Child Welfare News

National:

Homeschool family sues Virginia social services for removing children, claiming that parents imagined kids’ illnesses. (Christian Post)  

Out of turbulent foster care, a vibrant policy voice. (Chronicle of Social Change)  

Why I let my children walk to the corner store – and why other parents should, too. (Opinion) (Washington Post)  

Smart money: financial aspects of adoption. (WZZM-13)  

Let kids play outside alone? It should be a crime, poll says. (KTAR News)  
http://www.ktar.com/?nid=22&sid=1760675

Poverty during pregnancy causes high cortisol levels in fetus, leading to greater risk for serious disease later in life. (Medical News Today)  

About This Publication

Keeping Current is a compilation of relevant news and information, including trainings and events. The materials referenced in Keeping Current are intended to be additional resources for consideration by members of the CCAN community, and Children’s Law Center cannot verify the quality of all the materials or events referenced herein. CCAN attorneys should conduct their own independent research when reviewing these materials, and should review the weekly CCAN e-mail for current information. Please contact Jennifer Morris, Deputy Director, with comments or suggestions. Keeping Current is also posted on the Family Law page of ProBono.net/dc and www.childrenslawcenter.org.

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Drop in birth rates among US teens leads to estimated 4 million fewer births between 2007-2012. (Center for Disease Control, National Center for Health Statistics)
http://www.cdc.gov/nchs/data/nvsr/nvsr63/nvsr63_04.pdf

Working together to reform juvenile justice and child welfare systems. (Council of State Governments)
http://knowledgecenter.csg.org/kc/content/working-together-reform-juvenile-justice-child-welfare-systems

Study finds that parental incarceration may be worse for children than divorce. (USA Today)

In Virginia, thousands of day care providers receive no oversight at all. (Washington Post)

Tracking first graders from 1982 to present day illustrates the difficulty of escaping poverty. (Washington Post)

Report finds that school absences can set students back between 1 and 2 years. (Washington Post)
http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2014/09/02/school-absence_n_5739084.html

Changing lives: prevention and intervention to reduce serious offending. (National Institute of Justice Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention)

In Maryland’s poorest county, free meal programs could go a long way. (WAMU)
http://wamu.org/news/14/09/05/in_marylands_poorest_county_free_meal_program_could_go_a_long_way

Like Maryland, Delaware schools also struggle to make room for unaccompanied minors. (WAMU)
http://wamu.org/news/14/09/08/delaware_schools_struggle_to_make_room_for_unaccompanied_minors

The forsaken: a rising number of homeless gay teens are being cast out by religious families. (Rolling Stone)

Building a national strategy to end child abuse and neglect deaths. (Roll Call)
Maryland state judiciary to hold summit on foster care for LGBT youth after critical report.  (Baltimore Sun)

Failed adoptions traumatic for children.  (Columbus Dispatch)

Virginia advocate is unrelenting voice against child abuse.  (The Virginian-Pilot)

Grandparents raising grandchildren – a graying trend.  (Chicago Post-Tribune)

New York City Council passes bill to track kids when they leave foster care.  (New York Daily News)

Child poverty just dropped for the first time since 2000.  (Deseret News)

When abuse is not abuse.  (Slate)

Attorney General Eric Holder says immigrant children at the border should get lawyers, though his department disagrees.  (PBS NewsHour)


Parenthood denied by law: after a same-sex couple’s breakup, a custody battle leaves one parent a legal stranger to her child.  (New York Times)

What it feels like to lift your child out of poverty.  (Washington Post)

Americans’ opinions on spanking vary by party, race, region, and religion. (FiveThirtyEight) http://fivethirtyeight.com/datalab/americans-opinions-on-spanking-vary-by-party-race-region-and-religion/

In the wake of the Adrian Peterson case, two op-ed pieces highlight the debate around spanking. (Opinion) (New York Times)
- Punishment or child abuse? http://www.nytimes.com/2014/09/18/opinion/punishment-or-child-abuse.html?_r=0


The number of homeless children in American public schools is skyrocketing. (ThinkProgress) http://thinkprogress.org/economy/2014/09/23/3570962/homeless-students-2/

District:

District said it did all it could in Relisha Rudd case. (Washington Post)

Post columnist, Petula Dvorak, calls for an examination of Relisha Rudd’s life, not her disappearance. (Washington Post)

Washington Post’s Editorial Board also weighs in, saying the District evaded responsibility for Relisha’s disappearance. (Washington Post)
http://www.washingtonpost.com/opinions/the-district-evades-responsibility-for-relisha-rudds-disappearance/2014/09/03/92ede33e-3399-11e4-8f02-03c644b2d7d0_story.html

Commentary: report on Relisha Rudd misses the big picture. (WAMU)
http://wamu.org/news/14/09/08/commentary_report_on_relisha_rudd_misses_the_big_picture

Review of Relisha Rudd’s disappearance raises questions on training, reporting. (WAMU)
http://wamu.org/news/14/09/08/review_of_relisha_rudds_disappearance_raises_questions_on_training_reporting

Relisha Rudd report was whitewashed, lawmaker suggests at DC Council hearing. (Washington Post)
http://www.washingtonpost.com/local/dc-politics/relisha-rudd-report-was-whitewashed-lawmaker-suggests-at-dc-council-hearing/2014/09/19/a00df360-401e-11e4-9587-5dafd9629f0_story.html

DC expects to see 16 percent rise in family homelessness this winter. (Washington City Paper)

DC Human Services Chief: city can avoid homelessness crisis, but only with persistent effort. (Washington City Paper)

DC’s winter plan is a step forward, but much work still remains to be done. (DC Fiscal Policy Institute)

Opinion: shackling DC juvenile offenders should not be routine. (Washington Post)
http://www.washingtonpost.com/opinions/shackling-dc-juvenile-offenders-should-not-be-routine/2014/09/08/00ece1ca-33bb-11e4-8f02-03c644b2d7d0_story.html

Children’s National Medical Center makes big play for Walter Reed site; could reopen campus by 2015. (Washington Business Journal)
DC incomes, poverty level flat since recession’s end.  *(Washington City Paper)*

The best way to serve vulnerable homeless families? Get them out of shelter!  *(DC Fiscal Policy Institute)*

**Education News**

**National:**

How to get kids to class: to keep poor students in school, provide social services.  *(Opinion) (New York Times)*

Pediatricians’ RX for schools: later start times.  *(Washington Post)*
http://www.washingtonpost.com/local/pediatricians-rx-for-schools-later-start-times/2014/08/24/376f6646-2bd7-11e4-be9e-60cc44c01e7f_story.html

Virginia state academic tests show stagnant scores on reading, writing.  *(Washington Post)*
http://www.washingtonpost.com/local/education/virginia-state-academic-tests-show-stagnant-scores-on-reading-writing/2014/08/27/1d83dcf6-2df0-11e4-994d-202962a9150c_story.html

Prince George’s charter school to eliminate recess to shorten day.  *(Washington Post)*

First day of classes brings changes for Virginia schools.  *(WTOP)*
http://www.wtop.com/41/3693182/First-day-of-classes-brings-changes-for-Va-schools

Opinion: Pre-K is great, but to truly help families, we must help them from day one.  *(New York Times)*
http://www.nytimes.com/2014/09/03/opinion/help-families-from-day-1.html? r=0

Recent study suggests that exercise can help kids, especially those with ADHD, focus in class.  *(New York Times)*

The invisible achievement gap: students in foster care.  *(Huffington Post)*
http://www.huffingtonpost.com/marian-wright-edelman/the-invisible-achievement_b_5775172.html

A simple equation: more education = more income.  *(New York Times)*
Breaking ground: model for early education. (WAMU)
http://breakingground.wamu.org/model-for-early-education/

How the Common Core’s recommended books fail children of color. (Washington Post)


District:

How DC schools plan to discuss Michael Brown’s death. (DCist)
http://dcist.com/2014/08/how_dc_public_schools_plan_to_discu.php#photo-1

Addressing the student achievement gap through economic diversity in DC schools. (DC Fiscal Policy Institute)
http://www.dcfpi.org/addressing-the-student-achievement-gap-through-economic-diversity-in-dc-schools

DC extends the day at 25 schools, hoping that more time means better scores. (WAMU)
http://wamu.org/news/14/08/26/dc_extends_the_day_at_25_schools_hoping_that_more_time_means_better_scores

Reassign students before improving school quality, not the other way around. (Greater Greater Washington)

Washington Post editorial board writes that the District needs to adjust the boundaries governing school assignments. (Washington Post)

Some see the DCPS-charter relationship breaking down, but charter leaders disagree. (Greater Greater Education)
http://greatergreaterwashington.org/post/24065/some-see-the-dcps-charter-relationship-breaking-down-but-charter-leaders-disagree/

Absenteeism produces double-digit test score gaps in DC. (DCist)

Five lessons one woman’s story teaches us about poverty and education in DC. (Greater Greater Washington)
ShotSpotter sensors record 249 incidents of gunfire near DC schools during the 2011-12 school year. (WAMU)
http://wamu.org/news/14/09/03/hundreds_of_gunshots_recorded_within_vicinity_of_dc_schools

Suspensions and expulsions down in DC charter schools. (Washington Post)

Three maps that illustrate the connection between poverty and low test scores. (Greater Greater Washington)

DC mayoral candidate Carol Schwartz lays claim to ‘educational mayor’ in policy paper. (Washington Post)
http://www.washingtonpost.com/local/dc-politics/dc-mayoral-candidate-carol-schwartz-lays-claim-to-education-mayor-in-policy-paper/2014/09/05/146d0ddc-351a-11e4-8f02-03c644b2d7d0_story.html

From eighth grade to where? More DC schools help students map out transitions. (Washington Post)

District to hire a chief student advocate. (Washington Post)

In DC, a 13-year-old piano prodigy is treated as a truant instead of a star student. (Washington Post)

Petula Dvorak: no misrepresentation of piano prodigy’s treatment by DC schools. (Washington Post)

Study: truancy-prevention programs effective in DC. (WTOP)

Better school meals are reaching more DC students. (DC Fiscal Policy Institute)
http://www.dcfpi.org/better-school-meals-are-reaching-more-dc-students

Fewer charter school applications this year. (Washington Post)
http://www.washingtonpost.com/local/education/fewer-charter-school-applications-this-year/2014/09/16/400ad460-3a92-11e4-9c9f-ebb47272e40e_story.html

New DC education ombudsman has a busy first year. (Washington Post)
DC State Board of Education announces release of the 2014 annual report for the Office of the Ombudsman for Public Education. (DC Government)  
http://content.govdelivery.com/accounts/DCWASH/bulletins/cfeb65

Children can’t eat test scores: why school reform isn’t good enough. (Washington Post)  

No more teaching to the test: some DC teachers adopt a technique that gets students to think deeply. (Greater Greater Washington)  
http://greatergreaterwashington.org/post/24260/no-more-teaching-to-the-test-some-dc-teachers-adopt-a-technique-that-gets-students-to-think-deeply/

Wondering why a preschooler would ever need to be suspended? Here’s an explanation. (Greater Greater Washington)  

Enrique Cruz: newest member of the DC Public Charter School Board. (Washington Post)  

A chance to improve special education: three special education bills under review by the DC City Council. (DC Fiscal Policy Institute)  
http://www.dcfpi.org/a-chance-to-improve-special-education

DC asks court to end long-running special education litigation. (Washington Post)  

Mental Health News

Kids’ mental and physical health is paying the price for America’s prison binge. (Mother Jones)  
http://www.motherjones.com/mojo/2014/08/incarcerated-parents-childrens-mental-physical-health

Lawmakers call for an end to reckless prescribing of psychiatric medications to California foster kids. (Inside Bay Area News)  

Early childhood stress may have lasting, toxic effects. (Public News Service)  
http://www.publicnewsservice.org/2014-08-26/childrens-issues/early-childhood-stress-may-have-lasting-toxic-effects/a41348-1

Collaborative care intervention improves depression among teens. (Medical News Today)  
Expansion of mental health care hits obstacles. *(New York Times)*

Why we should invest in better mental health for children. *(The Hill)*
http://thehill.com/blogs/pundits-blog/healthcare/217521-why-we-should-invest-in-better-mental-health-for-children

**Reports and Publications**

Aging Out of Foster Care: How Extended Foster Care for Youth Eighteen to Twenty-One has Fostered Independence. *(Lucy Wieland and Jenny L. Nelson, William Mitchell Law Review)*
Although youth are considered adults at age eighteen, most would agree that the average American eighteen-year-old is not ready to live independently. Living independently presumes one has a place to live; a job or other means of financial support sufficient to pay for rent, utilities, food, clothes, and other necessities; and transportation, health care, a cell phone, and occasional entertainment. According to one recent survey, one in four teens does not believe she will be able to support herself financially until at least her mid-twenties. Imagine then the plight of youth in foster care who can turn eighteen and “age out” of the system, often without completing high school, with no place to live, without a job or other means of support, and with no plans for a future. An awareness of these realities led Congress in 2008 to pass the Connections to Success and Increasing Adoptions Act (“Fostering Connections”), the most significant part of which was that it allowed states to better assist teens after they turned eighteen. As of October 1, 2010, states have the option to extend the time youth remain in foster care beyond their eighteenth birthday to age twenty-one.
http://open.wmitchell.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1580&context=wmlr

Fostering Transparency: A Preliminary Review of “Policy” Governing Psychotropic Medications in Foster Care. *(Kathleen Noonan and Dorothy Miller, Hastings Law Review)*
In light of increasing national attention on the high rates of prescribing psychotropic medication for children in foster care, and related new federal requirements for state reporting to the federal government, the authors analyzed child welfare agency laws, policies, and regulations in sixteen states. Their analysis revealed that states with monitoring policies in place tend to use informal guidance or underdeveloped policy statements that were likely not subject to public notice or comment, and afforded little, if any, opportunity for redress. This article argues that, given the new federal requirements related to psychotropic medications and children in foster care, the state policy-making process must become more transparent to ensure broad public input and recourse in the case of non-compliance.

Childhood Food Insecurity in the U.S.: Trends, Causes, and Policy Options. *(Craig Gunderson and James P. Ziliak, The Future of Children)*
Food insecurity rates remain stubbornly high for a number of reasons. One is that we don’t fully understand what causes food insecurity or how food assistance and other programs can help alleviate it. Food insecurity has been researched extensively, and this research has helped policy makers and program administrators better address the problem. However, relatively little research has looked at what causes food insecurity among children in the first place, or the effectiveness of public policies,
especially on more severe forms of food hardship. In this policy report, the authors highlight new research that seeks to fill this gap.


**Policy Update: Federal and State Legislation to Support Grandfamilies.** *(Ana Beltran, National Center on Grandfamilies)*

Building on the progress of the last twenty years, helpful federal and state legislation continues to be pursued on behalf of grandfamilies. This update summarizes policy efforts during the last year and looks ahead to what is on the horizon. At the federal level, legislative efforts are focused on grandfamilies who are involved with the child welfare system. States are responding to federal activity by enacting policies to place more children with relatives and better serve grandfamilies who come into contact with the system, including “family finding” laws and including fictive kin as “relatives.” State policymakers are also striving to support the vast majority of grandfamilies who are outside the formal foster care system. States are increasingly collaborating across agencies to support grandfamilies with help from the federal Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) program, and are creating more educational and health consent laws. These budget-neutral laws respond to the needs of the families by allowing children in the care of their relatives to access public school tuition-free, as well as the array of necessary health care.

http://scholarworks.wmich.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1015&context=grandfamilies

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**Upcoming Events**

**Addiction 101—October 23, 2014, 3:30-5:00 pm at Children’s Law Center**

Michael Kabisch, MA, CACII, and Karie Ferguson, LICSW, from So Others Might Eat will train on addiction issues, a topic that impacts many families involved in the abuse and neglect system. Mr. Kabisch and Ms. Ferguson will discuss some basic addiction definitions, current research on addiction, general information about the types of addiction recovery services available, and drug use impacts family systems. Lastly, they will provide a brief introduction to the services that SOME offers adults and families in DC.