

NEWS FROM THE FIELD

October 2012



THE FIELD CENTER
for Children's Policy, Practice & Research

University of Pennsylvania
3815 Walnut Street, Philadelphia, PA 19104
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Trends in Child Physical Abuse and the Relationship with Housing Insecurity

New research from The Children's Hospital of Philadelphia raises concerns about gaps in national child abuse statistics

Joanne Wood, MD, MSHP

Hospital healthcare providers and child welfare workers reported anecdotal increases in cases of child maltreatment during the recent economic recession. In contrast, national data on child protective services continued to show declines in many forms of maltreatment, including physical abuse during the recession. Researchers at The Children's Hospital of Philadelphia's PolicyLab were concerned about the disconnect between the anecdotal reports and the national data.

In order to get to the bottom of the contrasting reports, Dr. Joanne Wood and colleagues at PolicyLab examined trends in hospital admissions for physical abuse at 38 pediatric hospitals over 10 years. The study, published in the journal *Pediatrics* in August of 2012, detected a significant increase in the rate of admissions to the nation's largest children's hospitals due to serious physical abuse over the last decade. According to the study, overall physical abuse increased by 0.8 percent, and high-risk traumatic brain injury increased by 3 percent per year between 2000 and 2009, while overall injury rates fell by 0.8 percent per year over the same time period. The findings contradict national child protective services data, which show a decline in child physical abuse over the same period.

The PolicyLab team took a closer look at the data in the context of economic hardship. The team identified a strong relationship between the rate of child physical abuse admissions to hospitals and the rate of 90-day mortgage delinquencies and mortgage foreclosures in the areas in which the hospitals were located. The researchers found that each 1 percent increase in 90-day mortgage delinquencies over a one-year period was associated with a 3 percent increase in hospital admissions due to child physical abuse and a 5 percent increase in admissions due to high-risk traumatic brain injury.

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Field Center Welcomes Its Newest Faculty Director: Professor Kara Finck

The Field Center is pleased to announce the appointment of its newest Faculty Director, representing Penn Law at the Field Center table. This position had remained unfilled following the death of Professor Alan Lerner two years ago (see *News From the Field*, Fall 2010, for a tribute).

Practice Associate Professor of Law Kara Finck recently joined the Penn Law faculty and spent the summer preparing the curriculum for her Child Advocacy Clinic. The Field Center is honored to have Professor Finck join fellow faculty directors Dean Richard Gelles (Social Policy & Practice), Dr. Cindy Christian (Medicine), and Professor Cindy Connolly (Nursing).

Prior to joining Penn's faculty, Professor Finck was the Managing Attorney of the Bronx Defenders Family Defense Practice where she represented parents in child abuse and neglect proceedings and supervised over 30 attorneys, social workers, and parent advocates who serve more than 1,000 clients each year. Professor Finck previously co-taught a seminar at Fordham University's Schools of Social Work and Law entitled "Interdisciplinary Responses to Child Abuse and Neglect." She is the co-author, with Dr. Lyn Slater, of *Social Work and the Law*, a textbook on interdisciplinary practice for social workers.

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**THE FIELD CENTER
FOR CHILDREN'S POLICY,
PRACTICE & RESEARCH**

Founding Benefactors Marie and Joseph Field

Guided by the Schools of Social Policy & Practice, Law, and Medicine and Nursing, and the Children's Hospital of Philadelphia, the Field Center for Children's Policy, Practice & Research brings together the resources of the University of Pennsylvania to enhance and assure the well-being of abused and neglected children and those at risk of maltreatment. By moving beyond traditional approaches, the Field Center utilizes an interdisciplinary model to integrate clinical care, research and education, inform local and national policy, and prepare the nation's future leaders, for the benefit of children and their families.

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**Field Center Young Professionals Council:
A Letter From Our Co-chairs**

During our time as law students at the University of Pennsylvania Law School, we had the life-altering experience of participating in the Child Advocacy Clinic. The clinic was taught by the late Professor Alan Lerner and co-taught by the incomparable Dr. Cindy Christian and demonstrated the value of taking an interdisciplinary approach to child advocacy. We learned trial advocacy and client counseling skills from Professor Lerner, we gained valuable insight on the medical and developmental issues involved in child abuse and neglect from Dr. Christian, and we worked along side talented social work students and social workers.

Professor Lerner's passion and dedication to improving children's welfare exemplified what it meant to be a true advocate. His passing in 2010 left a great vacuum. We wanted to continue his work and stay connected to the world of child welfare, but we did not know how best to do so.

In the fall of 2011, the Field of Dreams Luncheon celebrated the legacy of Professor Alan Lerner. At the luncheon, we were introduced in earnest to the work of the Field Center and the full extent of its achievements in the field of child welfare, both in Pennsylvania and nationwide. The Field Center inspired us with its ability to develop innovative approaches to address pressing issues affecting abused or neglected children. We wanted to be a part of it!

Recognizing that there are many other motivated young adults who want to be involved in this very important work, we approached Executive Director, Debra Schilling Wolfe in the spring of 2012 and asked what we could do to help the Field Center. From this meeting, the Young Professionals Council was born.

The Young Professionals Council, supported by Cindy Santos as the staff liaison, and Rachael LeMasters as the board liaison, is composed of professionals from within and beyond the world of child welfare, including lawyers, social workers, medical professionals, and teachers. The goals of the group are threefold: to increase public awareness about the work of the Field Center, to improve understanding of emerging issues in child welfare, and to encourage and promote support of the Field Center.

We cannot overstate the importance of the Field Center's efforts to enhance the lives of children who have been victims of abuse or neglect or are at risk for maltreatment. In the coming year we will work diligently to engage other young professionals in the mission of the Field Center through social and educational events.

Yael May and Rachel Stanton

Field Center Faculty Director Receives Research Award

One of the Field Center's faculty directors has recently received a prestigious award for her research. Penn Nursing Associate Professor Cindy Connolly has been selected to receive the Mary Adelaide Nutting Award, the 2012 American Association for the History of Nursing's highest award for article-length research, for her article entitled, "A Startling New Chemotherapeutic Agent": Pediatric Infectious Disease and the Introduction of Sulfonamides at Baltimore's Sydenham Hospital. The review committee noted, "Your creative study of the intertwining of medicine, therapeutic science, and bedside nursing involved in the introduction of sulfa, the first antimicrobial agent used in the treatment of children with infections, was unique and insightful." The award was given at the American Association for the History of Nursing's annual conference held in Savannah, Georgia on September 27-30, 2012.

Save the Date!

The Field Center for Children's Policy, Practice & Research
Is pleased to announce its Winter 2012 Community Symposium

The Racial Geography of Child Welfare

Dorothy Roberts, JD

Wednesday November 28, 2012
8:30 – 10:30 am

University of Pennsylvania Law School
Levy Conference Center – 3400 Chestnut Street

Dorothy Roberts is the 14th Penn Integrates Knowledge Professor, George A. Weiss University Professor, and the inaugural Raymond Pace and Sadie Tanner Mossell Alexander Professor of Civil Rights at the University of Pennsylvania, where she holds appointments in the Law School and Departments of Africana Studies and Sociology.

An internationally recognized scholar, public intellectual, and social justice advocate, Professor Roberts has written and lectured extensively on the interplay of gender, race, and class in legal issues and has been a leader in transforming public thinking and policy on reproductive health, child welfare, and bioethics. She is the author of the award-winning books *Killing the Black Body: Race, Reproduction, and the Meaning of Liberty* and *Shattered Bonds: The Color of Child Welfare*, as well as co-editor of six books on constitutional law and gender. Professor Roberts has also published more than eighty articles and essays in books and scholarly journals, including *Harvard Law Review*, *Yale Law Journal*, and *Stanford Law Review*. Her latest book, *Fatal Invention: How Science, Politics, and Big Business Re-create Race in the Twenty-First Century*, was published by the New Press in July 2011.

Preregistration is required and opens on November 1, 2012
via email at fieldctr@sp2.upenn.edu or phone at 215.573.9779

*This event is free and open to the professional community through a grant by
the University Of Pennsylvania's University Research Foundation.*

Field Center Partners with Penn Reading Project for Year of Proof Event

As part of a series of campus-wide events emerging from this year's Penn Reading Project's "Year of Proof" and reading selection, John Patrick Shanley's *Doubt*, the Field Center is presenting a symposium entitled, "How Well Do Our Laws Protect Children? International Models of Child Protection."

Scheduled for October 30, 2012 at the University of Pennsylvania Law School Levy Conference Center, the featured speaker is Jaap E. Doek, emeritus professor of Family and Juvenile Law at the Vrije Universiteit in Amsterdam, former chairperson of the United Nations Committee on the Rights of the Child, and founding member of the International Society for the Prevention of Child

Abuse and Neglect (ISPCAN), who will explore the many different ways countries address issues of child protection. This hallmark symposium will challenge the audience to look at the United States' approach to protecting children in the context of the international community. As the U.S. is only one of three nations that mandates reporting of suspected child abuse, a vigorous discussion of the issues and an opportunity to critically explore the prevailing system of child protection is anticipated.

Moderated by Cynthia Connolly PhD, RN, PNP, FAAN, Associate Professor of Nursing, Field Center Faculty Director, and Penn Nursing's representative on the Penn Reading Project, the presentation will be followed by a respondent panel featuring the Field Center's multidisciplinary child welfare experts, School of Social Policy & Practice Dean Richard Gelles, Dr. Cindy Christian, and Law Professor Kara Finck.

The New Road to Adulthood: How Pennsylvania is Helping Youth Aging Out of Foster Care Make The Journey

Cindy Santos, MSW

Whereas decades ago, marriage, parenting and living independently were the typical trajectory for young people (Arnett, 2004), recent demographic data on the path to adulthood demonstrates that the period from adolescence to adulthood has been prolonged (Berlin, Furstenberg, Waters, 2010). In his book, *Emerging Adulthood* (2004), Arnett cites several factors that have led to the extended period between adolescence and adulthood, including a rise in the median age of marriage, increased length of academic pursuits and instability in employment. Young people who were once thought to transition, defined as “passage from one state or stage to another (Merriam Webster)” from adolescence to adulthood are now experiencing a more fluid period between these developmental stages.

This new period known as “emerging adulthood” is a time when young people explore their identities in love and work, experience times of instability, are self-focused, feel in between adolescence and adulthood and are optimistic about their future possibilities (Arnett, 2004).

After World War II, the abundance of employment opportunities coupled with government programs that augmented the growth of the middle class contributed to a decade in which young people moved from adolescence to adulthood expeditiously (Berlin, et al., 2010). However, the years between ages 18 and 21 are no longer a “marker” of adult status (Berlin et al., 2010). Today, reaching the age of majority is not predictive of the ability of young people to live independently of parents, parental figures or for some youth aging out of foster care, the state.

In the current economic climate, employment instability is playing a major role in the increased reliance of emerging adults on parents and family. The current economic situation for emerging adults is insecure with labor market statistics indicating adults ages 18-24 as having the lowest employment rate (54%) in decades (Pew Social and Demographic Trends, 2010). More and more emerging adults are depending on their parents as a safety net. In a recent study on the “Boomerang Generation” conducted by the Pew Research Center (2012), 60% of adults 18-24 linked their financial situations to their parents to some extent. Additionally, 40% of adults, ages 18-24, surveyed currently lived with their parents or never moved out.

The bleak outlook of today’s economy is daunting for adults with a safety net to fall back upon, how much more so is it for youth who may age out of foster care with low educational attainment, limited employment history and skills

in the developmental tasks of adulthood?

and delays

Youth aging out of foster care continue to face an array of barriers to healthy adulthood including lack of educational attainment, lack of housing stability, financial instability (Courtney, Dworsky, Brown, Cary, Love, Vorhies, 2011), inadequate mental health access (Courtney, Piliavin, Grogan-Kaylor, Nesmith, 2001), and unconnectedness to committed adults (Avery, 2010). Moreover, minority youth who are disproportionately represented in foster care and amongst youth aging out (Wertheimer, 2002), face an even grimmer reality “and are more likely to experience transition patterns that cast a long shadow on their adult lives, including diminished prospects for socioeconomic achievement and for a fulfilling family life (Shanahan, 2000).”

Cognizant of the poor outcomes faced by youth who age out of foster care, The Fostering Connections to Success and Increasing Adoptions Act of 2008 was signed into law. This important legislation extends federal support, through Title IV-E of the Social Security Act for foster care, adoption and guardianship assistance to age 21 for young people who are completing high school, enrolled in post-secondary education or vocational school, participating in a program designed to promote or remove barriers to employment, employed at least 80 hours per month or incapable of doing any of these activities due to a medical condition (Children’s Defense Fund, 2009). Additionally, The John F. Chafee Foster Care Independence Program allows youth 16 and older who enter kinship guardianship or were adopted to foster care past the age of 16 to access Education and Training Vouchers (ETV) for and to participate in Independent Living Services/Programs administered by child welfare agencies (Children’s Defense Fund, 2009).

Long recommended by advocates across the state, Pennsylvania’s recent state budget allows for full implementation of Fostering Connections, including a provision that permits young people to re-enter foster care before turning 21 if they aged out 90 days or less before turning age 18 or any time after turning age 18. According to a report by The Juvenile Law Center and Pennsylvania Partnerships (2012), this legislative victory is expected to support permanent placement, improve educational outcomes and offer critical support for youth.

Systems of care responsible for youth in *locus parentis* must maximize this opportunity to increase the preparedness of young people making the incremental journey to adulthood. The human and societal costs of youth aging out of foster care wholly unprepared is far too great to ignore.

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The Field Center is Now a United Way Agency!

Donations to the United Way of Greater Philadelphia & Southern New Jersey can now support the Field Center’s important work on behalf of victims of child abuse and neglect with Donor Code 43049.



**MSW Intern:
Nicole Royer**

Nicole Royer joined the Field Center as an MSW intern in September 2012. She is currently a first-year MSW candidate at the University of Pennsylvania School Of Social

Policy and Practice, who is interested in pursuing a dual degree in Bioethics.

Nicole grew up in New Brunswick, New Jersey. She attended the University of Pennsylvania, where she graduated in May 2012 with a BA in Anthropology and a concentration in Medical Anthropology and Global Health. Throughout her senior year, she completed an independent study on mental health and sexual development in urban communities titled *Human Sexuality and Development: Orientation, Identity and Psychology*.

While living in Philadelphia, Nicole has been an active member of the community through volunteer work at the Urban Nutrition Initiative and engagement in the Netter Center for Community Partnerships. With a particular interest in working with urban youth, Nicole has served as a volunteer in West Philadelphia through recreational clubs, tutoring projects, and mentoring programs. Nicole also worked at the Hospital of the University of Pennsylvania as a research assistant in the Unit for Experimental Psychiatry.

At the Field Center, Nicole will be working several days per week at Project Penn in Family Court to engage families in concrete resources in the community. She enjoys the interdisciplinary nature of the Field Center and hopes to incorporate this framework of critical thinking into the pursuit of her passions, which are social justice, human development and health care.



**Philadelphia Center
Intern
Malorie Lakosky**

Malorie Lakosky joined the Field Center for Children's Policy, Practice and Research in September of 2012 as an intern

through the Philadelphia Center, an off-campus experiential learning program for undergraduate liberal arts students. Originally from Michigan's Upper Peninsula, Malorie will complete her undergraduate degree in Philosophy from Alma College in April 2013.

During her time at Alma College she engaged in a plethora of activities. She founded the Michigan Mu chapter of Phi Sigma Tau, the International Honor Society of Philosophy, and serves as president of the Philosophy Club, an extension of the honor society to any students interested in philosophy. She also assists her fellow students in making post-graduation plans as a Peer Consultant in the Academic and Career Planning office and tutors philosophy students. In 2012 she received the Posey Global Leadership Scholarship, which funded a five week volunteer experience in Ghana for her and one other classmate. She enjoys volunteering within the states, as well, including alternative break trips to Tennessee and West Virginia and a Leadership Summit in New Mexico.

After graduation, she hopes to serve as a Teach for America corps member for two years in Detroit while simultaneously earning a Master's degree in Education. Her interest in child welfare stems from a desire to better understand the effects of poverty and education on youth and families and how current systems address these issues.

Welcome to our new Advisory Board Chair: Pamela Schreiber, MSW

The Field Center is thrilled to announce Pamela Schreiber, MSW as the new Advisory Board Chair. She became a member of the Advisory Board in 2009, after she was introduced to the Field Center by Joe and Marie Field. Impressed by the mission statement of the Field Center and its aim of making changes on the policy level that will impact the whole child welfare system, Mrs. Schreiber has been an active board member for the past three years. As Advisory Board Chair, Mrs. Schreiber hopes to find additional avenues by which the Board can continue to support the Field Centers projects. She genuinely believes in the Field Center's ability to make substantial change to the child welfare system and plans to use her passion and experience to move the center forward.

Mrs. Schreiber earned her MSW from Columbia University with a concentration in casework. Throughout the course of her career, Mrs. Schreiber has held diverse positions in both the non-profit and business sectors. Upon completion of her MSW, Mrs. Schreiber began working at the Albert Einstein College and Hospital located in the Bronx. While there, she educated medical students on the practice of hospital-based social work and she worked directly with patients.

She then went on to hold positions at Duke Medical Center in their child psychiatric unit, Christ Child Treatment, working with autistic children, a community mental health clinic, and the University of Pennsylvania adult psychiatric clinic. Mrs. Schreiber later entered corporate America in the field of investor relations and communications. Currently, Mrs. Schreiber serves on several advisory boards and is working with her husband in the development of a new asthma medication. With this unique skill set Mrs. Schreiber brings an in-depth knowledge of the non-profit and business sectors to the Advisory Board Chair position.

We are delighted to have Pamela Schreiber as the Field Center Advisory Board Chair.



THANK YOU TO OUR SUPPORTERS!

We are grateful to the following individuals, foundations and organizations for their generous support of the Field Center from January 1, 2012 to October 1, 2012

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An envelope is attached for your convenience, or you may give a gift online by visiting www.fieldcenteratpenn.org. For more information, please contact Field Center Executive Director Debra Schilling Wolfe at (215) 573-5442 or dwolfe@sp2.upenn.edu.



Calendar of Events

DATE & LOCATION	EVENT & SPONSOR	CONTACT INFORMATION
Jacksonville, FL October 12 – 15, 2012	Awaken to Change - The National Conference for America's Children Prevent Child Abuse America	Phone: (312) 663-3520 Email: pmedrano@preventchildabuse.org Website: http://www.preventchildabuse.org/conference/index.shtml
Prior Lake, MN October 17 – 19, 2012	2012 National Tribal Judicial Conference & NAICJA Annual Meeting National American Indian Court Judges Association	Phone: (303) 449-4112 Email: info@naicja.org Website: http://www.naicja.org
Philadelphia, PA October 30, 2012	How Well Do Our Laws Protect Children? International Models of Child Protection The Field Center for Children's Policy, Practice & Research - University of Pennsylvania	Phone: (215) 573-9779 Email: fieldctr@sp2.upenn.edu Website: www.fieldcenteratpenn.org
Phoenix, AZ November 1 – 3, 2012	AFCC 10th Symposium on Child Custody Evaluations Association of Family and Conciliation Courts (AFCC)	Phone: (608) 664-3750 Email: afcc@afccnet.org Website: http://www.afccnet.org/ConferencesTraining/AFCCConferences
Henderson, NV November 14 – 16, 2012	2012 Conference on Differential Response in Child Welfare Kempe Center for the Prevention and Treatment of Child Abuse and Neglect	Phone: (303) 630-9429 Email: amyh@americanhumane.org Website: http://www.differentialresponseqic.org/conference/
Philadelphia, PA November 28, 2012	The Racial Geography of Child Welfare The Field Center for Children's Policy, Practice & Research - University of Pennsylvania	Phone: (215) 573-9779 Email: fieldctr@sp2.upenn.edu Website: www.fieldcenteratpenn.org
San Diego, CA January 26 – 31, 2013	27th Annual San Diego International Conference On Child and Family Maltreatment Chadwick Center for Children and Families, Rady Children's Hospital-San Diego	Phone: (858) 966-4972 Email: sdconference@rchsd.org Website: http://www.sandiegoconference.org

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Dr. Wood identified two major themes from the study. First, the study highlights the need to use data from multiple sources to ensure a more complete picture of child abuse rates both locally and nationally. There is an opportunity for child welfare agencies and hospitals to collaborate and share data for a more complete picture of child physical abuse rates in communities across the country, in order to develop targeted prevention and intervention. Second, the study identifies mortgage foreclosures to be associated with severe physical abuse. As the foreclosure crisis is projected to continue in the near future, these results highlight the need to better

understand the stress that housing insecurity places on families and communities so that we can better support them during difficult times.

The full study, entitled "Local macroeconomic trends and hospital admissions for child abuse, 2000 to 2009", is available in the August issue of *Pediatrics*. For more information about the study and on PolicyLab's body of child welfare work, visit www.research.chop.edu/PolicyLab.



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Newsletter Highlights...

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- Save the Date for our Community Symposium Featuring Dorothy Roberts