Emerging Themes in Child Abuse
Prevention Research:
Filling the Gaps

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Policy research that benefits children, families, and their communities

Literature Review Objectives

- To identify new developments in the characteristics of programs most successful in preventing child abuse – is home visiting still the best bet?

- To identify successful strategies that improve collaboration across state agencies or alter service delivery in ways that enhance efficiencies or improve outcomes

- To identify emerging frameworks or conceptual models in other disciplines that may have application in improving child abuse prevention programs or policies

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Core Activities

- Traditional search of promising prevention programs identified in journals focusing on child maltreatment, family support, children/youth development and public health
- A broader search to identify recent progress in other areas of study such as building "learning organizations", promoting cultural or normative change, neighborhood impacts, use of technology, implementation science and replication
- Interviews with key experts from diverse fields to highlight core topics of discussion and promising innovations

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Promising Areas of Inquiry

- New conceptual frameworks – people are thinking about the problem differently
- Advances in neuroscience and genetic research in explaining early child development and trauma impact
- Socio-economic trends impacting parental capacity and the challenges parents face
- A more focused emphasis on infrastructure building and systems development
- Innovation in research methods and data management

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New Conceptual Frameworks

- Risk versus protective factors
  - Moving from defining success simply in terms of reducing risk to measuring progress based on risk reduction and strengthening protective factors that promote resilience
  - Examples
    - Protective Factors Framework – Strengthening Families Initiative
    - Life Course Health Development – CDC's Prevention Strategy
    - IOM Report on Prevention of Mental Health Disorders
- Cultural competence versus cultural humility
  - Moving from the notion of mastering a body of knowledge to sustaining an ongoing commitment to learning and understanding

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Human Development and Trauma Impact

- Importance of early childhood on development
  - Early brain development and "executive functioning"
  - Impact of trauma and "toxic stress"
  - Limits of remediation
- Intervention potential for children 3-5
  - Attachment and Biobehavioral Catch-Up Intervention
  - Multidimensional Treatment Foster Care Program for Preschoolers (MTFC-P)
  - Tools of the Mind
- Intervention potential for adolescents
  - Attachment, Self-Regulation, and Competency (ARC)
  - Parent-Child Interaction Therapy (PCIT)

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Impact of Broad Socio-Economic Trends

- Growing income inequality and absence of upward mobility
  - May impact rates of intergenerational child maltreatment
  - Improved education and income may not exist to buffer the negative impacts of child maltreatment
- Economic Uncertainty
  - Less stable job markets/prolonged unemployment
  - Greater stress associated with instability in income and public investments
- Single parent status
  - Affecting more children from more diverse populations

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Moving Beyond Model Replication

- More fully understanding program implementation
  - Implementation science
- Building effective systems to support program development
  - Collective impacts
  - Community initiatives
- Using technology to enhance performance
  - Improving provider supervision and performance
  - Strengthening participant-provider relationship
  - Empowering participants to act on own

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Innovations In Data Management

- Growing use of administrative data and integrated data management systems
  - Monitor participant outcomes over the long term
  - Allow for a clearer understanding of an individual's experience across diverse public service systems
- Development of better program monitoring tools and fidelity systems
  - Greater clarity regarding program experiences across participants
- Use of more complex analytic packages
  - HLM
  - Propensity analysis

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Preventing Child Abuse: Next Generation

- Fewer "big" initiatives and more locally defined and managed programmatic innovations
- Self-directed strategies – strengthening the capacity of parents to access information and services on their own
- Development of a collective sense of responsibility for child outcomes
- Creating universal systems of support building on current health care and educational investments

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Ferguson's "Killer" Apps Adjusted for CAN

- Use of **modern medicine**/genetic research to determine what we can biologically address

- **Consumer culture** – teach families to demand what they need

- **Work ethic** – commitment to continuous learning; parents need to work at the job of raising their children and professionals to adapt their practice as necessary

- **Scientific revolution** – use data to improve practice and seek greater efficiency in what you deliver

- **Competition** – allow local variation and don't guarantee funding without outcomes

- **Rule of law** – expand who can do this work; don't place decisions in the hands of one professional group/one institution

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