

# What Works for Children?



Newsletter June 2003

*This newsletter is a round up of the activities of the What Works for Children group - a collaboration between Barnardo's, the University of York and City University. The group is funded by the UK Economic and Social Research Council to work with practitioners and service planners on using research evidence in practice.*

## IN THIS ISSUE:

- Recent activities of the What Works for Children group
- Finding information relevant to your work
- Upcoming event
- The website is online!

## RECENT EVENTS: Database workshop in Leeds

A small but keen group of Children's Fund employees gathered at Barnardo's regional office in Leeds in April this year to learn more about searching for information relevant to their work. The day was packed with information on which databases to search and how to search. Much attention was spent on how to focus your search to retrieve just the information relevant to your work. A few participants ended up finding things they had heard about and looked for but never found before.

For those of you who were not able to attend, but would like to know some tips for searching - over the next couple of pages you will find some of the information from the course.

This information is also available in our Evidence Guide. The guide is free on our website [www.whatworksforchildren.org.uk](http://www.whatworksforchildren.org.uk)

## HOW DO I EFFECTIVELY SEARCH FOR INFORMATION RELEVANT TO MY PROJECT?

Focusing your search is going to make it easier to find stuff relevant to your work. **Dividing up your question into 4 parts will help you do this:**

QUESTION	EXAMPLE
1. What is the target group you are trying to reach with your service? You may define the group or issue of interest in terms of age, sex, ethnic group and/or the type of problem you are interested in.	Children aged 5-10 with behaviour problems
2. The intervention. Think about what constitutes an intervention. It covers any activity you wish to do or are doing at the moment and want to assess.	Group-based parenting programmes
3. The comparison intervention when relevant.	One-to-one parenting programmes
4. The outcome of interest. What do you aim to be the result of your service?	Reduced behaviour problems, parent satisfaction, academic achievement

When you search for information on a database you will pick keywords from these four stages. In the example above you would pick the following keywords: CHILDREN, BEHAVIOUR PROBLEMS, PARENTING PROGRAMMES, ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT

In the databases, keywords can be combined in order to narrow down your search. For example, if you search for CHILDREN you might get over 1 million references. However, if you search for CHILDREN AND PARENTING PROGRAMMES you will probably get a more manageable number of hits.

**LIMITING YOUR SEARCH: Boolean operators**

AND, OR, NOT are called Boolean operators. They help you combine keywords in a search.

- **AND** combines two or more words. For example: children AND parenting programmes AND behaviour problems. This would look for references with all those words.
- **OR** means that you search for either word. For example: children OR parenting programmes. OR widens your search.
- **NOT** excludes words. For example: children NOT parenting programmes means that you would get hits with children, but not with parenting programmes. NOT should be used with care.

Another tip is to use \* at the end of a word to include more than one ending. Child\* will search for child, children, childhood etc. Parent\* will search for parent, parents, parenting, parental etc.

**SOME KEY RESOURCES**

Child mental health: FOCUS <a href="http://www.rcpsych.ac.uk/cru/focus">www.rcpsych.ac.uk/cru/focus</a>	The website provides resources relevant to promoting effective practice in child and adolescent mental health. A range of topics are provided, eg eating problems, mental health needs of looked after children and parent training programmes.
The electronic library for social care (eLSC) and CareData <a href="http://www.elsc.org.uk/caredata.htm">www.elsc.org.uk/caredata.htm</a>	This database lists books, reports, articles and research papers for social care. NB! This database uses & for AND, / for OR, ! for NOT.
Home Office <a href="http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk/rds">www.homeoffice.gov.uk/rds</a>	Here you can find full text reports of studies on crime and other related topics.
Joseph Rowntree Foundation <a href="http://www.jrf.org.uk">www.jrf.org.uk</a>	Joseph Rowntree Foundation funds a range of studies on social issues and children
Eric <a href="http://askeric.org/Eric">http://askeric.org/Eric</a>	This database focuses on education research.

## LATEST ACTIVITIES

**EVIDENCE REQUESTS:** The evidence request service has proved popular and hopefully useful for those of you who have used it. Please note that the service will come to an end on July 31<sup>st</sup>. If you would like help with finding research relevant to your work please make sure that you submit your question before this date. Requests for research can be sent to Madeleine [m.stevens@city.ac.uk](mailto:m.stevens@city.ac.uk) or Sarah [sarah.frost@barnardos.org.uk](mailto:sarah.frost@barnardos.org.uk)

**EVALUATION:** What Works for Children will be contacting all Children's Funds to map the range of services and projects. If agreed by the projects this will feed into the local evaluation to make sure you are not contacted twice about the same information.

**TOOLS FOR USING RESEARCH IN PRACTICE:** All projects will be sent a self-assessment tool and a hard copy of our evidence guide. We hope that these tools will be of help to you and would be grateful if you find the time to provide feedback on these resources. It is only through feedback that we can develop resources of the best quality.

**WEBSITE:** The What Works for Children website has been up and running for some time. The resources have now been updated. Visit [www.whatworksforchildren.org.uk](http://www.whatworksforchildren.org.uk) to find our evidence nuggets, the evidence guide and other resources for using research in your practice.

**NEXT EVENT:** Our next event will be on November 5<sup>th</sup> in York and will focus on what works for providing services to disabled children and their families. Mark the day in your diary now! You will receive an invite for the event closer to the time.

### What Works for Children

If you have any questions please contact Kristin Liabo at:  
Institute of Health Sciences, City University, Bartholomew  
Close, London EC1A 7QN; Direct line: 020 7040 5970;  
[k.liabo@city.ac.uk](mailto:k.liabo@city.ac.uk)