

Dear Colleagues,

The National Center on Family Group Decision Making at the American Humane Association has invited me to draw together a current synopsis of evaluation and research on including the family group in child welfare and child protection decision making processes.

To accomplish this I have invited an international team that includes Dr. Marie Connolly, Chief Social Worker for New Zealand; Kate Morris of the University of Birmingham in England; and Dr. Joan Pennell of North Carolina State University in the United States to be part of a team to work on this project. We are hoping to have a preliminary inventory of studies by the end of February, 2008 when the team meets in Colorado in the USA to draft the findings.

Writing on behalf of the team, I am asking you to help us locate all relevant evaluation and research. If you are uncertain whether a particular project or study is relevant, please contact any member of the team [see contact information below] and we will discuss it with you. This request includes completed work as well as work presently being carried out or proposed. We are especially interested in research and evaluation that has been undertaken since 2003 when a synopsis was last published by American Humane (see Merkel-Holguin, Nixon, & Burford, Protecting Children, Volume 18, Nos. 1 & 2).

We realize that the question of what is relevant is quite broad and we are intentionally leaving it this way. We hope to learn about new and innovative practices. The key is that the practice aims to bring the family group together as a central feature of the work planning for the child.

Within the final reports we intend to describe the designs of studies and summarize their findings. The conclusions of the project will be shared in a special issue of Protecting Children as well as in presentations and other publications.

To submit your materials, please email or send hard copy of your reports or related materials to:

Mary Skidmore-Taylor  
Research Assistant  
University of Vermont  
Child Welfare Training Partnership  
Trinity Campus  
Mann Hall #004  
Burlington, Vermont 05405  
Email: [mstaylor@uvm.edu](mailto:mstaylor@uvm.edu)

We look forward to hearing from you. Thank You.

Gale Burford

Please feel free to contact any member of the evaluation team if you have questions:

<p>Dr. Gale Burford,  Professor  Director Child Welfare Partnership  Department of Social Work  University of Vermont  Phone: 802-656-9661  Email: <a href="mailto:gburford@uvm.edu">gburford@uvm.edu</a></p>	<p>Dr. Marie Connolly  Chief Social Worker  Office of the Chief Social Worker  Ministry of Social Development  Wellington, New Zealand  Phone: 0-29-918-9099  Email: <a href="mailto:Marie.Connolly005@cyf.govt.nz">Marie.Connolly005@cyf.govt.nz</a></p>
<p>Kate Morris  Head of Social Work  Institute of Applied Social Studies  University of Birmingham, England  B15 2TT  Phone: 0121 414 5714  Email <a href="mailto:k.m.morris@bham.ac.uk">k.m.morris@bham.ac.uk</a></p>	<p>Dr. Joan Pennell  Professor and Head  Department of Social Work, CB 7639  North Carolina State University  Raleigh, North Carolina, United States  27695-7639  Phone: 919-513-0003  Email: <a href="mailto:jpennell@ncsu.edu">jpennell@ncsu.edu</a></p>