



Annotated Bibliography on Siblings in Out-of-Home Care
Last Updated December 28, 2005¹

Child Welfare Practice

- ◆ Barbell, K. (1995, Winter). Is our family focus wide enough to include siblings? *Children's Voice*, 4-5, 24. Retrieved from the Internet at http://www.hunter.cuny.edu/socwork/nrcfcpp/info_services/siblings.html

Makes the case that a family focus in child welfare decision-making must include attention to siblings, and outlines steps agencies must take to improve policy and practice to promote better outcomes for sibling groups.
- ◆ Barnardos Australia. (2002). *The importance of keeping brothers and sisters together in out-of-home care*.

A monograph that looks at the importance of keeping siblings together in both long and short-term care. The paper also explores ways of maintaining contact if separation has occurred. Australia. Order from: <http://www.barnardos.org.au/barnardos/html/monographs.cfm>
- ◆ California Department of Social Services. (1997). *Sibling groups in foster care: Placement barriers and proposed solutions*. Sacramento, CA: Author.

Written in compliance with state legislation requiring that CDSS conduct a study to determine the barriers which limit the placement resources available for sibling groups and develop solutions to those barriers.
- ◆ Center for Advanced Studies in Child Welfare. (2000). Siblings in foster care: Maintaining the ties that bind. *CASCW Practice Notes*, 9. Retrieved from the Internet at http://sww.che.umn.edu/CASCW/practice_notes.html

Practice tips from various sources.
- ◆ Center for the Advanced Studies in Child Welfare. (2003). Visitation: Through the eyes of a child. *CASCW Practice Notes*, 13. Retrieved December 28, 2005 from: http://sww.che.umn.edu/CASCW/practice_notes.html

Although keeping siblings together is a preferred service plan, separation may be necessary in some circumstances, which are outlined in this document. When siblings cannot be placed together, a visiting and maintenance plan is required. Describes best practices in visiting and lists several unresolved issues.
- ◆ Connor, S. (2005). *Siblings in out-of-home care*. NRCFCPPP Information Packet. Retrieved December 28, 2005 from: http://www.hunter.cuny.edu/socwork/nrcfcpp/info_services/siblings.html

Information contained in this packet includes summaries of issues, legislation, statistics, research evidence, model programs, and recommended websites and literature pertaining to siblings in out-of-home care.

¹ This bibliography was originally prepared by the Casey Family Programs National Center for Resource Family Support in 2002. It has been updated by the National Resource Center for Family-Centered Practice and Permanency Planning.

Annotated Bibliography on Siblings in Out-of-Home Care

- ◆ Depp, C.H. (1983, March/April). Placing siblings together. *Children Today*, 14-19.
An adoption worker rebuts some arguments for separating siblings and looks at ways to prepare families and support them after the adoption of sibling groups.
- ◆ Dougherty, S. & St. John, R. (2005, Summer). Family centered practice with siblings. *Permanency Planning Today*, 4-5. Retrieved December 28, 2005 from:
<http://www.hunter.cuny.edu/socwork/nrcfcpp/newsletters.html>
This article describes work being done by Oklahoma Department of Human Services to improve its child welfare practice with siblings using data collected through its Statewide Automated Child Welfare Information System.
- ◆ Fahlberg, V.I. (1994). *A child's journey through placement* (pp. 260-264) London: British Agencies for Adoption & Fostering
In this section on sibling relationships, the author presents both advantages and disadvantages to placing sibling together. She also discusses some factors to be considered in assessing families for the adoption of sibling groups.
- ◆ Flack, C., Hamill, R., Kosa-Grab, C. & Smith, J. (1996). Teamwork challenge: Placing a sibling family group. *ACWA Issues Papers*, 10. [Online]. Retrieved from the Internet at
http://acwa.asn.au/ACWA/publications/issuepapers/Paper_10.html
Practical casework considerations in placing sibling groups of three or more.
- ◆ Gleeson, J.P., & O'Donnell, J. (1997). Understanding the complexity of practice in kinship foster care. *Child Welfare*, 76(6), 801-836.
Points out that the placement of siblings in kinship care is often complicated: "Seventy-four of the 77 children in the sample had siblings. Siblings of the children in kinship foster care lived in a variety of settings, adding to the diversity and complexity of family caregiving and child-rearing arrangements. Seventy-eight percent of the children had one or more siblings living in the same relative's home with them. Forty percent of the children had siblings living with at least one other relative. Nine percent had siblings living in traditional family foster care placements with nonrelatives."
- ◆ Grimm, B. & Hurtubise, I. (2003, January-March). Child & Family Service Reviews. Part I: A background to the review process. *Youth Law News*, 24(1). Retrieved December 28, 2005 from:
<http://www.youthlaw.org/YLN.htm>
This is the first in a series of reports analyzing the completed Federal Child and Family Service Reviews. One issue examined (pp. 24-29) is sibling placement and visitation.
- ◆ Groza, V., Maschmeier, C., Jamison, C., & Piccola, T. (2003). Siblings and out-of-home placement: Best practices. *Families in Society: The Journal of Contemporary Human Services*, 480-490.
This article is based on research and practice experience from projects and cases in both public child welfare agencies and private adoption agencies. The authors summarize the research on sibling relationships, including a description of sibling relationships in families where children have been abused and neglected; discuss the barriers in child welfare that can result in the separation of siblings; and offer best practice solutions that support maintaining sibling relationships throughout temporary and permanent placement. An assessment tool to assist in the decision-making process for the placement of siblings is also included. This tool will help practitioners think systematically about the placement of siblings in order to make the best decisions.
- ◆ Herrick, M.A., & Piccus, W. (2005). Sibling connections: The importance of nurturing sibling bonds in the foster care system. *Children and Youth Services Review* (27)7, 856-861.

Because of the significant relationships that children may have with their parents and siblings before being removed from their home, children who enter the child welfare system may experience anxiety, trauma, grief, guilt and loss of identity. The purpose of this paper is to explore the ameliorating effect that sibling connections can have on these factors. It is the authors' position that sibling connections are extremely important to children in out-of-home care and, apart from situations where sibling contact will cause trauma or disruption for the children, professionals should make every effort to maintain sibling relationships. Both of the authors are child welfare researchers who also spent a significant amount of time in foster care, together and separated from siblings.

- ◆ Jewett, C.L. (1978). *Adopting the older child*. (pp. 160-163). Harvard, MA: The Harvard Common Press.

The author makes a case for finding adoptive placements that allow siblings to stay together, providing post-adoption supports for families that adopt siblings, and, when siblings are separated, helping them resolve issues of loss, grief, guilty, and jealousy.

- ◆ Jordan Institute for Families. (1997). *Why separate siblings? Children's Services Practice Notes*, 2(4). Retrieved from the Internet at <http://ssw.unc.edu/fcrp/Cspn/cspn.htm>

Brief review of reasons commonly given for separating siblings, and factors that should be considered.

- ◆ Kaufman, M. & Walton, D. (1981). *The placement of a large sibling group: A cooperative approach*. Washington, DC: US Department of Health and Human Services.

In an interview format, an adoption worker and a foster care worker describe the cooperative process by which they placed seven siblings together in one adoptive home.

- ◆ Keck, G.C. & Kupecky, R. (1998). *Adopting the hurt child: Hope for families with special needs kids*. (Ch. 8: Siblings: The old, the new, the feelings! pp. 119-130). : Colorado Springs, CO: Pinon Press.

- ◆ The authors recommend that siblings might be placed together even in those cases usually cited as reasons for separation, such as (1) sibling abuse, positing that abusive or aggressive behaviors will continue in separate placements, with different victims; and (2) the parentified child, whose emotional state may be harmed by the loss of younger siblings. Also discussed are cases in which the adoption of one member of a sibling pair is disrupted, and the effects of the adoption of children with special needs on biological children in the family.

- ◆ Kupecky, R. (2002, Summer). Womb mates: When sibling rights & child-parent attachment clash. *Adoptalk*. Retrieved from the Internet at http://www.nacac.org/adoptalk_articles/wombmates.html

The author makes the case for leaving young children in fost-adopt homes in which they have bonded with their parents rather than moving them in order to reunite them with siblings with whom they have little or no connection.

- ◆ National Child Welfare Resource Center for Adoption. (n.d.). *Sibling placement*. Retrieved December 28, 2005 from: <http://www.nrcadoption.org/resources/emerge.htm>

A practice brief that provides practice tips for working with siblings in adoption.

- ◆ National Resource Center for Family-Centered Practice and Permanency Planning. (n.d.). *Sibling practice curriculum*. Retrieved December 28, 2005 from: http://www.hunter.cuny.edu/socwork/nrcfcpp/info_services/siblings.html

The overall training objectives of this two-day curriculum are: to enhance understanding of issues concerning siblings in out-of-home care; to expand knowledge and skills in making appropriate

placement decisions for sibling groups; to enhance knowledge and skills in the recruitment and retention of resource families willing and able to parent sibling groups; to enhance ability to present appropriate information to the court to support sibling groups; and to increase knowledge of policy and legislation affecting sibling placements in participants' jurisdictions.

- ◆ Nelson, N. (2001). Making placement decisions for siblings. *The AAE Pipeline*. Retrieved December 28, 2005 from: <http://www.akae.org/fall01.html>

An article from the Alaska Adoption Exchange provides suggestions for sibling placements.

- ◆ O'Connor, R. (1998, June-July). Separating siblings: Guiding principles. *MARNmemo*. Retrieved from the Internet at <http://www.facam.org/Articles/Parenting/specialrelationships.htm>

Summary of 1993 Minnesota guidelines to be followed by agencies seeking to place siblings in separate adoptive placements.

- ◆ Schuenger, K. (2002). *Siblings in foster care*. NRCFCPPP Information Packet. Retrieved December 28, 2005 from: http://www.hunter.cuny.edu/socwork/nrcfcpp/info_services/siblings.html

Information contained in this packet includes fact sheets, practice tips, model programs, a review of policies and legislation, references and suggested readings, and web resources pertaining to siblings in foster care.

- ◆ Silverstein, D.N. & Roszia, S.K. (1999). Openness: A critical component of special needs adoption. *Child Welfare*, 78(5), 637-651.

This article looks at open adoption, often considered in infant adoption, as a way to recognize all of a child's relationships, including those with siblings. Because children with special needs are often adopted after abuse or neglect in their birth families, openness can be more challenging to the birth family, the adoptive parents, and to the child. The author presents a philosophy and model that "requires, creates, and supports reciprocal and participatory pathways for education, values clarification, negotiation, mediation, and problem resolution."

- ◆ Staff, I. & Fein, E. (1992). Together or separate: A study of siblings in foster care. *Child Welfare*, 71(3), 257-270.

This study focused on pairs of siblings placed by a private long-term foster care agency, looking at the relationship between placement disruption and placement with and without the paired sibling. The researchers found that sibling pairs placed together were more likely to remain in their first placement than those placed separately, but that of disrupted placements, it was more likely for both members of a placed-together pair to experience disruption. However, some pairs also had other siblings whose placements were not considered in the study.

- ◆ Timberlake, E.M. & Hamlin, E.R. (1982). The sibling group: A neglected dimension of placement. *Child Welfare*, 61(8), 545-552.

The authors, writing at a time in which it was a rare practice to maintain sibling groups in placement, focus on ways in which sibling groups can help their members deal with issues of separation and loss from one another as well as from the family of origin.

- ◆ Ward, M. (1984). Sibling ties in foster care and adoption planning. *Child Welfare*, 33(4), 321-332.

The author discusses the importance of sibling ties to children and offers recommendations for maintaining ties through the placement process. She stresses the need to consider the wishes and needs of the children in making placement decisions.

- ◆ Whelan, D.J. (2003). Using attachment theory when placing siblings in foster care. *Child and Adolescent Social Work Journal*, 20(1), 21-36.

This paper draws from the attachment theory literature, social work literature, and the author's experience as an outpatient psychotherapist. Using the concept of a secure attachment environment, this paper argues that siblings can potentially contribute to, or detract from a secure attachment environment.

- ◆ Youth Law Advisory Team. (2002). *Position paper: Siblings in foster care and adoption*. [Online]. Retrieved from the Internet at <http://www.ylat.org/leadership/policy/siblingposition.htm>

Maine Youth Law Advisory Team members met with the Bureau of Child and Family Services Director in 2001. In this meeting, they expressed concern about siblings becoming separated far too frequently in the foster care system. As a result of that meeting, YLAT members compiled feedback that became their position paper on siblings. It was submitted to DHS and was used to produce official policy that became effective July 25, 2002.

General

- ◆ Associated Press. (2001, July 26). Fear of separations for foster kids. *The New York Times*.

This brief newspaper article presents the experiences and opinions of several individuals involved in sibling issues.

- ◆ Belluck. (1998, Aug. 26). Emphasis shifts to keeping siblings together when using foster homes. *New York Times*, A18.

Newspaper article describes Chicago's Jane Addams Hull House sibling placement program and reviews various state efforts to improve placement issues for siblings during the 1990s.

- ◆ Bernstein, N. 2000, Feb. 16. Torn to pieces. *Salon*. Retrieved from the Internet at <http://www.salon.com/mwt/feature/2000/02/16/siblings/>

Electronic magazine article on the separation of siblings in out-of-home care.

- ◆ Bodie, Y. (2001). The epidemic of sibling losses. *Fostering Families Today*, I(1).

The author is a college student who was placed in foster care with some but not all of her siblings and later adopted along with two brothers into a family of 36. She writes of her experience and her desire to improve the system from within.

- ◆ Graham, K.A. (2003, July 22). No giving up in sibling search. *Philadelphia Inquirer*, B7.

This news story describes a 67-year old woman who is searching for nine siblings. All the children were relinquished by their birth parents; she lost touch with all of them in 1946. She has found two brothers.

- ◆ Harmon, A. (2005, November 20). Hello, I'm your sister. Our father is donor 150. *New York Times*, 1, 34.

This news article describes the efforts of some children conceived from anonymous sperm bank donations to connect with and build relationships with biological half-siblings.

- ◆ Hochman, G., Feathers-Acuna, E., & Huston, A. (1992). *The sibling bond: its importance in foster care and adoptive placement*. Washington, DC: National Adoption Information Clearinghouse. Retrieved from the Internet at http://naic.acf.hhs.gov/pubs/f_siblin.cfm

Contains an overview of what is known about sibling issues in out-of-home care, including a look at the intensity of the sibling bond, reasons frequently given for separating siblings, research findings that indicate these reasons may be faulty, and guidelines for decision-making in sibling placement.

- ◆ Kupecky, R. (1993). *Siblings are family, too: A resource guide for adoptive parents*. Pittsburgh, PA: Three Rivers Adoption Council.

Annotated Bibliography on Siblings in Out-of-Home Care

This guidebook is addressed to both adoption workers and adoptive families of sibling groups. It focuses on practical matters including using life books, having siblings in separate placements see the same mental health professional, therapeutic game-playing, recruiting families for sibling groups, pre-adoption visits, post-adoption supports, and attending to the needs of biological children in the family.

- ◆ Newberger, J. 2001, June 1. Growing up together. *Connect for Kids*. Retrieved from the Internet at <http://www.connectforkids.org>

Electronic article describing sibling placement programs in Chicago and Florida.

- ◆ Patten, P. (2001, May-June). The joys and complexities of sibling relationships. *Parent News* [Online]. Retrieved from the Internet at <http://library.adoption.com/sibling-relationships/the-joys-and-complexities-of-sibling-relationships/article/3307/1.html>

Brief summary of research on sibling bonds.

- ◆ Phillips, C. (1998). Foster-care system struggles to keep siblings living together. *APA Monitor*, 29(1), Retrieved from the Internet at <http://www.apa.org/monitor/jan98/sibs.html>

Brief description of several programs addressing issues involving siblings in out-of-home care.

- ◆ Price, C.A. (n.d.). Siblings are forever. *Senior Series*, 55-180-1. Retrieved December 28, 2005 from: <http://ohioline.osu.edu/ss-fact/0180.html>

This article discusses the importance of sibling relationships across the lifespan.

- ◆ Price, L.S. (2004). *Give siblings their right to reunite*. Portland, OR: Inkwater Press.

The first person true story of a woman who was separated from her sister as a baby, was reconnected at age eight, and formed a relationship as an adult. She founded Camp To Belong, a camping experience devoted to bringing separated siblings together.

- ◆ Riggs, D. (1999, Spring). Sibling ties are worth preserving. *Adoptalk*. Retrieved from the Internet at http://www.nacac.org/adoptalk_articles/sibling_ties.html

Describes some approaches to keeping siblings together in foster and adoptive placements as well as ways to maintain sibling connections even when they are placed separately.

- ◆ Schooler, J. (1996, May/June). Separating Siblings. *Growing Up Adopted*, 49.

In this brief article, the author provides some practical suggestions for adoptive parents of separated siblings, advising them to be open about their concerns, willing to maintain contact, committed to honoring children's wishes, honest about other siblings, and accepting of their children's feelings about their siblings.

Law

- ◆ Dillard, R.S. (1999). *Child in foster care seeks Supreme Court determination that siblings have a right to family integrity when their parents have lost custody*. The Evan B. Donaldson Adoption Institute. [Online]. Retrieved from the Internet at <http://www.adoptioninstitute.org/policy/polsib.html>

Summary of a case brought before Massachusetts Supreme Court in 1999.

- ◆ Elstein, S.G. (1999). Making decisions about siblings in the child welfare system. *Child Law Practice*, 18(7).

The author looks at decision-making in sibling placements from the perspective of the attorney.

- ◆ Illinois Department of Children & Family Services. (2004, June 4). *Lawmakers pass sibling rights resolution submitted by foster children*. Retrieved December 28, 2005 from: http://www.state.il.us/DCFS/library/com_communications_pr_jun42004.shtml#content
Youth of the DCFS Statewide Youth Advisory Board (SYAB) wrote a resolution and presented it at a senate hearing. The resolution, written with the assistance of law students from Loyola University School of Law, creates a 20-member Task Force that will include legislators, current and former foster children and representatives from the Department's advisory groups on foster care, adoption and youth services.
- ◆ Jones, B. (1993). *Do siblings possess Constitutional rights?* *Cornell Law Review*, 78(6), 1187-1220.
This article discusses the status of sibling rights and then addresses whether these rights deserve constitutional protection.
- ◆ National Adoption Information Clearinghouse. (2003). *Adoption state statutes - Cooperative adoptions: Contact between adoptive and birth families after finalization*. [Online]. Retrieved from the Internet at <http://naic.acf.hhs.gov/general/legal/statutes/cooperative.cfm>
A discussion of state laws related to formalized open adoption agreements, with citations and links. Four states (California, Indiana, Maryland and Massachusetts) have separate provisions for sibling visitation.
- ◆ National Center for Youth Law. (2000). *Foster care reform litigation docket*. Oakland, CA:Author. Retrieved from the Internet at <http://www.youthlaw.org/Fcdocket.htm>
Describes litigation concerning foster care. Of particular interest in sibling issues are cases filed in Illinois (1988, Office of the Cook County Public Guardian), and New York (1990, Legal Aid Society).
- ◆ Patton, W.W. (2001). The status of siblings' rights: A view into the new millennium. *DePaul Law Review*, 51(1), 1-38.
A review of case law and legislation involving sibling rights since 1991. Looks in particular at the legal status of siblings regarding visitation rights both pre- and post-termination of parental rights and in pre- and post-adoption scenarios in which sibling rights are measured against those of biological, foster, and adoptive parents. Concludes with a call to create a National Siblings Day.
- ◆ Supreme Court of the State of Nevada. (2003, December 30). *State, Div. Child & Fam. Servs. V. Dist. Ct.*, 119 Nev. Adv. Op. No. 68.
The Nevada Supreme Court ruled that the state must provide a teenager in foster care with information about the adoptive placements of her biological siblings. Specifically, the Court last month ordered the state to provide the addresses of the two adoptive families so that the teenager can serve the adoptive parents with petitions for sibling visitation. The Court found that the state agency defied a previous family court order to develop a sibling visitation plan with prospective adoptive parents before the children were permanently placed. Moreover, the Court rejected the state's argument that releasing the adoption records would make families less likely to adopt.

Literature Reviews

- ◆ Brody, G.M. (1998). Sibling relationship quality: Its causes and consequences. *Ann. Rev. Psychol.*, 49, 1-24.
This review of the psychological and developmental literature focuses on child characteristics and family processes and proposes a model that mediates the links between the two. Of note is the

observation that the combination of high level of support between siblings is rarely combined with a low level of rivalry.

- ◆ Hegar, R.L. . (1988, Sept.). Sibling relationships and separations: Implications for child placement. *Social Service Review*, 446-467.

A multidisciplinary literature review of research on sibling relationships and sibling separation, concluding that the importance of sibling ties should be respected in foster care placements.

- ◆ Kang, H. (2002). *Sibling relationship in out-of-home care*. Children and Family Research Center. Retrieved December 28, 2005 from:
<http://cfrwww.social.uiuc.edu/respract/biblio.pdfs/SiblingsinCare.LR.pdf>

This review includes studies on sibling separation patterns and factors, differences between children placed with siblings and children placed alone, foster mothers' and caseworkers' views on sibling placement, and the relationship between sibling separation and child functioning.

- ◆ Kang, H. (2002). *The nature of adult sibling relationship*. Child and Family Research Center. Retrieved December 28, 2005 from:
<http://cfrwww.social.uiuc.edu/respract/biblio.pdfs/AdultsiblingRel.LR.pdf>

This review addresses the following questions: What is the significance of the adult sibling relationship? What are the patterns and types of the adult sibling relationship? What are the factors that affect the adult sibling relationship?

- ◆ Kosonen, M. (1994). Sibling relationships for children in the care system. *Adoption & Fostering*, 18(3), 30-35.

This literature review focuses on factors that affect the nature of sibling relationships, including attachment to mother, the quality of the parental relationship, family emotional climate and stress, parental neglect and unavailability, abuse, parental favoritism, non-shared environmental influences, and access. The author concludes that an assessment of the quality of the sibling relationship should be an essential part of the decision-making process in placement.

Psychology

- ◆ Bank, S.P. & Kahn, M.D. (1982). *The sibling bond*. New York: Basic Books.

The authors present their view of the nature of the sibling bond based on their experience treating siblings in a psychotherapeutic setting.

- ◆ Lewis, M. (2005). The child and its family: The social network model. *Human Development* 48, 8-27.

Classical attachment theory views mother as the first and most important figure in an infant's life. A larger view of attachment moves toward a model of simultaneous and multiple attachment figures. In particular, it is argued that peer attachment is a separate but related system. A review of children's peer relationships, including siblings, leads to the consideration of a social network model in which a variety of different people satisfy a variety of different needs of the child.

Research

- ◆ Barth, R.P., Berry, M., Yoshikami, R., Goodfield, R.K., & Carson, M.L. (1998). Predicting adoption disruption. *Social Work* 33(3), 227-233.

An examination of older child adoption in northern California from 1980 to 1984 showed a decreased disruption rate, largely attributable to the greater use of foster parent adoptions. Contrary to expectations, placements in which siblings were together were not exceptionally likely to disrupt.

- ◆ Child and Family Research Center. (2005). *Conservation of sibling bonds update*. Retrieved December 28, 2005 from: <http://cfrwww.social.uiuc.edu/pubreports/PubsBriefs.htm>

Examination of Illinois child welfare data shows that sibling groups of varying sizes are more likely to be placed together when they are living with relatives than when they are in unrelated foster care. For the most recent data (FY 2004), the proportion placed together has remained level or declined for kinship care, but has improved significantly in unrelated foster care for sibling groups of all sizes.
- ◆ Drapeau, S., Simard, M., Beaudry, M., & Charbonneau, C. (2000). Siblings in family transitions. *Family Relations* 49(1), 77-85.

This research focuses on how siblings are organized following two types of family transitions: foster care placements and parental divorce. Its goal was to identify the family characteristics associated with intact and split sibling groups. Results indicated that siblings are more likely to be separated when children are older and when they have a larger age gap with their siblings; arrangements in which siblings are separated produce greater instability for them.
- ◆ Dubowitz, H., Feigelman, S., & Zuravin, S. (1993). A profile of kinship care. *Child Welfare*, 72(2), 153-169.

Describes children who were the subjects of a comprehensive study on kinship care. Sibling issues are only noted with a brief statistical reference that "Of those with siblings, the majority (68%) had at least one sibling placed together with them."
- ◆ Hegar, R.L. (2005). Sibling placement in foster care and adoption: An overview of international research. *Children and Youth Services Review* 27(7), 717-739.

This article reviews 17 studies from several countries which address definitions and descriptions of sibling groups in care, characteristics of children placed together or separately, and outcomes of sibling placements. Most studies examining outcomes suggest that joint sibling placements are as stable as, or more stable than, placements of single children or separated siblings and that children do as well or better when placed with siblings. Implications for policy, practice, and research are discussed.
- ◆ Kosonen, M. (1996). Maintaining sibling relationships - Neglected dimension in child care practice. *Social Work*, 26, 809-822.

This Scottish study reveals that issues impacting siblings in care in the United Kingdom are the same as those in the United States. Of 337 children in the study, 82% were known to have siblings. Sixty percent of these were not living with any of their brothers and sisters. Separated siblings lived in a variety of situations both within and outside the child welfare system, and reunification plans were often not in place.
- ◆ Leathers, S. (2005). Separation from siblings: Associations with placement adaptation and outcomes among adolescents in long-term foster care. *Children and Youth Services Review* 27(7), 793-819.

Although practice guidelines support the placement of siblings in the same foster home whenever possible, sibling groups are frequently separated. Little empirical knowledge is available to understand why siblings are separated or how different sibling placement patterns are related to children's placement adaptation and permanency outcomes. These questions were investigated using data from a study involving telephone interviews with the caseworkers and foster parents of a cross-sectional sample of 197 randomly selected young adolescents in long-term, traditional family foster care. Placement outcomes, including placement disruption, reunification, and adoption, were followed prospectively for five years. Results of multivariate analyses indicate that adolescents who were placed alone after a history of joint sibling placements were at greater

risk for placement disruption than those who were placed with a consistent number of siblings while in foster care. This association was mediated by a weaker sense of integration and belonging in the foster home among youth placed alone with a history of sibling placements. Youth placed alone, either throughout their stay in foster care or after a history of sibling placements, were less likely to exit to adoption or subsidized guardianship than youth with consistent joint sibling placements

- ◆ Lery, B., Shaw, T.V., & Magruder, J. (2005). Using administrative child welfare data to identify sibling groups. *Children and Youth Services Review* 27(7), 783-791.

California law requires that child welfare agencies place siblings together in foster care whenever possible. Such decisions depend on how siblings are identified. Siblings are usually identified when children are removed from the same household, while non-coresident siblings can be missed and may not be considered in placement decisions or analyses. This exploratory study examines a cross-section of children in the California foster care system, comparing four different sibling classification schemes to determine how well each method identifies siblings and discusses how each strategy might apply to meeting legislative mandates for placing siblings together..

- ◆ Scherman, R. (2003, June 15). *Siblings in the mixed adoptive home: The relationship between children when one is born, and the other is adopted, into the same family*. Paper presented for the 2003 Hawaii International Conference on Social Issues, Honolulu, Hawaii, USA.

A synthesis of literature on the possible relationship between those siblings being raised together in the 'mixed' adoptive home. Based on a broad review of research literature from the fields of adoption, developmental psychology, and behavioral genetics, it discusses adoptive family functioning and the sibling relationships, when raising both adoptive and birth children together.

- ◆ Smith, M.S. (1996). An exploratory survey of foster mother and caseworker attitudes about sibling placement. *Child Welfare*, 75(4), 357-375.

The author surveyed a small number of caseworkers and foster mothers, seeking information about their beliefs and attitudes about siblings in out-of-home placements. Differences in the beliefs of the two groups may contribute to inadequate training and preparation of foster families for sibling group placements.

- ◆ Sundar, P. & Nelson, G. (2002). Moving towards resiliency: A qualitative study of young women's experiences of sibling bereavement. *Currents: New Scholarship in the Human Services*, 2(1). Retrieved December 27, 2005 from http://webapps2.ucalgary.ca/~socialwk/Currents/articles/articles/purnima_sundar/sundar_index.htm

The goal of this exploratory research was to acquire a deep understanding of the experience of sibling bereavement in young adulthood. In-depth interviews with 7 young women who had suffered the loss of a sibling between the ages of 18-30 were conducted in an effort to describe this type of loss during this stage in life. Participants shared the effects of the loss, related helpful and unhelpful methods of coping, and discussed external factors that either facilitated or hindered effective coping. Based on these findings, a theory of sibling bereavement in young adulthood was developed.

- ◆ Tarren-Sweeney, M., & Hazell, P. (2005). The mental health and socialization of siblings in care. *Children and Youth Services Review* 27(7), 821-843.

The paper describes sibling-related investigations conducted within the first stage of a prospective study of the mental health of 347 children (aged 4-11) in foster and kinship care in New South Wales, Australia (the Children in Care Study). Mental health was measured with the Child Behavior Checklist and with a carer-report instrument designed to measure psychopathology specifically observed among children in care (the Assessment Checklist for Children). A large

number of study factors were measured, including several confounders of sibling-related data. The analyses include: the distribution and stability of sibling placements; mental health and socialization estimates stratified by sibling placement status; and a within-pairs comparison of oldest-younger sibling dyads in shared placements. Girls separated from all of their siblings were reported to have significantly poorer mental health and socialization than girls residing with at least one sibling.

- ◆ Testa, M. (1997). *Jane Addams Hull House Association Neighbor to Neighbor program evaluation*. Chicago, IL: School of Social Service Administration, University of Chicago.

Program evaluation of a community-based "professional" foster care program in which one of the goals is to keep sibling groups of three or more together and near their home community.

- ◆ Webster, D., Shlonsky, A., Shaw, T., & Brookhart, M.A. (2005). The ties that bind II: Reunification for siblings in out-of-home care using a statistical technique for examining non-independent observations. *Children and Youth Services Review* 27(7), 765-782.

This study was undertaken to incorporate sibling information and account for sibling bias when modeling longitudinal child welfare outcomes using a generalized linear model such as logistic regression. Results indicate that some sibling-specific factors (e.g., being placed together in care) strongly predict reunification, while another (i.e., number of siblings) does not. Implications for child welfare policy, practice, and future research are discussed.

- ◆ Wulczyn, F. & Zimmerman, E., (2005). Sibling placements in longitudinal perspective. *Children and Youth Services Review* 27(7), 741-763.

Although research that focuses on sibling placements in foster care has increased in recent years, for the most part this research has focused on single samples from a point-in-time perspective. This paper approaches the matter of sibling placements with longitudinal data, differentiating between the notions of togetherness and intactness in order to describe the placement experiences of sibling groups. The authors found that, although siblings often enter care on the same day, they make up less than half the groups entering care; and that small sibling groups and those placed with relatives are more likely to be placed intact. Moreover, there is evidence that separated siblings who remain in care are sometimes brought together over time, sibling group size and placement type affect the likelihood that siblings are brought together, and children who follow their siblings into care are much less likely to be placed with a sibling compared to siblings that enter foster care on the same day.

Statistics

- ◆ Child Welfare Research Center. (n.d.) *Child welfare supervised foster care supplementary reports: Sibling tables*. [Online]. Retrieved December 27, 2005 from <http://cssr.berkeley.edu/cwscmsreports>

Under an Interagency Agreement with the California Department of Social Services, CWRC receives quarterly extracts from the Child Welfare Services Case Management System (CWS/CMS). With CDSS funding and additional support from the Stuart Foundation, the Performance Indicators Project creates and presents timely and useful data about children who are involved in California's Child Welfare System. This data includes statistics about the placement of siblings in every county as well as statewide.

- ◆ Figgs, J. & Ashlock, S. (2001). *Kansas public/private partnership initiative*. [Online]. Retrieved December 27, 2005 from http://www.pioneerinstitute.org/pdf/bgc01_kansas.pdf

Describes a project that involves privatizing child welfare services in Kansas. Limited statistics given in the context of outcomes over a four-year period.

Annotated Bibliography on Siblings in Out-of-Home Care

- ◆ New York City Administration for Children's Services. (2000). *First annual placement report*. New York: Author. Retrieved from the Internet at http://www.nyc.gov/html/acs/html/statistics/statistics_publications.shtml

Pages 16-19 of the Analysis section of this report details the characteristics and placement of sibling groups in fiscal year 1999.
- ◆ New York City Administration for Children's Services. (2001). *Progress on ACS reform initiatives: Status report 3*. New York: Author. Retrieved from the Internet at http://www.nyc.gov/html/acs/html/statistics/statistics_publications.shtml

New York City is required to track sibling cases as a result of a lawsuit brought by the Legal Aid Society in 1990. Report provides information about sibling groups placed in care 1985-1999. Among the findings mentioned in this report: Siblings who enter care on the same day have the best chance of being placed together; smaller groups are more likely to enter on the same day than larger groups; when siblings are not placed on the same day, less than one-third of the later placements are in the same facility as the first child(ren); placement together is more likely in kinship care than in non-related foster homes or congregate care facilities; of groups initially placed together, those in kinship homes were more likely to remain intact after six months than those in foster care or congregate care.
- ◆ New York State Citizens' Coalition for Children, Inc. (2001). *NYS CCC's sibling report*. [Online]. Retrieved December 27, 2005 from <http://www.nysccc.org/Siblings/sibreport99.htm>

A summary of statistics concerning children being planned for separately from their brothers and sisters in New York State from January 1998 to July 1999.
- ◆ State of Michigan. (2001). *Michigan's consolidated child and family services plan: Annual progress and services report*. [Online]. Retrieved December 27, 2005 from http://michigan.gov/documents/FIA-Fed-Regulation-ConsolidatedChildFamilyServPlan2000-2005__14642_7.pdf

Included in this progress report for 2000-2001 and goals for 2001-2005 are some statistics concerning sibling placements in foster care.
- ◆ Testa, M., Curtis, A., Kang, H., & Kidd, Z. (2003). *Conservation of sibling bonds*. Children and Family Research Center. Retrieved December 28, 2005 from: <http://cfrwww.social.uiuc.edu/pubreports/PubsBriefs.htm>

This brief examines data from an evaluation of the *Neighbor to Neighbor* foster care program in Chicago, Illinois, showing that even when extended kin are unavailable, it is possible to attain similar levels of siblings placed together if unrelated foster parents are recruited, trained, and hired as professionals for the task.

Advocacy

- ◆ Casey Family Programs National Center for Resource Family Support. (2003). *Proceedings of the national leadership symposium on siblings in out-of-home care*. Washington, DC: Author. Retrieved December 28, 2005 from: <http://www.casey.org/Resources/Archive/Publications/SiblingSymposium.htm>

This 121-page report summarizes the program content and supporting materials for the National Leadership Symposium on Siblings in Out-of-Home Care held on May 19 and 20, 2002, and co-sponsored by Casey Family Programs and the Florida-based Neighbor to Family Program. More than 30 individuals from diverse fields, including foster care alumni, child welfare practitioners and policymakers, legal experts, resource families, and researchers explored ways to focus attention on issues affecting brothers and sisters in foster, kinship, and adoptive placements.

- ◆ Casey Family Programs National Center for Resource Family Support. (2003). *Siblings in out-of-home care: An overview*. Washington, DC: Author. Retrieved December 28, 2005 from: http://www.hunter.cuny.edu/socwork/nrcfcpp/info_services/siblings.html

A statement from Casey Family Programs National Center for Resource Family Support on their beliefs about good practice in working with siblings in the child welfare system.

- ◆ Cass, C.C. *Implementation analysis: Colorado House Bill 1108: Placement decisions involving children who are siblings*. Denver, CO: University of Colorado at Denver, Graduate School of Public Affairs.

Analyzes Colorado legislation aimed at maintaining sibling ties in placement; suggests six possible strategies for advocates to follow in working toward meaningful implementation of the bill.

- ◆ Shlonsky, A., Bellamy, J., Elkins, J., & Ashare, C.J. (2005). The other kin: Setting the course for research, policy, and practice with siblings in foster care. *Children and Youth Services Review* 27(7), 697-716.

The preservation and maintenance of sibling relationships in child welfare settings have begun to come to the forefront of practice and policy considerations. While past research on families coming into contact with the child protective services system has largely focused on the parent-child relationship, an emerging body of literature indicates that the relationship between brothers and sisters cannot be ignored. This paper highlights recent and historical trends in the literature on siblings in foster care, reviews some of the legal issues surrounding conjoint sibling placement, proposes a constitutionally protected right of association among siblings in out-of-home care, and explores the multiple and complex methodological challenges facing researchers in this area.