

Title	Type and matter	Summary
Constructing child abuse and child psychological abuse: Social representations and the lifecycle of a social problem	Qualitative Child abuse Child safety practice	- Grounded in Social Representation Theory, this study proposes a four-stage model: emergence, problematisation, communication, and resolution, to analyse how child abuse was constructed as a naturalised social problem in Quebec. It utilises a theoretical re-reading of diverse materials, including a decade of media coverage, parliamentary debates from a 2006 legislative reform, and contemporary interviews with practitioners. - The research demonstrates that "child abuse" became a self-evident public problem through emotional anchoring in fear and moral indignation, often creating a "us-them" narrative that distances "abusive" families from the broader community. This established representational framework now shapes and constrains how institutions recognise and respond to newer categories, such as psychological abuse. - The authors conclude that stabilised social representations deeply influence professional practice, justificatory logic, and thresholds for state intervention. They recommend that social workers use this model as a reflexive tool to identify how collective emotions and media narratives may inadvertently lead to stigmatisation or the uneven treatment of families.
The psychopathy substance abuse nexus in justice-involved youth and its implications for risk, need, and responsivity	Quantitative Youth justice Recidivism	- This study examined the relationship between psychopathic traits and substance abuse among 420 diverse, justice-involved youth in Canada. It aimed to determine how these factors intersect to predict violent and general recidivism across different gender and ethnoracial groups. - High psychopathy scores, specifically the lifestyle (e.g., impulsivity, irresponsibility) and antisocial (e.g., poor behaviour controls, criminal versatility) facet, showed strong convergence with clinical and criminogenic substance abuse indicators. Youth who scored high in both domains experienced significantly steeper and faster recidivism trajectories than those with lower scores, regardless of gender or Indigenous heritage. - Researchers conclude that substance abuse is a critical, dynamic risk factor that incrementally increases the hazard of future offending beyond personality traits alone. They recommend adopting a forensic substance management approach that uses multimodal, culturally responsive interventions to address both clinical needs and risk-reducing goals.
The overlap of child abuse, neglect, and exposure to domestic violence in court-involved children with a history of maltreatment: Frequency and correlates	Quantitative Child maltreatment Domestic and family violence	- This retrospective study analysed the case records of 279 children in Victoria, Australia, who were referred for expert psychological assessment by the Children's Court due to maltreatment concerns. It aimed to identify the frequency of co-occurring child abuse and neglect (CAN) and exposure to domestic violence (EDV), alongside associated risk factors. - Nearly two-thirds (63.44%) of the children experienced both CAN and EDV, with over 77 per cent experiencing two or more distinct types of maltreatment. Significant risk factors associated with this co-occurrence included serious child behaviour problems, parental substance use, and severe family or socioeconomic stress. - The authors conclude that court-involved families face a high burden of cumulative harm, requiring assessments that consider multiple forms of maltreatment together rather than in isolation. They recommend implementing shared risk assessment frameworks and inter-agency collaboration to prioritise these high-acuity families for holistic, trauma-informed support.
*Please note, in Victoria, the correct name is <i>Children's Court</i>.		
Evaluating disability bias in the Allegheny Family Screening Tool: implications for child welfare decisions	Quantitative Child protection Children with disability	- This study investigates whether the Allegheny Family Screening Tool (AFST) used to screen child welfare referrals in Pennsylvania, unfairly penalises parents and children with disabilities. - They found that although the AFST contains no explicit disability measures, it effectively "encodes" disability status through proxy variables like public benefit participation and high healthcare utilisation. Families with disabilities are significantly more likely to be flagged for intervention. - It concludes that the tool reinforces structural ableism by treating the use of essential supports, such as Medicaid or SSI, as indicators of risk. The authors recommend rigorous audit to prevent disability bias and ensure families have the right to contest automated decisions.

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The relationship between food security with diet quality and dental caries experience among Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children	Quantitative Indigenous health Food insecurity	- This study investigated the relationships between food security, diet quality, and dental health among 219 children in South Australia. It highlights how the historical disruption of traditional food systems through colonisation has contributed to enduring socioeconomic disadvantage and health disparities. - Nearly half of the surveyed families experienced food insecurity, and 55.7% of the children suffered from dental caries. Severe food insecurity was associated with a higher prevalence of caries and poorer diet quality, primarily driven by a significant reduction in vegetable intake. - The authors recommend recognising access to nutritious food as a basic human right and developing new food security measurement tools co-designed with Indigenous Communities. They call for systemic, community-led interventions to address the intersecting challenges of nutritional scarcity and oral disease.
Rural secondary school teachers' knowledge of adolescent suicide risk factors	Quantitative Rural and remote Suicide prevention School-based support	- This study surveyed 277 secondary school teachers in rural Victoria, to assess their foundational knowledge of adolescent suicide risk factors. It highlights that in rural settings, where youth suicide rates are higher and specialist services are scarce, teachers are vital frontline observers for early identification. - While teachers demonstrated a moderate overall knowledge level (70.4%), significant gaps remain regarding psychiatric disorders, warning signs, and the significance of previous suicide attempts. Furthermore, 27% of teachers reported avoiding engagement with students they suspected were experiencing mental ill health, suggesting that knowledge does not always translate into action. - The researchers conclude that suicide literacy is necessary but insufficient on its own to support effective prevention within school settings. They recommend that future professional development move beyond basic knowledge to provide practical skill-building and clear, system-level referral pathways to support teachers in rural communities.
Footprints in Time: Longitudinal Study of Indigenous Children – social and emotional wellbeing research report	Mixed methods Indigenous health Cultural safety	- This report analyses over 13 years of data from the "Footprints in Time" longitudinal study of Indigenous Children to understand what helps Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children "grow up strong". It utilises a holistic First Nations framework to explore how various interconnected domains, such as connection to culture, family, and country, influence long-term wellbeing outcomes. - The research identifies deep connections to family and culture as the most powerful protective factors for positive wellbeing, independent of a child's socioeconomic status. However, negative school experiences like bullying and racism were found to be critical risk factors that significantly increase the likelihood of self-harm and suicidal thoughts among youth. - The authors recommend that policy must shift toward community-led, strengths-based models that prioritise self-determination and ensure children remain connected to their kin and culture. They also call for urgent systemic action to create safe, racism-free school environments and for national wellbeing targets to be broadened to reflect holistic Indigenous perspectives.
Healthy Starts -The state of Australia's child and family health service system	Policy Report Maternal and child health Health inequities	- This report by the Centre for Policy Development maps the health and development journeys of children and families from conception through to school entry at age five. It evaluates the effectiveness of the public health system across three critical transition points: pregnancy recognition, support through birth, and early childhood development, to identify where service coordination succeeds or fails. - The research identifies ten systemic barriers, including critical workforce shortages, high out-of-pocket costs, and a lack of cultural safety that often deters Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families from engaging with mainstream services. Significant "postcode lotteries" exist for access to essential supports like home visiting, and participation in vital developmental checks is found to drop sharply after a child's first birthday. - Continued next page

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Healthy Starts -The state of Australia's child and family health service system	Continued.	The study recommends a shift toward progressive universalism, where high-quality services are available to all families but can flex in intensity according to specific levels of need. It calls for national oversight to ensure consistent quality standards and a move toward community-led, trauma-informed models that integrate health, education, and social support into a seamless pathway.
Built environment vocational training for justice-involved youth in Australia: a systematic review of recidivism and workforce outcomes	Review Youth justice Over-representation	- This systematic review synthesises 34 studies to evaluate whether vocational training in the built environment sector can reduce recidivism among justice-involved youth aged 12–24,. It focuses on addressing the intersection of youth justice rehabilitation and persistent industry skills shortages in Australia. - The most successful programs align training with regional labour market demands and provide culturally responsive, wraparound throughcare support. However, a significant equity gap remains, as Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander youth account for 63 per cent of the detained population but represent only 24 per cent of vocational program participants. - The study concludes that technical training alone is insufficient without addressing systemic barriers like employer bias and lack of post-release support. Researchers recommend integrating correctional education with national workforce development and utilising social procurement requirements to ensure stable employment opportunities.
The co-design of an Indigenous and community-led culturally responsive prevention framework to reduce the incarceration of children	Qualitative Youth justice Over-representation System reform	- This study addresses the extreme overrepresentation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children in the Australian youth justice system. It utilises an iterative, community-led co-design process grounded in decolonising methodologies to develop a culturally responsive prevention framework aimed at disrupting cycles of incarceration. - The research identified critical colonial drivers of incarceration such as systemic racism and intergenerational trauma, that must be dismantled. It established a multi-level framework that prioritises universal outcomes for thriving children, rights-based systemic reforms, and culturally grounded programs like therapeutic healing centres and Indigenous-led crisis housing. - The authors recommend that Australia must shift from punitive carceral models to holistic, justice-reinvestment strategies that empower Indigenous families, and calls for systemic investment in community-led, trauma-informed solutions that prioritise self-determination, cultural continuity, and the voices of Indigenous children.
Priced out of your future? How housing hardship increases adolescents' exposure to police-initiated contacts. Evidence from the United Kingdom	Quantitative Housing Youth justice	- This longitudinal study analysed data from 10,608 participants in the United Kingdom Millennium Cohort Study to investigate how childhood housing tenure instability and residential mobility affect police encounters by age 14. It moves beyond simple move frequency to examine the qualitative, socioeconomic conditions under which families relocate. - Adolescents experiencing downward tenure mobility (losing homeownership) or living in unstable rental housing are significantly more likely to experience police-initiated contact than their residentially stable peers. This risk is partially driven by childhood externalising behaviours and social severance—the erosion of supportive family and community networks. Furthermore, these destabilising effects are strongly amplified in highly deprived neighbourhoods characterised by heightened police presence. - The authors conclude that early youth-police encounters are structurally embedded within housing insecurity rather than simply reflecting individual criminal propensity. They recommend policy interventions that expand access to secure rental contracts, protect against forced displacement, and facilitate sustainable homeownership to prevent early legal system exposure.