

An annotated bibliography:
An Investigation into the influences, evolution and
impact of Child Protection Policy in the United
Kingdom

This annotated bibliography aims to look at sources relevant to the upcoming systematic literature review. The sources have been gathered with the intent to support the examination of the theory that discourse influences child protection policy in the United Kingdom. I aim to take the below sources and analyse them in a chronological order so as to discuss how policy has changed and to examine what has influenced these changes.

An annotated bibliography:
An Investigation into the influences, evolution and impact of
Child Protection Policy in the United Kingdom

Children's Rights

Archard, D. (1995) Children: Rights and Childhood. London, Routledge.

Synopsis:

Archard examines the rights of children from a legal and moral perspective looking philosophically at children and childhood. Archard analyses the work of John Locke and Philippe Ariès in part one of the text, here he looks at the conception of childhood. Part two of the book concentrates on children's rights and part three examines the roles of children, parents, family and the state. Archard's comprehensive approach combines philosophy with everyday practise and highlights the connections.

Rationale:

I consider this work to be very important as it is a multifaceted examination of the children's rights debate and looks at the roles of the family and state critically. One of the main reasons for the inclusion of Archard is that his book challenges contemporary thinking surrounding the 'proper' roles of the state and family in the upbringing of children. I suggest this is essential in the examination of the ideology behind most policy and legislation on children.

Media Response to Child Protection.

Batty, D. Meikle, J. (2003) *Out of Date Guidelines put Young at Risk*. [Online] London, The Guardian.co.uk [Accessed: 30th January 2011]

Synopsis:

The article looks at the results of a leaked report by the Metropolitan police into child protection services in the London area. The article makes reference to the Climbié case and discusses the surrounding issues. Batty and Meikle argue that many policy documents are “more than a decade out of date.” (Batty & Meikle: 2003) Also, they suggest that many areas of the UK are not working to the same guidelines. The article proposes that there is a professional reluctance to accept that situations similar to Climbié’s exist.

Rationale:

I decided to look at this article because it questions elements of child protection policy and its ineffectiveness in certain areas. It is an interesting piece because it has an emotive tone that suggests that individuals are to blame rather than the policies that are in place. I think this is an important source as it shows the kind of media responses that relate to the issues and some opinions of health professionals and social workers.

Has Child Protection Gone Too Far?

Cotton Wool Kids. (2008) [Broadcast] Channel 4. 10th April 2008.
[Accessed: 18th January 2011]

Synopsis:

This documentary explores the effect that child safety has on modern childhood. The documentary follows; Adel, who will not allow his 13 year old son out of sight, Toni, who wants to microchip her children and Jenny, who utilises a nursery webcam to check on her children while she is at work. The programme explores the anxiety and fear of both the adults and the children who are concerned about the threat of 'stranger danger' and the implications this has for them.

Rationale:

I included this documentary because it highlights the problem of going to extremes with child protection. I would suggest that the levels of protection that the parents take in the documentary could be construed as harmful to the children with several of the children being in a constant state of fear. The individuals in the programme, both parents and children, make multiple references to the case of Madeline McCann which illustrates the effect that moral panics incited by wider media can have on the lives of families. I am especially interested in the concept of child surveillance demonstrated in the programme.

Every Child Matters

Great Britain, Department for Education. (2003) *Every Child Matters*. [Online] London, HMSO. [Accessed: 19th January 2011]

Synopsis:

'Every Child Matters' (ECM) lead to the 2004 Children Act. This Green paper aims to address the problem of children being overlooked between different services and highlights that child protection cannot be separated from policy. The document looks at a framework of services and identifies concerns that matter to children as well as setting out five main aims for every child; be healthy, stay safe, enjoy and achieve, make a positive contribution and achieve economic well-being. It targets greater communication between government agencies and a higher level of accountability.

Rationale:

ECM is one of the most important policy initiatives and development programmes for children in the last decade and has been seen as the point of change for many families and children, therefore I believe it be imperative to my subject. I chose to look at the document because of its detailed frameworks and the emphasis on multi-agency collaboration. I would argue that this is also important for comparative purposes, mainly with the Lord Laming recommendations and in relation to the New Labour meritocratic aims laid out in the report.

A Progress Report.

Great Britain, House of Commons. (2009) *The protection of children in England: a progress report*. [Online] London, HMSO. [Accessed: 21st January 2011]

Synopsis:

This report was commissioned in the wake of the 'Baby P' case and examines the progress being made to implement effective child protection practices. The Report evaluates the practice that has been developed since the publication of the Victoria Climbié inquiry to identify any barriers that may prevent good practice from becoming standard practice. Recommendations are made to make systematic improvements.

Rationale:

This is an important source as it is a comprehensive overview and is essential to understanding child protection and the processes involved in forming policy. This report looks at the impact of the previous legislation and the 'stepping stone' legislations that precede 2009. I am particularly interested in analysing statistics relating to child protection policy which inadvertently opens up earlier ethical issues of data sharing which appears to be a basis of child protection policy, in multi-agency communication, but impeaches privacy rights of the child. This relates to the first source which questions the influences and wider implications of the child protection policies.

Children Act 1989

Her Majesty's Stationery Office. (1989) *Children Act 1989*. [Online] c41. [Accessed: 24th January 2011]

Synopsis:

The Act aims to address problems identified by the Committee of Inquiry Reports following several incidents of death in children cared for by social services. Section one of the act states that: "the child's welfare shall be the courts paramount consideration" (Children Act 1989: s1.ss1). Part V, 'protection of children', regulates; protection orders, removal and relocation, Local Authorities duty to investigate, children in care, and rules and regulations of its implementation.

Rationale:

The Children Act 1989, according to Lord MacKay is "...the most comprehensive and far reaching reform of child law...in living memory" (Brennan in Wyse: 2004.pp.188). It is important due to it's consolidation of previous laws relating to children, public and private law and its repeal of eight previous statutes relating to child welfare and the Children and Young Peoples Act of 1969. The Act was amended in 2004 but I have chosen to concentrate on the 1989 Act as I consider it to be a milestone in the laws surrounding children.

Child Protection in Medical Practice.

Royal College of Paediatrics and Child Health (2006). *Child Protection Companion*. (1st ed.) [Online] London, Royal College of Paediatrics and Child Health.

Synopsis:

The handbook gives guidance for medical professionals in recognising when a child may be being abused or neglected. It discusses procedure from a medical and legal viewpoint and endeavours to both protect children and health professionals. The document outlines responsibility, confidentiality, definitions of abuse, recognition of abuse, guidelines for action and multi-agency approaches amongst others. It is intended for the use of paediatricians but is acknowledged to be useful to other services.

Rationale:

This document shows how policy should work in practice. I chose this particular example due to the regular inferred failures of medical staff to recognise signs of abuse. It is interesting to note that the first section of the document relates to inter-agency information sharing, which raises ethical questions. It is significant to my research as it suggests that doctors should make child abuse '[their] business' (RCPCH: 2006.PP.iv) which is interesting in terms of analysis of the 'remains' of the laissez-faire approach to welfare that appears to reside as discourse in society.

Ideology of child protection

Sinclair, T. (2005). Mad, bad or sad? Ideology, distorted communication and child abuse prevention. *The Australian Sociological Association*. [Online] 41 (3) 227-246.

Synopsis:

Sinclair's article discusses the concepts of ideology and discourse in relation to the social theory of Jürgen Habermas. Sinclair questions whether child protection services and methods are in response to societal concerns relating to welfare or a method of surveillance and control of the marginalised population. Sinclair takes Habermas' reconstruction of ideology as systematically distorted communication and applies it to a hypothetical case to illustrate the way in which ideology affects everyday child protection practice.

Rationale:

Sinclair takes a multifaceted approach to the study of the ideology behind child protection policies and practices. I feel that this is important as a basis to the study of the evolution of and issues surrounding child protection and welfare. Sinclair critically analyses the system of child protection policy in terms of theories, studies and hypothetical cases and questions the wider implications of the systems as methods of social control, which I consider to be of great importance to the critical analysis of child protection services.

Case Study – Victoria Climbié

The House of Commons Health Committee (2003) *The Victoria Climbié Inquiry Report*. [Online] London, HMSO.

Synopsis:

The report identifies; gross failures of the system, failure to fully implement the Children Act and recommendations for change. After considering Lord Laming's Inquiry into the death of Victoria Climbié the report ascertains the following as recurring issues; failure of communication between staff and agencies, inexperience and lack of skill of individuals, failure to follow procedures and inadequate resources. Within the document, measures are suggested to improve child protection practises.

Rationale:

The case of Victoria Climbié as an example of when child protection fails. The case is important to the evolution of child protection as many amendments and schemes came from the inquiry. I decided to include the report rather than the original inquiry considers the reactions and the proposals from the initial report. This document is significant because it illustrates the problems that existed in the system. It is also imperative to my research as it implicitly examines discourses behind policy such; race, class, culture, religion and others.

A Summary of the United Nations Conventions of the child 1991

UNICEF (1991) *Children's Rights and Responsibilities*. [Online] Billericay, UNICEF.

Synopsis:

UNICEF, in its capacity as the UN body responsible for the rights of children and in 1991 they produced the leaflet containing a summary of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child 1989. The leaflet contains an outline of 42 of the articles within the treaty.

Rationale:

This document is important as it outlines the rights and responsibilities of children in a simple and concise way. I chose to include the UNICEF leaflet rather than the original treaty as it is presented in a way that many children can understand thus is it important for informing children of their own rights. Another reason is that UNICEF is required to promote the effective implementation of the Convention and so play an important role in the protection of children's rights, especially Article 6 which states that "All children have the right to life..." (UNICEF:1991).

Bibliography

Brennan, A. (2004) 'The Children Act 1989' In: Wyse, D.(ed.) *Childhood Studies: An Introduction*. Oxford, Blackwell. pp. 188-193.

Scott, J. Marshall, G. (2005) *Oxford Dictionary of Sociology*. 3rd ed. Oxford, Oxford University Press.