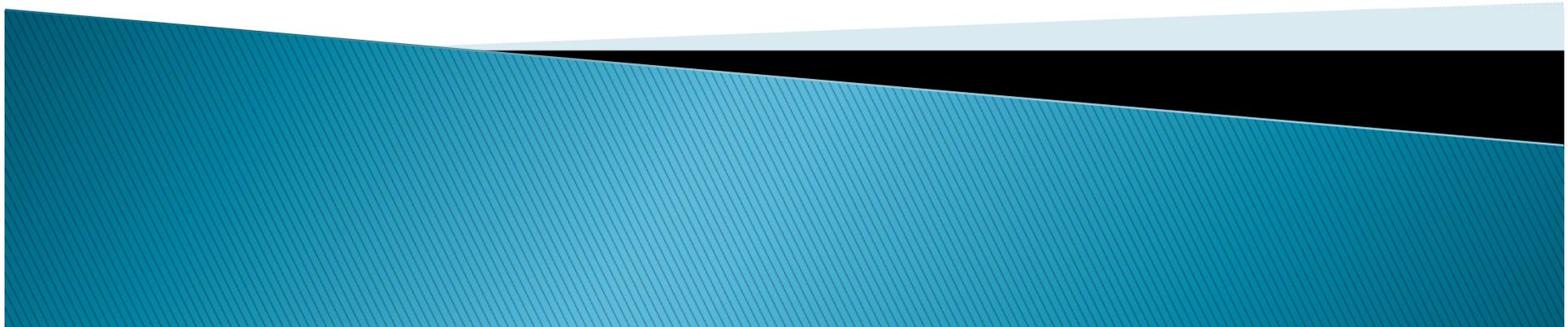


Child protection systems: An international comparison of good practice

Jachen Nett and Trevor Spratt



Methodology

- ▶ Country comparison criteria – comparable economic and social development; federal or centralised government structures; European or Anglophone child protection cultures.
- ▶ Recruit country study colleagues: Jachen Nett (Switzerland) Trevor Spratt (UK) Leah Bromfield (Australia), Johanna Hietamäki (Finland), Heinz Kindler (Germany), Lina Ponnert (Sweden).
- ▶ Recruit Swiss expert panel



Identifying the drivers

- ▶ Prevalence and effects of child maltreatment – The scientific imperative
- ▶ Investment in children – The economic imperative
- ▶ Children's rights – The legal imperative
- ▶ Inter-country comparisons – The moral imperative



Features of the development of child protection systems

- ▶ **Phase 1** – Children require protection from moral corruption, abandonment or because of their own anti-social behaviour
- ▶ **Phase 2** – Children require protection from parents and other individuals who bear psychopathological features
- ▶ **Phase 3** – Children and families require protection from the effects of structural inequalities in society
- ▶ **Phase 4** – Protecting children understood within and ecological model
- ▶ **Phase 5** – The protection of children understood within a framework of children's rights



Orientations: Child Protection or Family Service

(Leah Bromfield presentation Sydney 2011)

Characteristic	Child Protection Orientation	Family Service Orientation
Framing the problem of child abuse	The need to protect children from harm.	Abuse is a result of family conflict or dysfunction stemming from social, economic and psychological difficulties.
Entry to services	Single entry point; report or notification by third party.	Range of entry points and services.
Basis of government intervention and services provided	Legalistic, investigatory in order to formulate child safety plans.	Supportive or therapeutic responses to meeting the needs of children and families or resolving problems.
Place of services	Separated from family support services.	Embedded within and normalised by broad child welfare or public health services.
Coverage	Resources are concentrated on families where risks of (re-) abuse are high and immediate.	Resources are available to more families at an earlier stage.
Service Approach	Standardised procedures; rigid timelines.	Flexible to meet clients' needs.
State-parent relationship	Adversarial.	Partnership.
Role of the legal system	Adversarial; formal; evidence-based.	Last resort; informal; inquisitorial.
Out-of-home care	Mainly involuntary.	Mainly voluntary.

Source: Allen Consulting Group (2003, p. 14, Table 2.1)

The purposes of modern child protection systems

- ▶ Tensions with regard to how child protection is conceived, narrow and forensic or broad and intervening early to reduce risk factors in a wider population?
- ▶ The contrasting stories of Henry Kempe and Frank Pantridge
- ▶ Our view is that both responses are required, intervening in situations of crisis and identifying populations at risk of poor outcomes and providing services to them

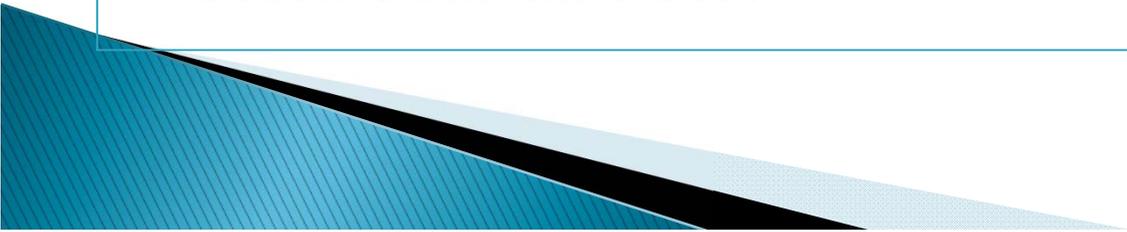


Foundation Level – Governance Features of Contemporary Child Protection Systems

- ▶ **Recommendation 1** – A national standing committee at Federal level to produce a National Framework for Child Protection to inform development of Canton law and service planning.
- ▶ **Recommendation 2** – Cantons retain legal responsibility for child protection services, but these are planned and delivered with voluntary and private providers in Child Welfare Boards.



Intermediate Level – Interrelated Features of Contemporary Child Protection Systems

- ▶ **Recommendation 3** – Teams of social workers employed in each Canton to discharge legal responsibilities associated with a child protection service at specialist level.
 - ▶ **Recommendation 4** – Interdisciplinary Case Planning Meeting set up in each Canton to ensure effective planning to meet needs and ensure protection at case level.
 - ▶ **Recommendation 5** – Universities to establish undergraduate and postgraduate training in child protection for professionals.
 - ▶ **Recommendation 6** – Universities to review standards for admission to social work degree programmes.
 - ▶ **Recommendation 7** – Promotion of partnership; parents to attend Case Planning Meetings and children's rights to representation and appeal in decisions involving them become standardised.
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Advanced Level – Service Delivery Features of Contemporary Child Protection Systems

- ▶ **Recommendation 8** – Development of a continuum of children’s services based on the Public Health Model to inform the development of the National Framework for Child Protection
- ▶ **Recommendation 9** – Development of practice guidance for social workers incorporating legislation and research informed ‘best practice’.
- ▶ **Recommendation 10** – Introduction of a two tier assessment framework at specialist level for social workers and common level for other professionals.



Advanced Level – Service Delivery Features of Contemporary Child Protection Systems

- ▶ **Recommendation 11** – Audit of current intervention methods employed by social workers to inform the work of the Child Welfare Boards in developing training and implementation strategies.
 - ▶ **Recommendation 12** – Audit of state care to inform development of National Framework for Child Protection and work of Child Welfare Boards.
 - ▶ **Recommendation 13** – Establish a national vetting and barring scheme for those working with children.
 - ▶ **Recommendation 14** – Set up a national data system to track both system outputs and child outcomes as part of National Framework for Child Protection and to inform the work of Child Welfare Boards.
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