

**School of Social Work and Social Policy**

**PROTECTING CHILDREN IN A  
MULTICULTURAL SOCIETY.  
AN AUSTRALIAN STORY**

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## **Abstract**

This thesis is based on a research study examining the extent to which cultural background and cultural factors are taken into account by Child Protection Workers investigating allegations of child maltreatment due to inappropriate or excessive punishment. Profiles of child discipline practices within a cultural and historical context were developed and qualitative and quantitative data was gathered through a survey questionnaire sent to all the metropolitan offices of Family and Children's Services. Data was also collected from ethnic leaders, some of their community members and from refugees. The data collected was examined in relation to Child Maltreatment Guidelines of Family & Children's Services and current Child Protection Laws in Western Australia, with a particular focus on practice implications for child protection workers.

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## Preface

The protection of children, a central task of welfare bodies in Australia and many other developed countries, has an impact on families and individuals across a diversity of social situations and levels. The cultural background of the identified child at risk and its family is an important factor amongst the many that child protection workers need to take into account. This factor becomes even more relevant when taking into account the social make-up of a country like Australia. The multicultural composition of Australia is an undeniable reality and failing to take this reality into account in an area such as the protection of children, has the potential to place children further at risk or cause irreparable family breakdown. One of the factors that influenced my choice of topic for this thesis, (Child Discipline and Ethnicity), stemmed from the nexus between my current professional work and my own cultural background. Families who leave their countries because of political and social instability or insecurity, or to seek new opportunities abroad, take with them their culture and their traditional family values.

Historically, the use of discipline in child rearing has varied according to economic, political, religious and cultural contexts. The role of discipline and the discipline methods used in the context of child rearing varied also according to the nature of different societies and civilizations. Another aspect of child rearing, in an historical context, is the strict discipline boys were subjected to, as opposed to girls, and the tasks ascribed to the male parent in the rearing of children as opposed to females.

*Of course, how child rearing has been represented in the past (or is in our time) is no golden road to understanding practice. Not least, as feminist researchers have brought to our attention, because most history is his story - not the story of the women who were (and are) the primary rearers in most cultures past and present, and seldom the story of the girl children either (Rogers 1993, p. 159).*

Male children were seen throughout times as the warriors of the future and the guarantee of survival for certain civilizations. This will be further discussed later on in this study. Children looked upon their fathers as role models and '...grew up to rear children as they had been reared - as still goes

on among surviving traditional people today' (Rogers 1993, p. 159). It can be argued that the view of fathers as the 'disciplinarians' and mothers as the 'nurturers' in many cultures is a social construct which stems from the roles traditionally assigned to male and female in the family unit.

I felt that, in spite of a general awareness of multicultural issues in child protection practice in Western Australia, to date there has been little research done on the topic of ethnicity and child protection. Social workers and other professionals in this area arguably need to become more reflectively critical of the effectiveness of the work they do and more aware of the different cultural backgrounds of families they work with. Issues of cross-cultural practice have been a part of the social work curriculum in WA since the 1980s; however, how does this taught awareness translate into practice? This awareness is needed not only in the 'investigative' or 'assessment' work required in child protection but also in the promotion and delivery of services to families and children from different cultural backgrounds. Researchers, social scientists and politicians alike have stressed the impact of child protection work on family life. Society's interest in the 'art' of 'child rearing' has led to the rise of 'experts' who use their knowledge and expertise to judge and even influence the way parents raise their children. Rogers notes the potential damage that can be caused by the rise of these so-called experts:

*The child expert has power over the caregiver and may use it (or abuse it). It is not hard to see how the popular press mines this twin vein of distrust in its reporting of child protection work: the social worker and the paediatrician do not just make errors but threatening errors - mistakes that could devastate not just in other families but also in our own (1993, p. 161).*

The current study focused on the Perth metropolitan area and covered the then ten districts of the department for Family and Children's Services. Following preliminary interviews with different professionals and after analysing available statistical data, several issues were identified. One critical issue appeared to be the fact that Family & Children's Services does not collect information on the cultural background of their clients, though facilities to do so exist. The only information obtained at the time of client contact, or referral, is whether the client's cultural background is 'Aboriginal',

'non-Aboriginal' or 'Unknown'. Arguably, these categories are a result of successful political action rather than the rational outcome of research. Provisions of services to address the cultural needs of WA's Aboriginal community were long overdue; however, the non-Aboriginal category, too, includes vast and culturally diverse populations. If clients' cultural backgrounds are not known, it will certainly become difficult for the department to ascertain the need for specific, culturally appropriate services in a certain 'zone'<sup>1</sup>. The current 'Funder, Purchaser, Provider' model adopted by Family & Children's Services<sup>2</sup> following its restructure will require sound and up-to-date statistical data in order to assess the need for specific services in their operational zones. Recent funding cuts, mainly at the Federal level, have led to an increasing 'rationalization' of services to communities of different cultural backgrounds. Unless an accurate picture of community needs is obtained, there is every chance that services currently in place will not target the areas where those services are required.

## Conclusion

The recent 'New Directions in Child Protection and Family Support' taken by the department for Family and Children's Services (FCS), which will be further addressed in this research, emphasized the importance of 'Increased consideration of the **cultural context** of referrals' [emphasis in the original] (Family & Children's Services 1996, p. 3). The importance of gathering information on the cultural context of the referral, from duty through to intake, allocation and subsequent work done with families, is echoed throughout the booklet published by the department. Being aware of cultural issues will assist in enhancing the likelihood of establishing a better rapport with families from Culturally and Linguistically Diverse (CALD) backgrounds. This will in turn lead to improved communication and increased chances of successfully achieving the ultimate goal of protecting children and enhancing the quality of family life.

This research aims at achieving the following goals: firstly, that through this work further discussion or debate will be generated. Secondly, that the information provided in this study will assist social workers and other

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<sup>1</sup> Family & Children's Services restructured the ten metropolitan districts and instead created four major zones, North East, North West, South East and South West. Each of these zones is subdivided into two zone offices, and specialist teams work across each zone office.

<sup>2</sup> This model will be further discussed in another section of this study.

professionals in their work with people from different cultural backgrounds, and assist agencies responsible for child protection in this state in making the necessary adjustments to policy, programs or guidelines involving Australians from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds. Finally, when it comes to the particular area of child discipline, knowledge and awareness of cultural expectations and customs of people from different backgrounds are of great importance. More often than not, the first contact will determine whether or not a working relationship is established with the parent or family. If this is achieved, departmental officers will be working towards the objectives in FCS' 'New Directions in Child Protection and Family Support'. Those objectives are: 'an increased emphasis on **family focused approaches of working with families** in the planning and provision of services' and 'Increased consideration of the **cultural context** of referrals' [emphasis in the original] (Family & Children's Services 1996, p. 3).

# 1 - Introduction

## 1.1 The Public Discourse

Corporal or physical punishment of children is a common disciplinary practice of parents worldwide. Children do need to be disciplined; however, as stressed by Francis, Linke and Castell-McGregor (1995), discipline can be given without the use of physical punishment. In Australia, as well as in other countries, there are different words that define corporal punishment. Each of those words describes the level of severity or force used and whether an implement was used. In English, some of these words are 'smacking', 'slapping', 'spanking', 'hitting', 'beating', 'belting', 'whipping', 'caning' and 'thrashing'. In Portuguese, equivalent words would be respectively, 'palmada', 'estalo', 'sova', 'bater' or 'espancar'. As Cashmore & Haas point out, what these terms '...have in common is that they all refer to actions which would constitute legal assault if they were administered to anyone apart from a child.' (1995, p. 2).

Physical or corporal punishment of children is used primarily to discipline them or to instill respect. As Cashmore & Haas note, physical punishment is 'The use of physical force against a child by an older person in a position of authority or power over the child, as a means of punishing the child for unacceptable behavior' (1995, p.3). The same authors point out that 'this definition excludes restraint, an issue which introduces different considerations such as its use in places like detention centers and mental health institutions' (1995, p. 3)<sup>1</sup>.

Another definition reads: 'Corporal punishment is the use of physical force with the intention of causing a child to experience pain, but not injury, for the purpose of correction or control of the child's behavior' (Straus 1994, p 4). Child protection workers have to deal on a regular basis with cases involving the use of corporal punishment of children. They closely follow the debates that this topic generates in public and political arenas. In January 1996, the Western Australian Premier, Richard Court, wrote: 'In many of our close Asian neighbours punishment is hard, swift and effective. At the same time

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<sup>1</sup> Different words can be used to describe the use of physical methods of discipline of children, such as 'physical punishment of children', or PPC for short, as used by Gough & Reavey (1997:417-430), 'corporal punishment' or 'physical discipline'. Throughout this study any of these designators may be used.

the role of the family is strong, personal responsibility is emphasized and government run welfare systems are usually seen as an insult to families' (1996, p. 1). Mr. Court then went on to address the issue of school discipline, advocating the reintroduction of the cane in our schools: 'What I did say, however, was that there *could* be a place for the reintroduction of the use of the cane in our schools' (p. 1-3).

In February 1998, a local court fined a hotelier in Northam, Western Australia, \$1,000 after being charged by police with the assault of his (then) five-year-old son in 1995. The child's father was reported as saying that: 'He did not believe that he had gone too far. He believed in teaching his children the correct values in life. Whether he was right or wrong would be decided in the way his children conducted themselves as law-abiding citizens' (Gibson 1998). This court case characterizes some of the contrasting and contradictory positions taken in this area of child discipline/abuse.

Just as this study was being concluded, another article on the use of corporal punishment in schools was published in 'The West Australian' newspaper. Entitled *Parents fear teenagers*, its author, Martin, quotes Perth author Hannah Rachel Bell's stance on the high number of students suspended in schools around the state. Bell was said to have commented that parents were '... scared their children would hit back if they used corporal punishment' and added that it was time schools used '...compelling, forceful restraint instead of suspension as punishment' (1999, p. 11). The issue of child corporal punishment is not just an educational issue; it cuts across the areas of law and order, individual rights, policy making and child rearing/parenting practices. Most importantly, it raises the issue of parental authority and the possible erosion of that authority through government intervention, a concern for many families from diverse cultural and ethnic backgrounds.

## 1.2 Corporal Punishment and Cultural Issues: Views from Research

*The narrow 'effectiveness' test of child protection stands up well, but the price which is paid considering the difficulties faced by many caregivers is excessive. Underlying some of these excesses is an attempt to use the state to enforce child rearing practices with which not everyone of every class, race or culture might be in agreement (Thorpe 1994, p. 202).*

While studies on the physical punishment of children have been done in Western societies, little attention was given to cultural issues linked with this practice. This appears to be related to some of the research methodologies and research instruments used. Understanding cultural differences and often vastly different socialization experiences of people from diverse cultural backgrounds requires qualitative and ethnographic research approaches. In child protection work, finding a balance between the level of intervention in family life and protecting children from harm is in itself very difficult, and this difficulty increases when working with families from diverse cultural backgrounds.

In their study entitled *Coercive Process and Delinquency*, Barnes-McGuire & Earls (1995) describe limitations with common research instruments. It is not known whether '...the instrument itself elicits more information from some groups than others, or whether there are substantive differences between the Cape Verdeans and other residents in their use of coercive language as a control technique' (p. 357)<sup>2</sup>. The authors further state that: 'In research that aims to describe the family environment and distinguish coercive interactions, cultural norms and community variation in norms must play a critical role in choosing measures and interpreting results. Establishing sound psychometric properties of instruments with families of ethnic minority status goes some way toward addressing this issue' (p. 359).

In studies of child abuse, the ethnicity factor is often left out altogether or not given the appropriate relevance, as noted by authors such as Thorpe (1994). However, in his own study on child protection work in the state of Western

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<sup>2</sup> Republic of Cape Verde, a group of islands in the Atlantic Ocean about 385 miles off the coast of Senegal. Cape Verde became independent from Portuguese rule in 1975.



Australia undertaken in 1987, Thorpe can only refer to statistical data on 'Aboriginal' and 'non-Aboriginal' people. This is a significant gap in any evaluation of child protection services if we take into account the multicultural nature of Western Australian society. In a study by Parton, Thorpe & Wattam (1994), *Child Protection, Risk and Moral Order*, a reference is made to the same study and again, the 'ethnicity' of families involved in the case studies is limited to either 'Aboriginal' or 'non-Aboriginal'. This reflects the gap in data collection still existing within the Department of Family and Children's Services in Western Australia.

Other authors note the danger of using different cultural values or norms as 'mitigating factors' in cases of child maltreatment. When analyzing decision-making in UK child-protection work, Dingwall, Eekelaar & Murray note that there is a 'rarity of allegations of mistreatment' (1985, p.79). This is due, they say, to the fact that, when investigating or assessing child abuse allegations, workers take into account parents' 'moral character' and other aspects of their lives that show a positive side. Dingwall, Eekelaar & Murray (1985) consider that assessments made using this approach are common in the UK child protection system; they use the term 'rule of optimism' to define it:

*The reconciliation, we have suggested, is accomplished by an additional assessment of parents' moral character as revealed partly through their demeanour and partly by an inspection of those aspects of their life which can be seen to lie within their own control. That assessment, however, is conducted under what we might term a 'rule of optimism', that staff are required, if possible, to think the best of parents (pp. 82-86).*

The components of this rule, according to the same authors, are *deviance and responsibility, cultural relativism and natural love*. In brief, under the first component, deviance and responsibility, when allegations of child abuse are investigated, child protection workers need to assess whether or not parents intended to hurt the child, and they obtain information about the parent/guardian's past. If it is judged that intent was present in the parent's actions and that he/she acted irresponsibly, hence mistreating the child, his/her actions will be seen as deviant or immoral.

*Moral character is, then, central to decision-making in child abuse and neglect, as with any other type of deviance. Its ascription, however, is not a straightforward matter. If deviance is ascribed rather than inherent, there is room to resist or negotiate the inclusion of any particular behavior within this category (Dingwall, Eekelaar & Murray 1985 p. 79).*

If, on the contrary, it is judged that the parent's actions were not inherently deviant, there will be room for the workers to reconsider the circumstances that led to the incident of alleged abuse:

*Child protection agencies may actually relieve parents of the burden of producing accounts by volunteering or imputing acceptable reasons for apparently untoward actions (1985, p. 82).*

Once parents manage to 'justify' their actions and clear the worker's suspicions of deviant behaviour, two 'institutionalized devices' are activated, Dingwall, Eekelaar & Murray argue. These are the two other components of the 'rule of optimism', *cultural relativism* and *natural love*,

*...which combined to eliminate the overwhelming majority of potential cases by providing justification or excuse and allowing front-line workers to prefer an optimistic reading of client behavior. These neutralized deviance in advance of any specific change (Dingwall, Eekelaar & Murray 1985, p. 82).*

Cultural relativism is considered by the same authors as 'an agency justification' that contributes to cases of child abuse not being detected by child protection workers. 'Justifications concede that, in some sense, the ascription of deviance is correct but that, in practice, the observed conduct is permitted or required by the particular circumstances.' (p.82). This means that in cases involving alleged mistreatment of children in families of a CALD background, parents' actions would be seen as attempts by the said parents to comply '...with alternative normative standards that would allow them to be recognized as appropriate parental behavior', Dingwall, Eekelaar & Murray further argue.

The term 'cultural relativism' is used in their study, according to Dingwall, Eekelaar & Murray:

*...to denote an intellectual position that all cultures are equally valid ways of formulating relationships between human beings and between human beings and material world, together with the possible political corollary that members of one culture have no right to criticize members of another by importing their own standards of judgements. In this respect it differs from a simple tolerance of diversity* (1985, p. 82).

With their 'rule of optimism', these authors stress that there are instances where ethnic origin is used to 'justify deviant conduct' (Dingwall, Eekelaar & Murray 1985, p. 83).

Nine years later, Murphy, refers to Dingwall, Eekelaar & Murray's work and notes that *rule of optimism* causes individual practitioners in health and welfare areas to believe that child abuse '...would not happen in their class, patient list or caseload' (1995, p. 27). Murphy analyses the 'functioning' of the said rule within the context of the UK child protection system. The *rule of optimism* can be 'gradually eroded', Murphy says, by the feeling that 'something is not quite right with regard to a particular child and family' (1995, p. 27). The same author notes that, in Britain, according to the 1991 census, '6 per cent of the population comes from ethnic minority communities'. Still according to the same census, Murphy says, these ethnic populations live mostly in industrial towns and large cities and 'are often poor'. In view of this, '...child protection practitioners find themselves, as white, middle class professionals, working with substantial numbers of poor, black families. This is not an easy task' (1995, p. 54).

Murphy stresses that this situation can lead to an 'over involvement' of the child protection system in those communities, which could be seen as 'punitive, as doubting the communities' ability to parent its own children'. It could also lead to a 'disproportionate' number of children being considered at risk of abuse and being placed in substitute care (p. 54). Should, on the other hand, the child protection system be guided by Dingwall, Eekelaar & Murphy's (1986) *rule of optimism*, 'intrusive intervention into families and communities would be limited, but the child might not be receiving that

protection which the international community have proclaimed as its right (United Nations 1989)' (Murphy 1995, p. 54). This author points to the difficulty of striking a balance between intervention in family life and the protection of children 'without seeking to replicate the worst racist abuses of power that are present in our society' (1995, p.54).

Other authors look at the influence that a family's origin, cultural background and religious beliefs may have in the perpetuation of physical punishment of children. Whipple & Richey state that 'other correlates associated with parental use of corporal punishment include an intergenerational history of aggressive parenting styles, parental beliefs, religiosity and cultural acceptance' (1997 p. 435). The authors note, however, that 'Understanding the connection between cultural sanctioning of child discipline and the incidence of child abuse remains a challenge' (1997, p. 435). Literature available on the topic of child discipline and/or corporal punishment is sometimes passionate, as in Jane & James Ritchie's book 'Spare the Rod': 'To us the matter [hitting children] is clear cut and simple. Any action that harms another is a violent act. There are so many scientific and humanitarian reasons why we think corporal punishment of children should join child labor and slavery in the rubbish bin of history' (1981, p. viii).

The authors, both psychologists by profession, researched the attitudes and practices of parents in New Zealand and claim that their research provides a 'consistent picture' of local child rearing practices. They draw on general psychological literature in order to establish that 'physical discipline of children has undesirable consequences' (Ritchie & Ritchie 1981, p. ix). According to Wood (1998), attitudes towards the use of physical discipline are nevertheless changing in New Zealand. Current legislation, Section 59 of the Criminal Code 1961, allows parents to use 'reasonable force' to discipline their children. New Zealand parents have, according to 'various studies' undertaken over the years, a 'strong preference' for the use of this method of discipline (Wood 1998, as quoted in the 'Child Abuse Prevention' journal).

In a comprehensive article on child protection work amongst the Maori population in New Zealand, Stanley provides an 'analysis of cultural issues' which may arise when investigating cases of child maltreatment involving children and families of Maori origin (1999, pp. 91-107). One of the objectives of Stanley's work was to present a 'solution focused intervention

strategy' using a 'Tikanga' framework for analysis (1999, p. 92). According to Stanley, 'Tikanga', stands for 'recognition of Abuse and Maltreatment'. Using this framework, which has elements of 'practice wisdom', the results of case studies analyzed from a cultural perspective were used to provide suggestions for change. In one of the final passages of her article, Stanley stresses that:

*The reviewing of the best cultural practice along with cultural practice where change is necessary, must continue to fill the void which exists in international cultural practice development (1999, p 106).*

This framework will likely contribute to providing the 'compromise solution' described by Murphy, in which children from 'ethnic minority communities' can be protected 'without seeking to replicate the worst racist abuses of power that are present in our society' (1995, p. 54) and avoid the trap of Dingwall, Eekelaar & Murray's 'cultural relativism' or 'natural love' (1985, pp. 82 passim 86).

The importance of cultural issues in child protection work is raised by other researchers, such as Parton who notes that the 'subject of child protection is part of one of the most basic components of our culture - childrearing practices - the study of it reflects not only a professional organizational interest, but all the things that are relevant to it in our culture' (1997, p. 77). In an article written for the purpose of the 7th Australasian Conference on Child Abuse and Neglect, American researcher, Dawson, notes that in the last decade 'child welfare specialists' in the United States have 'advocated for the acknowledgement of cultural differences and the larger community context when developing risk assessment policies and procedures' (1999, p 580). Dawson refers to the impact that quantitative methods of risk assessment had in the United States on African American families who are assessed as 'at risk'. In this researcher's experience, African American families are 'not fully understood' because of the lack of qualitative and interactive processes focused on understanding the 'particular family's culture' (Dawson 1999, p. 580).

Working with families of diverse cultural backgrounds does not just present difficulties and dilemmas to child protection workers from Anglo Celtic backgrounds. Bilingual or CALD child protection workers and other allied

professionals such as interpreters, are themselves caught in situations where close links to their communities bring dilemmas. Workers' own cultural biases and positions can cloud assessments or investigations of possible child maltreatment, and decisions to report cases of children at risk. Ang (1999) referring to his own experience of working in the Cabramatta area, New South Wales describes this phenomenon. In three of the case studies he uses in his article, Ang notes that the bilingual workers had placed their clients at risk due to their judgement being influenced by their close links to their clients, in what he describes as 'the loyalty dilemma', (1999, pp. 87-90). Bilingual workers, Ang further notes, are 'expected by their community to develop and maintain only a positive image of their people' (1999, p. 88). Ang offers a 'word of warning' to employees and supervisors regarding bilingual workers. He stresses that knowing cultural values can help in 'generating hypothesis' about a bilingual worker's views on an issue, noting, however, that cultural information should not be applied in a 'stereotypical manner' (1999, p 88). One of the ways to reduce the occurrence of this phenomenon, Ang suggests, is by providing adequate training to workers from a 'NESB (sic) background' similar to the training packages already widely available in NSW to Aboriginal workers.

Another researcher, Fernandez, found that Aboriginal children entered care at a higher rate and stayed longer in care, and that 'further inequities were evident in the pattern of reunification, which reflected slower transition home than non-Aboriginal children' (1996, pp. 269-275). Fernandez explores the impact that 'intrusive' child welfare practices and 'policies of acculturation' had on Australian Aboriginal people, who were left with a legacy of 'disintegration and dispossession'. Australian Aboriginal people are still recovering from the effects of those practices and policies. Based on her reading of international literature on child welfare intervention with 'children and families of colour', Fernandez comments that these families are subject to 'ethnocentric bias and heavy handed child welfare interventions that result in their over representation in care' (1996, p. 270). Fernandez stresses that cultural issues have an impact on all areas of child protection work and need to be taken into account when planning intervention.

*The potential for culture conflict is nowhere more clearly evidenced than in child protection work where parents from different cultural backgrounds find their child care practices*

*challenged. [...] The notion of cultural relativism has relevance to efforts to improve cross-cultural practice in child welfare (1996, p. 271).*

Fernandez makes her position clear in regards to cultural relativism and its interpretation by other authors. She refers to Dingwall, Eekelaar & Murray's (1983) work and their view that social workers in the UK have problems in 'identifying high risk situations' in cases involving families of non-Anglo Saxon cultures and that their assessments of risk are 'compromised on grounds of cultural relativism' (Fernandez, 1996, p. 271). She stresses, however, that it is debatable whether these apparent compromises are due to problems experienced by social workers, such as 'pressures or expectations' or lack of resources, 'apart from child removal', or whether it is the principle of cultural relativism 'per se' that needs to be challenged. In view of the contrasting socialization values between western and non-western cultures, Fernandez questions whether: 'one assumes superiority of one set of child rearing practices over the other or works towards achieving a blend of socialization values of different cultures, western and non-western, in the interests of children.' She stresses that the 'most important sharing and exchanging of practice knowledge can occur in the collaboration between workers and scholars from indigenous populations, ethnic minorities and dominant cultures.' (Fernandez 1996, p. 272).

Overall, it seems then that the emphasis must be on ensuring that child protection professionals are well aware of and informed about child care/parenting practices amongst people from different cultural backgrounds, and that policies and guidelines for practice incorporate such practice ethos. The pages that follow are intended to provide a general overview of cross-cultural child rearing practices.

### **1.3 Child Rearing Practices and Parental Attitudes Towards the Discipline Of Children: A Cross- Cultural Perspective**

*The lesson to be learned from anthropological studies is that the cultural context within which behavior takes place and the meaning attributed to it by those sharing that culture are important factors to be taken into account when labeling certain acts as abusive (Corby 1993, p. 40).*

How many times do people find themselves talking to their friends or family about that wonderful Italian dinner or the really wonderful food at the Chinese restaurant? For the discerning gastronome, however, there are differences, even if subtle, amongst foods coming from different areas of Italy or China, differences which relate to geographical, climate and lifestyle factors. Even when living in a culturally diverse society such as ours, people often tend to link and generalize specific behaviours, attitudes and ways of life to larger ethnic groups, ignoring the fact that within countries such as Italy or China, there is a diversity of different groups. Even though sharing the same language or political system, these ethnic groups have different ways of living in family and society. Koutsounadis (1983) notes that there are 'similarities of culture in certain ethnic communities, but at the same time there are differences which are unique to a group which identifies with these cultural factors and these distinguish them from another group'. For the professional working in the child protection field, it is important to be aware of these differences, mainly when it concerns child rearing methods, roles of different family members, moral, cultural and family values.

Edgar (1985) notes that, in spite of the shift towards 'multiculturalism' during the Whitlam era, little work had been done to gain more knowledge of different ethnic groups. Since then, there has been a steady increase in research in this area in order to cover the gap that existed. For those interested in multicultural issues or needing more detailed information on culture specific child rearing practices amongst different ethnic groups, there are now many sources of information. Whilst a search of your local library may only uncover a number of parenting books telling parents how to raise their children, a search at more specialized libraries or on the Internet may result in the specific information you need.



The information provided in this chapter is not intended to be detailed but rather to give the reader an insight in some of the parental attitudes towards child rearing and the use of child discipline from a cross cultural perspective. For the purpose of this study, the choice of ethnic groups took into consideration its representation in Australian society. This information was obtained from different sources, including the Internet. The choice of ethnic groups should not be taken as an indicator of the incidence or prevalence of child maltreatment amongst those cultural groups.

### 1.3.1 Aboriginal Ways

Thousands of years of nomadic life as hunters and gatherers were suddenly and violently interrupted the moment the first convicts and white settlers set foot on the Australian continent.<sup>3</sup> Child rearing methods that had been used by Aboriginal people for centuries suffered the impact of the new arrivals' way of dealing with children. It was a long, drawn-out process of cultural genocide. Aboriginal people were driven off the land and into missions or reserves, children were taken from their parents, and interbreeding was encouraged between whites and Aboriginal people in order to gradually 'extinguish' the Aboriginal race (Blainey, 1994). Disease also played a role in the decimation of the Aboriginal population which, isolated from outside influence for so many centuries, had no immunity to the new diseases introduced by the British colonization. However, in spite of the destructive impact of colonization, Aboriginal child rearing ways have survived to the present, mainly in more traditional areas.

Authors such as Hassan, Healy & McKenna (1985, pp. 298-327) currently classify the lifestyles of Australian Aborigines in three separate categories. *Traditionally oriented Aborigines*: people who live in those communities where initiation rites are still performed, Aboriginal 'customary law' is still influential, 'traditional forms of behavior and communication are still used' and the English language 'is not the main language spoken'. *Rural Aborigines*: those people living in settlements on Aboriginal land or reserves. This would also include Aboriginal people living 'as residents of small towns, in fringe camps, or on nearby reserves'. Hassan, Healy & McKenna (1985, p.

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<sup>3</sup> Whilst this study concentrates on child discipline issues related to CALDB people, it was felt that discussion of Aboriginal child rearing methods, as related to discipline, was relevant. A more detailed overview of Aboriginal child rearing from the time of white settlement to the present is provided in Chapter 2.

300) considered this group was somehow 'culturally marginalised' from the more traditional Aboriginal group, though often connected in some ways. They were generally seeking employment or escaping the 'restrictions of reserve life' and seeking to be accepted by mainstream 'Australian Society'.

The third category, '*Urban Aborigines*', were those Aboriginal people living in the large urban centres. Even though the latter group may be perceived as having 'lost' most of the Aboriginal cultural ways, Malin, Campbell & Agius (1996) argue that urban Aboriginal families adapted their parenting to city living and in spite of often social and financial difficulties, manage to raise their children the Nyungar<sup>4</sup> way.

Perceptions of Aboriginal child rearing methods held by many professionals in health and welfare industries in Australia have varied over the years. Negative perceptions of Aboriginal parents' ability of caring for their own children were held well and truly until the mid 1970s. As Bourke (1993) notes, memories of those days still haunt Aboriginal parents today and intervention by government officials are looked upon with fear and suspicion. Stereotypes of Aboriginal parents can, unfortunately, still be identified in today's Australian society, in spite of good progress made through educational campaigns over the years.

In regard to child discipline methods, however, Aboriginal parents do not generally use corporal punishment to control or punish their offspring. Hamilton (1981), Hassan, Healy & McKenna (1985) and Malin, Campbell & Agius (1995) point out that from very early in life, Aboriginal children are given far more freedom to explore the world around them. Any discipline is given in non-physical ways such as 'teasing and scaring'. Hassan, Healy & McKenna go further by stressing that 'Security and love are emphasized throughout childhood, not discipline' (1985, p. 310). The over-representation of Aboriginal children in child protection cases is seen as due to factors related to their particular lifestyle and particular child rearing practices, 'to European eyes - utterly bewildering' as Thorpe (1994, pp. 163-164) notes. This results in children from Aboriginal descent being 'over-represented' in statistical records of abuse, mostly in cases of neglect, as stressed by Parton (1997, p. 125).

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<sup>4</sup> Nyungar: language of people from South Western Australia.

### 1.3.2 Parents from Southern European/ Mediterranean Countries

#### 1.3.2.1 Southern Italians

Bertelli (1985) stresses the complex and diverse nature of the 'Italian experience' due to Italy's rich history, culture and diverse society. Italy has existed as a nation since 1860 and until then had consisted of several states which were 'closely linked' with surrounding countries such as France, Germany and Austria. Bertelli (1985) and Travaglia (1983) note that this historical past has contributed to the creation of a complex and rich culture. Bertelli warns professionals dealing with clients from an Italian background to be sensitive to the 'possible implications of his/her approach'. One of the recommendations made by Bertelli is that professional practitioners approach 'the subject on a comparative basis among [Italy's] various regions and sub-regions' (1985, p. 33). Traditionally, Italy, in conjunction with other Southern European countries, has contributed to a large migratory movement in the years following the Second World War. Italian migrant communities are well represented in the 'Diaspora'. Italian communities abroad tend to maintain some of their traditions and the family is seen as an important social structure; however, as Bertelli notes, this does not necessarily mean that Italian people 'uphold the value and importance of family ties to the point of not being community-minded' (1985, pp. 45-46). In the Italian way of thinking, the family is not cast as a nuclear family in opposition or contrast to the community. The kinship system of Italian families, whilst not extensive, is 'characterized by strong ties and contacts with relatives, particularly within the family of orientation' (1985, p. 47).

Koutsounadis (1983) and Travaglia (1983) point to the importance of the family unit in the preservation and transmission of cultural values and traditions in Southern European/Mediterranean families. In these families, culture and traditions are preserved through 'primary and secondary social relationships'<sup>5</sup> and 'extended vertically and horizontally' through family kinship (Koutsounadis 1983). In Anglo-Australian families, according to the same author, primary relationships are 'individualistic and restricted to the

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<sup>5</sup> Koutsounadis considers that a 'collectivist' ideology characterises 'primary' relationships between individuals and groups whilst and 'individualistic' ideology characterises 'secondary' relationships, whether industrial, political or commercial, in Southern European countries.

nuclear family and few personal friends' and secondary relationships 'have a collectivist focus'.

Koutsounadis stresses the importance of these ideological values in 'understanding the expectations and attitudes of Southern European/Mediterranean parents' (1983). In his study, Bertelli (1985) focuses on southern Italian families because the majority of migrants to Australia came from that region. According to the latest Australian population census, there were an estimated 238,200 overseas-born Italians and 333,900 second generation Italian Australians, bringing the total to an estimated 572,100 Italian born people and their descendants living in Australia (ABS 1996, 3221.0 & 3412.0). In Western Australia, there were an estimated 25,124 Italian born residents with 22,342 living in the Perth metropolitan area. The figures for WA and Perth do not take into account second generation Italian Australians (ABS 1996, 2015.5 & 2020.0).

Historically, the southern Italian family is characterized as a patriarchal system and, as Bertelli (1985) notes, even in those families where the mother was 'in charge of the household' due to the 'husband-father' working away for long periods of time, he would always maintain his authority in the home. Travaglia (1983) also notes the patriarchal structure of the Italian family. He points, however, to the fact that male and female roles in the household have changed over the years due to the 'woman's emerging role as equal provider'.

For historical reasons, attachment and 'loyalty' to the family was of great importance for people of southern Italy and was used as a defense over the centuries during periods of invasion by different civilizations (Bertelli 1985, pp. 52-53). Honour and respect are not only expected individual traits but are also to be held towards parents and other family members. In family life this meant that the man was to be able to maintain his family, 'economically and socially', and the woman was required to be a 'good wife' (Bertelli 1985, pp. 53-54).

Children are taught from a very young age to respect their parents, relatives and strangers. Failure to do so, particularly in front of strangers, attracts an instant disciplinary measure. Koutsounadis (1983) notes that 'shame' is used as a form of punishment for unacceptable behaviour and that corporal punishment is still used as a form of discipline. According to the author, parents encourage teachers to use corporal punishment. Bertelli (1985) also

notes that southern Italian families expect obedience from their children and seldom use reasoning to deal with their children's misbehaviour.

Travaglia (1983) further notes that the father is usually seen as the 'disciplinarian'; however, the mother undertakes most of the day-to-day discipline of the children. The same author states that, in spite of the 'infinite variety of family relationships' in Italian culture, the father is still seen as the 'head of the household'. He is the 'disciplinarian and authoritarian figure', the mother is seen as the nurturer, 'daily disciplinarian, dutiful wife' and 'upholder of religious observances', often interceding for the children. The children are seen sometimes as the 'only purpose of marriage, much loved, overprotected and often spoiled' (Travaglia 1983).

Children are dependent on their families and the parents have the obligation to raise them in an appropriate manner. As stressed by Koutsounadis (1983), Travaglia (1983) and Bertelli (1985) parents plan their children's life in all aspects, religious and educational, set goals and plan for their future. These factors contribute to keep the children dependent on their parents until their late teenage years. The Roman Catholic religion has great influence on Italian families and, even though there is currently no official religion in Italy, according to statistical data 81.7% of the population is Roman Catholic (Britannica, 1999, p. 28). Bertelli (1985) and Koutsounadis (1983) note that Italian parents often complain about the excessive freedom and lack of discipline they perceive in children from an Anglo-Australian background. The education system is also seen as ineffective in teaching children proper moral and family values. As their offspring grow up in the 'Australian cultural environment', these contrasting 'cultural ways of life' can lead, and often does, to situations of 'parent/child conflict' (Koutsounadis, 1983; Bertelli, 1985).

### **1.3.2.2 Greeks**

Greece has a long and rich history and its people a strong sense of community, a sentiment that can be observed in Greek communities around the world. Religion, historical heritage and a 'common vernacular' unite Greek people who see themselves as 'one people equal to each other in important respects' in spite of the ethnic composition of its population (Britannica 1989, p. 370). Greek migration has had a long history and Greek people have been able to maintain their culture through 'well established

techniques'. Hearst (1985) states that the establishment of Greek Orthodox Communities, churches and ethnic schools abroad has been one of the techniques used.

Similarly to Italian migrants, Greeks came into Australia in large numbers in the years after World War II, mainly between 1961 and 1970. Whilst pre-war migrants were 'predominantly owners of businesses, post-war migrants were mainly factory workers and laborers' (Hearst 1985, pp. 122-123). Greek migration was influenced by economic rather than political reasons, according to Hearst, and characterized by the 'strength of family chains' and its influence in the sponsorship of further migration. There are an estimated 280,500 Greek-born and second generation Greek Australians living in Australia (ABS 1996, 3221.0 & 3412.0). The Greek community in WA is 3,454 strong with 3,224 Greek-born people living in the Perth metropolitan area alone (ABS 1996, 2015.5 & 2020.0).

The patriarchal nature of Greek society was enshrined in its Civil Code. Under article 1387 of the Greek Civil Code, 'the man is the head of the family and takes all decisions concerning conjugal life provided his decision does not constitute an abuse of right' (as cited by Hearst 1985, pp. 124-125). Other provisions granted the right of *patria potestas*, which was the right to represent the child in case of legal or financial transactions, and also the right to 'train, rear, educate and punish'. Only when the father was unable to do this would the mother take over these powers (Hearst 1985, p. 124). These and other articles of the Civil Code (family law) were 'drastically changed' in the early 1980s by the government headed by Konstantinos Karamanlis. These changes established formal 'equality between women and men' (Britannica 1989, p. 373; Hearst 1985, pp. 124-125).

In spite of these changes to the letter of the law, real changes in people's attitudes and behaviour will take longer to occur. Hearst (1985) expressed this feeling when addressing the topic of Greek 'traditional family values'. Hearst pointed out that, although the changes in family law were far reaching, it was unlikely that people would change overnight and an understanding of Greek traditional family values was important in order to understand the values of Greek families who settled in Australia. In that sense 'relationships within the family are 'authoritarian'; the man's role in the nuclear family is of

major importance and compliance to the 'male household head' and the older siblings is expected' (Hearst 1985, p. 126).

The same author points to the traditional sex segregation in Greek society. This appears to be more prevalent in rural societies where there is 'segregation of public space' and women 'accord deference' to men. These traditional sex roles can be witnessed in religious, social and family events where the birth of a son is 'greeted with public rejoicing' whilst the birth of a daughter is seen in the light of the future 'economic burden of raising daughters'. Men who are seen as not being able to make their 'rights' prevail in their household are usually 'despised and ridiculed' (Hearst 1985, p. 128). Hearst, however, clarifies that changes brought about by urbanization, the growth of an 'urbanized' middle class and the 'existence of greater choice for women' have led to a change in traditional sex roles, even in the definition of 'honour'<sup>6</sup> among men and women (pp. 130 passim 132).

In respect to child rearing, Hearst (1985) notes that mothers have the primary role as caregivers whilst males are the breadwinners and 'supporters' of the family. These roles are clearly delineated. Mother-child interaction in traditional Greek families is very intense and family life is 'child-oriented'. As with Italian families, education is highly regarded. Mothers are usually very involved in every aspect of their children's educational and social life, even to the extent of carefully selecting their children's friends. Hearst finally notes that, in spite of 'formal deference patterns and authoritarianism', Greek children 'are usually enjoyed and indulged' (1985, p. 131).

For Greek migrant families, mainly the more traditional ones, attempts to maintain traditions and uphold family values can potentially contribute to conflict between parents and their children as they grow into their teenage years. Hearst points to what she describes as 'pressures towards Anglo-conformity' that come from 'structures outside the Greek community' (1985, p. 132). Hearst (1985) notes, however, that for some Greek families, the stresses of migration have contributed to tensions in the household and ultimately to physical violence on women and children.

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<sup>6</sup> Hearst notes that the 'boundaries of the family' are defined in sexual control. Traditionally women are expected to be virgins before marriage and failure to prove this can lead to being dishonoured. On the other hand it is up to the men to ensure their wives' virginity and 'guard the honour of women' in their families 'before and after marriage' (pp. 129-130)

### 1.3.2.3 Turkish families

With a population of approximately 64,000,000 people and located in the Middle East between the Asian and European continents, Turkey, originally Anatolia, has a rich history which spans many centuries. Its location played a major role with a period of expansion that started with the sultanate of Seljuq's control of Anatolia in 1071 AD. With a mixed population that included Christians, Armenians, Greeks, Syrians and Iranian Muslims, the Seljuk sultanate of Anatolia is considered by historians as 'one of the most important Muslim states of its age' (Britannica 1989, p. 914). The large territorial expansion by the Ottoman people led to the establishment of a vast empire which extended from the walls of Vienna to north of the Black Sea, east to the Persian Gulf, and south to Egypt and North Africa (Hearst 1995; Britannica, 1989). The Ottoman Empire lasted six centuries until the early 20<sup>th</sup> century.

Due to Turkey's history and its past territorial expansion, its population has diverse cultural and ethnic backgrounds. Turkish is the main language throughout, a language that has got its origins from 'Ottoman Turkish'. This national language was created in order to 'purify it of Arabic and Persian words and idioms', which had a pervasive effect during the Ottoman Empire (Britannica 1989, p. 895). Kurdish accounts for 7% of the other languages, spoken by country people in eastern and southeastern regions, and the remainder 3% of the population speak Greek, Armenian and Yiddish.

Even though there is no official religion in Turkey, 80% of the population is Sunni Muslim and 19.8 % Shiite Muslim. Fourteen per cent of the population are non-orthodox Alevi and 0.2% Christian (Britannica 1999, p. 727). Turkish people are tolerant of other religions and they respect other people's beliefs and culture. Isin (1983) notes that it is due to the 'impact of Islam' that Turkish people are so tolerant and hold 'equal regard and respect for every individual'. Isin also remarks that Turks are proud of their past and of who they are, a pride that borders on 'chauvinism'. Isin further notes the impact that the Western world had on Turkey's social and political life.

Major changes to Turkey's political and social structure started in 1922 under the rule of Mustafa Kemal, who in that year and after the defeat of the Greek occupation army ensured Turkey's independence (Hearst 1985; Britannica 1989). The main change brought by Kemal, later known as Ataturk, was the



separation of religion and state, with education and social life being secularized. Under his rule, Islamic practices such as the 'veiling of women, the wearing of the fez and polygamy were outlawed' (Hearst 1985). Muslim schools and the teaching of religion in schools were abolished. Other changes brought in by Ataturk's regime led to the replacement of Islamic law with a 'combination of elements from European civil codes and the adoption of the Western calendar, time systems and measurement systems'. However, as noted by the same author, the 'Islamic laws of marriage and divorce needs to be understood as a background to Turkish family values' (1985, pp.146-147). Isin (1983) notes that in spite of western influence in Turkey's social and political life under the reforms started in the 1920s, Turks are nevertheless distrusting of the Western world, a distrust that dates back to the 'cross and crescent days'.

With a population where the majority (up to 98%) is Muslim, the radical changes in family law brought in by Ataturk had a major impact on a large number of families and couples. In their extreme, these changes led to 'heightened stress among married couples' and an increase in the number of 'married suicides in the period between 1927-46' (Hearst 1985, pp. 148-149). This situation, still according to Hearst, reflected the difficulties faced by Turkish people in accepting the separation of religious and secular powers and also the threat to their traditional view of gender roles and responsibilities (Hearst 1985; Britannica 1989). Only from the 1970s onwards, with the onset of industrialization and the 'Westernizing' of economic, social and government institutions, were these laws widely accepted by the population. Traditionally, however, family life and most responsibilities lie with the male head of the household and, as Hearst further notes, 'residence after marriage is 'patrilocal'', which means that the newly wed wife will live with her husband's extended family, often within the same household (Hearst 1985, pp. 156-158).

Hearst (1985) and Isin (1983) both note that Turkish society is hierarchical and that authority increases with age. Child rearing is a task traditionally the responsibility of women, who also have to undertake most of the other household chores (Britannica 1989). Young girls are indoctrinated from very early into these gender roles and are required to look after their younger brothers and share the household tasks. Children from early ages are taught to respect their parents and their elders. Hearst and Isin note that child rearing

in rural areas is 'coercive and restrictive' with 'autonomous will and activity' being discouraged. Children are discouraged from being 'active, mobile, curious and talkative' (Isin 1983) and in male-dominated households children are not allowed to cry (Britannica 1989). As children grow up, 'beatings, shaming, threats of castration, and frightening tales' are used as forms of discipline (Cultural Cameos 1997, p.6).

With modernization, industrialization, rapid population growth and the movement of population from the country to the cities, there has been a gradual breakdown in Turkey's traditional ways. Women were exposed to new experiences and lifestyles and given more opportunities for upward social mobility (Britannica 1989; Hearst 1985). These changes have affected family interaction and parent-child relationships. One of the important factors that has been reported since the early 1960s, is the breakdown of father-son relationships with male children rebelling against the father figure and leaving home. This has in turn led to a change in the role of female children in the household, with families basing their homes on daughters rather than sons. In some situations mothers become 'part of a buffer relationship' between fathers and sons, in some instances siding with their sons in challenging the father's authority (Hearst 1985; Isin 1983; Britannica 1989).

Migration was another factor that brought pressure on Turkey's traditional lifestyle and family life. Turkey does not have a tradition of migration, unlike some other countries in Southern Europe, and the history of migration to Australia starts as late as the 1960s (Isin 1983). Isin further notes that it was following the signing of a 'Migration Agreement' between Australia and Turkey in 1967 that a more significant number of Turkish migrants came to Australia. Turkish families who migrated to Australia were a minority and faced with a foreign social and cultural environment and a lack of family support, they suffered further 'fragmentation' (Hearst 1985, p. 166). In order to fulfil their economic goals in Australia, parents are faced with the prospect of both having to engage in full-time work. One of the most relevant stresses in family life for Turkish families in Australia is, however, related to 'parent-teen' conflict. Both Isin (1983) and Hearst (1985) note that these difficulties stem from the different value systems and expectations held by Turkish parents in regards to their children's education in Australia.

### **1.3.3 Families from Asian Backgrounds**

#### **1.3.3.1 Vietnamese**

Vietnam has been subjected to repeated invasions throughout its history, the most recent in late 19<sup>th</sup> century when it came under French occupation. This occupation ended in 1954, at the end of the first 'Indochina War', with the defeat of the French army at Dien Bien Phu. An agreement reached by the French and Viet Minh representatives at Geneva on 21 July 1954, temporarily divided the country into North and South Vietnam, with a demilitarized zone created on the 17th parallel. Peace, however, did not last long. With the support of China and the (then) Soviet Union, the North Vietnamese Viet Minh regime steadily reorganized. In South Vietnam, the recovery following the first Indochina War was not as smooth (Britannica 1989; Hassan, Healy, McKenna & Hearst 1985; Ta 1999). American political and financial influence remained strong. Social and political instability was brought under control by the military regime of Air Vice Marshall Nguyen Cau Ky in 1965. By this time, the Hanoi regime had consolidated its military power, and forces of the 'National Front for the Liberation of the South' or NFL, started infiltrating South Vietnam (Britannica 1989; Hassan et al 1985)

What followed became one of the bloodiest conflicts in modern history, with American President Lyndon B. Johnson initiating the deployment of increasingly large numbers of American troops and equipment into South Vietnam from 1963 onwards. By 1968, an estimated 510,000 American troops were fighting alongside some 600,000 regular Vietnamese troops, another 50,000 troops from South Korea and smaller contingents from Thailand, New Zealand and Australia. By 1970, in spite of peace negotiations being held in Paris by the warring parties and the gradual withdrawal of American forces from Vietnam, the conflict widened to Laos and soon after into Kampuchea in what was considered the second Indo-China War (Britannica 1989).

January 1973 saw the signing of a cease-fire agreement between the USA and all three Vietnamese parties, and the withdrawal within a period of sixty days, of all North American forces. Fighting did not stop, however, and in April 1975 the Communist forces of the NFL were finally able to enter Saigon, the capital of South Vietnam. The process of reunification of South and North Vietnam that started then has been problematic due to the significant

ideological differences between North and South Vietnamese in regard to economic and social reforms.

Vietnamese people have been deeply affected by the events that took place since French colonial rule. South Vietnamese people fled in large numbers when the Communist forces of the NFL occupied South Vietnam in April 1975. Many Vietnamese have since sought refuge in North America and other countries, such as Australia. The Communist government deported the minority ethnic Chinese population in 1978 and 1979. Vietnamese people were allowed to immigrate legally into the United States in the 1980s under the 'Amerasian Homecoming Act' (1987) (Ta 1999, p. 25).

A significant number of Indo-Chinese refugees arrived in Australia following the fall of Saigon to the Communist regime in 1975, with an estimated 37,000 settling here in 1980 (Viviani, as quoted in Hassan et al 1985, p. 265). Numbers from the latest census suggest that a total of 197,800 Vietnamese born and second generation Vietnamese Australians live in Australia (ABS 1996, 3221.0 & 3412.0). In Western Australia, there are an estimated 10,065 Vietnam born people with 9,606 of them living in the Perth metropolitan area (ABS 1996, 2015.5 & 2020.0).

Settling in a country with vastly different cultural values, norms and social structure is a great challenge for refugees and immigrants from Indo-China, a challenge made even more difficult by the circumstances surrounding the departure from their homeland. Tokura (1983) notes that the Indo-Chinese population in Australia is made up of seven different ethnic groups from three different countries, Vietnam, Laos and Kampuchea. These ethnic groups are Vietnamese-Chinese, Indigenous Vietnamese, Laotian Chinese, the Indigenous Lao, the Lao Hmong, the Kampuchean Chinese and the Kampuchians. These groups' main religions are Bhudism (66.7%), Christianity (8.7%) and two indigenous sects, Cao Dai (3.5%) and Hoa Hao (2.1%). Other religious beliefs such as Taoism and Confucianism are professed by the remaining 19% of Vietnamese (Hassan et al 1985; Phung 1999; Britannica 1999). Even though there is no official religion in Vietnam, religion has been an important factor in Vietnam's way of life and religious dogma is applied to certain aspects of people's personal and daily life.

Traditionally, Vietnamese people value family identity and people live in extended family systems with grandparents, parents and children (Ta 1999).

Hassan et al (1985) and Phung (1993) stress the importance of Vietnamese family values and the importance placed on the family unit. The Vietnamese family is a 'self sufficient and independent unit' (Phung 1993) which provides financial support for its members, education for its young and assistance to its elders, and is used to arbitrate conflicts. Phung and Hassan et al further note that strong ties exist between parents and children and that families give preference to male children.

Families are usually large as children are seen as having economic and social value. The father is head of the family and parents are responsible for the family's emotional and financial support. In return, children are expected to be obedient and show respect and love for their parents. Phung notes that 'Filial piety and conformist respect have been considered a significant factor in family life' (Phung 1993). Traditionally, communication amongst family members follows a 'hierarchical' rule that reflects Vietnamese morality and ethics. Hassan et al (1985), Phung (1993), and Ta (1999) note, however, that women have in recent times become more than just homemakers and have assumed an important role in the running of family affairs. The communication patterns are, according to Phung (1993), from parent to grandparent, wife to husband and youngest child to oldest child.

Discipline is usually performed by the mother; however, the father holds a powerful role in the family and is responsible for disciplining the children for serious breach of the family rules or incidents that may place the family's integrity at risk (Cultural Cameos 1997). Discipline is only applied to its full extent once the child turns three. Punishment is usually brief and may include isolation from other family members, 'verbal reprimands, scolding or shaming' (Cultural Cameos 1997, p.6). Children are rewarded for being 'calm, inactive' and passive.

Immigration and resettlement had a major impact on the traditional Vietnamese way of life, with a breakdown of the extended family structure and subsequent loss of support networks. With the breakdown of the traditional structure comes the loss of 'family identity', so important in Vietnamese culture. Furthermore, Phung (1993) points to the 'culture shock' faced by 'most of the older Vietnamese who are experiencing Western culture'. This culture shock leads to arguments that occur when children, caught in between two cultural scenes, rebel against their parents or argue

with the elders. Most Vietnamese parents may, however, be reluctant to seek help for themselves or their children, as the idea of counselling or mediation approaches may be alien to them (Hassan et al. 1985).

### **1.3.4 Families from Arab and Middle East Countries**

The Internet proved to be a useful resource for finding information regarding child rearing styles in Arab, Middle Eastern and African countries. As with the previous sections in this chapter, the following paragraphs are not intended to be exhaustive when dealing with child rearing among the many ethnic groups in Arab speaking worlds or African countries. Lebanon and Yemen will be used to illustrate some of the child rearing/parenting styles in the Middle East and in Arab speaking countries. There are an estimated 70,224 Lebanese born people living in Australia (ABS Census 1996); of those, 836 live in WA with 751 living in the Perth metropolitan area. A total of 7,247 people originating from the Middle East and North Africa live in Western Australia, of which 6,834 live in the Perth metropolitan area (ABS 1996, 2015.5 & 2020.0)

#### **1.3.4.1 Yemen**

Arab countries have a culture and customs as rich as their centuries old history. Religious belief systems play a very important part in social, family and political life in these countries. In Yemen almost 100% of the population follows the Muslim creed. Christianity was extinct in Yemen probably before the 10<sup>th</sup> century (Britannica 1999; Yemen Home Page 1999). Islam permeates Yemeni political, social and judicial systems and is enshrined in the country's constitution as the official religion. Under article 24 of the Yemeni constitution, the family unit is seen as 'the building block of society' and article 31 refers to women as 'beloved second half of men who have their rights and duties guaranteed by the Sharia<sup>7</sup> and the law' (Yemen General People's Congress 1999).

Even though the Yemeni constitution does not discriminate between men and women, males have a dominant role in the family and society in general. In spite of the women's liberation movement that started in South Yemen in the 1940s, the struggle for equality has not finished yet. According to a former

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<sup>7</sup> Sharia: Muslim code of religious law.

leader of the 'Union of Yemeni Women' in South Yemen, Noor Ba Abbad (1997), one of the obstacles faced by Yemeni women who want to join the active work force, is the difficulty in 'taking care of the home and family as well as advancing job prospects'. In the main urban centres there is some more openness towards women in the work force. Under the title '*Women try to find a place in Yemen's economy*', business columnist Nawfal Al Jourani (1999), notes, however, that even though 48% of Yemen's population are women, they only constitute 21% of the labour force in that country. Of these 21%, only 12.4% are in the paid labour force.

When it comes to family life, Yemenis uphold traditional values and gender roles, encapsulated in the Koran. These traditions are more strictly followed in country areas, such as in Tihama where 'female circumcision'<sup>8</sup> is still practiced in certain areas. Women carry out the majority of the household tasks and even after a long day working the fields with their husbands, they still have to carry out the household chores (Albaqui 1999). In most of Yemen there is strict segregation between the sexes and due to the practice of veiling, men are unable to choose their brides. The mother usually chooses the bride for the male child and the father completes the negotiation. The marriage contract is completed in the presence of an 'Al Qadi', a judge, and a substantial price is paid by the bride (Yemen Culture 1999).

An article in a local Yemeni newspaper, the Yemen Times, reports on a series of incidents that portray some of the punishment methods used by Yemeni parents on their children. According to Athena Al Absi (1998), the physical punishment of children in Yemen can be swift and violent at times. 'A teacher father of three sons aged 5, 3 and 2 years punishes his children by using a thundering voice, beating their buttocks, slapping their faces, or simply glaring'; 'I use a belt or a stick,' he said' (Al Absi 1998,p. 1). The other parents interviewed by the same columnist, a gas-station attendant and his wife, stated that their children, three girls and two boys, were punished by their father beating them with a 'qat' stick<sup>9</sup>, a belt, a 'lighted match or frighten them with fire' (1998, p.1).

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<sup>8</sup> Many authors name this procedure 'female genital mutilation'. Even in Arab countries this procedure, which causes major psychological and medical problems, even leading to death, is now being questioned and has significantly reduced (Arabia Culture, 1999).

<sup>9</sup> Qat, or khat, a plant whose leaves contain a mild alkaloid which acts as a stimulant. The Yemeni government has been trying to reduce and discourage its consumption due to health concerns (Britannica, 1989, Vol. 13: 903 passim 906)

The punishments were used by these parents whenever the children misbehaved or became a 'nuisance', such as insisting on visiting relatives or asking repeatedly to go chew qat with their father. If the child misbehaved in public, one of the fathers would beat the child 'violently in front of all the people' (Al Absi 1998, p. 1). The two sets of parents interviewed by the journalist gave as reason for their methods the fact that their children had to be kept in control. Physical punishment had been administered to the children from as young as twelve months of age and, in one of the cases, till the boys reached 12 or 14 years and the girls 18 or got married (1998, p. 1). One of the children mentioned in Al-Absi's report had sustained a fractured arm because of such discipline.

In both families, the fathers were the ones who punished the children more severely, but the mother would also use physical discipline with some severity. The two sets of parents saw the physical discipline of children as a way of educating their children and keeping them under control. The parents saw this as the way they could show society they were making a real effort to educate their children. They noted, however, that some of their children had reacted to the violent punishments by becoming withdrawn and avoiding the more violent parent. The older children also tended to become more violent towards their younger siblings and started to refuse to go to school.

The use of physical punishment is also common in Yemeni educational institutions. Muttahar (1997), a third year student at Sana's University Media College, notes that corporal punishment is not prohibited under Yemeni law. Punishment of children is left to the discretion of teachers who, in general, view corporal punishment as the only way to deal with unruly students. Some of the discipline methods used by teachers include 'caning, standing up in the corner for a long time with hands raised, kicking the pupil out of the classroom, sweeping the school grounds [...] or calling up the pupil's parents by the school principal' (Muttahar 1997, p. 1). From the information obtained by the same writer, however, it can be inferred that these extreme methods of punishment do not stop or control unruly or disobedient students, on the contrary. Muttahar concludes her article by asserting her disagreement with a punishment which she sees as exceeding 'reasonable limits' and which 'becomes a physical and psychological aggression against another human being which can be seen as a kind of torture' (1997, p. 3).



Ismail (1997) joins Muttahar (1997) in his condemnation of the extent to which corporal punishment is used in Yemeni society. Both writers refer to the 'International Convention of the Rights of the Child', signed by Yemen in 1991, and stress that Yemen authorities seriously need to address childhood problems. Another Yemeni columnist, Mohammed Hatem Al-Qadhi (1999), denounces in his article entitled '*Our Kids and Summer Vacation*' what he sees as the lack of educational and recreational resources for Yemeni children during school holidays and the apparent lack of interest of government and parents in addressing these issues.

These reports published by Yemeni columnists appear to indicate that attitudes towards the physical punishment of children and issues such as child labour are slowly being addressed by Yemeni authorities. However, in countries with a strong religious fundamentalist orientation, changes in attitudes towards parenting and traditional gender roles, amongst others, are slow to take place.

#### 1.3.4.2 Lebanon

Lebanon is the smallest Middle Eastern country but one of the most densely populated Arab countries with a population of 3,506,000 (Britannica 1999). With a complex number of religious groups and a loose social structure made up of several different communal groups, Lebanon was originally the land of Phoenicians and the Semitic tribes, and the mediaeval land of the 'Crusaders, the Caliphs and the Saracens' (Hassan, Healy, & McKenna 1985, pp. 173-174). Islam became the religion of a majority of Lebanese people with Muslims being 55% of the population, Christians 37.6%, Orthodox 11.7%, Protestant 0.5% and Druze<sup>10</sup> 7.1% (Britannica 1999, p. 644). From 1516 to 1918 the country became part of the Ottoman Empire and at the end of World War I it was transferred to French sovereignty. Whilst under the Caliphs and Ottomans, Lebanon became the shelter for dissident Middle East people, both Muslims and Christians. Lebanon's problematic internal affairs and the Arab-Israeli conflict led in 1975 to a highly destructive civil war. Israel's invasion of Lebanon in 1982 over the Palestinian question dealt the final blow to a country already debilitated by the long-standing civil war (Hassan 1985; Britannica 1989).

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<sup>10</sup> Druze: small Middle Eastern sect characterised by an eclectic system of doctrines combining Biblical and Islamic ideals.

The civil war in Lebanon ended in 1990 and since then the standard of living of its population has improved. However, Basil Fuleihan, a World Bank-paid adviser to Lebanon's finance minister, stated in an interview to the Reuters news agency that the country, one of the Arab world's 'most sophisticated' in the past, was so severely destroyed by the civil war that the standard of living is now back where it was when the conflict first started in 1975 (Fuleihan 1998). Lebanese people left their country in large numbers following the start of the civil war in 1975, with another surge of migration following Israel's invasion of Lebanon. However, Lebanese migration to Australia started as early as the 1890s, during the gold rushes (Hassan, Healy & McKenna 1985). These authors note that by 1901 2,000 Lebanese had arrived in Australia and by the 1930s this number had risen to 3,000. According to the 1996 Census (ABS 1999, pp. 1-5), there is a total of 70,224 Lebanese people living in Australia with an estimated 836 living in Western Australia, 751 in the Perth metropolitan area (ABS, 2020.0 - B05 & 2015.5 - B05).

At present the Lebanese are the largest Arabic-speaking migrant group in Australia. Lebanese migration has been characterized by 'chain migration', with the father migrating initially and subsequently bringing in his immediate family. Other family members usually replicate this process, with males migrating ahead of their families (Hassan, Healy & McKenna 1985). Religion plays a vital role in Lebanese society and dominates many aspects of family life. The main religious groups are Muslim, Druze and Christian, with the latter group being divided into Orthodox, Maronite and Protestant (Cultural Cameos 1997; Hassan 1985). Islam has become the religion of the majority of the population in Lebanon, closely followed by Christianity.

For Lebanese migrants in Australia, the 'Muslim mosque is a statement of faith' as well as a place of social and cultural importance, while at the same time providing 'psychological support' to its members (Cultural Cameos 1997, p. 3). For Lebanese Christians, church buildings are regarded as 'the material expressions of their cultural values' (1997, p.3). Lebanese parents hold certain beliefs in regard to the wellbeing of their children. Some of these beliefs include children wearing a 'small blue medallion' as protection against the 'evil eye' and 'seeking the protection of a saint' by dressing the child as a 'miniature copy of the saint's habit' (Hassan, Healy & McKenna 1985, p. 191).

Lebanese people place great value on family life and strong kinship ties. The father is the head of the household and exerts his authority over all other members of the family. This authority is further consolidated by the support of a united household that assists the head of the family in bringing any member of the household into line, if necessary (Cultural Cameos 1997). Gender and family roles are clearly set out, with the female partner responsible for the management of the household and for the home duties and the male head of the family responsible for the upkeep of his family.

Socially, females are expected to be 'gentle, maternal and domestic', while males are expected to be 'dominant decision makers' and be responsible for passing culture, tradition and religious knowledge on to their children (Cultural Cameos 1997, p 5). Other family members may live in the same household and they are expected to participate and contribute to the household's functioning. Older women in the household, who may have gained more status through motherhood, are responsible for maintaining the family's morals and honour. The kinship group can be spread across a large geographical area but regardless of distance, their role in looking after the welfare and needs of other family members is not diminished (Ghabrial 1983; Hassan 1985; Cultural Cameos 1997).

Children bring great happiness into the family and are seen as a valuable asset and as future contributors to the prosperity of the family. Boys are generally preferred to girls, and more so amongst migrant Lebanese families. Ghabrial (1983) states that this is the case because parents fear girls may bring shame to the family 'if they take up westernized attitude and behavior'. On the other hand, parents see boys as their security for old age (Ghabrial 1983). Parents put a lot of effort in ensuring their children live in a happy, peaceful and secure home.

Lebanese parents may be seen as being 'over protective' towards their children, Ghabrial states, due to the insecurities that come with migration. Intervention by schools, government bodies or statutory authorities may cause resistance and concern to Lebanese families living in Australia (Ghabrial 1983; Hassan 1985; Cultural Cameos 1997). Traditionally, in Lebanon, the family is 'protected by the Lebanese Constitution', thus reinforcing and 'institutionalizing' the authority of the male head (Hassan, Healy & McKenna 1985, p. 182).

The male child continues family lineage and marriage traditionally takes place within the extended family. Members of the extended family may advise in regard to marriage partners. Children live with the family until they marry and, as they grow up, they are expected to be responsible to a certain extent, and assist in looking after the younger siblings. Older children are also expected to act as role models for the younger children. Lebanese parents expect high standards of behaviour from their children at school and in the home. Honour and shame are extremely important concepts to Lebanese families and parents expect children to respect and maintain the family's good social standing. As in Lebanon, Australian Lebanese families expect that their children respect the cultural values of their community (Ghabrial 1983; Cultural Cameos 1997).

Discipline is handed down by the family and supported at communal and religious levels. Regardless of the religious following of the family, children are made aware from an early age of social roles and family obligations and of the consequences of breaking the rules or bringing shame to their families and/or the community. Small children are 'usually disciplined by their mother' who may resort to 'physical punishment' or require the children to 'kneel in a corner'. The mention of their father's 'displeasure' is, however, enough to bring the child into line (Cultural Cameos 1997, p. 6). Ghabrial (1983) comments that in some instances parents may 'over discipline' their children by 'indulging in giving instructions' and 'talking over and over about parents' values and principles'. Punishments may take the form of hitting with a stick, slapping the face or pulling of ears. The same author stresses that in some cases this can be considered as 'child abuse'; however, she further notes that '...careful considerations always reveal the motive behind this way of management'.

## **Conclusion**

*There are issues of particular significance in working with families from different cultural backgrounds not the least [of] which is recognition of power differentials that race and ethnicity bring into play based on assumptions of white superiority, and recognition of the constraints of one's knowledge base with respect to non-western cultures. The notion of cultural relativism has relevance to efforts to*

*improve cross-cultural practice in child welfare* (Fernandez 1996, p. 271).

Child corporal punishment can be seen and interpreted from many different angles. For some researchers, corporal punishment has been a child rearing method passed from generation to generation, a form of discipline that has a lot to do with the parents' cultural or ethnic background. For others, corporal punishment is a form of discipline that has been used since time immemorial and has nothing to do with people's belief systems or cultural background. Whichever way one looks at it in the context of child rearing, physical punishment has to be one of the issues which has raised, and will continue to raise, a high level of debate in today's world.

With the dawning and rapid expansion of the Internet and communication technology, this debate has gained new dimensions and has reached into the heart of countries where conservative views of child rearing and discipline are earnestly defended. Conversely, western countries where moderate views or even condemnation of corporal punishment were held for a long time, are now looking at corporal punishment as a 'quick fix' to the perceived juvenile crime issue. So-called 'fundamentalist' religious groups in several countries around the world appear to be gathering increasing support and growing in numbers, partly because of their firm stance on matters of discipline. The strong patriarchal nature of families in some cultural groups is another of the factors that may lead to the use of corporal punishment as a form of discipline.

Events taking place towards the end of the 20<sup>th</sup> century have brought to light the wide and diverse ethnic reality of our world. As an example, since the break-up of the former Soviet Union and the subsequent political and social changes in Eastern Europe in the 1980s, several ethnic minorities, previously suppressed by authoritarian regimes, are now fighting for independence. Many thousands of refugees fleeing from these conflicts have since migrated to other countries, with Australia accepting a large number. Historically, Australia's societal institutions have recognized and assumed child-rearing practices that predominantly had their roots in England. In the years after the Second World War, families from other cultural and linguistic backgrounds came into Australia in large numbers, bringing with them different child rearing practices.

Aboriginal society, culture and traditions had child-rearing practices that saw child discipline from a very different perspective. While many aspects of Australian society have been shaped by recognition of the multicultural nature of current Australian society, this has not been so in the area of child protection. It should be noted, however, that government agencies have made a great effort in recent years in research and policy development areas relating to child protection work with people from Aboriginal background.

## 2 Ethnicity and Child Protection Work: the Everyday Issues

### 2.1 'Do you understand?' The Tower of Babel

*At first, the people of the whole world had only one language and used the same words. As they wandered about in the East, they came to a plain in Babylonia and settled there. They said to one another, 'Come on! Let's make bricks and make them hard' [...] 'Now let's build a tower that reaches the sky, so that we can make a name for ourselves and not be scattered all over the earth'. [...] Then the Lord came down to see the city and the tower those men had built, and he said, 'Now then, these are all one people and they speak one language; this is just the beginning of what they are going to do. Soon they will be able to do anything they want! Let us go down and mix up their language so they will not understand one another.' [...] so the Lord mixed up the language and from there he scattered them all over the earth (Good News Bible 1990, p. 12).*

This passage from 'Genesis - 11' provides a marvelous illustration of the 'power of language' and the importance it has for human beings and their ability to live in society, communicate ideas and exert control over others. So vital was this power that it attracted the Lord's attention to what humans could achieve when united by language. Language, verbal and written, is the vehicle for communication and the transmission of culture, knowledge and tradition. Individuals experience the power of language when, visiting countries foreign to them, they are unable to understand what is said around them or to them. People may have to resort to interpreters or dictionaries to communicate their needs or requests in different circumstances. The ability to understand and speak languages other than their mother tongue can make a difference between feeling powerless and being empowered, between being a spectator or observer in a different cultural setting and becoming an actor in it.

Australia appears to have been the place chosen by diverse people of the world to come together, as the antithesis to the Tower of Babylon. People

from the four corners of the world are represented in this multicultural society. In 1947, 81% of the migrant population came from the main English speaking countries, the United Kingdom, Ireland, South Africa, the United States and Canada. By June 1997, this number had been reduced to only 39% (ABS 1999, 2821.0). This recent ABS report noted that 'preliminary estimates for 1997 identified 23% of the population as overseas born' and according to the 1996 census 'a further 27% of persons born in Australia had at least one overseas born parent'. This diversity is reflected in the number of different languages spoken in Western Australian households. Again referring to ABS statistics for Western Australia, an estimated 209,272 persons aged five and over spoke a language other than English at home (158,422 for Perth alone) and proficiency amongst overseas born people who had English as a second language was variable.

For many migrant families from a Culturally and Linguistically Diverse Background (CALD), not being fluent in the mainstream language can become a long-term obstacle for successful settlement. For others, even those who have some knowledge of the English language, the experience of moving to a new country is the greatest challenge they will ever face, especially during the initial year(s) of settlement. Migrant families of a CALD background need to learn about their new social environment and adapt themselves to a new lifestyle. Children tend to adapt to this new environment much faster than their parents do and they learn about the new social norms and values in a much shorter period of time. Whilst children attend school, their parents are busy trying to find a job or working hard to improve their quality of life. As a result, parents may become dependant on their children in situations where the proficient use of written or spoken English may be required. Australian welfare workers and professionals in other human service areas have observed such situations. I find what has been described as the 'phenomena of acculturation' a useful concept in understanding this recurring pattern.

Acculturation was first identified in 1880 and a widely accepted definition was:

*Acculturation comprehends those phenomena which result when groups of individuals having different cultures come into continuous first hand contact, with subsequent*



*changes in the original culture patterns of either or both groups* (Redfield, Linton & Herskovits 1936, p. 149).

The stages of acculturation identified by Marin (1992, as cited by Casas & Pytluk 1995) are as follows: 1 – *Superficial*: this initial stage involves people forgetting facts that are part of their country of origin's history or tradition and learning about the history and customs of the country of choice; 2 – *Intermediate*: people start making changes in their lifestyle, social relationships, language preferences and usage. During this stage, Marin argues, other indicators of these changes are the 'ethnicity of friends, neighbors and co-workers' and the choice of names for their children or for ethnic media in multicultural environments. 3 – *Significant*: this is the stage when more permanent changes in the person's beliefs, values and norms take place and are reflected in the day to day activities of the 'acculturated individual'.

It is my view that this process of acculturation, or shall I call it 'settlement', amongst families of culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds is not an easy and straight forward one. This process or phenomenon is gradual and complex, and evolves in cyclic stages. For people who are members of minority groups or communities, the acculturation process raises issues of power and control. People affected by it experience different degrees of difficulty in adapting to the new social environment and its customs. Some will never fully adapt to the new cultural norms and will firmly defend the ones they were raised under. Their offspring will, however, progressively accept and adopt the new cultural and social norms and values, whilst retaining some residual knowledge of their parents' own ethnic origin. This view is shared by Grieger and Ponterotto (1995) who further note that these different levels of acculturation within families can, depending on the family's cultural background, potentially contribute to the development of conflict between parents and their children.

### **2.1.1 Language and The Cultural Scene**

*We are constantly trying to think up ways to involve parents who have limited English. [...] It must have been awful when teachers years ago were saying, 'Don't speak your language at home - make the children speak English'. Because parents*

*lose power with their children anyway as they become better at English* (Kassel 1999, p. 9).

This statement from Kassel's article was obtained during her interview with 'English as a Second Language' teacher Kellie Fuller. It raises some of the issues many migrant families faced when they first arrived in Australia. In order to avoid being identified as 'migrants' from a different cultural background, which could mean discrimination, parents encouraged their children to speak only the English language and they anglicized their names. The changing of names is still common practice amongst people from a CALD background.

Murray, with whom I worked for a while, had a surname that did not hide his ethnic origin. He had been born to Italian parents, and compared to mine, his English was faultless and without the trace of an accent. Once I got to know him a little better and our friendship developed, I started addressing him in Italian during Team Meetings. He appeared to be a little reluctant initially; however, over time, our snippets of dialogue in Italian became more regular. I found out later that his real name was Mario, not Murray. Some time later another colleague at the same office, who had known Mario for a few years, told me that it had been the first time she had seen Mario acknowledge his cultural background openly.

From my own experience, it is sad to see the offspring of migrants who have settled in this country in the 50s, 60s and 70s not being able to talk to their parents in their mother language. It is an interesting situation witnessing parents talking to their children in their first language and children replying in English. This phenomenon is not as evident now, as the general acceptance of our multicultural society has brought a change in policies and attitudes towards cultural and linguistic diversity. Clyne notes that 'grandparents, especially grandmothers, are now playing a vital role in this [raising children bilingually] as the caregivers of young children during the working week' (1998, p. 20). Clyne sees this enthusiasm in the second generation as due to their desire to compensate for the 'less successful maintenance of the language during a period of less favorable community attitudes'.

Lo Bianco (1999) notes that this change started taking place from the mid 1970s onwards. Lo Bianco identifies five stages in cultural and linguistic policies in the period 1974 to 1999. Until the mid 1970s, the author identifies

a period he calls: 'Anglo-conformity culture and assimilationist theories'. During this period, Lo Bianco argues, policies and practice at different institutional levels sought 'an eventual homogenization for immigrants and indigenous Australians' (1999,p.4). Language diversity was seen as a problem during this period, according to the same author, as it created difficulties for teachers trying to teach 'minority students'. The governments of the day dealt with this problem by 'replacing' children's languages with the 'school's English, to supplant the languages of culture, socialization and intellectual development with the language of the dominant society' (1999, p. 4).

Lo Bianco identifies the first stage of cultural and linguistic transformation in the early 1970s which 'saw the beginnings of a two part reaction to assimilationist ideology'. This included the 'replacement' of 'British identification' with an Australian national identity. This change was triggered by Britain's decision to join the European market and the commitment within Australia to a cultural diversity. Lo Bianco notes that during this period, instead of attempting to replace the first language, governments started to offer specialized English classes and culture retention programs. This, he states, was accompanied by a 'move from regarding diversity as a problem to retention of minority language as a 'right''. 'Language and culture retention' whilst having English as the national idiom was seen as benefiting the individual and the community (Lo Bianco 1999, p. 5).

The second stage of this transformation, according to the same author, saw linguistic and cultural retention not as a right but rather as a resource. A right, Lo Bianco argues, implies 'sanction against some authority for non-compliance'. Resource, on the other hand, 'involves thinking about the benefits (cultural, cultural, economic and social) of assisting young people to retain and develop a mastery of the language of their families, and the cultural knowledge they are developing in their communities' (1999, p. 5).

Still according to Lo Bianco, in the late 1970s and early 1980s a combination of factors such as the loss of Australia's exports to Britain and the realization of Australia's potential in the Asia-Pacific region, saw a push at the political level for the teaching of a selected number of 'key Asian languages'. This push targeted mostly English-speaking Australians and was motivated by 'economic imperatives and geo-political and strategic interests' (1999, p. 5). The fourth stage identified by Lo Bianco is the period from 1987, when

Australia adopted the 'National Policy on Languages, to 1994, when the National Asian Languages and Studies Strategy was adopted'. The author argues that this was a period of intense 'policy development'. He comments that, even though the idea of a 'language and culture policy had been well and truly adopted by government', there was 'great contest about the priorities, the underlying ideologies and the researching' (1999, p. 5). Lo Bianco identifies the fifth stage of culture and language transformation in the late 1990's. This is a period he identifies with an 'unfortunate' return to the past in terms of language policies:

*The concern again prominently expressed in policy is for English, this time in the form of English literacy standards. The effect of this strong and insistent advocacy of the priority of English is to make vulnerable many of the extensive achievements that Australian education has made for multicultural and multilingual education (Lo Bianco 1999, p. 5).*

### **2.1.2 Language, Culture and Child Protection Work**

*The bottom line in communicating accurately with children is that adults must realize that they and children **do not speak the same language**. Because the penalty for that lack of realization, is **daily miscarriages of justice** which never need to have happened. [emphasis in the original] (Walker 1999b, p. 179).*

Anne Walker, a US Forensic Linguist, focuses her work on communication with children. Most of her work and research was done with children whose native language is English. Walker warns her readers that when interviewing children and adults who have 'English as a second language', special care should be taken 'when talking with, and listening to them' as they may lag behind in 'acquisition ranges'<sup>1</sup> (1999a, p. 182). Australian researcher Ruzzene (1998) focuses her attention on work with people from an Italian

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<sup>1</sup> According to Walker, language acquisition is not just a process, it is an unstable one, in which children learn to form words and sentences. This process may be more or less unstable depending on the age of the child, the familiarity with the event, the trauma associated with that event and the environment.

background and the problems created by language barriers and 'cross lingual difficulties' between parents and their children. In her work Ruzzene identifies two main themes within cross-cultural social work literature, which she describes as 'subjective awareness and understanding of one's ethnicity and culture' and 'objective awareness and understanding', the understanding of the individual within the 'broader social and political environment' (1998, p. 17).

These two different but not mutually exclusive main themes, Ruzzene stresses, pay minimal attention to the importance of understanding and exploring 'the language experience' of people whose first language is not English. The 'understanding of this language experience', Ruzzene notes, 'can be assisted through understanding the process of culture' (1998, pp. 17-18). The process of language and culture are 'one and the same', Ruzzene argues. So much so that just because a client from a CALD background speaks the English language, it does not necessarily mean that he/she may understand what is being said or the topic or views being presented by the worker.

Another aspect raised by Ruzzene and other authors is that knowledge and fluency in English gives people in minority groups the power to access 'the most significant and powerful institutions of our country' (1998, p. 18). Martin (1998) notes that elderly Chinese people residing in the Eastern suburbs of Melbourne had been disadvantaged and placed in stressful situations when dealing with government and service organizations due to their lack of English skills. Martin suggests in her work that teaching English to elderly Chinese people would not be effective due to their low literacy skills, and more interpreters and bilingual workers should be employed in mainstream service delivery. Access to interpreters is again raised by Martin when stressing the important role of social workers in providing Chinese people with relevant information regarding 'rights, services and obligations and to advocate where necessary' (1998, p. 8).

Child protection workers are currently not expected to be proficient in languages other than English, even though this would be extremely helpful at times. There are, however, certain issues that need to be considered when working with CALD families. Grimshaw & Sumner note that, in order to achieve social work's historical role of 'liberating the client from

dependence', it is necessary to allow them to articulate their own thoughts (1991, p. 143). This, Grimshaw & Sumner conclude, would enable clients to 'learn and progress towards self awareness and a new dignity' (1991, p. 191). The process of assessment or investigation that is undertaken by child protection professionals evolves around the use of different means of communication, written and verbal, all in English. Even when care is taken to ensure qualified interpreters are used in dealing with families/persons from a CALD background, important information can be lost in the translation process. This loss of important information can be even greater when close family friends or relatives are used as interpreters.

As Ruzzene notes in her study, 'further complexity in communication occurs' when 'speakers and hearers' are not 'equally competent in the same language' (1998, p.18). Another phenomenon that occurs amongst people of a CALD background is the gradual erosion of their mother language. People start 'intermingling' English words in their conversations. The interaction between children and their parents may be 'limited' because they don't 'share one common, comprehensive language' (1998, pp. 18-19). As Ruzzene finally notes, the 'shared meanings' within the family may become limited as children 'experience a new world in English and its culture'. Ultimately, this may affect 'the degree of connectdness the individual may have to their ethnic community' (Ruzzene 1998, p. 19).

Professionals may expose themselves to further risks when families/persons from CALD backgrounds are deemed to speak and understand the English language well enough. The risks in this latter situation are the meaning of words being lost and professionals being unaware of appropriate 'communication channels' or body language. This results in people involved in the conversation becoming annoyed or impatient due to being unable to get their message across or feeling that they are being misunderstood. When interviewing children, special care needs to be taken as, depending on their age, their language skills are not fully developed.

Walker stresses that adults have traditionally found interviewing children, especially pre-school children, a difficult process. The 'incomplete or inconsistent' information adults get often leads to children being considered 'unreliable witnesses' (1999b, p. 179). As an example Walker notes that due to the process of 'language acquisition' being 'an unstable one', for a child as

young as five a grammatical 'rule' may operate during a conversation but five minutes later it may be lost. This happens because a five-year-old child is going through the 'acquisition process'. Along with acquisition comes 'development of cognitive skills, one of which is to hold in memory incoming information' (Walker 1999b, p. 179).

Walker points out that the difficulties adults have in interviewing children is due to their 'total amnesia' about how they, themselves, learned language. Adults are not able to appreciate the 'extraordinary skill they have in choosing words, putting them together in quite complex ways, and then knowing how to use those utterances in culturally acceptable ways' (Walker 1999b, p. 179). Interviewing children from a CALD background requires extra care and extra skills, the same author comments. If interpreters need to be used, attempts should be made to secure the assistance of very experienced ones and ensure that they are well briefed on the nature and circumstances of the case. The use of joint Police/FCS investigation teams in Western Australia makes language and cultural issues even more relevant to practice. Language and culture go hand in hand and child protection professionals need to ensure they are properly equipped to deal with the great variety of situations that come their way.

In view of the Australian Bureau of Statistics 1996 census on language and ethnicity cited at the beginning of this chapter and the sensitivities that exist in working with CALD people in child protection cases, the need for a holistic approach to 'language services' appears clear. New arrivals, either migrants entering Australia under sponsorship or family reunion schemes, or refugees and so-called 'boat people', will not necessarily achieve a reasonable level of proficiency in English in a short period of time. Some, depending on their age, may never learn it at all. It is in the early stages of settlement that a wide range of information is required. It is also during the earlier stages that parents find it more difficult and challenging to adapt to a new social and cultural life. Effective communication is a key element of successful settlement and when it comes to child protection, it is crucial in avoiding costly and irreparable damage to family relationships.

## 2.2 Legal Issues

*States Parties shall take all appropriate legislative, administrative, social and educational measures to protect the child from all forms of physical or mental violence, injury or abuse, neglect or negligent treatment, maltreatment or exploitation, including sexual abuse, while in the care of parent(s), legal guardian(s) or any other person who has the care of the child (Convention on the Rights of the Child 1991, Part 1, Article 19, section1).*<sup>2</sup>

The contention and difficulties over the use of corporal punishment is present in other debates raised in the legal field. Meertens (1997) quotes the Australian Law Reform Commission president, Alan Rose, on a national report on juvenile justice prepared by the Australian Law Reform Society and the Human Rights Commission:

*Corporal punishment conveys unfortunate signals to children about the way legal processes work and fits poorly with the principle that school discipline should be administered in a manner consistent with the child's human dignity' (Rose as quoted by Meertens 1997, p. 4).*

According to Meertens, this national report recommended that 'corporal punishment should be banned and suspension from class was the wrong punishment for truancy' (1997, p. 4). In another short article published one month later in the same newspaper, journalist Hal Crawford (1997) mentioned Attorney General Peter Foss's position of not changing the laws that allowed parents 'hitting their children'. Peter Foss's comments were made at the time that laws were before the New South Wales parliament making illegal '...hitting a child above the shoulders and with anything except an open hand'. Peter Foss was further quoted on this article as saying that the WA Criminal Code '...had provisions to deal with parents who used unreasonable force on their children' (Crawford 1997)<sup>3</sup>.

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<sup>2</sup> The 'Convention on the Rights of the Child' was signed by State Parties in New York on 20 November 1989 and entered into force in Australia on the 16 January 1991.

<sup>3</sup> Current laws in Western Australia, the Child Welfare Act (1947), do not contain any provisions making illegal the use of physical discipline by parents.



Amidst the ongoing legal discourse on child corporal punishment, there are other voices that raise the issue of 'rights': the rights of the child versus the rights of the family and parents. Parton & Wattam note that the increase in state intervention and the increasing 'critique' of the 'welfarist child-care system' led to an 'undermining of the welfare consensus in child care' (1997, pp. 26-28). Parton & Wattam further note that the realization by the general public of the extent of family violence, with the consequent physical and sexual abuse of women and children, led in the UK from the 1960s onwards to the creation and establishment of several interest groups.

Adding to the controversy surrounding this debate, civil libertarians became concerned with the intrusiveness of the child welfare system in family lives, an intrusion that was 'allowed' and went 'unchallenged' (1997, p. 27). Parton & Wattam refer to this state of affairs in the British child protection system and the use of the powers of 'in loco parentis' by local authorities under section 3 of the 1980 Children Act (section 2 of the 1948 Children Act). Under this section of the Act there are provisions authorizing the placement of children without parental involvement under the 'Place of Safety Orders'. The argument, they note, is that with 'their priorities' and 'processes of decision making', and in an attempt to 'protect themselves from outside criticism', child protection practitioners 'failed to give due weight and consideration to the different and perhaps competing interests of family members as opposed to the concerns of the professionals themselves and their agencies' (Parton & Wattam 1997, pp. 27 passim 247).

The formation of parent lobby groups in the UK, the 'child death inquiries' held in the 1980s and the debate about the 'rights of parents versus the right of the children to remain home, free of state intervention and removal, were placed on political and professional agendas' (Parton & Wattam 1997, p. 28). How much has this debate influenced the child protection discussion in Australia? How much has Australia inherited from the UK child protection system? These are questions that I will not be exploring in this study. It is my argument, however, that current child protection law and common law in Australia has been, and still is, influenced by the British model. Cashmore and Haas (1995) also hold this view. When addressing the issue of 'the common law defense of 'lawful correction'', these authors note that 'common law' is based 'originally on English common customs [...] The tradition and

principles of English common law are a significant part of the law in Australia' (1995, p. 14.).

English common law allowed parents the use of physical punishment of their children in order to 'lawfully correct the child, being under age, in a reasonable manner' (Blackstone 1765, as quoted in Cashmore & Haas, 1995, p. 14) or, as Halsbury's 'Laws of England' stated,

*An act is not an assault if it is done in the course of lawful correction of a child by its parent or of a pupil by its teacher, provided that the correction is reasonable and moderate considering the age and health of the child and administered with a proper instrument, and in the case of a female in a decent manner* (Halsbury 1992, as quoted in Cashmore & Haas, 1995, p. 14).

The question of physical punishment being 'reasonable' and 'moderate' is one for which there is no clear answer; it is open to subjective, rather than objective, interpretation, both at the legal and the community level. In the matter of child discipline, another important question is what differentiates 'physical assault', or common assault, from 'physical punishment'. According to Cashmore & Haas an assault occurs 'when someone uses any degree of force against the body of another without consent, either intentionally or recklessly' (1995, p. 15). In common law, stress is placed upon consent having been given by the person who was the object of an assault or the act 'being justified or excused by law' (Criminal Code Act Compilation Act 1913 (WA) Part V, Ch XXVI s. 222). Australia's adoption of the 'Convention on the Rights of the Child', of which an article is quoted in the opening of this section, has not contributed to a dramatic change in the law in Australia concerning the use of child physical punishment.

Individual States and the Commonwealth have, nevertheless, statutory provisions and government policies that regulate and control the use of physical punishment in schools, childcare institutions/agencies and juvenile detention centres. It must be noted as well that Articles 3 and 5 of the above mentioned Convention recognize, and recommend, that 'States Parties [...] respect the responsibilities, rights and duties of parents, or, where applicable, the members of the extended families or communities provided for by local custom' (Convention on the Rights of the Child 1991). The Convention

further recognizes, in articles 28 and 29, the importance of the child and his/her parents' cultural identity, language and values, in 'conformity' with the contents of the convention.

### **2.2.1 Around The World: A Snapshot of Legal Issues**

Examples of the intense legal debates raised by the provisions of the Convention vis-à-vis individual State Parties (worldwide) in cases involving alleged 'excessive physical punishment' of children are numerous. 'A' (a boy aged nine who initiated a complaint before the European Commission of Human Rights) vs. UK (Judgement of 23 September 1998) was one such case. It concerned 'the responsibility of a State to protect children within its jurisdiction from excessive corporal punishment' (Smith 1999, p. 1; Stephenson 1999, p. 1 par. 3). A's stepfather had initially been charged with 'assault occasioning actual bodily harm' (the boy had been hit with a cane on several occasions and bruising had been documented by a pediatrician). However, even though the 'defense did not dispute that the stepfather had caned the boy on a number of occasions', he was found not guilty, a decision 'consistent with previous [UK] case law' (Smith 1999, p. 9).

In summing up to the jury, the judge advised that it was a 'perfectly good defense that the alleged assault was merely the correcting of a child by its parent, in this case the stepfather, provided that the correction be moderate in manner, the instrument and the quantity of it' (Judge's summing up, as quoted in Smith 1999, p. 6). This case generated great media interest and focused attention on the right of parents to physically chastise their children. It highlighted the impact that both the European Convention on the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms and the Convention on the Rights of the Child had on the UK judicial system in regard to this particular case (Smith 1999; Stevenson 1999).

Quoting other authors, Smith remarks that the Convention on the Rights of the Child marks the end (in legal terms) of the age-old idea that children are their parents' property and raises the central issue of 'respect', respect for the child as an individual whose emotions need to be taken in to account. 'It is therefore fitting', Smith writes, 'that the Convention has, inter alia, heralded a global evaluation of the right of parents to physically chastise their children' (1999, p. 3). There is no legal provision in the UK preventing the physical

punishment of children; however, should the child feel 'aggrieved, some relief may be afforded by provisions of the salient international treaties' (Smith 1999, p. 3). In this case, for a child in the UK, both the European Convention and the Convention on the Rights of the Child, which the UK ratified, are in force and offer 'potential redress' (Smith 1999, p. 3). However, the same author notes that even though the UK was 'obliged' to ensure implementation of the Convention, the latter could not be part of national law in the UK until it was incorporated by an Act of Parliament. This would leave any violation of the said Convention in the UK a matter for the international community to deal with in accordance to international law. Again quoting other authors, Smith notes that at the time the Convention was being drafted, there was no willingness amongst the majority of the states parties to even discuss the 'physical chastisement of children' (1999, p. 4). She points out that Sweden, which outlawed the physical punishment of children back in 1979, (the International Year of the Child) has successfully implemented, a 'significant public education campaign' (1999, p. 4). Finland, Denmark and Norway have followed suit, with pressure being placed on other European countries to prohibit the use of physical chastisement of children.

Still in the United Kingdom, and following a government decision to ban the use of corporal punishment in government and private schools in 1998, Christian schools verbalized their discontent with the passing of such legislation<sup>4</sup>. Headteachers of twenty independent church schools and schools run by parents stated that the ban breached parental and religious rights. One of the headteachers, a Mr. Philip Williamson, was quoted as saying that the government was 'stopping parents from selecting a school which reflects their philosophical beliefs' (BBC News, 1 Feb. 1999). He further said that he 'strongly' believed that the state had no right to interfere with the upbringing of children in the family 'unless there is some sort of assault or abuse going on' (BBC News, 1 Feb. 1999). The same article revealed that this same group of independent schools was preparing an application to the European Court requesting the new legislation to be stopped on the grounds that it 'breached the rights of parents and freedoms of religious expression guaranteed by international statutes of human rights.' A correspondent of the UK's Daily Post, Anne Benson, (1999) quotes the same Mr. Philip Williamson, headteacher at a Christian school, in an interview stating that parents 'could

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<sup>4</sup> The School Standards and Framework Act.

be called [into school] to punish their own children' in order to get around the possible ban on corporal punishment.

Articles from the United States of America and Canada show that, at the domestic and school level, corporal punishment is a current and pressing issue and the level of discourse between the pro and against lobbies is high. However, little has been done at the legislative level to prohibit the use of corporal punishment of children. Matthews (1996) notes that the issue of corporal punishment in Canada has 'just begun to emerge in the child abuse discourse' and that certain sections of the public are beginning to 'challenge' certain sections of the [Canadian] Criminal Code. Matthews goes further by stressing that 'the concern is that corporal punishment is part of a continuum with spanking at one end and physical abuse and homicide at the other' and noting that it can be 'sometimes very difficult to assess when a parent or caregiver crossed the line' (1996, p.8). In November 1999, Finucane (1999) reported that a local minister of religion in Woburn, Boston, US, had been acquitted of charges of physical abuse of his son, pressed against him by the local child protection agency.

In their US study of 'Social change and trends in approval of corporal punishment by parents from 1968 to 1994', Straus, Murray & Mathur (1996) note that a downward trend in the use of corporal punishment by parents in the US has been taking place since 1968. The authors point out that the 'overall decrease and the decline in normative consensus represent major changes in cultural norms concerning child rearing'. Straus, Murray & Mathur further state that the decrease in the use of corporal punishment was more significant among 'middle class whites' and that 'the lesser change' occurred among 'lower class' African-Americans. With the decrease in the use of corporal punishment, white middle class children are, according to Straus, Murray & Mathur, less likely to develop psychological problems. However, the same authors stress that the situation is unlikely to be changed for children of the African-American minority whose parents are likely to continue using such methods of punishment.

Straus, Murray & Mathur (1996) caution their readers in regards to the 'seemingly' optimistic trend as, they note, there had been an upward trend in the approval rate for corporal punishment in the three years prior to the completion of their study. This, they say, could be related to public reaction

to an increase in 'youth crime rate' and the 'tendency to reconsider corporal punishment'. An article which reflects this tendency in US public opinion was published by Associated Press (13 July 1999) and refers to comments made by a group in Wyoming, US, following the Littleton, Colorado, school shootings. In this article, the 'trustee' of the group stated that he 'would like to see laws passed in Wyoming that guarantee parents the right to physically discipline their children.'

In another US state, Florida, a Senator was quoted as saying that he would push to 'reinstate corporal punishment in public schools' (Brown 1999). Straus, Murray & Mathur (1996) raise concerns in regards to the 'backlash' [in favour of CP] and moves to stop this 're emerging trend vis a vis the widening gulf between socio-economic status groups in respect to corporal punishment'. The authors stress that measures to control the use of corporal punishment among the lower socio-economic groups 'could exacerbate class and race conflicts', as people in minority groups would see those measures as attempts to control and limit the lives of the under-privileged in the guise of child protection.

News from South Africa shows a push from Christian education schools for the reintroduction of corporal punishment with a reference to a High Court case in Port Elizabeth where Judge Liebenberg ruled that 'spanking - biblically based or otherwise' would continue to be banned in schools (Rickard 1999). Representatives of the group 'Christian Education South Africa', an organization of US origin, claimed that the ban on corporal punishment in schools curtailed their 'constitutional rights' to religious and cultural freedom. Physical punishment of children in South African schools had been banned under the Schools Act of 1996.

An editorial in Johannesburg's 'Business Day' of 29 June 1999 addresses the issue of the reintroduction of corporal punishment from the public opinion's perspective of 'raising children with respect for the law' (Business Day, 29 June 1999). The Business Day's editorialist ponders the tasks of South Africa's new Education Minister, Kader Asmal, and challenges him to either allow the continuation of the moral decay among students or 'take drastic measures'. The editorial goes on to suggest, 'A harsh and extreme possibility is the reintroduction of corporal punishment at schools' which could 'help restore a sense of pride and achievement among pupils'. It is the editor's view

that pupils 'need to feel embarrassed when they have erred [and without corporal punishment] there is no clear mechanism in place to instill this feeling'.

Elsewhere on the African continent, Zambia and Nigeria are examples of countries where the use of corporal punishment remains enshrined in law. Phillips (1999), a BBC correspondent in Lagos, Nigeria, reported how the population in Nigeria's state of Zamfara had celebrated the introduction of 'Shari'ah law' (Islamic Law) by state governor Ahmed Sani, this in spite of Nigeria's new president, Olusegun Obasanjo, being a 'devout Christian'. This new legal code, Phillips notes, restricts the 'conditions in which men and women can mingle in public' and introduced punishments such as 'amputation for those convicted of theft and flogging for those caught drinking alcohol'.

From the Zambian capital Lusaka, the Times of Zambia (1999) reported in September 1999 that the government's Education Minister, Brigadier-General Godfrey Miyanda, told parliament that 'corporal punishment was still considered an important form of discipline where all other means failed'. Mr. Miyanda was responding to questions from other MP's regarding the 1986 Zambian Education Act which specified that corporal punishment could 'only take the form of a stroke of the cane on the palms or across the buttocks' and could only be inflicted 'by a person the same sex as the child'.

In Kuwait an Islamic MP is quoted as advocating the introduction of 'Islamic Punishment' in order to 'clean up' Kuwait. Walid al-Tabtabai, a former Shari'ah law professor, called for the Islamic punishments of 'flogging, amputation and stoning to be introduced in Kuwait, a religiously conservative country' (Arabia.On.Line 1999). Closer to home, Malaysia's authorities maintain the use of corporal punishment of children above the age of ten for certain offences, in spite of opposition to this practice from lawyers (Lugun 1999). In New Zealand, Mr. Murray McLean, a National's MP, suggested that corporal punishment for violent criminals should be brought back, in lieu of imprisonment. He further suggested that 'caning should be brought back into schools' (The Press 1999).

Other countries on Australia's doorstep, such as Singapore, could be added to the list of apologists and supporters of the 'lawful and controlled use' of corporal punishment of those who transgress the law or on children in the

context of child rearing and education. It is not uncommon for certain members of the public in Australia to call for harsher penalties and punishment of juvenile offenders. One such call came from Returned Services League WA's President Ken Bladen in April 1999 during the celebrations of Anzac Day in Western Australia. In his speech, Mr. Bladen called for the introduction of corporal punishment for criminals and its reintroduction into schools. (AAP, 1999).

### **2.2.2 Assault vs. Physical Punishment: Laws, Statute and Policies in Australia.**

Cashmore & Haas define child corporal punishment as *'The use of physical force against a child by an older person in a position of authority or power over the child, as a means of punishing the child for unacceptable behavior'* (1995, p. 3). Taking the previous definition of assault, we are left with the notion that the physical punishment of children is a case of assault, as there is physical force used and no implicit consent from the child. This is where the common law defense of 'lawful correction' comes in, a defense criticized by authors such as Ennals (1998), Stevenson (1999) and Smith (1999). This defense is present in common law across Australian States, with slight variations in its wording.

In the Northern Territory, section 188 of its Criminal Code Act (1983) makes 'common assault' an offence punishable by imprisonment, and increases the penalty when the assault is perpetrated on a child under the age of sixteen. However, section 11 allows a 'person' to 'justifiably apply force to a child for the purpose of discipline management or control' and may even delegate that power to another person (Criminal Code Act 1983 (NT)). Section 27 of the NT Criminal Code Act makes the use of force 'justifiable' provided that it is not 'unnecessary force' and it does not endanger life or cause serious injury. There is no direct reference to corporal punishment in the NT's Community Services Act (1983); however, day-care licensing conditions and the Northern Territory's Juvenile Justice Act (1983), s.66, prohibit the use of corporal punishment or any other forms of physical violence against children (Cashmore & Haas 1995, p. 158).

In the state of New South Wales, section 35 (2A) of the Education Act 1990, rules that guidelines and codes regarding the discipline of children in government schools 'must not permit corporal punishment of children'



(Education Act 1990 - NSW). However, corporal punishment was reintroduced in 1989 under the provisions of the 'Fair Discipline Code 1989', which includes 'guidelines for the use of corporal punishment'. Under the provisions of this code, schools can introduce corporal punishment as a 'last resort' and only after a formal decision by the 'parents of the school and the school community' (Cashmore & Haas, 1995, p. 155). The same authors note, however, that most schools in NSW have abandoned the practice of corporal punishment. Other Acts of parliament and regulations in the area of 'substitute care', child protection, childcare services and juvenile detention in NSW, make it unlawful to use corporal punishment with children or young persons (Cashmore & Haas, 1995, pp. 156-157).

Queensland provides another example of the common law defense of physical punishment in its Criminal Code under section 280. Entitled 'domestic discipline', section 280 allows for the purpose of 'discipline, management or control, towards a child or pupil, under the person's care such force as is reasonable under the circumstances' (Criminal Code Act 1899, QLD). The use of corporal punishment in Queensland schools was abolished in the beginning of 1995 following a 1992 Cabinet decision. However, Cashmore & Haas (1995, pp. 159-161) note that Children's Services Regulations and Detention Centre Regulations in force in Queensland at the time their work was being completed, provided for the use of corporal punishment as a form of discipline.

In Western Australia, the use of physical punishment is allowed under Part V, Chapter XXVI, section 257, of the Criminal Code. Under the heading of 'domestic discipline', it considers 'lawful for a parent or a person in the place of a parent, school master or master, to use, by way of correction, towards a child or apprentice, under his care, such force as is reasonable under the circumstances'. Section 260 of the same Act, however, prohibits the use of 'excessive force', making unlawful the use of 'more force than is justified by law'. Cashmore & Haas note that the WA Education Act (1928) Regulations permitted the use of corporal punishment as a 'last resort for offences against morality, for gross impertinence or for willful and persistent disobedience' (1995, p. 167). The sections of this Act were repealed in July 1987 and corporal punishment has officially been banned from government educational institutions since. Corporal punishment has also been abandoned in private schools in WA, according to the same authors (1995, p. 167).

WA's Child Welfare Act (1947) considers in section 4 (1) definition (i) that a child who is 'ill treated, or suffers injuries apparently resulting from ill-treatment' is a 'child in need of care and protection' (Child Welfare Act 1947, p. 3). Under section 149 (e) it provides for regulations to be written concerning 'the punishment that may be imposed upon [...] wards and children' placed under its care and control. However, as noted by Cashmore & Haas (1995), no regulations have ever been made and the practice of physical punishment of children or wards in care has always been discouraged, and never condoned, by the department of Family and Children's Services. Such practice is not permitted under WA's Community Services (Child Care) Regulations 1988, section 74 (b) which states that 'in the discipline or management of children enrolled in a service the licensee or permit holder shall ensure that no child is subjected to any form of corporal punishment...?'

At the time of writing, the Western Australian department for Family and Children's Services (FCS) is drafting new legislation. The Family and Children's Services Bill', has yet to be circulated for public comment (Family and Children's Services, 1998). The *Laws for People*, a review of current legislation undertaken between 1988 and 1991, provides the framework for this new legislation. Apart from drawing significantly from this review, the new Bill also draws on similar legislation from other Australian states, England and Scotland. The basic principle of the new legislation, the discussion paper says, should be the 'recognition of parental responsibility towards their children, with 'intrusion into families' only being allowed when 'allegations of significant harm to a child have been made' (FCS 1998, p.5).

The discussion document stresses that the new act should reflect the principles of 'parental responsibility; government and community support to families; and that the welfare of children is paramount'. Under the heading of '*Services for families and the protection of children*', the department proposes that a guiding principle would be 'that any form of support and care would promote the child's development and be considered in the context of the child's *family, culture and networks*'. [emphasis by the writer]. Consideration of cultural issues is given in the proposed 'guiding principles in the protection of children' (FCS 1998, p. 3).

Overall there is enough scope in Australian legislation for intervention in cases of excessive physical punishment of children. The main question is whether the physical punishment of children should be altogether outlawed by an act of parliament. One of the questions raised by the case of 'A' v UK is whether states parties should come into line with international legislation and ensure that domestic legislation reflects treaties such as the Convention on the Rights of the Child. As Smith (1999) writes:

*The pertinent [UK] law provides criminal and civil law safeguards against assault. Such protection is, however, eroded in respect of children within the home by the defence of reasonable chastisement and the fact that the onus of proof is on the prosecution to prove beyond reasonable doubt that the treatment was not moderate and reasonable in the circumstances (p. 11).*

If this is the case, it appears that the proposed new Family & Children's Services Bill will fall short of that target, at least in Western Australia. Current legislation in Australia encapsulates and upholds the cultural and moral values of the colonizing powers.

In regards to the use of corporal punishment as a form of 'domestic discipline' in child rearing, it provides a legal defense for such practice, provided 'reasonable force' is used and 'no harm or injury' is inflicted on the child. Arguably, these laws will provide a defense to parents from a CALD background who use corporal punishment as a form of discipline for their children. This could, nevertheless, lead to situations such as in the case of A vs. UK and the US case involving the Woburn minister of religion previously discussed on page 59.

### **2.2.3 A final word regarding legal issues**

*186. National education and awareness campaigns about child abuse and neglect should be developed and directed towards the major ethnic and cultural communities around Australia.*

*187. The national care and protection standards should require that all family services department officers making*

*assessments or conducting investigations receive appropriate training in cross-cultural awareness, including issues relating to differing child rearing practices in various communities (ALRC 84, 1997, appendix D).*

It is fitting to conclude this section on legal issues with references to recommendations from the Australian Law Reform Commission's paper '*Seen and Heard: priority for children in the legal process*' (ALRC 84, 1997), and to Cashmore & Haas 's discussion paper, *Legal And Social Aspects Of The Physical Punishment Of Children* (1995). The opening paragraph of the ALRC report on children and the legal system states:

*Australia's children are the nation's future. Australia's legal processes consistently failed to recognize this fact by ignoring, and mistreating the children who turn to them for assistance (ALRC report, 1997; overview).*

The ALRC goes on to stress that much needs to be done to provide children with the necessary access to, and appropriate participation in, the legal processes, further stating that 'changes are needed across all levels of government and across all jurisdictions'. The ALRC suggests that the 'Commonwealth' should take a 'leadership and co-ordination role' in regard to the changes that need to occur and the implementation of the recommendations made. Some of those recommendations relating to the use of corporal punishment are found in section 3 of the said report under the heading of 'Children, Families and the State' and in section 10 under the heading of 'Children in Education'. The ALRC's clear position on the issue of the corporal punishment of children is that it should be banned as a form of discipline in domestic and education settings (ALRC 84, 1997, section 3 passim section 10).

The ALRC acknowledges Western societies' views on childhood, noting that childhood 'is not only a legal concept - a period of limited legal capacity while a person is under the age of eighteen - but also a social concept' (par. 3.2). It also stresses that Western societies view childhood as 'a period of irresponsibility, during which children are in need of firm, often coercive control'. This is an image that, according to the authors of the report, 'has justified corporal punishment of children' and the creation of laws that 'control or prevent children from gathering in places where it is considered

they may be susceptible to adverse influences' (par. 3.3). It is my view that this approach to the control of children is not just common in Western societies but indeed in other societies around the world, with varying influence on the word of law.

When addressing the issues of child protection in the section under the title of 'The family and the state', the ALRC report briefly discusses three different models of state intervention in families where children are considered to be at risk. In the first model, the state takes a 'minimal role' in caring for children, intervening only 'in extreme cases for the protection or correction of children' (ALRC 1997, par. 3.6). This approach, the report notes, is seen by some as ensuring that there will be a 'minimal level of intervention' in family life, hence protecting the 'sanctity of the parent-child relationship.' Critics of this approach argue that the 'extreme cases concept where intervention is permitted is too narrow' and that the wishes of the children are neglected as 'children's interests are assumed to coincide with those of their parents' (par. 3.6).

In clear contrast to this approach stand those who advocate for 'strong state intervention in family life'. Under this approach, the report argues, the state decides with whom the child should be placed. Whilst being 'child focused', this model of intervention 'may overlook the strength of bonds between parent and child, even when the parent may be considered unsatisfactory'. This approach, the report further suggests, places 'too much faith' on the state, and 'assuming its agents, such as social workers, and judges, are capable of making sound and appropriate judgements that provide better outcomes for children' (Par. 3.7).

The third model sees the 'main function of state intervention as maintaining the biological family wherever possible, or at least the links between the family and child should separation be necessary' (par. 3.8). Critics of this model argue that this may as well remove the focus from the child's needs, and that it places 'too much emphasis on biological ties', hence relegating the child's 'interests, feelings and welfare' to a lower priority. The ALRC report notes the importance of the principles and guidelines contained in the Convention for the Rights of Children (CROC) and stresses that the '...most important statement of Australian policy regarding children's rights is our ratification of CROC' (par. 3.14).

The ALRS report notes, however, that in spite of the Federal Government's commitment to comply with CROC, and even though CROC 'obliges States Parties to ensure that their laws are consistent with its treaty provisions', breaches of this commitment have been detected on the part of 'federal, State and Territory governments' (par. 3.17 - 3.19). There are, nevertheless, ways in which 'ratified international treaties' can influence the legal process in Australia. The first one, according to the ALRC report, is a 'principle of statutory and common law interpretation' (par. 3.20), which allows the judiciary, when 'faced with a number of equally valid interpretations and in the absence of any indication in the contrary', to apply the interpretation that 'confirms more fully with Australia's relevant international treaty obligations', such as under the UN's Human Rights treaty.

The second way in which Australian legislation can be influenced by international treaties is based on 'a principle established in *Teoh*<sup>5</sup> in which:

*A majority of the High Court in that case held that, by ratifying an international treaty, the Australian government provided grounds for persons to have a legitimate expectation that, in the absence of any express provision to the contrary, the executive will act consistently with the treaty's provisions (ALRC 1997, par. 3.22).*

However, according to the same report, the Federal government attempted through administrative decisions in February and May 1997, to 'remove any legitimate expectations that may be based on ratification of international treaties such as CROC'. In its 1999 annual report, under the heading of 'Implementation of Previous Reports', the ALRC noted that the 'joint report on the Convention on the Rights of the Child' had been tabled in parliament in September 1998. Since then there had been major changes to child protection legislation passed in New South Wales (Children and Young Persons (Care & Protection) Act 1998), and Queensland (Child Protection Act 1999).

Other recommendations made by the joint committee had been implemented and a National Children's Summit, organized by the Coalition for Australia's Children, was held at Parliament House in Canberra on the 5th and 6th December. The ALRC annual report mentions various initiatives undertaken

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<sup>5</sup> Minister for Immigration and Ethnic Affairs v *Teoh* (1995) 128 ALR 353 (ALRC, 1997, par.3.22)

in other states, in consultation with the ALRC. There was confidence that these projects would ultimately produce 'guidelines that could be adopted on a national basis, consistent with recommendations contained in ALRC 84'.

Even though it was completed in May 1995, more than two years before the completion of the ALRC report just mentioned, Cashmore & Haas' report (1995) provided a set of recommendations specifically focused on the issue of the corporal punishment of children. In their list of recommendations the authors suggest different ways in which legislators across Australia can change the law in order to make illegal the use of any form of corporal punishment of children. This is, however, a complex, difficult, and potentially controversial task in view of Australia's multi-cultural society, as the authors acknowledge (Cashmore & Haas, 1995).

I will not be fully addressing Cashmore & Haas' discussion and recommendations in this paper<sup>6</sup>. I would, nevertheless, like to support the idea, as argued by Cashmore & Haas, that any legal change: 'should be preceded by public debate and accompanied by an education campaign to inform the public of the reasons for the change and to educate them about appropriate alternatives to physical punishment' (1995, p. 130). What is needed now is informed discussion and public debate. Five years after this report and two years since the tabling of the ALRC's report on CROC, little change has occurred and no major public debate regarding the use of corporal punishment of children has taken place. Will any government, federal or state, current or future, give this debate the relevant priority?

### **2.3 Child Corporal Punishment: Other Issues**

In concluding this chapter, I will briefly mention two other issues that are relevant to the topic of corporal punishment: *belief systems* and *health*. These two issues generate passionate public debate and provide an example of two extremes in the current discourse on the use of child corporal punishment as a form of discipline. Belief systems and religion are inseparable within certain ethnic groups, creating difficulties and raising ethical dilemmas for professionals in the child protection field. Health provides child protection professionals with plenty of valid reasons as to why corporal punishment

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<sup>6</sup> Reading or consultation of this discussion paper is recommended as it provides a good overview of the legal issues surrounding the use of corporal punishment in Australia.

should not be used as a discipline method with children, regardless of culture or belief systems.

In some of the literature, researchers such as Straus (1995) correlate the use of corporal punishment amongst Calvinists, evangelical Protestants and Puritans with the onset of depressive illness, intra-familial and intergenerational. Two major belief systems, Christianity and Islam, will be briefly discussed in relation to child discipline issues. For the purpose of this study, these belief systems were chosen because they are well represented in Australian society. Information provided in this section was obtained from different sources, including the Internet, but only for the purpose of considering the current discussion. In no way should this information be taken as an indicator of the incidence or prevalence of child maltreatment amongst those who profess and follow these beliefs.

### **2.3.1 Belief Systems**

*Research cannot tell us which are good child-rearing practices and which are bad - unless it includes moral, religious and political (i.e. non-scientific) preassumptions like the importance of an' ethnic or religious identity (Rogers 1993, p. 164).*

In every society, values, norms, and moral principles are guided by people's beliefs and customs. These, in turn, influence family values, the roles of family members and child rearing styles. Juvenile crime, elder abuse and deviance in general are often blamed on the breakdown of the family unit and/or the lack of strong parental guidance and authority. At times of high levels of criminality, people turn to the media to press for stricter, harsher sentencing and, at the same time, express their own opinions as to who is to blame for society's ills. Others extol the virtues of religious education as a way to 'turn back the tide' and instill proper morals on the younger generation. Parents may decide to enroll their children in schools run by religious organizations, not necessarily because they follow the same creed but rather because they believe these schools will offer a stricter code of discipline and instill proper morals and values in their children. These teaching institutions comply with the mainstream educational curriculum and also introduce their students to the Bible and to religious worship through religious education units.



The Bible has for many centuries been used by various religious denominations as a guide for their followers. Historians consider that the domination by the Roman Catholic Church was the result of the collapse of the Roman Empire's state and administrative system in the west (Britannica 1999 CD). Using the power conceded to them by imperial law, the Roman popes developed a 'specific ecclesiastical state' based upon a new 'theocratic ideology - the idea that the pope was the representative of Christ and the successor of Peter'. Using this ideology, Roman popes detached themselves from the Byzantine emperor (Britannica 1999 CD). A major push for 'missionizing' the people of western countries came from the Roman bishop Gregory I (590-604), who strengthened the power of the church in Spain, Portugal, Gaul and Northern Italy, countries which later developed into bastions of the Roman Catholic Church. The push towards the separation of church and state started with the 16<sup>th</sup> century 'reformation movement' and the effective separation of these powers was proclaimed during the French revolution in the 18<sup>th</sup> century (Britannica, 1999 CD).

Along the same lines, Muslims use the 'Qur'an' (or Koran), Islam's holy book which carries the prophet Mohammed's oral revelations on the word of God (Allah) as the guide for Muslims the world over. The Qur'an provides Muslims with the principles of the Islamic way of life and encompasses the Islamic Criminal Law, the Shari'ah, and family law. According to historians, traditional Islamic law reflected 'to a large extent the patriarchal scheme of Arabian tribal society in early centuries of Islam' (Britannica, 1999 CD). There is an ongoing debate on the use of Shari'ah law in its pure form versus the push for reform by 'westernized' Muslim scholars. This debate highlights the different interpretations of the Qur'an and its principles by Muslims in more traditional Arab countries and in countries such as Turkey, Egypt and Iran where Shari'ah law has been adapted to the needs of contemporary life. Muslims, however, stress the importance of the guiding principles contained in the Qur'an and the many benefits the application of those principles would bring to families and communities in general, if they were applied (Australian Islamic College 1999).

Even though the Roman Catholic Church in the western world has lost most of the power and dominance it had for centuries, its influence is still felt at varying levels in many countries in the west, especially those in Southern Europe. Depending on the ideological orientation of the ruling majority in a

given country, belief systems or religious beliefs have a varying influence on its constitutions, governing style, policy and statute. Countries where Roman Catholicism is the dominant religion and where strong connections between church and secular powers exist, may have certain popular expectations of social and family life, including child rearing. The Book of Deuteronomy, one of the sources of the Hebrew canon, exhorts Jews to conform to 'Yahweh's Covenant Laws'<sup>7</sup> (Britannica 1999 CD). The Book of Deuteronomy is found in the Old Testament and was used since antiquity by Jews and Catholics alike, inter alia, as a guide for parents in regards to child rearing and family life.

### **2.3.2 Belief Systems and Child Discipline: What the Literature Says**

*If you don't punish your children, you don't love them. If you do love them, you will correct them (Proverbs: 13.24).*

The above statement is found in the Bible and must surely be one of the most quoted by those for and against the use of corporal punishment of children. The same statement has been translated in other Bible editions as the well known 'He that spareth his rod hateth his son' (Proverbs 13:24). As will be seen, advocates of physical punishment of children will use this statement to justify such disciplinary methods. Those against will argue it is the wrong way to discipline a child, bearing in mind the physical and emotional consequences that such punishment will have on the child and also possibly arguing that Jesus or God Himself would not have wanted children to be maltreated. Similar statements are found in the Bible and all of them are used in the current debate. The dilemma for the child protection worker is whether or not the physical punishment of a child was excessive and whether it is part of the particular family's 'modus operandi'.

To a large extent, the level of devotion to a certain belief system determines the weight that followers will place on God's word. Extremes can, and do, happen, giving way not just to literal interpretation of holy books but also to forms of religious extremism, commonly known as 'fundamentalism'<sup>8</sup>. The

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<sup>7</sup> Yahweh or Jehovah, name of God in Hebrew.

<sup>8</sup> Fundamentalism: 'strict maintenance of traditional orthodox religious beliefs such as the inerrancy of Scripture and literal acceptance of the creeds as fundamentals of Protestant Christianity (Oxford Dictionary, 1987)

influence of religion in decisions involving the discipline of children is raised by Ritchie & Ritchie (1981), Armstrong (1983), Ellison, Bartkowski & Segal (1996). In their article, Ellison, Bartkowski & Segal note that one of the reasons why 'Conservative Protestant parents' are more likely to use physical punishment with their children is because they take God's word in the Bible as being unarguably true and correct. Armstrong noted how a Calvinist minister, Johnathan Edwards, referred to 'bad' children 'whose wills had to be broken' (1983, p. 21).

Hand in hand with this literal and unquestionable interpretation of the Bible come issues of power and authority of the parental figure, power and authority that go unchallenged as they are seen as given by divine rule, 'shaped by specific patterns of divinely ordained authority relations' (Ellison, Bartkowski & Segal 1996, pp. 664-665). Another aspect which influences conservative Protestant parents' use of child corporal punishment is the view stemming from the literal interpretation of the Bible that children are 'born predisposed to egocentric conduct and inclined towards rebellion against all kind of authority' (Ellison, Bartkowski & Segal 1996; Ritchie & Ritchie 1981). Corporal punishment, through use of chastisement with the 'rod', is used for fear that children may grow up outside God's will, hence missing out on 'spiritual salvation'. From the results of their research Ellison, Bartkowski & Segal conclude that 'theological conservatism' in parents is a stronger predictor of corporal punishment than other predictors such as 'parental education and race/ethnicity' (1996, p. 665).

Followers of the Puritan evangelical model have a similar conservative view on child rearing and, according to Cleverley & Phillips, see the use of 'honest punishment' as the way to establish 'habits of obedience, self-control, and discipline' in the child:

*Parents should never attempt to reason with children or shame them into good behavior - correctly used, 'spanking guides and controls initiative, inventiveness and self reliance' and will instill a deep sense of respect, discipline, self control, and a settled, orderly appreciation of loving authority (Cleverley & Phillips, p. 33).*

According to the same authors, Puritan evangelists use passages of the Bible to teach parents the right way to raise their children, such as Proverbs 4:20,

'My son, attend to my words', and Proverbs 29:15, 'The rod and reproof give wisdom; but a child left to himself bringeth his mother to shame'.

Parents who profess or follow a certain belief or creed but hold a more balanced, less literal view of the Bible, are less likely to resort to the physical punishment of children (Ellison, Bartkowski & Segal 1996). This approach to discipline varies greatly from those cases where in court hearings defendant parents or their counsel quote passages of the Bible in order to explain and justify why a child needed to be spanked, and further defend the right to spank their children once or twice a month with the end of a leather belt to instill discipline (Finucane 1999).

Research conducted with refugees from African origin during a pilot study on migration and parenting in Australia revealed that respondents believed 'children needed to see God as the ultimate source of reward and punishment as God would always be there watching' (Sims & Omaji 1999, p. 91). As with other aspects of one's culture, belief systems and religion add an extra dimension to the investigation and/or assessment of cases involving the use of child corporal punishment. As Korbin comments when noting the difficulty in reconciling cultural diversity and child protection, it is not surprising that 'cultural practices' related to 'child rearing are adhered to so tenaciously' (1982, p. 258). Korbin further points out that 'traditional modes of child care and socialization' remain unchanged 'long after' changes have occurred in other areas of culture.

There are, however, researchers and even theologians who contend that 'theological conservatism' in child rearing does not necessarily lead to best parenting and best outcomes for children in their formative years. Cleverley & Phillips note that 'over the centuries' within the Puritan evangelical movement, parents and some of its leaders felt that they had been 'ambivalent about the recommended disciplinary practices' (1986, p. 33). Cleverley & Phillips go further in their discourse over Puritan evangelist methods of child rearing by quoting Jean Jacques Rousseau and his view on child discipline. According to Rousseau, children are 'naturally born good' and it is humankind that, through its actions, brings evil into it.

*Whereas the Puritan evangelical model justified restraining and disciplining the child - the child's nature being sinful and something to be overcome - Rousseau's emphasized*

*freedom. If the child was allowed to follow its natural impulses in an unconstrained way all would be well* (Cleverley & Phillips 1986, p. 34).

In their book, 'Spare the Rod', Ritchie & Ritchie hold that there is no evidence that raising children according to biblical and Christian teachings will not necessarily produce 'satisfactory and effective people to a greater degree than other ways of bringing up children' (1981, p. 97). They claim that rather than acting as 'Christian or non-Christian', parents are mostly 'unconsciously' re-enacting what their parents did to them during their childhood (1981, p. 97), a view shared by Stattin, Janson, Klackenberg-Larsson, & Magnusson (1995).

Cashmore & Haas quote works from Campbell (1977) and Greven (1990) while pointing out that 'all biblical quotations in favor of harsh punishment had come from the Old Testament' and that the New Testament did not support such course of action (1995, pp. 9-10). Indeed these authors claimed that if parents justified using corporal punishment with the excuse that 'Jesus teaches that you must receive the rod', this would not be a valid justification, as Jesus was never quoted in the New Testament as advocating such punishment (Cashmore & Haas 1995, p. 9).

Regardless of all arguments and attempts to change views on the use of child physical punishment, articles found in literature and on Internet sites still advocate 'Biblical child rearing'. In a more restrained tone, the author of one such article, Miller (1985), tries to provide parents with a 'balanced recipe' for raising children within a Biblical framework. Quoting from the Bible, Miller stresses that principles of child rearing should be divided into two categories of positive and negative 'biblical incentives and rewards'. An example of a positive reward can be found in the parable of Matthew 25:21 where Jesus gives us the 'example of voicing approval of both the deed and the person'.

An example of a negative incentive, according to the author, is the use of 'spanking as taught specifically in the scriptures'. A word of caution is raised in the article and parents are warned to avoid 'spanking out of frustration' or spanking regardless of the 'offence'. Miller further suggests that parents should focus on the positive rather than the negative incentives, teach children the scriptures, and use the most extreme form of negative incentive, spanking, sparingly. It is advice like this, coming from believers themselves, which will

hopefully contribute to a change in attitude towards the abolition of child physical punishment.

### 2.3.3 Health implications

*With increasing migration resulting in many societies becoming multicultural, it is important for those working in the child abuse area to have an appreciation of child rearing patterns of other cultures (Oates 1986, p. 50).*

Articles on the health effects on children of corporal punishment often quote Biblical or religious references as a way to illustrate what is seen as inappropriate ways of disciplining children. Health concerns and findings with regards to this issue can be divided into two major areas. One is the effect of corporal punishment at the emotional or psychological level, with researchers pointing to the negative impact on children as they grow up, and the later development of anti-social, aggressive behaviours. The second is the risk of physical injury/trauma to the child, with researchers providing, in my view, unarguable evidence as to the undesirable and avoidable effects of corporal punishment on children. The message from the medical profession is unequivocal: regardless of the intention, when you hit a child, the action has the potential to leave permanent scars, physical and emotional.

Certain cultural practices, such as coin rubbing (Rice 1994; Hassan et al 1985) and 'facial scarification'<sup>9</sup> (Oates 1986, p. 51) often come to the attention of medical practitioners and child protection workers whose initial assessment is that children have been victims of maltreatment. Rubbing a coin covered with tiger balm until red marks appear on the skin is a traditional treatment for nausea in Cambodia (Kors Kyol) or fevers, headache and cough in Vietnam (Caó Gió). Headaches can be treated by a process known as 'cupping' (Choop Kyol) which is practiced by placing a small bottle or cup to cover the light and create a vacuum effect (Rice 1994). This treatment may result in localized bruising or a dark mark being left on the skin. Rice notes that pulling of the hair (Dork Sok) can also be used as treatment for headaches.

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<sup>9</sup> Scarification: also called cicatrization, practice of producing raised scars (keloids) on the human body in decorative patterns (Britannica 1989; micropaedia vol 10, p. 502)

The practice of scarification is still carried out amongst traditional African tribes in order to 'assert the cultural identity' of the tribe member (Oates 1986, p. 51). I will not be focusing on these practices but rather on the ones related to the use of physical punishment as a culturally acceptable child rearing method. It is important, nevertheless, to draw attention to the existence of such practices which may result in visible physical marks being left on a child or adult's body.

Medical researchers analyze corporal punishment from a health/medical perspective and warn readers about the serious long-term effects that even mild corporal punishment can have on children. Their message is clear: 'A child may be severely injured by a blow that would cause only minor bruising in an adult' (Taylor & Maurer 1985, p. 1). These authors further stress that children can be injured unintentionally during even mild punishment if they jerk away and the blows land off target, or if they fall against sharp edges of furniture or other objects (p. 1). Taken literally, this study raises serious issues and dilemmas for the child protection professional.

There is a fine line between physical punishment and child abuse, and there is a clear danger in generalizing all physical punishment of children as 'abuse'. Care also needs to be taken in generalizing that physical punishment always has a detrimental effect on children's development. Studies as the one presented by Oates (1986) refer to children who had been victim of extreme cases of physical abuse over significant periods of time. As Oates points out, 'the crucial factor in determining a poor outcome for the child seems to be the continuation of the unsatisfactory environment' (1986, p. 104).

Straus (1995), an American psychiatrist, takes this further by exploring the possible connection between the use of corporal punishment and the greater probability of depression and suicidal thoughts as an adult. Albeit inconclusive, this study by Straus raises concerns about the use of corporal punishment and its possible long-term effects on children. In a country where corporal punishment is widely used, Oates (1986), Patterson (1995) and Maughan, Pickles & Quinton (1995), raise the possibility that the frequency with which corporal punishment is used may increase the chances of depressive illness in children and may lead to the perpetuation of family violence and criminal activity in later life. Another author, Welsh (1998), also links severe corporal punishment during childhood to later criminal

behaviour in what he refers as 'The Belt Theory of Juvenile Delinquency' (Welsh 1998, p. 1). Welsh argues that the progression to 'juvenile delinquency' develops in three stages. During the first stage, between the ages of one and three, corporal punishment is minimal 'except for the rare aberration of child abuse'. It is during the second stage, between the ages of three and five, when parents believe that the child 'is old enough to understand', that physical punishment is used more often. 'Aggression and defiance tends to surface at this age', Welsh notes (1998, p. 5).

During the third stage, between the ages of five and thirteen, the child may 'exhibit hyperactivity and behavior problems', even though criminal behaviour or delinquency is 'rarely seen'. It is, however, during this period that parents may increase the severity of physical punishment, moving from using an 'open hand' to the use of 'a belt, board, extension cord, or the fist' (Welsh 1998, p. 5). This increase in severity ultimately leads to the build-up of anger and aggressiveness in the young adolescent, who sees aggression as the norm. At the same time, the young adolescent 'starts to exhibit the poor conditionality to aversive stimuli', hence having poor control of his/her own anger and aggressiveness (Welsh 1998, p. 5).

Moving from the American continent to Europe, British author Alice Miller takes this argument further, as she describes England as '...the land of sanctioned corporal punishment' and notes how younger generations start to realize the 'poisonous aspects' of their own upbringing (1988, p. ix). Miller uses not just 'passionate' but, as she notes, 'emotional' language when she links excessive and continuous corporal punishment of children with later criminal or violent behaviour. The same author argues that by treating children in this violent way, people are 'contributing to the continuation of cruelty in the world' (Miller 1988, pp. vii-xii). Miller's book, however, looks at the extreme cases of corporal punishment, those which cross the boundaries of cruelty, and lead some of those who suffered that cruelty to annihilation through self-destruction or to extreme violence and aggression.

In support of her theory, Miller cites 'The Life of Christianne F.' (1988, pp. 109-129), who went through a path of self-destruction through drug use. The author also claims that extreme physical punishment can lead to cruelty and genocide, as, for example, in Hitler's case (1988, pp. 142-195). Is it the case, however, that dictators such as Iraqi president Saddam Hussein or Yugoslav's



deposed president Slobodan Milosevic<sup>10</sup> are the products of excessive corporal punishment? Miller's argument raises the issue of mental illness in cases of severe and continuously severe corporal punishment.

## **Conclusion**

While studies on the physical punishment of children have been done in Western societies, little attention was given to cultural issues linked with this practice. This appears to be related to some of the research methodologies and research instruments used. Understanding cultural differences and the often vastly different socialization experiences of people from diverse cultural backgrounds, requires qualitative and ethnographic research approaches. Cultural diversity in Australian society leads to the existence of equally diverse child rearing practices. Disciplining methods used by parents to control their children's behaviour are equally diverse. Drafting or changing the current laws in a way that could appropriately address every culture's specific needs in this area would be a cumbersome, if not impossible, task.

In brief, rather than bringing in laws prohibiting physical methods of discipline or punishment of children beyond what is currently in place in this State, more attention should be given to understanding the belief systems that make physical punishment of children the only alternative within certain cultures. Arguably, stricter laws or wider use of statutory powers by child protection agencies would be unlikely to bring any changes to the current level of physical punishment of children, a widely accepted practice for many centuries in different societies and cultures world-wide. The historical overview of the physical and corporal punishment of children provided in this study shows the complexity of the issue and the debate it has generated since antiquity. The influence of religion in decisions involving the discipline of children is not just confined to people of CALD background but it also extends to families and parents from an Anglo Celtic background.

Ensuring that child protection workers are aware of the family's particular ethnic background, including belief systems, is extremely important, as this will provide relevant information for the formulation of appropriate

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<sup>10</sup> Slobodan Milosevic was brought down during a popular uprising in Serbia on the 5 October 2000. Milosevic ruled Serbia for 12 years and had refused to accept defeat after Serbia's presidential elections in September 2000. Vojislav Kostunica, the successful candidate, was sworn in as new Serbian president in mid October.

intervention plans. No agreement will ever be reached between those who favour the use of child physical punishment and those against. Parental education regarding the proper and adequate use of discipline, avoiding corporal punishment, appears to be the best approach, as changes in law itself will not automatically change parenting styles, beliefs and behaviours that are often deeply entrenched.

### 3 Child Discipline: A Historical Perspective

#### 3.1 Child Discipline in Classical Antiquity

Attitudes to child rearing practices and the use of physical/corporal punishment changed through the years, depending on religion, morals, philosophical views and historical times. French pointed to the difficulties in interpreting the potential sources of material about child rearing in ancient civilizations and the ‘...significant disagreement...in matters of interpreting the affective qualities of the relations between adults and children’ (1991, p. 13-14). Women had the primary role in child rearing but ‘...fathers also frequently played more than minor roles in caring for and educating their children’ (1991, p. 13). Despite the importance of child rearing in the socio-political context of classical antiquity, children's faith in life was often determined by the faith of their own families. Considered public property, children were taken from their families, used as exchange currency and caught in the middle of wars, famine and plagues. It wasn't until the turn of the 19<sup>th</sup> century that the rights of children were gradually recognized.

There were both positive and negative views of children in ancient history. Children were seen as ‘... the individual's family and the larger community's link to the future’ and ‘both Greeks and Romans believed that only with proper education of children would the society be able to perpetuate itself’ (French 1991, p. 20-22). French further cites evidence of the positive views of children that came from philosophers like Plutarch and artists of the Roman period. ‘One of the major expressions of a negative view of children in this period is infanticide’... ‘the willful exposure of infants no doubt reflected an attempt both to regulate the population and to eliminate at the beginning children too weak or malformed to survive’ (French 1991, p. 22). From her study of ancient texts, the author believes that extreme forms of physical punishment, such as beating, spankings and whippings were common methods of discipline in most households. It was not possible, however, to determine ‘...how frequently parents and caregivers used violent, even brutal, measures’ (1991, p. 22).

*Alongside this clear concern for and investment in the welfare of children stands an equally clear picture of thousands of children subjected to infanticide, sale, neglect, abandonment, and horrendous abuse (emotional, physical,*

*and sexual). Nor can there be much doubt that ancient societies tended to devote more effort and resources to rearing male children (French 1991, p. 13).*

Research on early observation of children by ancient medical writers reveals that there was an attempt to adjust child rearing practices to the developmental stages of the child. In her summary of ancient traditional beliefs regarding childcare and punishment, French noted the 'observed characteristics' vs. the 'prescribed treatment' (1991, pp. 18-19). Punishment was applied according to stages of child development under a certain prescribed treatment in order to keep certain behaviours under control. Most young children were seen as 'fragile and damageable'. Thus, one should '...protect them from harsh treatment, and spare them from harsh punishment' However, school-aged children and adolescents, seen as reasonably strong and sometimes headstrong, should be treated 'using firm, even harsh discipline to instill proper attitudes and behavior' (French 1991, pp. 18-19).

### **3.1.1 Education of Children in Classical Antiquity**

Some writings or treatises on childhood and child rearing practices of the time are attributed to philosophers like Plato and Aristotle. Although stressing that this cannot be ascertained, French notes, nevertheless, that 'political philosophers of the 4<sup>th</sup> century B.C.E., principally Plato and Aristotle, devoted considerable attention to children and how to make sure that their education and training equipped them for life as good citizens' (1991, p. 16). These studies were used by other civilizations, notes French: 'The philosophical tradition articulated by Plato and Aristotle carried over into the Greco-Roman and Roman world' (1991, p. 16).

French notes that Quintilian, Plutarch, Cicero, St Augustine, and the late pagan writer Macrobius, authors whose works span some five centuries, follow the earlier model on growth and development of children with but few modifications. French comments that according to Greek tradition, the earliest lawgivers were already concerned '...with the way the young should be reared and educated' (1991, p. 17). Romulus (founder of Rome according to Roman legend) is given the credit of creating legislation on child rearing and education.

The importance of children in the transmission of culture and the perpetuation of nations and communities led to the careful planning of their education. Sommerville (1982) and French (1991) point to the work and influence that different philosophical schools – Academics, Peripatetics, Stoics, the Roman Sophists – had on education and child rearing practices in ancient times. From her research of Hellenistic and Roman imperial periods, French was 'reasonably confident' that '...these views permeated the upper classes and were adopted by men and women privileged enough to obtain more than an elementary education' (French 1991, pp. 19-22). There was, however, no idea about the extent to which the general population shared these beliefs.

The Greeks and Hebrews gave special attention to the education of children, with children from upper classes given particular attention. Sommerville argues that these civilizations, especially the Athenians, are the greatest sources of cultural tradition as they 'lifted their eyes above the economic and political means of survival to reflect on the ends of man's life' (1982, p. 28), a view shared by other authors.

This drive for survival and expansion in certain cultures led to extremes in the education of children. A clear example of this comes from one of the Greek states, Sparta, and the methods used in the education of their young. An important aspect of Sparta's history was the Spartans' view of gender roles in society. At a time when there was male dominance, and women and children, mainly female children, were disregarded and harshly treated, according to Cleverley & Phillips one of the philosophers of the time, Plato, 'came to look at women in a new way' (1986, p. 10). Cleverley & Phillips refer to Plato's work 'The Republic', in which he reported being 'extremely impressed by aspects of Spartan society, and Sparta had evolved unusually, in that women were accorded equality with men in some facets of life' (1986, p. 10).

The importance of Greek and Hebrew civilizations in the understanding of our cultural heritage and attitudes toward children, is also stressed by Sommerville who states:

*One of the Greek states, Sparta, particularly impressed the others with the wisdom of its child rearing principles. From Plato to Rousseau, accounts of Spartan practice have been cited as an example of the success of a hard line with children. The rationale behind Spartan customs was*

*military preparedness and unthinking obedience to the state. Boys were trained very deliberately to be soldiers and girls to be mothers of soldiers* (1983, pp. 24-25).

From these and other readings, it can be seen that corporal punishment was used mostly with boys and was intended to create warriors, thus preparing children for life and ensuring the survival of civilizations. French argues that education was ‘...not for the sake of the child, but for the perpetuation of the state and community’ (1991, p. 2).

The use of physical discipline in education was prevalent in classical antiquity. Sommerville (1982) gives the example of the use of ‘paidagogos’ (pedagogues), male servants in classical Athens, who were in charge of the education of upper class boys from the age of seven until their late teens. The pedagogue’s job was seen as demanding, as he ‘...took the boy to school in the morning, carrying his book and his lyre, and saw that he minded his manners. He then saw that his charge arrived home at night and was empowered to punish him if necessary. Thus, he could make a major contribution to the child’s moral training’ Sommerville (1982, p. 29-30). Sommerville argues that the use of pedagogues could simply show ‘the low opinion the Greeks had of boys before they had been brought through the taming process’ (1982, p 29). The same author cites Plato in one of his works, ‘The Laws’, in which he ‘...warned that children were the most stubborn of all wild beasts, because they were the most clever’ (1982, p. 29).

However, voices for and against the physical punishment of children by their tutors could already be heard at that time. Sommerville quotes two Roman philosophers on the issue of punishment of children. On the one hand, Quintilian felt beating children in order to educate them was usually unnecessary. According to Sommerville Quintilian thought that ‘A teacher who had made the effort to understand his pupil’s individual needs and character could probably dispense with it’ (1982, p. 43). The same author quotes from Quintilian’s work the following passage: ‘I will content myself with saying that children are helpless and easily victimized, and that therefore no one should be given unlimited power over them.’ (Quintilian, as quoted by Sommerville 1982, p. 44).

On the other hand, the Roman philosopher Cicero argued for the physical punishment of children as a way to ‘correct’ them. Sommerville

demonstrates Cicero's position by using the philosopher's quote: 'The more ingenious and clever a man is, the more teaching is vexatious and difficult for him. When he sees something which he himself grasps quickly being but tardily perceived it is torture for him.' (Cicero, as quoted by Sommerville 1982, p. 44). Sommerville further comments that Quintilian's 'sympathetic appeals' are forever being rediscovered, and gives the example of how '...Renaissance humanists found a complete text of his work in 1416 and praised the wisdom of his direction. Unfortunately, even they found it easy to forget this good advice under the pressures of classroom teaching.' (1982, p. 44).

### 3.2 From Christianity to Mediaeval Times

When Christianity started spreading throughout the Roman Empire, it brought with it a change in attitude towards children. This change was '...related to Jesus' own statements about children and the revolution in values promoted' (Sommerville 1982, p. 47). The emphasis turned from preparing children for war in order to ensure the continuation of civilizations to instilling the right moral and Christian values. The breakdown of family and family values was seen by some authors as having been one of the contributing factors to the downfall of certain empires such as the Roman Empire, which view was endorsed by Christians. 'One cannot help thinking that Rome, too, paid for its neglect of children and the family. Toward the end, the Western Empire simply did not have the native manpower to fight its own battles. [...] They blamed the falling population on a decline of the commitment to the family' (Sommerville 1982, p. 46).

Sommerville quotes from the Gospel, giving examples of Jesus' views and teachings on children, observing that:

*First he was suggesting that the child's spirit was the very essence of the religious life - a life of wonder and dependence. [...] True religion was a faith like children express. And true greatness was in a life of services that could extend even to the caring of children (Sommerville 1982, pp. 48-49).*

Christian faith went as far as prohibiting abortion and infanticide, a practice that was widespread in those days, and although these practices did not cease

altogether, 'Western societies did begin to develop a conscience against the disposing of children on the garbage heap.' (1982, p. 50).

This change in the approach to children can be found in the 'Book of Proverbs' which intends to teach morals and religion by means of proverbs and sayings. 'My child, pay attention to what your father and mother tell you. Their teaching will improve your characters as a handsome turban or a necklace improves your appearance' (Good News Bible 1992, Proverbs 1.8, p. 697). The Bible addresses issues related to child rearing and parenting. In 'Sirach, The Wisdom of Jesus, Son of Sirach', also known as Ecclesiasticus, children are taught how to behave and how to treat their parents: 'Children, listen to me; I am your father. Do what I tell you and you will be safe, for the Lord has given fathers authority over their children and given children the obligation to obey their mothers. If you respect your father, you can make up for your sins, and you honour your mother, you are earning great wealth' (Good News Bible 1992, Sirach 3.4, pp. 1124-1116).

Notwithstanding this change in the approach to children, the new doctrine did not necessarily improve the way in which children were disciplined. On the contrary, in order to maintain high moral standards and values, physical discipline of children was seen as an essential part of child rearing and education. 'If you don't punish your children, you don't love them. If you do love them, you will correct them' (Proverbs: 13.24, p. 707). 'Discipline your children while they are young enough to learn. If you don't, you are helping them destroy themselves. (But don't punish them so hard that you can kill them)' (Proverbs 19.18, p. 713); 'Don't hesitate to discipline children. A good spanking won't kill them. As a matter of fact, it may save their lives.' (Proverbs 23.13, p. 716); 'Children just naturally do silly, careless things, but a good spanking will teach them how to behave' (Proverbs 22.15, p. 716).

There are many other proverbs and teachings where the corporal punishment of children is recommended. However, some authors point out that Jesus, Himself, did not recommend or approve the infliction of pain onto children. These proverbs and sayings were attributed to the apostles, wise men and other people who followed Jesus through Palestine and other provinces. Christianity had an ever-lasting influence on the way children were raised and how discipline was applied but it also changed attitudes towards children themselves and towards childhood. The image of Jesus as a child, used in



ritual celebrations throughout the world, was greatly important in this change in attitude. 'Perhaps as a result of the increasing veneration of the holy family, the cult of infant Jesus, and the nursing Madonna, there are more literary references to kindness toward children, playing with babies and descriptions of the child's first steps' (Nicholas 1991, p. 33).

### **3.2.1 Crusades and Missionaries**

The spread of Christianity continued in the Middle Ages through the Crusades and the voyages of early European explorers and navigators who took with them missionaries in order to spread the 'Word of the Lord'. 'The Star of Bethlehem, which drew the Three Kings, guided countless faithful in later centuries to their Holy Land. Pilgrimage became a Christian institution and paths of faith would become paths of discovery' (Boorstin 1984, p. 116). The same author remarks that even after the end of the Crusades in the late 12<sup>th</sup> century, pilgrimages still remained a living force in European Christendom. Missionaries went as far afield as Japan, where, in 1528, the Jesuits are seen as having '...talent for reaching across cultural barriers' (p. 120 passim 508).

Crusades and the work of missionaries influenced the ways in which other civilizations dealt with the discipline of their young and also the intentions behind their methods of discipline. It has to be noted that many of these people were influenced by the culture, traditions and Christian religious beliefs that were imposed on them by colonizing powers, in the case of Latin America by the Spanish and the Portuguese. The impact of the colonizing powers on indigenous people was less in remote areas of those countries. 'In the indigenous societies of colonial Brazil, magic, totemism and rituals to protect children and other tribal members from 'bichos' (beasts of the jungle) were central to their cultures' (Kuznesov 1991, p. 148).

Kuznesov describes how children were raised by their mothers between the ages of eighteen months and seven years and how they accompanied their mothers during their work in the fields. The author added that 'In their early lives Indian children were not subject to corporal punishment. They were however taught to fear demons and beasts, and were taught games and songs that emphasized the dangers of these creatures to young children'. Although the Portuguese were politically supreme in Brazil and dominated all areas of institutional life, 'women of the indigenous and African cultures were

extremely important in the care and nurture of children of all backgrounds' (Kuznesov 1991, p. 148).

Indigenous Brazilian people used corporal punishment not as a disciplining tool but, similar to Spartan traditions, as an education method in order to make boys '...brave and strong' (Kuznesov 1991, p. 150). In contrast with this practice, however, were religious beliefs, culture and traditions, and the views on family and the rearing of children imposed by the Portuguese colonizers. Following St Augustine's views on the '...sinfulness of children because of the doctrine of the original sin', the Portuguese believed that children were born in original sin, were willful and passionate, and needed 'a stern master' (Kuznesov 1991, pp. 153-154). Kuznesov further notes that 'the Portuguese family system is most vividly portrayed by the principle of *patria potestad*, enunciated in fifteenth and 16<sup>th</sup> century law codes, which compelled obedience of children to parents and wives to husbands for the general good of the family' (1991, pp. 153-154).

Kuznesov illustrates the dominant role of the father in the family system and society at large, with examples where fathers '...ordered the death of their sons or daughters for disobedience or supposed immorality' with no attempt at prosecution by authorities (1991, p. 153). The same author points out that this emphasis on discipline 'contrasted with the customs of both indigenous and African tribes, who reportedly did not use corporal punishment on children before the Portuguese expansion to the New World'. Whipping of children over the age of five was common in colonial times in Brazil and '...modern families continue to keep paddles (*palmatorias*) that are to be used to strike the hand of the disobedient child, but corporal punishment is not commonly used anymore' (Kuznesov 1991, p. 165).

Religious Orders, which played an extremely important role in education during mediaeval times, used corporal punishment as part of their educational methods. Shahar found historical material which indicates that 'Asceticism was a central concept in the Christian outlook' (1990, p. 172). Shahar gives further examples of how Thomas Aquinas saw 'suffering', through beating, as '...an integral part of the teaching of good qualities and the acquisition of knowledge ...the tears and suffering accompanying this process are the fruit of the punishment imposed on man as a consequence of the Original Sin'.

Corporal punishment was used on top of the already strict and austere regulations set by the abbots in monasteries.

Yet there were people at that time that voiced their opposition to such punitive measures. Shahar quotes one such person, Anselm de Canterbury, at the end of the 11<sup>th</sup> century as ‘...voicing vehement opposition to the beating of children in monasteries as the main disciplinary measure’ (1990, pp. 173-174). This ‘isolated’ plea, Shahar continues, had been made in response to the ‘complaints of the abbot that the more he beat the children, the worse behaved and savage they became’.

### 3.2.2 Mediaeval England

Several authors note that corporal punishment of children was widely used during the Middle Ages. Hanawalt notes that in mediaeval London, ‘By the child’s fourth year, discipline began to play a major role in socialization’ (1993, p. 66). This author gives examples of the often-brutal corporal punishment of children either by their relatives, other adults or by the authorities of the time. Hanawalt notes that in spite of the great poverty and appalling and unhealthy living conditions that most families endured in mediaeval London, ‘The grim picture of childhood mortality, however, should not obscure the fact that parents, godparents, family, servants, apprentices and neighbors all looked after the welfare of the children’ (1993, p. 67). In the chapter *Childrearing, Training and Education of Children in Medieval London*, Hanawalt points out that ‘Beatings were regarded as more effective than scolding, and cursing children (suggesting that the devil take their souls) was strongly forbidden by the Church’ (1993, p. 72).

Shahar, who distinguishes between the ‘controlled beating’ of children and ‘savage ill-treatment and flogging’, comments that ‘The phenomenon of violence towards small children existed in the Middle Ages, as it did in later periods (and, indeed, does today as well)’ (1990, p. 109). Shahar further noted, however, that mediaeval society ‘...undoubtedly regarded as unacceptable cases of violence which caused grievous bodily harm or death which, if not attributed to insanity on the part of the perpetrator, was considered to warrant punishment.’ (1990, p. 110). Most of the literature, nevertheless, points to the fact that corporal punishment of children, regardless of their age, was pervasive in mediaeval England.

In summary, even though all historical documents point to the fact that corporal punishment was widely used in mediaeval England, some authors stress that the maltreatment of children was not generalized and that it decreased towards the end of the 17<sup>th</sup> century. Based on studies from other authors, such as Linda Pollock and Hanawalt, Chauduri argues that ‘beginning in the late 17<sup>th</sup> century and developing rapidly into the 18<sup>th</sup> century’, the ‘patriarchal and authoritarian nuclear family’ is replaced by ‘an intimate domesticated nuclear family, in which there was a greater intimacy between spouses and a tender and loving relationship between parents and children’ (1991, pp. 241-243). Further quoting Pollock, Chauduri says that ‘a concept of childhood was very much alive in the 16<sup>th</sup> century, during which time children were not subject to brutality, nor was the parent-child relationship formal’ (1991, p. 242).

### 3.3 From England to Australia

#### 3.3.1 Convict Children

*Oliver was about to say that he would go along with anybody with great readiness, when, glancing upwards, he caught sight of Mrs. Mann, who had got behind the beadle's chair, and was shaking her fist at him with furious countenance. He took the hint at once, for the fist had been too often impressed upon his body not to be deeply impressed upon his recollection (Dickens 1837, Oliver Twist).*

In *Oliver Twist*, Charles Dickens portrays the harsh life and violent treatment children received during the years of the industrial revolution. Employment of children as young as seven was commonplace in the different industries that were created in England and then in other countries throughout Europe. Mechanization brought with it high unemployment and poverty to the lower classes:

*despite the prevailing rhetoric of 'liberty' and egalitarianism, European culture and society in the late 18<sup>th</sup> century was conspicuously and profoundly elitist, especially in England, where dispossession of the peasantry from the land was well advanced, hastening the change over from subsistence to*

*capitalistic farming and industrialization* (Kociumbas 1997, p. 6).

In spite of this sudden industrial growth, unemployment and poverty were high. Poverty pushed children to criminal activities, as noted by Fabian and Loh when referring to the 'convict children':

*Until the 1820s about a quarter of the convicts were 'juveniles', that is under eighteen years of age. Most were city poor - the children of the slums. [...] Poor children worked from as early as seven years of age as errand boys, chimney sweeps, servants, street sellers and hawkers, in the mines and as offsidiers to tradespeople. ...Many children, like their parents, were unemployed. They lived by theft, often working in gangs. Most of their crimes were against property, not persons* (1980, p. 22).

The industrial revolution, which started in England in the 18<sup>th</sup> century, initiated a process of socio-economic and cultural development unprecedented until then.

It was in the early 16<sup>th</sup> century that England initiated the transport of convict children to its colonies all over the world. In their book *The Lost Children of the Empire*, Bean and Melville describe what was to be one of the largest migration movements in history:

*In 1618, a group of orphaned and destitute children left Britain for Richmond, Virginia in the United States. It was the start of an extraordinary era in British history, formally referred to as Britain's child migration scheme - a more acceptable phrase than child exportation - and was to last almost 350 years. The final boat load left only some twenty years ago, in 1967, when ninety children left Southampton for Australia, but altogether about 150,000 children were 'exported' to outposts of the British Empire - to Canada, Australia, New Zealand and, to a lesser extent, South Africa, Rhodesia (now Zimbabwe) and the Caribbean* (1989, p. 1).

Thousands of 'convict children' began arriving in the Australian colony from England in the early 18<sup>th</sup> century. These children were, as Fabian & Loh noted, 'working class children' (1980, p. 23). The authors add that 'Transportation to the colonies was seen as a punishment for crime and it was hoped that this punishment given to some criminals would deter others from committing offences. [...] Convict children were punished as severely as adults were. Girls could be subjected to floggings, thumbscrews or isolation in places of secondary punishment - just the same as boys' (p. 25). England's reasons for transportation of adult and juvenile convicts to the colonies were, however, mostly related to the great difficulty the government of the day was having in dealing with the increasing overcrowding of the prison system. Kociumbas argues that juvenile convicts represented cheap, unskilled child labour: 'The criminal law, long engaged in prizing people off the land, could thus be turned to propelling surplus human capital to create a useful Pacific base for the expansion of navigation, war and trade' (1997, p. 8).

The full force of England's criminal law applied to all those living in the colony and the range of punishments dished out to children as young as seven was extremely severe. Kociumbas points out that, 'though criminal law defined young people as children until fourteen, those aged seven could be held criminally liable if it were proved they knew they were doing wrong' (1997, pp. 22-23). In some of the institutions presented by Kociumbas as an example of the type of punishment dished out to juvenile offenders, 'corporal chastisement was still used extensively. Indeed, many magistrates tended to prefer it to sending boys into old-fashioned gaols where there was still insufficient attention to the principles of silence and separation' (1997, p. 35).

Discipline in orphanages and schools was similarly harsh and corporal punishment used. Kociumbas quotes from personal bibliographies in order to give an example of how 'children were expected to be disciplined and orderly from an early age' (1997, pp. 66-67). She further notes that 'Parents were remarkably lenient, however, for a society which dealt so savagely with other people's children and condoned corporal chastisement in the school'. Fabian & Loh note how harsh punishment was dished out in schools permanently set up at the time of the Goldrush. They quote Henry Parkes, a reformer of that time, as having said that 'the state should provide education for the mass of children to make them 'acquainted with their rights and mindful of their duties', and to combat crime and bad habits among them (1980, pp. 51-53).

Punishments were severe and in the Cavendish College punishment book of 1852 children are listed as daily receiving 'the cuts' for 'idling', getting spelling wrong [...] for talking or laughing during examinations [...] or getting their catechism wrong.'

Furthermore, whilst some historians such as Fabian & Loh, note a change in attitude to childhood, with laws being passed to make education 'free, secular and compulsory and to regulate the factory conditions in which so many children worked', only the offspring of the rich and powerful were given access to education which would allow them to reach for the most 'powerful and best paid positions'. The 'very poor children kept wagging school and working to help feed the family' (1980, pp. 60-61).

### **3.3.2 Impact of Colonialism on Aboriginal Ways of Life**

*A few Britons who came to Sydney in 1788 saw nobility and dignity in the black people. Those who came to the settled districts fifty years later saw them in decline, some begging, others accepting paid work for only a few days at a time, thus leaving a small core of Aborigines in the continuous workforce. In theory their freedom remained but in practice it was lost because in the extensive sheep districts their old food-gathering grounds were now occupied by the multiplying sheep and cattle (Blainey 1994, p. 45).*

In 1788, the First Fleet arrived in Botany Bay with its first load of seven hundred convicts and two hundred soldiers. The arrival of the First Fleet started a process of colonization that, in more than one way, changed the landscape and the lives of the indigenous people. Blainey (1994) stresses the impact that the introduction of new domesticated animals, such as sheep and cattle, had on Aboriginal people's lifestyles. As settlers spread with their flocks and herds into the rich grazing fields, Aboriginal people were forced out of their traditional land.

As Fabian & Loh (1980) note, the casualties inflicted by the invading troops, both by military acts and the spread of diseases until then unknown on the continent, led to the gradual breakdown of Aboriginal kin structure and the contamination of their culture. Kociumbas notes that towards the end of the

18<sup>th</sup> century, in certain areas Aboriginal people became 'refugees in their own land' (1997, p. 21). Unable to lead their hunting and gathering lifestyle, and seeing their children taken away, some took to alcohol:

*Rum and other hard liquor, not beer, was the drink of the outback, and those Aborigines who liked the solace of alcohol drank it in potent form. Amongst some Aborigines, alcohol was as virulent as disease. Even the will to live faded away, as the secure old Aboriginal world crumbled* (Blainey 1994, p.45).

Even in locations further away from the white settlers' outposts and sheep stations, where Aboriginal people were able to maintain their lifestyles, new diseases such as influenza, measles, smallpox and venereal diseases were killing 'far more' people than 'guns and rifles' (Blainey 1994, p. 45). The onslaught of disease on the Aboriginal population led to the generalized belief amongst white settlers and officials that Aborigines would eventually die out.

These ideas were further reinforced by 19<sup>th</sup> century biologist Charles Darwin who, as part of his theory of biological evolution of the survival of the fittest, concluded that 'full-blood Aborigines as distinct from part-Aborigines (sic) might die out' (Blainey 1994). Blainey (1994) and Kociumbas (1997) note that in view of the rapid demise of the Aboriginal population, attempts were being made to record their languages and customs, and that 'Concerned Europeans wanted to 'save' the children by taking them from their parents' (Kociumbas, 1997 p.20). In the process, Aboriginal children who had been taken from their parents were placed in purpose-built schools and later taken to orphan schools with European children.

In Western Australia, the colonization process started forty one years later, in 1829, under the command of Captain James Stirling. Captain Stirling had carried out an expedition to the Swan River in 1827 and his findings had captured the interest of the British Crown in the area. What followed was little different from the events that had unfolded during white settlement on the eastern coast. By the end of the 18<sup>th</sup> century, the Aboriginal social fabric around the main settlement areas had been all but extinguished.

Aboriginal children were institutionalized under government rule, with others being killed by settlers as Aboriginal people tried to resist their advance



(Fabian & Loh 1980). Aboriginal children were used as cheap labour in rural areas or sent to institutions such as orphanages. Ruth notes that 'most of the money given to Aborigines went to Aboriginal children in institutions. In Western Australia this policy led to the opening of orphanages for waifs and abandoned half-caste children' (1990, p. 34).

As Kociumbas notes, 'The Aboriginal child had been born in a world strikingly different from that of Europeans' (1997, pp. 2-5). Aboriginal child rearing and education, at the time of colonization, was shared by the extended family, as were all other facets of their economic, social and political life. 'It followed that each child's identity, training and destiny depended not on material possessions but on factors such as gender, totemic and religious affiliation and especially age'. Aboriginal traditions and culture were passed on through an 'oral communication system' from generation to generation by elderly men and women.

Kociumbas further notes that 'No child was ever alone, for each was surrounded by a galaxy of relatives not one of whom was solely responsible for the full time care of any child' (1997, p. 4). Corporal punishment or other violence towards children had no place within the Aboriginal world. Whilst colonization has since the beginning all but radically changed traditional Aboriginal child rearing practices, examples of how Aboriginal people handled their offspring's discipline are still found in some areas of the Australian continent.

In an ethnographic study undertaken in the late 1970s in order to obtain information '...about the child rearing practices of an Aboriginal group', Annette Hamilton (1981) argues against Malinowski's theories on the way Australian indigenous children were disciplined by their parents. Hamilton quotes Malinowski as he describes the 'savages' [sic] as being people without feelings, lacking any chastisement, giving their children an 'insignificant education' and adding that '...it is impossible to conceive of any serious education without coercive treatment, especially at that low stage of culture' (1981, pp. 9-11).

Using the findings of her own study and supporting it with other authors' findings, Hamilton notes how 'gestures' and body language are used to deal with children's unruly behaviour: 'the fourth and fifth gestures are both threats. The first is the *stare*; [emphasis in the original] this is used almost

exclusively by older men to control unruly children who are interfering with their activities. The second threat is used by adults of both sexes, particularly in the context of aggressive behaviour between children. The adult holds up one arm, bent at the elbow with the fist clenched, and men combine this with the stare to produce immediate results' (Hamilton 1981, pp. 42-43).

When observing child rearing practices of children between three and five years of age, Hamilton notes that 'Adults remain tolerant of children's activities as long as they do not endanger anyone and refrain from physical punishment no matter how great the temptation' (1981, p. 78). She further notes that 'girls are subject to no more discipline than boys are and are just as likely to go into tantrums, although they seem more easily calmed' (1981, p. 84). Hamilton finally stresses the marked contrast between European and Aboriginal expectations of child-adult relations '...where the adult is not only permitted to physically assault a child but on occasions even exhorted to do so - 'spare the rod', and all that'. Hamilton further notes that the same way the child's right to 'fight his parents back with physical assault is seldom encountered in manuals of modern European child rearing', so is the idea that 'the parent has the right to beat the child in order to get it to obey them is similarly absent in Aboriginal child-rearing' (1981, p. 100).

In summary, the first settlers brought with them a completely different set of child rearing and child disciplining methods which were totally opposed to the Aboriginal ways. The destructive impact of early settlement years was followed at the turn of the 19<sup>th</sup> century by the introduction of laws by the Colonial Government which led to the forced separation of Aboriginal children from their parents. Haebich notes that laws such as the Aborigines Protection Act, passed in 1886, which created the Aboriginal Protection Board, were inspired by the 'Social Darwinist' theories of the 1870s: '...Aborigines were simply given enough to make their 'passing' as 'comfortable' as possible' (1989, p. 48). In spite of the theories of the time and the 'White Australia Policy', enshrined in the 1905 Aborigines Act, Aboriginal people have, to a large extent, been able to retain their child rearing practices, as noted by Hamilton (1981) and Kearins (1985).

### **3.4 Child Rearing at The Turn of the Century: The Australian Inheritance and Early Stages of Child Welfare**

#### **3.4.1 Institutional Education and Control**

Anglo Celtic culture and traditions dominated Australian child rearing methods and attitudes to child discipline. This influence was felt at the institutional and family levels well into the 20<sup>th</sup> century and it was also reflected in early child welfare laws and regulations. Historians point to a gradual improvement of children's living conditions at the turn of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, at least for the children of the wealthy. The influence of British customs, traditions and laws in Australian family and institutional life are mentioned by historians, Gandevia (1978), Fabian & Loh (1980), Picton & Boss (1981) and Kociumbas (1997).

In early to mid 19<sup>th</sup> century, male and female orphan schools in Australia were set up by philanthropists related to government officials or by Church officials. These institutions and the rules and regulations that governed them, Kociumbas notes, were similar to those in Britain. Punishment of female and male children was often brutal and degrading, meant to control the spread of crime and create obedient workers and servants. Children were kept in these institutions for an 'extended period', in one of these orphanages till the age of twenty one. Kociumbas further notes that this extended period of 'control' was consistent with the 'legal status of children under English Law' (1997, pp. 44-45).

Education for the children of the colony's civil and military officials, the 'colonial elite' or 'pure merinos', (Kociumbas 1997, p. 54), was of great concern to their parents. Families went to great lengths to ensure that their children were educated as 'gentlemen' and 'ladies' 'conspicuously superior to the convict class', even if this meant, from as early as 1801, sending their children on a risky voyage back to England for their schooling. Those children who remained in the colony could expect an education system pervaded by stringent rules evolved from the 'British Public Schools tradition'. Boys were expected to learn Latin grammar and receive 'hefty doses of corporal punishment'. Girls were taught in a fashion that would reduce them to their role as 'property of men', schooled 'in the rituals of

ladylike subordination and decorum' (Kociumbas 1997, p. 55; Fabian & Loh 1980).

Furthermore, Picton & Boss (1981) note that early child welfare interventions were performed by agencies that were a mix of private and charitable organizations, partly or wholly funded by the government of the day. British Poor Law and the English penal system are seen by these authors as the main influences on welfare policy and practice in Australia. Although British Poor Law never became law in Australia, some of its principles were applied to the 'Institutional care' of children and to 'welfare policies' for parents (Picton & Boss 1981, p. 22). Fabian & Loh note that in the early 1860s children 'were still being imprisoned with adults' and some juvenile offenders were being more severely punished than adult offenders (1980, pp. 101 passim 114).

Child labour was pervasive throughout the 19<sup>th</sup> century with children either working with their families during the 1850s Goldrush or working on the land with their parents during the 1860s. Fabian & Loh (1980) and Kociumbas (1997) note that children's labour was essential for the survival of their families. The situation for working children in towns was perhaps worse, with children being exploited in dangerous jobs and working long hours. The first laws regulating child labour in Australia, known as Factory Acts, were introduced in Victoria in 1873. These new laws were meant to regulate women and children's work; however, they only applied to factories with more than ten employees and to boys under twelve years of age and girls under thirteen who were no longer supposed to work in factories.

Gandevia (1978) points to legislation passed by the Tasmanian government in 1867 to encourage the establishment of industrial schools by voluntary organizations. This legislation led to the establishment of a boys' reformatory in the 1870s, a girls' reformatory in 1881 and a boys' training school in 1884. Gandevia quotes the secretary of these institutions as saying that their main aim was to 'create a home influence, to allow as much freedom as possible, to avoid corporal punishment and to arouse good moral tone' (Gandevia 1978, p. 109). As noted by the same author, the secretary's views were 'doubtless conditioned' by the criticisms of 'institutional management and the success of boarding out' (1978, p. 109). Thorpe (1994), notes that these early attempts at developing child welfare legislation had

little to do with the protection of children, as the laws were limited to children who were at work or on the streets.

### **3.4.2 Family Life: The Wealthy, The Poor, and the Institutionalized Children**

There was a vast difference between the lifestyles of children from different social strata towards the turn of the 19<sup>th</sup> century and in early 20<sup>th</sup> century Australia. Children of wealthy families lived in a very restricted and structured environment, especially female children. According to historians like Kociumbas (1997) and Fabian & Loh (1980), child rearing in 'elite households' and middle class families was concentrated more on 'maintaining a caste barrier than on the child's needs'. Wealthy families led a lifestyle according to English culture, custom and tradition. This extended to their selection of a typical English diet. Their houses were built in a way that insulated them from newly arrived settler families, poor and destitute families, and even their servants, usually convicts from England.

With this environment in most privileged families, there was little contact and nurture between parents and their children. Children were expected to 'be disciplined and orderly from an early age'. According to Kociumbas (1997), some parents were remarkably lenient in a society where other children were so badly maltreated and corporal punishment was allowed in government schools. Gandevia notes the different child rearing methods used for boys and girls of the colony's 'new generation' (1978, pp. 65-67). He mentions some of the views held by society in those days: girls were 'frivolous, talkative and overdressed', generally lacking manners, disobedient and showing 'little respect' to their parents or teachers. Boys were considered to be even worse, and the overall lack of respect was blamed on the 'rare' and 'lenient' punishment handed down by their parents to these children of privilege.

In addition to the arrival of adult and juvenile convicts to Australia, there were also free settlers who arrived in the 1820s and especially between 1837 and 1842. Gandevia considers this a significant event and mentions the 'massive wave' of migration at the time of the Goldrush (1981, pp. 49-51). These migrants came mainly from Ireland, England and Scotland, although there was a minority that came from Asian countries such as China. Kociumbas mentions that there were over a million European people in

Australia at the time of the Goldrush, 'of whom almost half had been born elsewhere and of whom around 36% were children' (1997, pp. 72-73).

Kociumbas further notes that regardless of whether the children were Aboriginal or white, they all were 'profoundly affected by the frenzied materialism, chaotic individualism and social fluidity of the golden decades' (1997, p. 72). This state of affairs had a final destructive effect on many families who were already facing a precarious life. Child abandonment due to family breakdown, poverty and destitution led as early as 1834 to the creation of an act in New South Wales which empowered the governor to 'bind children as apprentices' (Gandevia 1981, p. 58).

In other States, a growing number of children were institutionalized in orphanages, schools for industry or institutions for the handicapped. Most were run by charitable organizations but subsidized by government. Attempts to solve the problem of these children led to public criticism regarding the funds being spent. Fabian & Loh (1980) and Kociumbas (1997) note that in 1850, 'mixed asylums' were built in the State of Victoria, where children and adults were placed in residential care. This was seen as a cost cutting exercise brought about by endless arguments between the State and the different religious/charitable bodies that ran these institutions.

This Victorian decision created further upheaval among social reformers of the time. Calls were made for the transfer of children from asylums to the care of 'foster families'. Picton & Boss argue that foster care was at the time considered cheaper than institutional care and it also was the only way to '...break the stranglehold of pauperism', a principle enshrined in British Poor Law (1981, pp. 23-24). The lot of children placed in foster care didn't necessarily improve. Fabian & Loh (1980), Picton & Boss (1981) and Kociumbas (1997) all cite evidence that many of the children placed in foster families were used as 'slave labour', physically and sometimes sexually abused, and even neglected.

Children living in lower working class families could expect a difficult and harsh childhood. In the countryside, life on the pioneer farms was austere and children could expect to be 'severely disciplined' (Kociumbas, 1997, pp. 86-87). At the turn of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, Australian 'public opinion was strongly against corporal punishment' (Gandevia 1978, p. 66). However, this did not stop corporal punishment being used as a routine discipline method for

children. The same author points out that in working class families the father would be 'called on' in major emergencies or to administer '...occasional severe penalties' with corporal punishment, usually for boys, being a 'normal hazard of childhood' (Gandevia 1978, p. 67).

Gandevia (1978) and Fabian & Loh (1980) note that the depression of the 1890s in Australia led to a high rate of unemployment among skilled workers, mostly men. With the associated drift of the population to the towns, there was an improvement at the 'legislative and material level' for the 'stunted children' living on the streets. Fabian & Loh note that women and children kept their low-paid jobs in the factories and at home, doing 'sweated labour' (1980, p. 104). Thorpe (1994) notes that legislation enabling 'child protection' measures to be extended to the home where the child lived with its parents was not enacted until early in the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

### **3.5 Australia Twentieth Century: Attitudes Towards Children and Child Discipline**

#### **3.5.1 From Federation to World Wars**

*During the early days of child migration, attitudes to children were as cruel and intolerant in Britain as they were overseas. But what happened to many children in Australia in the 1940s and 1950s, a time when we were meant to be so much aware of child welfare, was horrific (Bean & Melville 1989, pp. 18-19).*

In January 1901, at the very beginning of the new millennium, Australia became a federated nation. A new Commonwealth government was mainly responsible for international politics but, as noted by Fabian & Loh, had 'little to do directly' with children (1980, p. 106). The 20<sup>th</sup> century also brought the first and second World Wars and the 1930s Depression, which again caused great misery and hardship to Australian families and their children. Fabian & Loh (1980) and Kociumbas (1997), mention the increasing urban growth throughout Australia in the early 1900s, a growth fuelled by the creation of new industries and businesses. This growth created pressure on the labour market and, in spite of attempts by the governments of the day to monitor the employment of children, boys and girls as young as eleven years of age were found to be working in factories under unacceptable circumstances.

In Western Australia in 1907, the case of a private foster mother by the name of Alice Mitchell became the cornerstone for the creation of child protection legislation by the government. Alice Mitchell, who looked after illegitimate children whilst their mothers worked, had caused the death of at least thirty eight children who had been placed in her care over a period of several months. She allegedly sold the tins of baby food given to her by the mothers of the children to a local grocery shop (Thorpe 1994, p. 68-69). Thorpe notes that this news caused a public outcry and led to 'public figures' of the time setting up a 'Children's Protection Society' as a pressure group. A Children's Act was passed in 1908 and a State Children's Department was established under the control of the Colonial Secretary (1994, p. 9).

The number of children transported from Great Britain to Australia and other British colonies continued at a steady rate during the early part of the century. Whilst in the 19<sup>th</sup> century children had been shipped off for philanthropic reasons, in the 20<sup>th</sup> century they were seen as 'the bricks for Empire building', following the Boer War in South Africa (Bean & Melville 1989, p. 78). In their book *Lost Children of the Empire*, Bean & Melville provide vivid accounts of the experiences of children, mostly aged between four and fourteen, at the institutions where they were placed. The accounts of these children are illuminating as to the kind of treatment they endured:

*The first two years were dreadful. There was this nun, she was a cruel woman - she was expelled later from the order but it was too late. She had this razor strap - that's a wide leather strap for sharpening razors - and she didn't hesitate to use it, it was an everyday affair. I saw her beat four year old Cathy until she was black and blue, beaten to a pulp. I lived in fear of that woman ...I didn't know why I was being beaten. ...She would put you over her knee and hit you with a stick until you could take it no more. ... She turned me into a scared, timid, nervy child.'* (recollections of a child sent to Nazareth House in Geraldton, Western Australia, 1911, Bean & Melville, 1989 pp. 2-3).

Up to ten thousand children were sent to Australia following the Second World War, according to Bean and Melville who further note the 'systematic abuse' suffered by the children placed in Australian institutions. The stories that unfold in the book relate to the period between 1940 and 1950. Whilst



the 'attitudes towards children were 'cruel and intolerant' in Britain and overseas, Bean & Melville consider this period to have been '...one of the blackest spots in the whole history of child migration' (1989, pp. 18-19). Young boys sent to institutions such as the Bindoon Boys' Town were given little in the way of schooling and they were mostly used as 'slave labour' in building and farming. Corporal punishment dished out to children at religious institutions was wanton and so severe that it often caused injuries.

*The extreme cruelties, inequalities and racism of this period, plus the pressure on working people to conform to regularity and self discipline were the more marked because of the arrival of an alternative set of cultural and moral values. These derived largely from new technologies for producing and marketing consumer goods (Kociumbas 1997, p. 184).*

For children outside the religious institutions, education was provided by state schools where discipline was severe, in spite of rules that theoretically limited the use of corporal punishment, particularly of girls younger than twelve. Private denominational schools were out of reach for the children of the working classes. As noted by Fabian & Loh (1980), most of the private schools were intended to prepare pupils for business or a profession. Children of poor and destitute families attended the 'Ragged Schools', which were only phased out in the 1920s. Kociumbas further mentions that teachers were being trained by 'formal examination' and being paid by 'results'. Teachers were thus being encouraged by the hierarchy to use corporal punishment: 'violent assault and flagellation were routine' with the cane being used to punish even the slightest misdemeanour, distraction or mistake (Kociumbas 1997, pp. 121-129).

Fabian & Loh (1980) also mention that extreme corporal punishment in educational institutions continued well into the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, in spite of governments having abolished its use. Girls' education was 'adjusted' to their future role as housewives with disciplines that mostly taught them homemaking skills. All children attending state schools were taught British history, and the values of Britain and the Empire were inculcated as a matter of course. Boys were expected to join the Junior Cadet Corps created by the Commonwealth Defence Act of 1910. With the specter of a first major conflict on the horizon, World War I, Kociumbas notes that 'a chauvinistic

patriotism' was present in every text book. Children were made to sing 'jingoistic' songs which recounted the feats of the British Empire whilst the young cadets marched past (Kociumbas 1997, pp. 122-123).

Education within the Catholic school system was, according to the same author, 'less jingoistic' but still teaching the same values. Catholic schools focused on family values and children were 'urged to avoid vanity and frivolity'. Discipline was, nevertheless, given great attention by a Catholic Church determined to 'cultivate and display superior discipline and talent in Catholic youth' (Kociumbas 1997, p. 117). Catholics as well as Puritan evangelical educators were following the traditional views that every child carried within the seeds of the 'original sin' committed by Adam. In order to 'expunge' children from that original sin, 'practices of restriction and repression' in education and child rearing were adopted (Cleverley & Phillips, 1986, pp. 28-29). This practice involved the 'judicious application of corporal punishment'.

Migration of families and children continued in the period after World War I. Australians enjoyed a short period of 'comparative comfort from 1920 to 1928' (Fabian & Loh 1980, pp. 152-157). The years that followed, from the 1930s to the 1950s, saw a period of hardship and suffering for families and their children. The depression of the 1930s brought high unemployment, and women and children were again used as cheap labour and as the providers for their families (Fabian & Loh 1980).

The condition of Aboriginal families and their children, whose needs had been severely neglected by successive governments, deteriorated even further. Fabian & Loh (1980) and Kociumbas (1997) note the persistent policies in the 1920s and 1930s of separating Aboriginal children of 'mixed blood' from their mothers, and confining Aboriginal people to reserves where already reduced and poor rations were reduced even further. Kociumbas (1997) notes that corporal punishment was used on children who tried to run away from the reserves. Those who attended school were made to 'feel ashamed' of their Aboriginality, were 'flogged' at school for using their own language and given new names to help 'annihilate' their Aboriginal identity.

Aboriginal children were used as 'slave labour' in agriculture and other industries, which also happened to the migrant children placed in Dr Barnardo and Fairbridge's children's homes. Aboriginal families were usually paid in

rations for the work that white men and women could not do due to the harsh climate mainly in Australia's northernmost areas.

*The medical theory that the white man or woman was incapable of healthy living in the tropics encouraged the habit of letting Aboriginal people 'come in' and camp near traditional land, performing largely unpaid labour in return for rations (Kociumbas 1997, p. 183)*

Kociumbas further maintains that massacres of Aboriginal men, women and children were still taking place in the 1930s and that, on certain stations, children were being beaten or even killed as a 'means of maintaining discipline' (1997, pp. 183). Fabian & Loh provide historical documents which portray the suffering and ill-treatment sustained by Aboriginal children under the 'protection' of the State under what he classifies as the 'Australian apartheid' (1980, pp. 164-165).

### **3.5.2 Australia Post World War II**

*It is obvious that the diverse and multi-cultural nature of Australian society must, in future, be increasingly reflected in child welfare programs and social policy in general. ...But before such a situation can occur, child welfare will need to be made secure from capricious changes in policy brought about by our political party system (Picton & Boss 1981, p. 152).*

The end of the Second World War started a major transformation of life in Australia. Steady economic growth and a changing attitude towards family life and child rearing characterised this transformation, which affected all areas of political and social life. The large intake of migrants presented a new challenge for the authorities. Although the majority of migrant families were still coming from Great Britain, many now also came from Eastern and Southern European countries which had been ravaged by war. These families brought with them different styles of child rearing and discipline, and settling in the new country was not easy for children or their parents. With the end of the war, Australians started looking for their own identity as a nation, separate from the British Empire. Furthermore, after the contribution women had made to Australia's war effort, society was now changing its views on gender

roles. The school curriculum for girls underwent a slow and gradual modification and girls could look forward to more choices in life.

Immigration from 1945 to 1966 brought more than two million immigrants to Australia, about half from European countries as noted by Kociumbas (1997). Fabian & Loh (1980) comment that following the abolition of the White Australia policy in 1972, the doors were open to many migrants of non-European countries. This growing intake of migrants from the four corners of the world started the creation of a multicultural society, which many Anglo Saxon Australians found difficult initially. Kociumbas illustrates the problems initially experienced by children of immigrants at school, where, unable to speak English or with a lunch box filled with 'exotic' foods, they found themselves isolated and placed in lower grades by their teachers. However, according to the same author, in spite of the cultural diversity, new migrants 'offered little challenge to Australian child rearing ideals' (Kociumbas 1997, pp. 202-203).

In contrast to mainstream Anglo Saxon Australians, the situation of Aboriginal people in terms of education, health and employment only marginally improved in the years following the end of World War II. Technically, a large number of Aboriginal people were wards in the care of the Commonwealth government, until 1967. 'They were treated like children: they had no voting rights and lived under the authority of government officials' (Fabian & Loh 1980, p. 198). Aboriginal people were only given the right to vote following a referendum in 1967. Fabian & Loh (1980) and Kociumbas (1997) note that Aboriginal people remained a disadvantaged group within Australian society in spite of government propaganda of the 1970s and some changes at the legislative level, such as the acceptance of Aboriginal Land Rights in 1972.

The schooling experience for Aboriginal children who had been 'assimilated' into mainstream white society, was in some cases harsh. Lack of appropriate clothing and poor health and hygiene meant more often than not that these children were isolated and victimized by 'white Australian' children. Kociumbas remarks that in some rural areas where Aboriginal children joined a large number of impoverished white children, schooling was '...a terrifying, meaningless experience', with caning part of school life (1997, p. 209).

With the advent of new child rearing theories during the 1950s, Australian children slowly began to experience more freedom to express their feelings and emotions, and to explore new forms of entertainment. Kociumbas notes that the 'Spockean 1950s' were 'the halcyon age' for Australian children who were able to escape the constraints which had been imposed on previous generations (1997, pp. 214-215), a view shared by Fabian & Loh (1980). According to Cleverley & Phillips (1986, p. 93), Dr Benjamin Spock, whose views greatly influenced all aspects of child rearing during the second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, sold some thirty million copies of his book 'Baby and Child Care'. Dr Spock's child rearing theories, Kociumbas notes (1997), were influenced by Sigmund Freud and changed the way in which Australian parents saw their children's sexuality. Cleverley & Phillips note that in the first edition of his book Dr Spock had encouraged parents to relax the fairly strict and inflexible attitude towards child rearing. This was a view which Spock later reviewed, in 1957, due to public and political pressure and his concerns that 'parents might get into trouble with permissiveness' (Cleverley & Phillips 1986, p. 95). In spite of this, the winds of change had arrived and the psychological and physical punishments of children which were common during the nineteenth and early 20<sup>th</sup> century, were from this time considered 'offensive to the sensibility of many' (Cleverley & Phillips 1986, p. 31).

These views on children and child rearing filtered through to child welfare policies in late 20<sup>th</sup> century Australia. As noted by Thorpe (1994), the term 'child abuse' reached Australia in the late 1960s. By then, and despite the 'growing affluence' of the Australian population, an increasing number of children were being 'neglected or brutally attacked' (Fabian & Loh 1980, pp. 216-218). Newspaper headlines brought to light cases where children had been either severely neglected or had suffered horrific injuries, such as the UK case in 1973 of Maria Colwell whose plight and injuries were not detected by child welfare workers. This and other incidents of child abuse led to an increased awareness of 'the battered child syndrome' and academics and legislators started to pay a growing attention to child abuse (Picton & Boss 1980, p. 120). During the 1970s, there is an 'accelerating professional attention being focused on child protection matters' (Thorpe 1994, p. 15).

### **Conclusion:**

For those aware of the dark history of child rearing, or for those who have suffered 'heavy handed' doses of corporal punishment at home or in school, comments from public speakers and politicians about reintroducing 'the cane' or other forms of corporal punishment in schools may bring some bitter memories. For others, though, this is a solution for the perceived and growing problem of youth criminality and what is seen as a general 'lack of respect' at home and on the streets (MacDonald 1999, p. 3).

Child corporal punishment was used throughout history for different purposes. In antiquity, it was used to instill discipline and create warriors who would later ensure the survival, or expansion, of a civilization or the preservation of its culture (Sommerville 1982; French 1991). Corporal punishment was, however, not wanton and randomly applied but used according to the child's development stage. Christianity rejected the views of children as future warriors and guardians of 'state and culture'. Christianity professed instead the need to instill the right moral and Christian values in children and, in doing so, stressed the importance of the 'family unit' in the upbringing of children (Sommerville, 1982; Good News Bible, 1992, Proverbs 1.8). Whilst Christian values and morals helped bring a reduction of infanticide and abortion, practices widespread in antiquity, the use of child corporal punishment was encouraged by Christian proponents as a way to raise children with the right morals and teach them obedience to parents (Proverbs 19.18; 23.13; 23.15).

Non-Aboriginal Australia directly inherited its child-rearing practices from Great Britain, including Ireland. From a present-day child welfare perspective, many early practices were highly undesirable and sometimes abominable. The British Empire 'exported' 'undesirable street children' in order to purge the streets from the 'plague' of abandoned children and 'petty criminals' (Fabian & Loh, 1980, Kociumbas 1997). These children paid a high price for their alleged offences, sometimes with their life. These 'child convicts' were the 'by product' of Britain's 18<sup>th</sup> century industrial revolution. Adult and child convicts were used by the early settlers as cheap labour to build the new colony. This practice was widely used by the British imperial government in its other outposts as well, for example in Canada. It was only in the mid 19<sup>th</sup> century that governments, pressed by outrage from the public, started

introducing laws meant to reduce child exploitation and abuse (Gandevia 1978; Fabian & Loh 1980; Picton & Boss 1981).

Another most destructive aspect of British settlement was the almost total annihilation of Aboriginal people and their culture, and the breakdown of their kinship system. This destruction was initially caused by the spread of diseases which were common among the convicts and settlers but against which Aboriginal people had not developed immunity. Successive governments carried out systematic persecution and extermination until the early 20<sup>th</sup> century (Hamilton 1981; Haebich 1989). Aboriginal people, who lived off the land, had child-rearing methods very different from the methods used by Europeans. Aboriginal parents rarely used corporal punishment. Successive generations of Aboriginal children forcefully taken away from their families later experienced the horrors of physical punishment used routinely in the European culture of the day (Kociumbas 1997).

As used from Australia's early settlement years to the early 19<sup>th</sup> century, child corporal punishment had three different objectives. For convict white Anglo Celtic children it was intended to 'tame them' into obedience and 'beat' their 'evil minds'. For the children of wealthy settlers, the administrators and the military, it was intended to teach them the right morals, to ensure the survival and perpetuation of the British Empire. For Aboriginal children, corporal punishment was used as a tool to break their willingness to fight back, and eventually bring indigenous people into submission (Fabian & Loh 1980; Kociumbas 1997).

Australian families from an Anglo Celtic background have, over the years, developed a particular child rearing style, influenced by British culture and tradition. The massive migration of European and non-European people to Australia, mainly from the 1960s onwards, meant millions of people from different cultural and linguistic backgrounds settled in Australia. Few of these new migrants consciously relinquished their traditional child rearing methods (Fabian & Loh 1980; Kociumbas 1997). Whilst their children attended mainstream schools, life at home still followed the traditional routines and child rearing methods. Migrant intake slowed towards the new millennium; however, the intake of refugees from Asian and Eastern European countries on compassionate grounds is still taking place at a steady pace.

We cannot say Australians have a particular 'child rearing style'. Can we say, though, that Australian people have developed an understanding and an acceptance of different child rearing styles? Child corporal punishment is still a form of discipline used by Australian families from different cultural backgrounds. The difficulty for the child protection professional working in this multicultural society is to protect children from maltreatment whilst avoiding the undermining of parental authority in families of culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds and without compromising the child's safety and welfare.



## 4 Research Methodology

### 4.1 Addressing the Topic

*What people tell us as researchers or practitioners is profoundly shaped by our theories, most obviously in the ways we listen and influence the development of a life story with our questioning. The field, in turn, determines what can be said, and how, and what remains unspoken (Riessman 1997, p. 28).*

This research was started at the time the department was going through an evaluation of their child protection work. Two respected researchers in child protection, David Thorpe and Nigel Parton carried out this evaluation. Thorpe and Parton's extensive work and recommendations led to changes in the way the department handled its child protection activities. The 'New Directions in Child Protection' approach was developed and implemented (Family & Children's Services 1996). This gave me the opportunity to critically observe how the said re-structure impacted on service delivery to people from a CALD background. Difficulties arose in balancing my position as a statutory worker and as a researcher. A number of ethical dilemmas emerged for me during the course of the research process. In today's social, financial and political climate, people tend to be wary of research and researchers. Research is seen to be inextricably linked to change. Change certainly does not always bring the desired or expected benefits.

During the course of my research I was open about my relationship with the state's child protection agency, even though this research was being carried out independently. This close relationship with the employing organization and field of work meant that I had, from the outset, an understanding of the child protection mechanism. In spite of my own CALD background this relationship sometimes curtailed my access to a wider number of respondents from ethnic communities. This was mainly due to the statutory nature of my work within the department and to the experiences or views of some of the respondents in regards to statutory government agencies. On a positive note, however, my relationship with fellow field workers within the agency has made my task as a researcher easier. Field officers were eager and willing to share their experiences and provide their views on a topic that they felt was relevant to their practice.

Unlike the positivistic stance that ‘inquirer and object are independent’, the naturalistic axiom is that ‘The inquirer and the *object* of inquiry interact to influence one another; knower and known are inseparable’ (Lincoln & Guba 1985, p. 37). This made sense in terms of my own cultural background, my personal experience and my professional occupation as a child protection worker. This relationship between inquirer and object, knower and known, is emphasized in this chapter’s opening quote by Catherine Riessman (1997). Being a child protection worker, as well as a parent made me more aware of the issues related to the assessment of child concern reports or investigation child maltreatment allegations, in particular the those involving families of CALD background.

## 4.2 Study Design

In an area of study where so many different cultural realities were explored, the use of the naturalistic paradigm was considered an appropriate theoretical framework since one of this paradigms’ axioms is that:

*There are multiple constructed realities that can be studied only holistically; inquiry into these multiple realities will inevitably diverge (each inquiry will raise more questions than it answers) so that prediction and control are unlikely outcomes although some level of understanding (verstehen) can be achieved (Lincoln & Guba 1985, p. 37).*

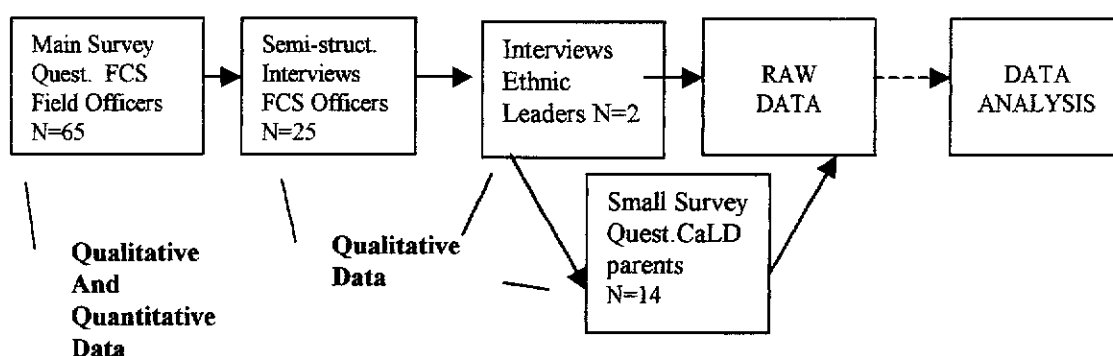
The initial design was changed and adjusted as the study progressed, as per Lincoln & Guba (1985). This flexibility allowed me to optimize the time available to collect the data and to make adjustments when unexpected difficulties appeared. Rather than using the one research technique, I used a combination of techniques that assisted in the data collection process and its analysis. An example of this was the decision, following the interviews with FCS field officers, to prepare a smaller survey questionnaire for parents of CALD background. This smaller questionnaire was administered with the assistance of one of the ethnic leaders and a non-government agency providing assistance to migrants and refugees from a CALD background. Fourteen of these confidential questionnaires were returned to me with important qualitative data that reflected some of CALD parents’ experiences with parenting/disciplining their children in Australia. My decision to prepare this questionnaire was made in order to avoid potential confidentiality

and ethical issues and to a certain extent, bring some balance to the data collected which mostly came from FCS field officers.

In order to take full advantage of the collaborative and naturalistic methods of inquiry used, I relied on the co-operative interaction between researcher and respondents. This 'co-operative and interacting relationship' between researcher and participants is considered by Lincoln and Guba (1985, pp. 101-109) as an essential factor. Because 'human research is inherently dialectical', securing participants' 'full understanding and co-operation' ensures that the researcher gets the best possible information from them (1985, p.104). I feel that this was achieved from all participants/respondents in this research, as field officers, ethnic leaders and parents who agreed to participate were keen to share their experiences and knowledge of the subject of child discipline.

The variety of methods used, qualitative and quantitative, provided valuable and plentiful data that maintained its relevance and validity in spite of the time span between its collection and analysis. Due to the topic and the nature of this research, there was a clear bias towards the collection of qualitative material, which was plentiful.

### Sources of Data



There was no intention for this study to establish a causal link between ethnicity and the use of child discipline. Parents from diverse cultural backgrounds use diverse child rearing methods and disciplining methods, and this has been the case across generations from time immemorial. However, in a world where communication technology is gradually erasing cultural divides, nothing can be taken for granted. Change is a constant in this 'old' new world. As a researcher, I set off on this journey (my research) with a number of

questions to which I sought an answer. The emergent nature of the design and the free-flowing nature of qualitative data through the use of semi-structured interviews, meant that there was no ascribed causality throughout the process of data collection and analysis. Lincoln & Guba provide a well argued 'internal' critique of the 'causality concept' and conclude:

*...we believe that the concept of causality should be replaced (we are not ready to push, as was Bertrand Russell in 1913, for its eradication) with a formulation that takes account of the difficulties noted, has special relevance to human phenomena, and explicitly recognizes that human experience, judgement, and insight are inextricably involved (1985, pp. 141-4).*

Lincoln & Guba further suggest that the concept of causality should be rather replaced by one of 'mutual shaping', as there are 'far too many problems with causality to continue'. Instead, 'the replacement concept of mutual shaping seems to be relatively free of these problems and, at the same time, more in tune with emergent epistemological and paradigmatic considerations' (1985, p. 159). Huberman & Miles enter into the discourse on the use of 'local causality' in qualitative research, not an easy or straight-forward task, as they admit:

*Unfortunately, the procedures are not well operationalized, and the guarantor of validity is the classic one: the degree of fit between, on the one hand, extant theory and theoretical predictions and, on the other, the data collected under the presumptions of the theory. There are real problems with this line of thought, especially if one subscribes to the middle-ground epistemologies. (1988, pp. 351-381)*

So why was a quantitative component introduced in this study when so much rich qualitative material could be collected? The structure of the main research instrument, the research questionnaire, and the nature of the data collected, dictated to a great extent that a 'mixed-methodology approach' would be used in this study (Creswell 1994, p. 179). The quantitative data collected was not intended to be used in an exhaustive manner but rather to set the context of the research topic and highlight the significance of the issues

raised. This quantitative component contributed to the test of 'credibility and validation' of the data collected (Lincoln & Guba 1985), and as part of the 'triangulation' technique espoused by Denzin (1975) and Denzin & Guba (1998, pp. 3-4). These authors liken qualitative researchers who use such an eclectic approach to their work to 'bricoleurs'<sup>1</sup>. However, rather than being a meaningless and haphazard collection of methods, research done in this manner will be richer in detail. Instead of limiting the researcher to a strict set of rules, the researcher is able to create his/her own research tools or adapt them as required by the emergent needs of his/her study. Hence, the researcher as 'bricoleur' has the added advantage of flexibility.

*The bricoleur understands that research is an interactive process shaped by his or her personal history, biography, gender, social class, race, and ethnicity, and those of the people in the setting. The bricoleur knows that science is power, for all research findings have political implications* (Denzin & Guba 1998, p. 4).

Most importantly, however, this approach to qualitative research places an extra demand on researchers. Researchers need to map and document their actions carefully along the way, in the same way as trekkers will leave points of reference along their walk through uncharted terrain in order to find their way back to base. All this information was complemented with existing statistical data in the area of child protection.

#### **4.2.1 Data Collection**

Quantitative and qualitative data for this research was collected through a survey questionnaire (appendices 1 & 2) administered to FCS field officers, and interviews with Family & Children's Services field workers and leaders of local ethnic communities. This survey questionnaire was tested prior to being submitted for approval to the Metropolitan Director of FCS. Most of the questions were multiple choice and respondents were asked to tick the appropriate boxes on the questionnaire paper. This questionnaire was structured in such a way that both quantitative and qualitative data were collected, with comments from the respondents invited at the end of each

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<sup>1</sup> Bricoleur: French word meaning person who is able to perform different odd jobs in and around the house using a wide variety of tools of the trade (hence the term bricolage). In Australia, the equivalent to a 'bricoleur' would be a handyman.

question. The researcher personally distributed and collected the questionnaires and, in most instances, had the opportunity of attending 'team meetings' where the purposes of his research were explained. Field officers were asked to refer to up to four cases in their current caseload involving families from a CALD background. At the end of the survey questionnaire, respondents were asked whether they were willing to participate in a one-to-one interview with the researcher.

This invitation was well received by respondents, with twenty five of them agreeing to be interviewed. The interviews, held in mid 1997, were not electronically recorded upon request of the interviewees. Manually recording the semi-structured interviews did not restrict the flow of participants' stories, even though the note-taking process limited capturing the full richness of detail. Transcriptions of the interviews were prepared from the written notes and sent to participants, who were then requested to correct them and add comments if they so wished (appendix 3). This was a step required in the process of ensuring credibility of the information collected (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Sixteen respondents were interviewed individually, and the remaining nine respondents were interviewed in groups of two or three. The use of group interviews assisted in the process of data collection as it generated dialogue between respondents (Sarantakos 1993, p. 179). Valuable qualitative data was thus obtained, strengthening the information already collected through the survey questionnaire.

Language, verbal and written, was another important factor throughout this study and apart from having a section dedicated to language issues on the literature review, it also played a significant part in the process of data collection and analysis. The questions in the survey questionnaire addressed the issue of child discipline and sought professional opinion on that subject. Both questions and responses used language specific to the field. The smaller survey questionnaire (appendix 6) used a simpler, direct language; however, it still drew a good response from parents who completed it. The main differences between the responses to both questionnaires were the perspectives canvassed regarding child discipline and child rearing methods. Though they both carried a 'child focused' bias, the input from field officers covered a wider range of issues related to case practice and case management issues. My position as a professional, a parent and a researcher from a CALD background facilitated the task of processing and analyzing written and oral information.

Fontana & Frey note that 'the use of language and specific terms is very important in order to create a 'sharedness of meaning'' (1998, p. 68).

### **4.3 The Sample**

The main survey questionnaire was distributed to field officers in the (then) ten FCS offices in the Perth metropolitan area, Perth, Mirrabooka, Joondalup, Scarborough, Fremantle, Midland, Belmont, Rockingham, Armadale and Canning. A total of one hundred and fourteen questionnaires were distributed between June and August 1996 with sixty five questionnaires returned to me. This brought the response rate to around 60%, a good rate taking into account that at the time of the survey a number of field officers may have been away on leave or too busy to respond. The questionnaires were contained in a package which included an introductory cover letter (appendix 1) and a self addressed reply envelope. The unmarked packages were placed in Senior Case Work Supervisors, Team Leaders and Caseworkers' pigeon holes.

In an attempt to obtain views on child discipline from a cross-cultural perspective, I consulted with leaders from two ethnic communities in Perth, Western Australia, from East European and East Asian background respectively. These two respondents provided their views on parenting and disciplining issues relevant to their communities. In order to obtain views from migrants and newly arrived refugees, I requested assistance from one of those ethnic leaders and the manager of a local non-government welfare organisation. This particular agency provided assistance mostly to people from Middle Eastern and Asian backgrounds. With their assistance I administered the short confidential questionnaire (see appendix 6). From these contacts, valuable qualitative data and 'grounded knowledge' was obtained and, most importantly, allowed, though in a small way, for the voice of CALD people to be included in the study.

#### 4.4 Ethical Issues and Dilemmas

*A duty of care is a duty to take reasonable care to avoid acts or omissions which you could reasonably foresee would be likely to injure a person for whom the Department has a responsibility, or some relationship toward (FCS Law of Negligence; Duty of Care 1997).*

My initial intention was to hold one-to-one interviews with parents from CALD backgrounds, chosen with the use of 'snowball technique', in order to obtain their views on child discipline issues. In order to achieve this I would need to secure the services of a research assistant, a move not possible due to the costs involved. Personally engaging in one to one interviews with parents from a CALD background was not possible due to my employment with the state's child protections agency, Family and Children's Services, and my duty of care. Whilst it may seem that this duty of care is restricted to the work carried out during working hours by any Departmental officer, it is in fact a duty which extends to after hours and holiday periods. Flowing from this, a researcher employed by FCS would not be able to guarantee respondent confidentiality should information provided in the course of the interviews indicate that a child was at risk of harm. My own professional Code of Ethics (AASW, 2000) under its section 4.5.2 (Research) determines that social work researchers 'consider carefully the possible consequences for individuals and society before participating in, or engaging in research'. It also determines that social work researchers should 'seek to ensure the anonymity and/or confidentiality of research participants and data and will discuss them only in limited circumstances for professional purposes' (AASW 2000, p. 20).

Berg & Smith note the 'powerful influence' that the relationship between researcher and the researched have on the 'nature and quality of social research' and the need to address this relationship within 'methodological canons' (1988, p.21). Other researchers, such as Westcott (1996), Campbell (1997) and McAuliffe and Coleman (1999) stress the potential ethical and practical dilemmas for social work practitioners/researchers in child protection and other fields. The methods used to collect information from respondents, in particular the interviews with the two ethnic community leaders and the smaller confidential survey questionnaires administered with



their assistance, helped to reduce some of the potential ethical dilemmas I faced. Field officers who responded to the survey and those who were later interviewed, were asked to refer to their own cases and experiences, but no identifying client information was collected in this survey. Interviews with field officers were conducted in different settings, either at a local coffee shop or within their workplace. This process took place with the knowledge and consent of office Managers, Team Leaders and other senior staff. All reasonable care was taken to adhere to research ethics but obviously, it won't be until the completed research document is in the public domain before I can know whether the guidelines have indeed been followed to the letter. Campbell stresses that the social worker/researcher carrying out research within their own field of work and within their own agency, should always keep in mind the 'possibility of numerous, unintended consequences' stemming from their research (1997, p. 31).

#### **4.5 Processing Data**

Processing the large amount of quantitative and qualitative data was a time-consuming task that required some expert assistance. Quantitative data generated by the survey questionnaire was processed using SPSS software. The statistical data obtained from the quantitative data provided a good snapshot of the respondents' views on the topic and, to a large extent, confirmed my own perception of the importance of cultural issues in child protection work. Even though I had the choice of using software for the classification and processing of qualitative data, I decided to perform this task manually. This involved scanning the data for common topics and recurrent themes, which were then typed and sorted into a card system. As I went through this process, I cross-referenced quantitative and qualitative data and took notes of any thoughts that I felt were relevant to the research topic. This process of ongoing critical analysis fits in with the 'constant comparative method' of data analysis initially described by Glaser and Strauss (1967) and used by Lincoln and Guba (1985).

Participating field officers were not requested to present case studies as such. Rather, they were asked to draw on their current or previous contact with families and children from a CALD background. This provided the opportunity for field officers to draw on their experiences with more than just one cultural background. I must note an interesting aspect of the participants'

responses to the questionnaire. In spite of my explanation on the first page of the survey questionnaire of the acronym CALDB (Culturally and Linguistically Diverse Backgrounds), which replaced the acronym NESB (Non-English Speaking Background), 22.5% of participants included in their replies contacts with Australian Aboriginal parents. This could be related to: a) participants' lack of awareness or knowledge of the new acronym, which had just been adopted at the time the questionnaire was administered, or b) lack of awareness regarding the significant historical and social difference between Australian Aboriginal people and people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds, or c) that they were focused on issues of cross-cultural competence of relevance to both groups.

The acronym NESB focused on linguistic diversity as the main differentiation between people of Aboriginal descent and migrants from other than English origin. The expression 'non-English speaking background', which was in use at the time I arrived in Australia, appeared to be well accepted by ethnic groups across Australia. In his foreword to Storer's book *Ethnic Family Values in Australia*, Edgar states:

*A gap clearly existed in Australian research on the family characteristics and values of the many **non-English speaking groups** that make up Australian society [emphasis by the author] (1985, p. ix).*

Edgar was referring to Aboriginal and other ethnic communities of non-Anglo Celtic background that the book focuses on. If the emphasized sentence in this quote was replaced by *culturally and linguistically diverse background groups*, I would also include those people from Irish, American or Scottish descent who have English as their native language. The argument could go on forever. Aren't we ALL from diverse cultural backgrounds? When we use the term 'English speaking background', are we referring to the dominant ethnic group?

Through the survey questionnaire and at the end of the one-to-one interviews, I had no doubt that the majority of respondents had a sound awareness of cultural issues and how these impacted on their casework. Aboriginal people are from a culturally and linguistically diverse background as well, and, like most ethnic groups, are a minority in Australian society. Similar to Aboriginal people, ethnic groups may suffer from some degree of

discrimination and have different accents. Other arguments can be raised in regards to this perceived overlap of CALD and Aboriginal issues. I can recall some of the comments from colleagues and professionals from associated disciplines when the 'CALDB' acronym came into effect in mid 1996. Now and then it was felt by some that CALDB was not a clear term and that NESB was perceived as a much clearer and easier term to use. This aside, the new acronym introduced the cultural dimension into our concept of multiculturalism.

### **Conclusion**

*Qualitative researchers commonly speak of the importance of the individual researcher's skills and aptitudes. The researcher - rather than the survey, the questionnaire or the census tape - is the 'instrument'. The more honed the researcher, the greater the possibility of 'good' research (Richardson 1998, p. 345-372).*

I will use this section to have a critical look at some of the aspects of my research and some of the difficulties I experienced. There were a number of important factors in this study that I need to present and discuss briefly in this concluding section. One was that, as Denzin & Guba describe, I was a 'bricoleur', a 'jack of all trades' who carried out all the tasks related to this research, apart from the coding and data input related to SPSS software application. Another factor was related to the large amount of data collected and the vast amount of literature researched, including articles from the World Wide Web. Finally, there was the length of time that lapsed between the start of this research study and its completion, which had implications for methodological and writing style.

The reasons for the long period of time from inception to the conclusion of this study relate mostly to personal factors and the difficulty of balancing work and study. In this sense I shared Fiona Williams' experience (1993) of doing research whilst juggling professional life, family life and responsibilities with an increasingly busy social life (difference in gender made no difference). Finding the motivation to engage in the writing process at the end of a hectic day at work or enjoying the simple things in life became major tests of my determination to continue.

As the research evolved, so did my professional experience and skills in child protection. This close relationship between my professional occupation and research topic made me review on several occasions my initial hypothesis and seek further information. The process of searching the literature continued after I completed and tested the major research tool, the survey questionnaire. Quite often, I felt overwhelmed by the depth, quality and amount of information collected from the literature and respondents, leaving me in a quandary as to what to keep and what to discard.

Distributing, and later collecting, the survey questionnaire became a delicate logistical process, as I had to co-ordinate the time of delivery and collection in order to keep track of the number of questionnaires distributed and the number later returned. Whenever I was able to, I addressed field officers during their team meetings before handing out the questionnaires or else I obtained the co-operation of managers or team leaders to hand the documents to all team members. I believe this process, which highlights the importance of co-operation between researcher and participants (Lincoln & Guba 1985, pp. 101-109) contributed to the good return rate for the questionnaire. Being able to address field officers and other participants in this research was also an important step towards providing respondents with a better understanding of what was being asked from them. This process of 'explanation' became a natural part of the research process. As Walmsley stresses:

*In all research situations, how we explain our research, and how people being researched explain it to themselves is a subject worthy of attention, more attention than is usually given to it. It can be a crucial determinant of what we discover (1993, p. 46).*

Questionnaires completed and returned, the next step was to start booking times and a mutually convenient place for the one-to-one interviews with participants who had volunteered. In a way I am glad that no interviews were electronically recorded, as the necessary note taking considerably reduced the time needed to transcribe the information. As it turned out, the information collected through the use of these two methods of inquiry provided a wide variety of material that took a considerable amount of time to process. As Huberman mentions, 'The 'quality' of qualitative data aside, the quantity can be daunting, if not overwhelming' (1998, p. 182-183). Storing all this

information, keeping track of transcripts sent and received and of other forms related to the research process, i.e. consent forms and correspondence, were other vital parts of my work.

In this area, the use of a computer application such as QSR's Nud.Ist, would have played an important role. By the time I attempted to use this software, however, most of the interview transcripts, even those of ethnic leaders, had been typed and stored in a word processing format incompatible with the said software. Kumar (1996) and Huberman & Miles (1998) note some of the advantages in using computer software in qualitative or quantitative research. This was one of the weaknesses in my research work, as more knowledge and understanding of relevant software for data analysis would have significantly reduced the time required for some of the tasks in my study.

The time factor impacted mostly on the cohesion and consistency of the text. Writing took place at an irregular pace, influenced by time available and other commitments I had to fulfil. My main aim was to present the collected material in such a way as to illustrate the main research findings. Time has, however, not impacted on the relevance of the topic for practitioners in the child protection area. Even as I write the final lines in this document, articles in the press and current affairs programs continue to bring up issues related to child rearing and child discipline. Even now, I need to resist the temptation of gathering further material and get on with the main task – completing the write up.

## 5 Child Protection Work and Cultural Issues

*The researcher's words are the glue that holds the report together. However, the research report must be grounded in the experience, and therefore the voices of the participants (Kirby & McKenna 1989, p. 156).*

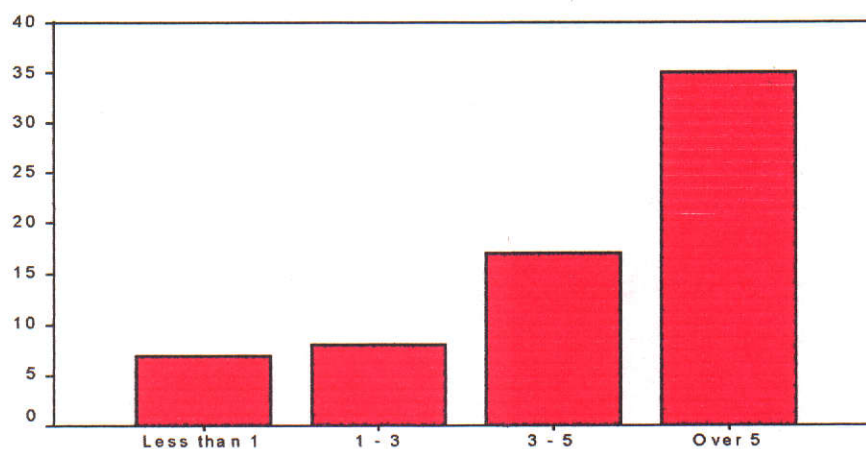
### 5.1 Setting the Multicultural Scene

Australia's unarguably multicultural society brings a daily challenge for social work practitioners, health practitioners and other professionals in the field of human service work. Numbers from the 1996 Census relating to Western Australia are significant: 547,764 out of 1,726,095 persons (31.7%) were born overseas; 183,780 (33.6%) of these persons spoke a language other than English. A closer look at the '*Basic Community Profile*' for the Perth greater metropolitan area (ABS 1996, Catalogue No. 2020.0) shows that out of a total of 1,244,317 persons, 253,509 had been born in Europe and the former USSR (20.4%); 80,763 had been born in Asia (6.5%) (including Southeast, Northeast and Southern Asia); 18,505 persons had been born in Africa (1.5%) (excluding North Africa); 6,834 had been born in the Middle East and North Africa (0.5%); 4,456 persons had been born in South America, Central America and the Caribbean (0.36%). Other numbers that I consider relevant to this work are the ones related to 'language spoken at home'. Out of a total of 1,159,158 respondents, 158,422 (13.7%) spoke a language other than English at home (a list too long to cite with twenty four different languages, including Australian indigenous languages).

This same diversity in cultural backgrounds was clearly reflected in the data collected by the survey questionnaire at the heart of this research. In the survey questionnaires returned, 80% of field officers from the (then) ten Perth metropolitan district offices of Family and Children's Services (FCS) reported having worked with people from thirty eight different cultural backgrounds, representing the four corners of the world. This information was based on their current and/or remembered previous caseload and included a total of one hundred and twenty one case studies. The questionnaires were administered in the months of July and August 1996. A majority of CALD people

represented in the survey had been living in Australia for more than three years (see Graph. 1).

Number of Years Living in Australia



Graph. 1

In terms of classification, thirty seven of the case studies were classified as 'Child Maltreatment Allegations' (CMA), which means an investigation was undertaken by FCS officers; twenty eight others had been classified as 'Child Concern Reports' (CCR) and a remaining fifteen had been classified under 'Family Support' category. Thirty two of the cases were of 'statutory' nature, meaning that departmental officers used the powers conferred to them under the Child Welfare Act 1947, and thirty eight others reported as non-statutory.

These were classifications created under FCS' 'New Directions Guidelines' with Child Maltreatment Allegation (CMA) being '...restricted to those cases in which the act which has occurred is illegal and/or where there is evidence of severe or persistent harm' (DCD 1995, p. vii) and Child Concern Report (CCR) referring to cases where there is no clear indication that harm or injury has been inflicted on the child. In either case, a visit by a departmental officer(s) is undertaken, in the case of a CMA in an investigative mode (statutory) and in the case of a CCR an assessment is undertaken (non-statutory) in a more supportive role. The sections that follow will provide the reader with a view on some of the complex issues raised by field officers, ethnic leaders and people from a CALD background who responded to the smaller survey questionnaire.

The questions included in the main survey questionnaire addressed a number of areas the researcher considered critical for practitioners in the child

protection field. During the twenty five semi-structured interviews, respondents were given the opportunity to explore the issues raised in the questionnaire or add any other comments. In some of these interviews up to three respondents participated. The sixty five respondents to the survey questionnaire referred to a total of 99 cases involving 164 children. Even though this research looked specifically at issues affecting child protection work involving families of a CALD background, several FCS respondents reported on their experience with Aboriginal families. Eighteen out of these ninety nine cases involved families from Aboriginal background and the remainder families from CALD backgrounds (see appendix 7).

### **5.1.1 Aboriginal People and CALDB People: Shared Experiences**

The difficulty experienced by some of the field officers in separating Aboriginal issues from issues linked to CALDB people relates perhaps to the existence of closely related issues in the area of work with these diverse cultural groups. There are important points that must be made in regards to Aboriginal people and Australians from Culturally and Linguistically Diverse Backgrounds. Like Australian Aborigines, people from CALD backgrounds belong to minority groups, which suffer, to a greater or lesser extent, the effects of discrimination in certain areas. People from certain ethnic minorities have fled dictatorial regimes, been subjected to torture or trauma and, like Aboriginal Australians, are fearful and suspicious of government officials. Some respondents noted these similarities between Australian Aboriginal people and CALD people. With Aboriginal clients there are specific guidelines and policies that workers can refer to, if necessary, and more attention is given to funding of culturally appropriate services. One respondent reported that working with CALD customers was like 'chasing down a dark alley'.

For child protection workers these issues make the task of engaging with clients or establishing rapport a difficult one. This is evidenced by comments made on the questionnaires and during the interviewing process:

Field officers Mary and Denise felt that CALDB clients had a real fear of the statutory authority of FCS officers. However, whenever involvement took place, clients initially



tried to *'please and co-operate'*. They would work with staff and comply.

In another district office, Patrick gave the example of a South American family who was not particularly co-operative due to their experience in their country of origin. They could not understand why the government would intervene and saw this as interference with family issues.

Ron felt that CALDB people were somehow suspicious of FCS' role because of their personal experience in their countries of origin. Clients from Afghan and Burmese backgrounds were particularly concerned and suspicious. Chinese people were similarly difficult to engage.

Elsie and Denise in turn noted that: *The duty officer is sometimes contacted and these families ask for assistance. There is however the 'fear' and 'shame' thing, mainly for people who came from countries where there was an autocratic government. That is a real barrier. Fear of having people of their own culture to assist them. This issue is also true for Aboriginal clients.*

Sharon, however, differentiated between migrants and refugees in regards to their attitude towards government departments. Sharon felt that:

*Cultural issues are extremely important; it is very stupid not knowing something about cultural backgrounds and refugees.' There is a difference between migrants and refugees in the way they react to departmental involvement if refugees have been traumatized and tortured.*

Since the mid 1990s, Australian governments, State and Commonwealth, have been paying increased attention and devoting more resources to Aboriginal people. The same cannot be said in relation to ethnic minorities. Whilst favourable policies, such as the Federal Government's charter of public services in a culturally diverse society, 'Responding to Diversity' and Western Australia's 'Valuing Diversity' have been created and implemented, there are still serious gaps in terms of service delivery and resource provision. Some

FCS respondents felt, however, that not enough was being done to help the cause of Australian Aboriginal people. Some of the comments in the survey questionnaires read:

*For Aboriginal clients FCS response could be more culturally appropriate, especially through use of Aboriginal field workers and more preventative support services, i.e. wards - or family support such as Coolabaroo - service which is very flexible as to who they will assist.*

*Service for Aboriginal families, particularly where the parents have been separated from their own parents and have not had opportunity/experience at adequate parenting in their own childhood.*

Three of the respondents, Sharon, Bill and Jeff, further commented that:

*Sharon: there are lots of services for migrants but not enough services for Aborigines, e.g. for Portuguese migrants there is the Fremantle Migrant Resource Centre. Migrants are better serviced than Aborigines are.*

Bill: mentioned the example of Vietnamese people to which Sharon replied that there are people FCS can contact in order to consult re issues with Vietnamese people. She added that Aboriginal people make up 70% of FCS's clientele.

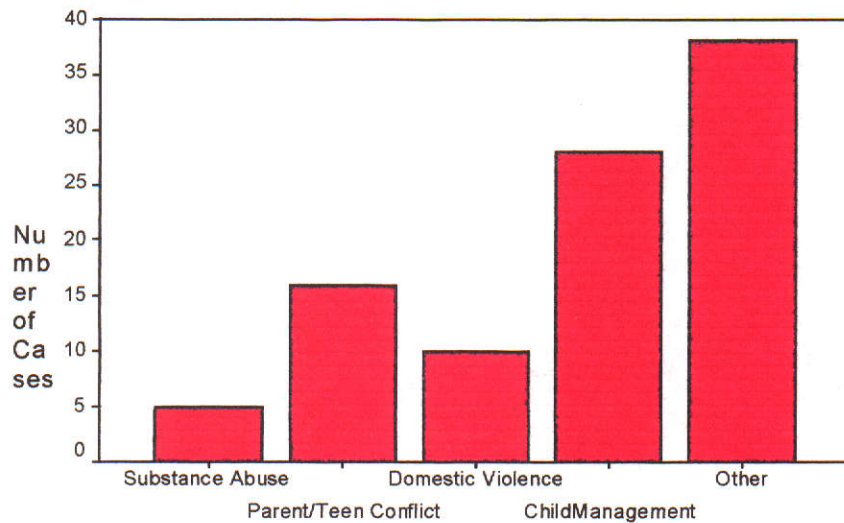
and Jeff:

*I do not accept the proposition that we serve Aboriginal families well because they are overly represented as 'client group' in relation to their representation in population. This does not mean that we provide them with a good service. The department and its staff are not clear about what is accepted by society in relation to the growing of its children.*

*In relation to Aboriginal families we disservice them because of fear of being accused of discrimination. Staff is*

and substance abuse, 5%. The remainder 39% of cases included a variety of reasons for contact, with eight cases being for alleged 'physical abuse' and two due to excessive corporal punishment (Graph. 5).

### Main Reasons for Contact



Graph 5

The difficulties experienced by respondents in 84 of the cases were related to: different cultural concepts - 51.2%; language difficulties - 20.2%; gender issues - 17.9%; religious issues - 7.1%; age - 2% (Chart 6). In spite of the relevant percentage of cases where language<sup>2</sup> created difficulty in communicating with families, only in three of the cases, or less than 4% of the total, were interpreters used 'at all times'. In another four cases, interpreters were used only during the first contact with the parents/families and in yet another four cases, just occasionally (Chart 7). Those respondents who had used the services of interpreters considered that it had been very helpful to their work.

<sup>2</sup> Respondents' views on language/communication issues are given more detailed treatment in this chapter.

### Use Interpreters

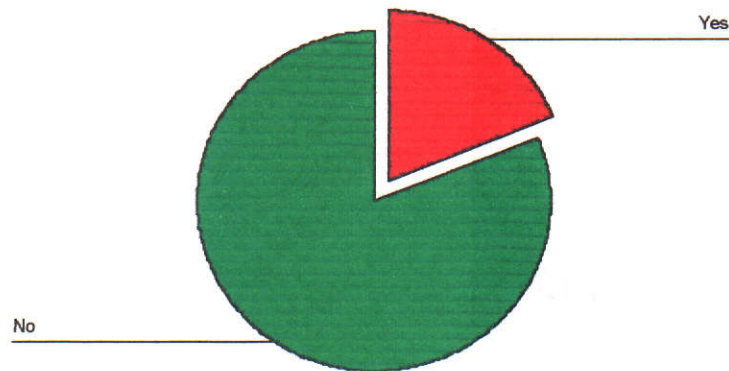
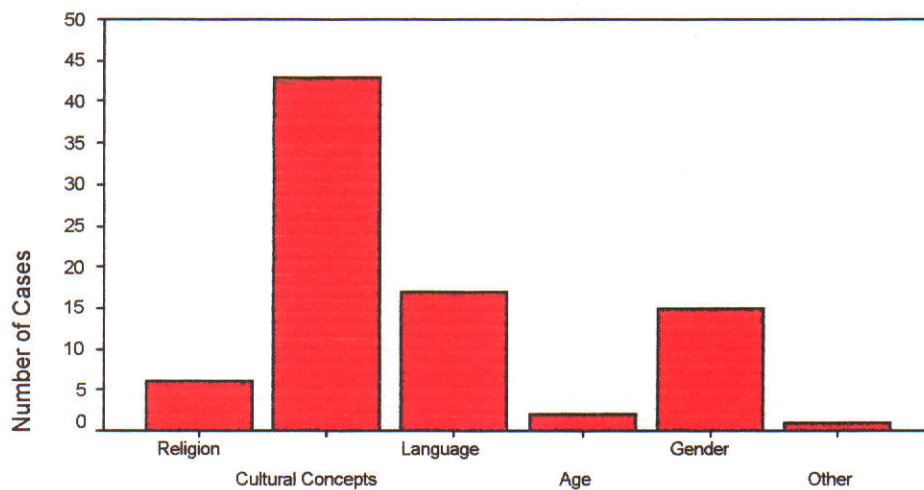


Chart 6

### Difficulties Experienced



Graph 7

Comments made by respondents on the survey questionnaire pointed to the fact that some of the disciplinary measures used by parents had been passed on from generation to generation:

*Mother maintained that biting on the cheek was done to her and her mother and so on back generations. She said that*

*she was responding directly to her own cultural background and expectations.*

*Both parents believed that it was appropriate within their own culture to discipline children through use of force. They made statements about being brought up in a similar manner and could not see anything wrong with this.*

*Parents often claimed their child management practices were appropriate in their country of origin.*

*Mother from Papua New Guinea said that hitting the children was OK in her country.*

Other comments and statements made by respondents pointed to the fact that the use of physical discipline in certain ethnic groups was 'dictated' by cultural norms and values:

*Denise said the main issues for her were the use of excessive physical discipline: In Asian cultures the use of physical discipline is acceptable, to a certain level. Denise had contact with clients from Asian and African backgrounds. The African background client, she stated, was particularly over the top.*

*Issues for people who migrate to other countries are that they have their own cultural values and then their children embrace the values of the adopted country; this causes parent-teen conflict.*

*Elsie felt that sometimes, within their own community, they had found reinforcement of attitudes and the community had 'covered up' the problem. Sometimes they may even reinforce (condone) the use of some of the disciplining methods.*

Belief systems or religion, and their use by parents to justify their disciplinary measures were reported by respondents as one of the difficulties experienced when working with those parents. 'Strong religious belief - rigid code' was one of the comments written in the survey questionnaire. Another respondent

stated that *'The religious issues (Jehovah's Witness) appeared to be more problematic than the cultural issues'*. During the one-to-one interviews some field officers expanded on the difficulties and dilemmas they faced in cases where religious issues were present:

Miriam and Diane mentioned examples of families where excessive discipline took place in the context of strict religious beliefs, such as Islam.

Workers come across certain instances when the injuries sustained by a child were not intended as disciplinary measures but rather used as treatment for a given health problem.

Jane had negative experiences when using the services of some of the agencies in an area where she worked. In one case she used a Community Health Nurse from a local Health Clinic for the first visit in a case involving a Vietnamese family. *The main concern was that the child had been found to have welts and severe bruising on her neck and chest. It was later found that her grandmother had 'rubbed' her with a coin (coining) because she believed this would cure her chest infection.* The nurse felt that this was quite acceptable and Jane had to struggle with the nurse regarding the inappropriateness of such treatment. Apart from the 'coin rubbing' the care of the child was quite OK. Coining was considered acceptable; however, Jane was not sure whether the nurse or the mother understood that there was a need for statutory involvement.

As a case example, Vanessa had to work with an Asian family whose child presented with a bruised chin and chest. It was found that child had been rubbed with a coin (coining), a common practice in certain Asian cultures to treat chest infections.

In addition to intergenerational issues, culture, belief systems and customs, respondents linked the use of physical discipline to gender role, male privilege and domestic violence issues:

Rita felt that Australians from Culturally and Linguistically Diverse Backgrounds (CALD) were very similar to families that have poor dynamics. *Some culturally different families have the same poor dynamics - probably handed down from generation to generation, and have inadequate means of communication.*

More than culture, Rita saw it as an 'inherited' parenting style. *There are no concepts of 'rewards' or 'time out' instead of hitting. Spouse abuse is also part of the problem.*

*In another case in which a child was being beaten with a stick, staff at a local community health centre became involved and there were difficulties as staff colluded/sided with the client. There were gender issues, as the worker from the centre could not discuss the dynamics of the marriage with the mother who was being physically abused.*

Elsie had three or four families of European descent in her case load and shared the following experience:

*In one of those cases there were issues of domestic violence and gender. There was a general assumption from the perpetrator that it was all right for men to assault women, even given Criminal Law here. People were still coming to terms with our law.*

*I think cultural issues are intrinsic to a case if a client is from a different cultural background. Cultural issues may be identified, this doesn't necessarily mean they are understood.*

Some of the comments recorded by respondents linked family violence to an anti-authority attitude from some (male) clients towards child protection workers:

*Father had a history of being aggressive/sexist to female workers.*

*Anti-authority attitude to government departments; father's personal culture too macho to make good use of service.*

Other respondents related their experiences during the one-to-one interviews:

Vanessa noted that in a certain case there was an issue regarding gender. The male client did not acknowledge the female worker assigned to the case. There was no eye contact with the worker. This changed when a male worker was present.

Elsie mentioned a case which involved the use of physical discipline; the male partner felt that it was OK to physically assault children. Elsie felt that, even given the large number of CALD families in their district, these families tended not to come forward but tried to resolve the issues with their own resources.

*In some situations, such as in a case involving a PNG family, the man would not comprehend or accept FCS's intervention. There was also a gender issue, as he did not accept what the female officer was saying. In such a situation the force of the law had to be used.*

Kaye pointed out that a large number of field officers were young women and sometimes there were gender issues. She referred to her experience in working with a Muslim and Vietnamese family. This was a bad experience and if a worker has a bad experience when starting field work, this can 'put you off!'. And regarding a case where there was DV [domestic violence], Kaye noted that men are involved in the community. However, women are not allowed to become involved as well and become isolated.

Paul gave the example of a Burmese family. The woman in the family was isolated, whereas the man was active in the community. *How do you get the woman involved?* He felt that in many CALDB families the traditional model is still



used and it is within this model that they talk to their children.

## 5.2 Legal Issues

As a result of their employment with the state child protection agency responsible for administering the provisions of the Western Australian Child Welfare Act (1947), respondents were acutely aware of their statutory responsibilities. Questions 4 and 7 of the survey attempted to establish a correlation between the number of years the families had been living in Australia and their knowledge of the legalities regarding the use of corporal punishment on children. Other questions in the survey questionnaire requested information regarding the nature of the department's involvement and its statutory powers. In 32 of the 99 cases referred to by respondents, the department was involved in a statutory manner. The number of responses to the question about parents' awareness of legal issues in regard to disciplining matters, was, however, inconclusive (Graph 1 and Chart 8).

Parents aware of Potential Legal Consequences

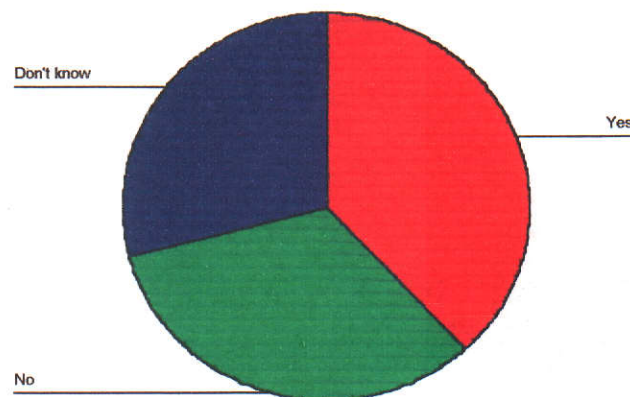


Chart 8

Thirty four of the officers reported that thirty two of the families in their contacts had been in Perth for less than five years and forty others more than five years. In response to the question of whether parents were aware of the legal implications of using such a method of discipline, respondents indicated that twenty one of the parents in their contacts were aware of these and eighteen were not. It was thus impossible to establish a correlation between

the number of years of living in Australia and parents' awareness of legal implications regarding the use of physical punishment on their offspring in Australia. However, it is possible that the longer families live in Australia, the higher their awareness is of legal issues and therefore, more often than not, they will be more cautious with their disciplining methods. Some of the responses obtained reflected the difficulties experienced by CALD families in this area:

One of the respondents pointed out the need for awareness training in what may be seen to be culturally appropriate, i.e. with some Vietnamese people, the practice of rubbing young children with a coin to have good luck. Following FCS intervention the [child's] father knew that he needed to [become aware of the law] *for things to be under the law.*

Vanessa noted that some clients were not aware of our role (FCS) and the consequences of their actions. *Child protection agencies similar to FCS may not exist in countries they came from, so they are not aware of WA legislation re child protection and children's rights.*

Other responses stressed the importance of educating CALD people about legal issues, particularly concerning child protection:

*Some times people do not come to be helped. They do not know or understand the system. Education regarding Australian laws and views of parenting/abuse towards children is needed.*

Miriam and Don said that they had both given talks at the local primary schools. These talks focused mostly on 'self protective' behaviours. There were no talks on the 'legal side' of the department's work.

Other respondents felt that sometimes families from certain cultural backgrounds were not aware that even in their countries of origin laws protecting children were now in force.

Elsie said that the bottom line is workers need to tell the parents what the consequences of their actions are and

present options. Sometimes they are not aware that there are other options.

Rita and Ron felt that most of these families have been cut off from their family roots and are isolated. *They still talk about their old country as the best thing. However, in their own country they would probably suffer the most dire consequences for their action as those countries have gone through some dramatic changes since they originally left.*

As an example Ron mentioned a case he had involving a Greek family. *Greece has signed the 'Charter for the Rights of Children'. This parent was, however, mistreating his child.*

Rita mentioned a case she had involving a Chinese boy and his parents. There was a lot of conflict over school marks (examination). *This conflict had to be understood in the light of the importance education had for Chinese people, culturally. However, we [FCS] had to let the father know that it was not OK to hit his son. You can get caught up in that. We need to let clients know that this is abuse in Australia, let them know about law here and at the same time be sensitive to cultural differences.*

In this same area of legal issues, the need to make the legal process clearer to CALD parents involved in 'Care & Protection' applications was stressed by some respondents:

Miriam and Don felt that letter(s) issued in the process of a C&P order and language used during the court process were issues to be considered. *CALD clients find it hard to understand what is being said in the process. According to the respondents making the C&P process clearer for CALD parents is not just a task for Family and Children Services as this agency is inter linked.*

### 5.3 Language/Communication Issues: Getting the Message Across.

With the complexity of issues to be dealt with in child protection investigations, effective communication between field officers and families is vital. The survey questionnaire incorporated a group of questions where 'likert scales' were used. These questions were intended to gauge the level of difficulty experienced by field officers in explaining their intervention to parents/families, and the parents/families' ability to understand the reason for the intervention by FCS. The questions were linked to other areas, such as possible difficulty in communication due to language, different cultural concepts, religious belief, gender or age.

Out of 74 valid responses, field officers indicated that in 16 cases they had experienced a significant degree of difficulty in explaining their intervention and in 23 of the cases some degree of difficulty had been experienced. On the other hand, in 20 out of 73 cases parents were reported to have experienced a significant degree of difficulty in understanding the reasons for FCS intervention and in 29 cases parents had some degree of difficulty in understanding intervention (Chart 9 & Chart 10, following page).

Explaining to Parents the Reason for Intervention

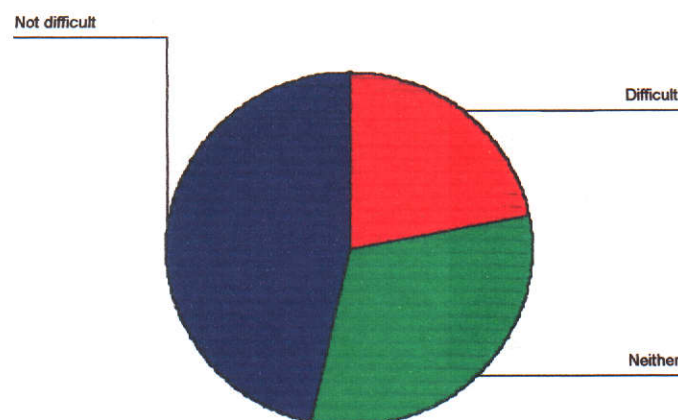


Chart 9

### Parents understanding reason for Intervention

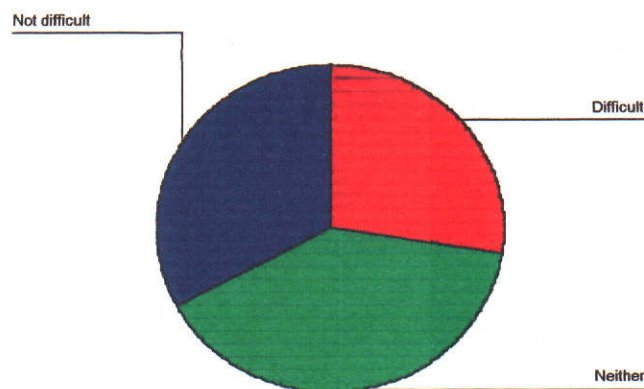


Chart 10

It is important to note that officers' perception of whether parents or families of a CALD background have a good understanding of what they are being told is rather subjective. In some situations, whilst being addressed by field officers, people from certain cultural backgrounds may nod their heads or display other visual or verbal cues perceived as 'understanding' of what is being said. The reality is that these people may be trying to be polite towards field officers, not willing to challenge or question the information they are being given.

Language accounted for 20% of the difficulties experienced by field officers when working with parents and families of CALD backgrounds. Some of the respondents' comments on the subject of communication illustrate what the nature of those difficulties were for service delivery, statutory and non statutory:

Diane noted that there was a language barrier due to the jargon used by departmental staff, which made it difficult for CALDB clients to understand what was happening. Example of such terms: *'protective behaviours'*, *'appropriate parenting'*, and *'discipline'*. They often do not understand what is being said. The assessment process is based on words staff is familiar with but has no meaning for clients.

*There are lots of pamphlets on child protection that reinforce what workers say. These pamphlets need to be short and sharp. These pamphlets, and even videos, are, however, only in English.*

Even respondents who did not have a lot of experience in the field saw language as an important issue:

Don did not have a lot of experience but saw language as an issue. He also saw '*defining*' what constitutes '*child maltreatment*' in a certain cultural context and working in cases with CALDB clients as a challenge.

Jane questioned whether CALD people in general understood the concept of 'child maltreatment' and how to convey that message. She mentioned the huge responsibility in this work and the need to be child focused. '*When there are difficulties in communicating with parents, if you are worried about whether you are doing the right thing or not, you are not being 'child focused*'.

The lack of easy access to translators and interpreters when dealing with language/communication difficulties can lead to 'less than desirable' outcomes that involve the use of children, relatives or close friends as 'interpreters'. The acceptance of such solutions may lead to distorted and inaccurate information being collected and, worst of all, to certain situations where children or adults are used who may be at risk or who have been victims of maltreatment.

Vicki noted that sometimes clients use their children as interpreters, which is very inappropriate and can result in communication breakdown or misinterpretation of issues.

Ron stated that some of the meaning and significance of what you say could be lost in the translation process *when working with CALD people who cannot speak fluently. Because of this you may lose your 'train of thought. The quality of your work is not as high.*

Other language issues and dilemmas will be explored when analyzing data related to service provision and the use of interpreters.

## 5.4 On Being Focused

Without exception, field officers were clearly child focused in their assessments and investigations. The majority of them showed awareness of the cultural issues in their cases. However, for them the welfare of the child(ren) was paramount, as the following statements show:

*Whilst I believe workers need to be aware of cultural differences in parenting/discipline, I believe they should also be able to work with family on child abuse issues across these cultural boundaries.*

*There may be cultural difference but this does not mean accepting children being beaten up, Sharon said. Sharon gave the example of a woman of Jamaican background who hit her daughter over and over again in an unacceptable way, cultural differences could not be an excuse for such behaviour. People care for their children in many different ways, Sharon added, but we don't know of any culture where child abuse is allowed. Use of excessive force is the issue. Bill agreed and added that he felt some ethnic people might use their cultural background to get out of the situation.*

Jeff pointed out that staff need to be clear about what behaviours from adults to children are acceptable, what society condones in relation to setting boundaries/limits.

*Staff needs to be clear regarding which behaviours by adults are dangerous to those children. Behaviours that are going to negatively affect the sense of care and nurturing that child experiences within that family....*

*If the environment the child is growing up in involves limit setting and boundary setting that is, by our society's definition, dangerous, then we have to be clear about this and be able to discuss this with the parent(s) when we contact them.*

These comments and statements from respondents to the survey questionnaire illustrate the relevance 'cultural awareness' has in child protection work. Without this awareness, professionals may make rushed, inaccurate judgements in cases involving families and children from a CALD background. The consequences of such decisions often lead to unwanted damage to the family systems and, worst of all, the inability to establish a good future working relationship with the family. These outcomes will not necessarily lead to a child focused approach or protect the best interests of the child. Conversely, professionals who have an awareness and reasonable knowledge of cultural issues and local resources are more likely to establish a good working relationship with CALD families from the outset, hence obtaining better information on which to base their assessments or investigations.

## **5.5 Services: What Works, What Doesn't!**

### **5.5.1 Providing Services**

Questions 14 to 24 in the survey questionnaire asked respondents to provide information and feedback regarding services used, their outcome and any perceived gaps in services to people from a CALD background. Out of 75 cases there were: 21 referrals to counselling (general) (28%), 15 referrals to a psychologist (20%), 14 referrals to parenting courses (18.7%), 8 to self-help groups (10.7%), 7 to mediation (9.3%) and 10 to other services (13.3% of the total) (Graph. 11).



Let us look now at some of the comments and responses obtained through the questionnaire and one-to-one interviews. Some of the comments on the questionnaire reflected difficulties that language barriers created in service delivery to CALD people, both in statutory and non-statutory work (fig 13).

*Language barriers, as well as father's difficulty working with female workers. Took it more seriously from a male worker.*

*There was a case with a Portuguese family where ADA [Alcohol and Drug Authority] accepted to provide counselling; however, no interpreter was provided. Similar situations happened in Rockingham.*

*Workers had no relevant language skills or understanding of cultural issues. The service offered had no statutory power; thus it was likely that parents would not follow through.*

*Client felt isolated, [which] exacerbated her problems, especially after the death of her Australian husband. Client was not proficient in English language.*

*Service itself was not culturally appropriate, however they agreed to utilize interpreters and consult with caseworker as much as possible.*

*Both parents had difficulty with English and had not made contact with any migrant resource worker in terms of settlement issues.*

*Interpreter was used for mother, which allowed easy flow of information. Father understood some English, but interpreter not used. This caused some difficulty. Service of linguistically compatible workers within program was needed, not separate program.*

*(in response to Q. 11.1) Language related difficulties; used an interpreter who knew the family from the detention centre. The interpreter indicated none but I'm unsure because of my unfamiliarity with the culture.*

*Multicultural Women's Health Care Centre is an important resource. There are issues of isolation, mainly with women of ethnic background; there is isolation because of language difficulties. We cannot take the protection of children in isolation.*

*The programs we use are still the same, however, with CALDB clients we have the language barrier. Aboriginal clients are usually willing and prepared to participate in programs like PAIST or MIPPS. Parenting programs as well. This may be part of their culture or the impact of Native Title.*

Adding to these comments, respondents felt that clients refused services for a variety of reasons:

*Passive resistance - was out when sessions had been arranged.*

*Communication not a problem; rigid expectation of parents; not wanting to follow through; closed expectations.*

*Did not meet needs. Client not feeling comfortable using services. Embarrassment of outside support for what they see as a family problem.*

*Services were threatening to client. Assessments clouded by lack of understanding of cultural issues*

*Not culturally appropriate but appropriate for the issues involved. Took measures to make the service culturally appropriate (i.e. interpreter).*

*There are issues that need to be addressed. The biggest one is the lack of knowledge of cultural aspects even in the provision of services. In one such case [an ethnic family] the approach by FCS officers was so bad that clients ended up declining services.*

### 5.5.2 Service Outcomes

So what did respondents have to say about the outcome of the services they used? How culturally appropriate and useful were they? How much did they contribute to a change in family/parental attitude? Questions 18 to 21 asked respondents to relate to their experiences and provide their views on services. Chart 15 displays respondents' views in regards to the cultural appropriateness of services.

Cultural appropriateness of Services

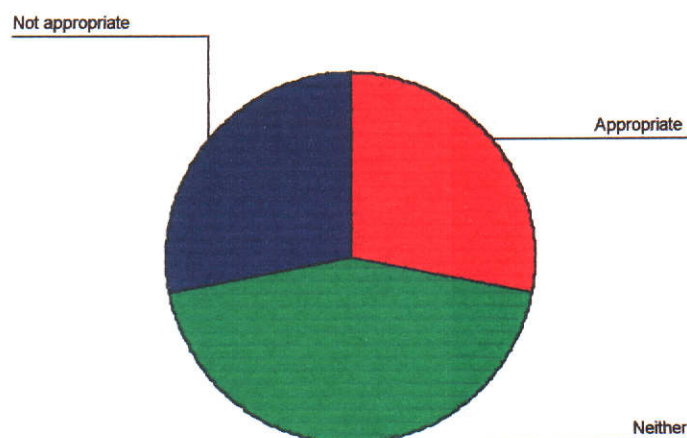


Chart 15

Respondents referred to 50 cases, reporting that in 14 of those cases, or 28%, services used were culturally appropriate and in an equal number of them, services were not culturally appropriate. In 22 out of the 50 cases, or 44%, respondents had some doubt as to the cultural appropriateness of the services used. Some of the comments and responses obtained from respondents in regards to this question were:

*All agencies/staff involved with child and client were Anglo-Saxon, including foster carers. Current case manager was Vietnamese and this was the clients' saving grace; the worker was tireless in efforts to educate other agencies/staff involved. Vietnamese caseworker spent a lot of time explaining departmental role and what was expected of parent, establishing trust.*

*Local services utilized education of cultural issues and liaison, very resource intensive.*

*White middle-class! What can I say! Location adapted to white middle-class values. Didn't take into consideration cultural identity, etc. Lacking of taking into account cultural differences.*

*Parents were aware of the difference between them and other parents and declined to attend after a while.*

Miriam and Diane felt that it is very difficult finding someone to specifically provide counselling to the child. Some of the resources used by the respondents were 'Relationships Australia' and 'Swan Clinic'. Miriam felt that the Parent Information Centres were very 'white middle class' and not used to their full potential. Swan Clinic had an interpreter and a multicultural officer.

Other services, though seen as culturally appropriate, presented some difficulties when their workers or volunteers were seen as siding or colluding with their clients:

*[There are] difficulties in liaising with organizations even like the [...] Migrant Resource Centre. They always seem to be too busy and sometimes enmeshed with the clients. They could also have their own ideas and beliefs about what constitutes child maltreatment or not. Non-Government Organization workers are not prepared or trained to deal with cases of child maltreatment. They can only advise FCS staff about particular issues.*

On this same topic, Don added that the information received from these agencies could be interpreted in different ways and felt that *value judgements could still be made. Some of these agencies are under the wing of the department. Don mentioned the need for 'awareness raising' amongst staff of possible 'value judgements' in cases involving clients/children from different ethnic backgrounds. A policy*

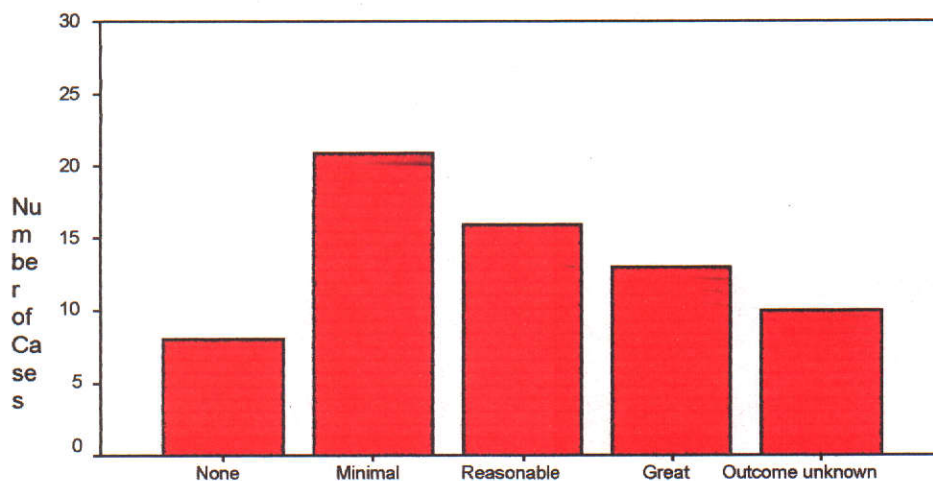
*in this area would help workers identify whether they were making a value judgement or not, he said.*

Nancy felt that finding appropriate services for a particular parent was extremely difficult due to the parent's psychiatric illness. Psychologists (psychiatrists) change quite often and their cultural awareness is not the best.

*The department's own resources were used successfully with the roles of some workers being adapted to the particular needs of the client. The case manager went to great lengths, actively supporting the parent. The worker gave more support than what normally would be expected.*

Question 21 asked respondents to give their views in regards to the perceived or actual effectiveness of the services in changing families/parents' attitude. Likert scales were used in this question and respondents were asked to rate the degree of improvement. The numbers collected with this method were consistent with the general feeling gauged in respondents' comments and feedback during interviews. Out of 68 cases referred to by respondents, in 21 (30.8%), there was minimal improvement noted and in 8 of those cases (11.8%), no improvement at all. Reasonable improvement was noted in 16 of the cases (23.5%) and great improvement in 13 cases (19.1%) (Graph 16).

Improvement in Family Attitude



Graph 16

## 5.6 Parenting and Discipline Methods: Parents' Views

The smaller questionnaires prepared for parents from a CALD background provided important data on how they generally felt about parenting in a new social and community environment. A sample of this questionnaire can be found in Appendix 6 of this thesis. These questionnaires were administered with the assistance of a non-government agency in Perth that deals mostly with recent arrivals and refugees from diverse cultural backgrounds, such as African, Arab and Asian. There were a total of seven responses to this questionnaire. Other questionnaires were administered to parents from a well-established Eastern European community in Perth which resulted in another seven questionnaires returned.

With regards to the seven clients of the Perth non-government organization, one had been in Western Australia for less than a year, two between one and three years, one for three to five years and three for more than five years. A worker at the agency assisted some of the respondents in the completion of the questionnaire. The three respondents who had been in WA for less than three years reported no major difficulties in regards to parenting or raising children in WA and stated that they used verbal correction for disciplining their children. The respondents who had been in Australia for more than three years had a little more to say about their experience in the country. Their responses to question 2 of the questionnaire were as follows:

*Australia's children getting all the system support to go away of home.*

*More liberal value system in conflict with conservative upbringing of self.*

*Trying to be the best parent and provide my children with the ideal upbringing, however circumstances and social factors do not make this an easy job. Also having to work and not spending enough quality time with the children.*

*Children don't speak good Vietnamese and I don't speak good English - causes language barrier. Bring home Australian culture and behaviour e.g. speaking back to*

*parents, less respect for elders. Disobeying my wishes and dating Australian girls.*

As to whom to approach for help, if required, the same respondents respectively stated they would:

*Approach friends, wife and own support groups, colleagues and friends*

*Read books on children's stages of development, what do they need, what to expect from them, how to discipline them, etc. or get other specific readings from the Parent Information Centre Mirrabooka.*

*No one. Family deals with situation.*

And to question 4, which asked how they disciplined their children, respondents stated that they used:

*Time out/rewards and punishment; let them experience consequence of action and sent to room when younger.*

*It depends on the child's age, the 'wrong' they did, and my own emotional well being at the time. If I was well rested I would approach the issue with confidence and good control, in a positive way. If tired and stressed out I would shout at them, I might send them to their room but soon make up and promise myself to control my anger when it occurs.*

*Smacking when young.*

And as to awareness of services or assistance available to parents and their children, five respondents stated that they knew of services in this area. However, one respondent said he would not access them and another respondent was not aware of any services.

The data obtained through the other set of respondents, members of an Eastern European community, provided further detail. It has to be noted that these seven respondents had been in Western Australia for respectively seven, nine, twelve, thirteen, fifteen and seventeen years (two of them). The respondent who had been in WA for seven years had few comments to make in response to the questions, whilst another respondent focused on specific

educational issues when responding to questions 2 and 3. The others, however, provided the following responses:

On question 2, regarding difficulties with parenting/child rearing in WA:

*Fortunately, we have not had too many problems with our children (age 13 and 15) yet. We do not experience the so-called 'generation gap'. However, there is some cultural clash in terms of our expectations (reading good literature, watching programs that, in our opinion, are of some value, etc.) and their interests/hobbies. There is also a very strong peer pressure conveying attitudes which often contradicts ours.*

*I have not had any problems in regard to parenting. Few minor for example to teach them keep their rooms tidy, to teach them better organize their time spending at home, preparing homework.*

*1 - Confusion with two languages spoken at home. 2 - Standard and high costs of child care. 3 - Necessity to drive children everywhere. 4 - Restricted contacts with the extended family.*

*I have experienced some difficulties understanding children, lack of communication, because school environment can't give good examples of human behaviour. Bad behaving children are not punished.*

Who did these parents respectively approach for help?

*My wife and I are both social workers so I guess we have been able to resolve all the matters ourselves.*

*My friends.*

*Nobody. Tried to solve the problems myself and with my husband.*

*Nobody.*



*School psychologist, teacher; Parenting Help Line, psychologist, priest, friend. The best help was from talking to the priest and friend.*

And about question 4, regarding discipline methods, respondents had the following to say:

*Removal of privileges, e.g. outings, some TV programs, etc.*

*Step 1. Listen to their explanation, next my lecture why they shouldn't behave like this.*

*Step 2 . When offence repeat cut off some privileges (never pocket money - for they working hard for them).*

*I had a specific way of disciplining my children when they were disobedient or misbehave; I either do not let them watch TV, play computer or do not hand them lollies and if they do some things small, I tell them off.*

*No I do not [have a specific way of disciplining] Usually they listen and obey what they were told to do. Sometimes they try to argue but after discussion we always reach agreement and understanding. My son very often keeps his room untidy when told keeps saying that nobody in the whole suburb has such a clean room (teenage room).*

*1. Reprimanding. 2. Suspending certain privileges.*

*Some restrictions like giving less pocket money, taking away computer for some time.*

And finally, were these parents aware of services or assistance for families and children available in Perth? Five of the respondents did not know of any and the other respondents stated that:

*No - for myself, but my son has number where he can complain about my behave [behaviour].*

*Yes, but I do not think they do much good in helping the parents to solve problems. From my experience the best support can be given by relatives and extended family.*

As with the results and information obtained through the main survey questionnaire, no definite correlation could be established between parents' use of corporal punishment, the length of their stay in Australia and their knowledge of legal issues regarding the use of corporal punishment. This result appears to indicate that cultural background, intergenerational issues and/or religious beliefs play a primary role in their decision to use that type of punishment. The data obtained from these shorter questionnaires was meant to provide readers with a little taste of what parents from CALD backgrounds have to say about their experiences in Australia. They are still significant and illustrate some of the issues that contribute to parent/teen conflict situations: children taking on 'Australian' value systems and life style against parents' expectations and wishes, language barriers and perceived role of government agencies.

## **5.7 Ethnic Communities: The Issues**

I interviewed ethnic leaders from two different cultural backgrounds, Vince, from a South East Asian country, and Mary, from an East European country. They are both actively involved in projects within their own communities and assisted me in obtaining perspectives from their community members on child discipline issues. Mary had been in very close contact with people from her community who arrived in Perth in the early 1980s. Her job was to enroll children of CALD background whose parents wanted them to go into the Catholic education system. Mary also teaches children from her community their own native language. Vince works at his community's welfare centre and provides services to newly arrived migrants and other members of his community.

### **5.7.1 The Australian Experience**

The first community leader, Mary, felt there were clear differences in family values and discipline between her country and Australia. In Mary's country, there is 'far more respect towards parents and children take more notice of what parents wishes are.' Mary mentioned that parents can 'dictate who they [their children] go out with.' Discipline is strict as far as day-to-day living is

concerned and there is an expectation that children will look after their parents in their old age. Physical punishment is used, which may include a stick or a strap. A slap or a smack across the bottom or legs may also be used.

Only very recently have there been attempts in Mary's country to create the equivalent of a Child Welfare Act. However, raising children 'has always been a family business' and parents always had 'some freedom to administer discipline'. At an official level, Mary said, when excesses occurred, the grandparents or other members of the extended family would look into it. Generally speaking, the attitude of parents from Mary's community is that 'they are ambitious for their children and go to great lengths to educate them' and 'there are great expectations that they should succeed'. Parents had the support from the extended family and from people in the community and government institutions who respected generally accepted family values.

In Australia, parents from her community feel a lack of support from government institutions and other people, and the message children get through the media and in educational institutions is not in keeping with their traditional family and moral values. 'A lot of them despair about things. At first they try to resolve things themselves', Mary said. Before accessing mainstream services they go to their own priests and community organizations to seek a solution. Some go to the extent of sending their children on holidays to the mother country in order to try and renew in their children the 'family connectdness' and regain some of the lost moral and family values.

Vince spoke of the experience of his people in Perth. His community is between 9.000 and 10.000 strong in Perth and most of them came to Western Australia as migrants. Child rearing in his country is seen as a family responsibility. The extended family assists parents in raising or looking after their children, if parents have to go out to work or even when they are home. Grandparents, uncles and aunts may live under the same roof and look after the children.

In Perth, everything is different and it is not as common to see the extended family raising the children. There may still be extended family living nearby but houses cannot accommodate the whole family. In Vince's community, children are traditionally closer to their mother and the father is expected to be

stricter with the children. Parents expect obedience and respect from their children and expect them to study hard. Parents use discipline to teach the children to behave rather than to abuse them. Parents may shout at their children and send them to their bedrooms. Smacking is used quite often. Some parents expect their children to help with the housework as well.

Vince said that laws for the protection of children exist in his country but they are not as strong as in Western Australia. Here, parents feel powerless when dealing with their children. They see the law in WA as protecting the children too much and allowing them to abuse the system. Vince commented that 'welfare officers do not fully investigate what happened.' Parents see the law as 'protecting the children too much even when they lie or tell stories'. They feel that they need to understand the children but the children also need to understand their parents; 'the understanding has to be mutual', explained Vince.

### **5.7.2 What Can be Done Differently?**

According to Vince, parents from his community need to know more about child discipline and how to raise children in Australia. They want to have more control over their children and they see the law as being too lenient. Parents are concerned over school rules which are seen as very lenient. Parents need to have a worker from their own community with them to help communicate with the school, because of the different culture. Some families, however, do not request help because they fear 'losing face' within their community if other families find out they are experiencing problems with their children. Another issue raised by Vince was the fact that due to language difficulties, welfare workers misinterpreted what parents said; the language and vocabulary sometimes had different meanings when translated. Language difficulty was a barrier for parents wishing to attend/use mainstream services.

Vince stated that welfare officers listened to parents; however, welfare officers did not understand the culture and parents became upset about it. As an example of some of the problems that could arise in some situations, Vince mentioned a case where a Welfare Officer asked a father to shake his teenage son's hand, to kiss him and hug him. The father became very upset, as in his homeland it is not the custom for a father to apologize to his child. The Welfare Officer did not understand why the parent was so upset. The father did not say anything to the Welfare Officer but when he left he discussed it

with Vince. In his homeland, children are kissed or hugged by their parents or relatives when they are very young. Some men and older people may even touch young children's genitalia in a caring/loving fashion. In Australia, however, this could be seen as abusive.

Vince had two situations where teenage children had run away from their homes. Initially, their parents did not want them back but after a few months the children were accepted back home. Vince said that when children run away, parents try to get them back any way they can and that in 99.9 % of the cases the children are accepted back home, even if it takes a while. Parents come to him for help in the first instance because they don't want anyone else to know about the problem and he tries to mediate between them and their children. Sometimes parents also go to their relatives or try to solve the situation themselves. As a final resort they may go to the police. The majority of parents find it hard to accept that their children have run away, and they may keep quiet about it.

Parents get advised to consult other services but because of language/communication difficulties they do not want to go. Vince knew of a case where a parent from his community did attend a mainstream parenting course but this parent had a good knowledge of English. A few years ago, Vince tried to start a parenting group for members of his community but there were privacy issues and this could not go ahead. He would like to set up another group because there are enough people locally. However, such a group would need an independent facilitator and the group itself would also have to be independent.

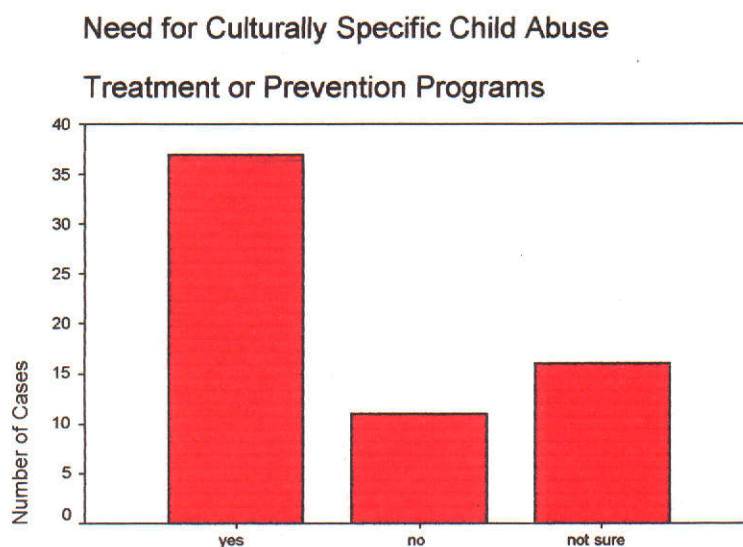
The other community leader, Mary, feels that the services that are being offered by the Australian institutions are focusing on how the parent should behave in order to avoid the breakdown of the family relationships. The system should work on the children so that they learn that they have certain obligations to their parents and family. Parents from Mary's community don't think it is up to the children to decide on certain issues. Children need guidance if they are not shaping up the way they should, not in order to please their parents but to become good and positive members of society, because it concerns their future. Parents don't want psychologists or other professionals telling them that they should let their children leave. They do not want to get detached from their children. They want their children to realize that they do

not want them to leave them but rather that they want the best for them. Parents would like the existing services to work with the child, to help them see what is the best way to improve their lives.

Some parents in Mary's community had complained to her about the reaction within the educational system when they had tried to tighten up the discipline of their children because they were getting into bad company. School principals usually took the side of the child, not taking into account the parents' point of view. Parents feel resentment that schools criticize the parents for smacking their children instead of grounding them. There is no joint approach. School counselors tend to alienate children from their parents. They talk to the parents but they do not convey the message to the children that they should also change. There is no joint interview, counselors see the child and the parents separately and they don't bring the child into the meeting. There is no support for the parent. Parents feel that they would rather not go to these meetings because they feel they do not work. There should be mutual respect and ways of satisfying both parents' and children's needs.

Mary finally stated that she felt there is a fairly high respect in the community for specialists and if parents go to a psychologist or a school counselor, they are happy to get some guidance from that person. However, if that person only listens and asks questions but doesn't give them any directions or guidance, the parents feel isolated. They get very annoyed when they find there is no follow-up of a situation with the child. Children tend to take far more notice of their peers than of their parents. Children may disregard what their parents tell them but they would listen to what counselors say. Children are very well off in Australia; they have a lot of material things and this is not the best for children. It takes time for parents to realize that there is a problem, they may hope that the situation will improve, there may be some embarrassment because they cannot raise their children properly. Sometimes parents feel there is no-one to turn to. Parents want advice; they want someone to tell them what they are doing wrong rather than just listen to them relate the problem.

The views from Mary, Vince, and the parents from CALD backgrounds who completed the short survey questionnaires have a common theme: their concern about the perceived lack of respect young people had for their parents



Graph 16 B

Respondents made strong comments regarding the need for culturally specific services.

*In keeping with new directions and family support interventions need to be culturally sensitive. Presently while investigations (CMA's) must be carried out by FCS, there is an obvious lack (gap) of services for NESB families in terms of linking into appropriate family support services for parenting information (skills development) and linking those socially isolated into the larger community and social networks. Likewise these services need to be developed to work in partnership with FCS, as it is not always appropriate for services to be delivered by the 'welfare' services, like the new Parent Information Centres, etc. are not going to be accessed in the way they should/could be given their 'white middle-class' model for mainstream society. There needs to be a greater input in developing non government locally based services which provides non statutory, non threatening services.*

*Education regarding Australian laws and views of parenting/abuse towards children. Relevant services which have understanding of culture and language skills to assist and support families. Information forums for ethnic people*

*whereby they can obtain information on services available, etc.*

*Accessibility to interpreters is an issue when dealing with child protection cases. However I believe that this can be overcome by using interpreters and possibly even culturally appropriate resources in the department (other workers).*

*I feel that parents should have access to culturally appropriate preventative services that should reinforce Australian acceptable standards of care and link parents in services. This would prevent the isolation some parents find themselves in.*

*Although I don't have any appropriate clientele and am not sure if the district needs specific prevention programs I do believe in areas where there is a large ethnic or Aboriginal population a program would be an excellent preventative idea.*

*Understanding by FCS staff of child management by ethnic people. Fine tuning of ability by FCS staff to convey Australian standards to people of CALD background.*

*Not so much different services although culturally appropriate workers would be valuable, especially for larger minority groups - current programs could perhaps be modified/adapted for use with such families. Also more of these types of agencies required for all clients as there is a scarcity of resources all round.*

*Similar based organizations in our culture come from religious base and have professional skilled workers. Need to widen such base with workers from culturally different religious group as well as country of origin, e.g. Coptic, Ukrainian, Muslim, Buddhist, and Confucian.*

*Services that are able to understand the perspective of parents from culturally diverse backgrounds and the problems associated with raising children in a 'different'*



*environment. Similarly those which can assist children to place events in a cultural context.*

*Most definitely (yes)! Culturally appropriate service delivery; ready access to interpreters. Close liaison with ethnic specific agencies; ethnic specific field staff.*

*Service for Aboriginal families, particularly where the parents have been separated from their own parents and have not had opportunity/experience at adequate parenting in their own childhood.*

*Education by culturally acceptable parties to the families to integrate their religious beliefs and cultural practice into acceptable standard of parenting for Australian society.*

- 1. Perhaps more 'grant in aid' social workers or counselors.*
- 2. Programs which are culturally specific in areas where ethnic communities settle.*
- 3. Need to form good relationships with Muslim schools, for example to educate parents and support children who are Australian born to make sense of parental expectations.*

*Limited by resources but access to services with understanding of specific culture. Child care/cultural practice & standards. Placement options that are culturally acceptable/compatible.*

*With CALD clients if we create new policies and guidelines we may create a setting where we do not intervene, or become reluctant to intervene. We could create an environment where, to try and control the danger, we involve the family in a 'Eurocratic manner'. Policies or instructions will not make a difference. We need broad principles of practice, clear statements and processes about what 'best practice' is and the way we can address these issues. I believe we can achieve this through training, good*

*supervision of staff and the appointment of high calibre staff.*

## **Conclusion**

This chapter took us through the world of child protection workers and that of parents of different cultural backgrounds and two ethnic leaders. They are distinct worlds, brought together by demographic and social ties. The information provided at the outset of this chapter was meant to present the multicultural diversity in Australian society and give readers an insight in the potentially complex task faced by child protection workers when undertaking assessments or investigations. Their answers and comments in the questionnaire and the views they expressed during the one-to-one interviews, provided a wealth of information on the issues, dilemmas and difficulties they face in their work with CALD people, such as language, communication, culture, legal and practice issues. The three years it took from the time the information was collected to the present did not in any way reduce the value and importance of the data. FCS respondents demonstrated through their comments and responses that they have a sound awareness of the importance of cultural issues in child protection work. Nevertheless, there is room for improvement.

Responses from ethnic leaders and CALD parents, even though small in number, were nevertheless powerful and provided us with their experiences and views on child rearing. I was very fortunate in obtaining the co-operation and contribution of these CALD respondents, as it gave this research a vital viewpoint on migration and parenting. The responses came from CALD parents at different stages of settlement. They reflect the fears and concerns parents from CALD backgrounds face in their transition to a new culture and a new social environment, with different sets of values and norms. Most of all, CALD parents want to have a voice and a say in the future of their children. It is vital that professionals in welfare and related areas take the time to listen to CALD parents' views on parenting and any matters related to the welfare of their children. Their views need to be taken into account, as they, more than anyone else, want the best for their children.

## 6 Cross Cultural Work in the 21st Century

*At the far end of the ruins, Boss Nass appeared, lumbering out of the shadows with several more of the Gungan council to stand atop a stone head partially submerged in the water. Amidala and her retinue approached to within hailing distance over a network of causeways and islands.*

*'Jar Jar Binks, whadda yous doen back?' Boss Nass rumbled angrily. 'yous suppose ta take dese outlanders and no come back! Yous pay good dis time!' The fleshy head swivelled. 'Who yous bring here ta da Gungan sacred place?'*

*The Queen stepped forward at once, white face lifting. 'I am Amidala, Queen of the Naboo.'*

*'Naboo!' Boss Nass thundered. 'No like da Naboo! Yous bring da maccaneks! Dey bust up our homes! Dey drive us all out!' A heavy arm lifted, pointing at the queen. 'Yous all bombad! Yous all die, mebbe!'* (Brooks 1999, p. 252).

This passage from the science fiction movie *Star Wars* illustrates the fact that cultural diversity permeates all aspects of social life and is portrayed through different art forms. In this particular case, the film director, George Lucas, portrays different ethnic groups on a far away planet with all their rich idiosyncrasies, down to the detailed costumes. The film's main character, Queen Amidala, has to use her skills and her awareness of the culture of Boss Nass and his people to convince him to support her own people in their fight against the oppressor, the Trade Federation, and their mean 'maccaneks'. Obviously, we do not have to fight any wars against laser-waging droids or people from far away galaxies. Our battle is more down to earth in the form of a joint effort to protect children and help families in today's complex and diverse social context. The move of populations across borders and across continents, aided by an increasing ease of long-distance travel, means that most countries, with few exceptions, have an increasingly culturally diverse population.

## 6.1 Cross-Cultural Competence: What is it?

Child protection is an area where social work professionals are involved in both a statutory and non-statutory manner. It is also an area of work requiring a wide range of skills. Social work professionals working in this area need to be constantly aware of their duty of care towards the child. The theoretical framework within which this practical task is approached, shapes the parents' interests vis-à-vis those of the child. Under a systems theory approach, there is a clear need to work effectively with the family in order to facilitate a change of their child discipline practices in a culturally appropriate context. Social workers and other professionals who work in child protection and with families in general need to be aware of differing cultural traits.

Kaufman & Zigler note that in the American context of child protection, there has been a focus on developing programs and policies which take into account the multicultural make-up of a given community. They state that interventions in child protection should be:

*multidisciplinary, developmentally and culturally appropriate, and coordinated with volunteer and community resident efforts to support children and families (1996, p. 249).*

An important issue raised by Kaufman & Zigler is the need to design and implement interventions that espouse, amongst others, the principle of 'delivery of culturally competent individualized services to meet the unique needs of clients'. Knitzer addresses some of the issues in children's mental health in the United States and stresses the need for the implementation of a 'culturally competent' and 'sensitive' system of care 'for children of color' (1996, pp. 217 passim 228). These programs, according to Knitzer, must take into account the needs of particular communities and in turn develop 'responsive programs' that take into account the principle of 'cultural competence'.

There are other areas in which cross-cultural competence becomes a relevant skill for professionals in the child protection area, as noted by Hanson:

*The need to be cross-culturally competent is just as critical for neonatal intensive care nurses, social worker, or*

*physicians in health care settings as it is for child care providers, educators [...] and aides in educational settings* (1992, p. 5).

The critical need for such competence is not yet accepted by all field workers and their managers. At the time I was completing the writing phase of this research, I was taken aback by the comments made by a senior officer when I raised the issue of cross-cultural competence as one of the important skills for field officers. This senior officer noted that because of the negligible number of CALD people in the office's catchment area, cross-cultural competence was neither relevant nor required for field officers. This key decision-maker maintained her original stance even after I drew her attention to the fact that we worked with a high number of Aboriginal families.

Citing Green's work (1982), Lynch and Hanson (1992, p. 356) stress that cross-cultural competence is about being able to work with different cultural groups whilst:

- 1) *Being aware of one's own cultural limitations,;*
- 2) *Having openness, appreciation and respect for cultural differences;*
- 3) *View intercultural interactions as learning opportunities;*
- 4) *Have the ability to use cultural resources in interventions; and*
- 5) *Acknowledge the integrity and value of all cultures.*

It is within this framework of cross-cultural competence that I will discuss some of the findings of this study and make recommendations where appropriate. In compiling this chapter I took into account three different perspectives: that of the respondents and their views on the issues raised; the perspectives that come from relevant literature and my own perspective and views on the issues raised.

## **6.2 Protection of Children in Western Australia**

In Australia, as in other countries, the protection of children is a task usually assigned to government child protection agencies or other statutory bodies. Child protection, however, is not the sole responsibility of government statutory bodies, it is a responsibility that must be shared by all professionals

in health, welfare and education settings. Professionals working in these areas have a duty of care towards children and are expected to report any situations where children have been maltreated or are considered to be at risk of maltreatment. In some Australian states, there are laws making the report of suspected child maltreatment mandatory for health and welfare professionals. Most of these agencies have duty, intake and assessment systems that are specifically adapted to their needs and target groups. As a guide only for the purpose of this research, I will describe the intake, assessment and allocation system used by Family and Children's Services in Western Australia.

In this final chapter, the focus is on the Western Australia's child protection agency. This is due to the fact that a large amount of the data collected came from FCS respondents, through the survey questionnaire and one-to-one interviews. It recognizes as well FCS' key role in the provision and funding of welfare services. I stress, though, that the issues raised and the recommendations made are not just relevant to FCS; they are relevant to all professionals working in child protection in a cross-cultural context.

### **6.2.1 Duty, Intake and Allocation**

When a member of the public contacts Family & Children's Services, he/she is directed to the duty officer. The duty officer obtains information, either via telephone, fax or in person, about the issues, concerns or problems being experienced by a family or individual. This initial contact may come from the family or individual themselves or reported by an outside agency or a member of the public. The information obtained is assessed by the duty officer, who in turn decides whether he/she can deal with the situation at that time. If further action is required, the 'intake information' is discussed with a senior officer. A decision is then made as to the classification of the case and the priority that it will be given. The latter will determine whether the case will be allocated and acted upon immediately or if it will be allocated later.

In a very short period of time, a number of significant events take place, influenced by several factors which will impact on the quality of service provided to the client family or individual. If the referred family is of a CALD background, some of these factors are: the officer and his/her senior officer's knowledge and skills; their awareness and knowledge of cultural issues; the resources available in the office and/or local community; the

family's or individual's reaction to the department's actions. I would like to concentrate on the three initial stages of the *duty, intake and assessment* process and reflect on some of its aspects, starting with the initial contact with the duty officer. Waugh stresses the importance of the intake stage in child protection work, which requires the worker to 'elicit appropriate information about children and their families, assess and analyze this information and make professional judgements about it'. In this process, Waugh argues, the way in which 'harm to a child' is defined in the 'context of cultural and societal values needs to be addressed' (2000, pp. 57-63). Failure to obtain relevant information and assess that information in an informed and critical manner, may lead to a 'hasty decision that a notification is warranted' and an investigation that 'reveals no abuse' (p. 59).

Another important point raised by Thorpe (1994) is the way in which information obtained by the duty officer is recorded. It is based on this information that the decision to raise an investigation or assessment is going to be made, and detailed, accurate record keeping is essential. At this stage, and indeed throughout the recording process, the worker needs to keep his/her own assessment separate from any allegations/concerns reported and other information received. It is my view that the thorough and professional handling of duty intake and assessment will reduce unnecessary work later on.

Apart from recording the reporter's concerns, demographic information about the family subject of the allegation or concern must also be obtained. The duty officer then checks whether there were previous reports on the said family or any involvement by FCS. If not identified at this stage, there is a possibility that cultural issues are identified during the allocation process. The responses obtained from the survey questionnaire revealed that there was a reasonable awareness in regards to cultural issues and in 40 out of the 74 cases referred to by respondents (55%), cultural issues had been identified by duty officers at intake.

Allocation usually takes place in the context of a team meeting, during which the intake information is presented and further discussed by team members. According to respondents, it was at this stage that cultural issues were identified in another 16 cases, or 21% of the total. There were a number of cases, however, where cultural issues were not identified at intake or allocation. Without the intimate knowledge of the individual cases, it is not

possible to know whether their outcomes could have been different had the relevant cultural issues been identified at intake. Chances are that having a knowledge of the family's or child's cultural background would assist in the process of identifying potential resources within the community and improve field officers' planning and preparation for the subsequent contacts with the family or individuals.

During the allocation process the senior officer, in conjunction with the officer(s) allocated to the case, discusses a plan of intervention. Depending on the nature of the information received at intake, the case is classified under the category of *Family Support*, *Child Concern Report* or *Child Maltreatment Allegation* and a decision made as to whether a single officer or two officers will undertake the initial visit or investigation. In 80 of the cases, respondents identified 37, or 46%, as falling into the more serious category of Child Maltreatment, and 28 of those cases, or 35%, as Child Concern.

Armed with the information obtained during the allocation process, child protection officers undertake an initial visit to the family or child subject of the allegations. This first contact is crucial in order to ensure the safety of the child(ren) and, at the same time, establish rapport with the family to an extent that allows the circumstances surrounding the original report to be investigated. It is at this point that careful consideration must be given as to whether interpreters should be used, keeping in mind that effective communication is essential if parents are to comprehend the reason for departmental intervention.

For cases involving families from a CALD background, in a way similar to cases involving work with Aboriginal families, FCS field officers are directed to obtain information relevant to the family's cultural background. In the case of language difficulties field officers are encouraged to seek the assistance of an interpreter, with the client's consent. Field officers are likely to have little difficulty in obtaining advice pertaining to Aboriginal culture. The same may not be the case in regards to families from other ethnic groups, particularly if they belong to minority groups in the community. In such situations, ready access to Internet sources by field officers would be advantageous. At the time the data for this research was collected, only two of the respondents raised the issue of information technology in the field. Their comments were:



*...there should be briefing notes regarding cultural differences, for instance regarding Arab culture, and this should be in computer,*

and another respondent suggested that:

*...the Internet could be a good resource.*

Since early 1997, when the data for this research was collected, the Internet has gained more and more relevance, to the extent that it is not realistic to ignore the potential of information technology and Internet resources in social work practice. Care must be taken, however, when accessing and using Internet resources, as not all that is published on the net comes from reputable and trustworthy sources.

### **6.2.2 On Statutory Intervention**

*Some clients are not aware of our role (FCS) and the consequences of their actions. FCS type services may not exist in countries they came from, so they are not aware of WA legislation on child protection and children's rights (FCS field officer).*

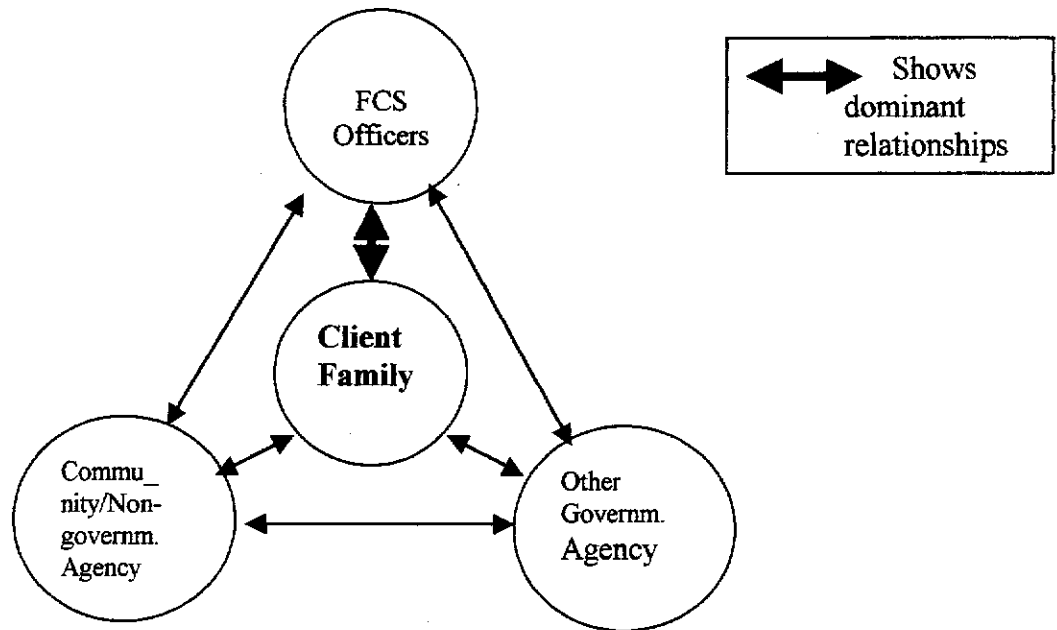
Intrusion in family life, itself an unavoidable 'by-product' of child protection intervention, is greatly increased with the use of specialist teams. If the outcome of intervention is the temporary removal of a child or children from their families, there is no other choice but to start Care & Protection proceedings at the Children's Court. In zones where a generic child protection team structure exists, the tasks of investigation and apprehension, and Care & Protection applications are undertaken by two officers of the generic team. One of the original officers usually carries out subsequent casework. This structure results in the allocated officer(s) maintaining their case work relationship with the family in a consistent manner throughout the most delicate stages of intervention. In the Perth metropolitan area, however, a specialist team structure was implemented in 1997. This new structure had a major impact on service delivery in the metropolitan area with the creation of six service delivery teams (child protection): Intake and Assessment, Protection of Children, Care for Children, Life Skills, Intensive Family Casework and Community Development. These teams were formed in order

to reflect the 'whole of government move to the *Funder/Purchaser/Provider* model' (Simpson, Benham, Barnett, Chandler, Clifton, Treacy & Bonson, 1999).

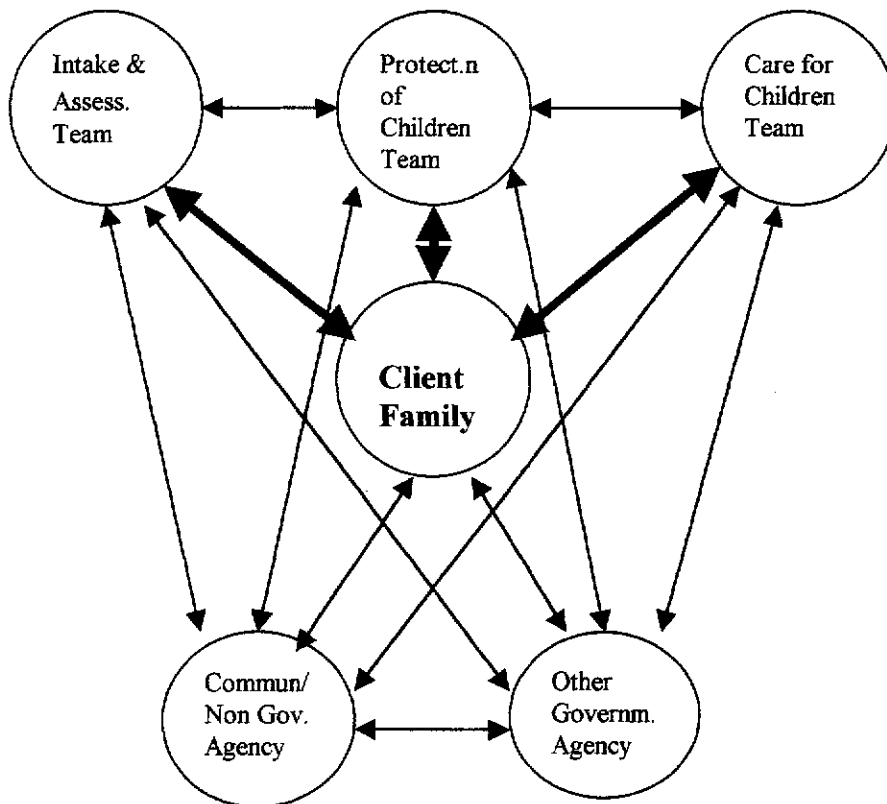
It is important to stress that, benefits aside, this new system has the potential to cause extra stress and disruption to families subject to departmental intervention, as they are likely to be in contact with more than one set of departmental officers during the process of assessment/investigation. The system will also increase pressure on workers, as it will be harder to establish a working relationship with families and there are increased complexities in the communication between workers in each team. Figures 1 and 2 are an attempt to assist the reader in visualizing the complex communication pattern created by the new structure in comparison with the use of a generic child protection team.

When working with CALD families under the new structure, any rapport established with families is likely to be lost when more than one or two officers have contact with clients, especially when working with resistant, anti-authority clients. The same may happen if clients from a CALD background have experienced torture or trauma in their country of origin at the hands of government authorities or the military. Some CALD families, mainly those recently arrived, may have little social support and no family support. The outcome of reunification, one of the ultimate goals in child protection, may be compromised by the use of this approach.

It has to be noted that recent statistical data released by the department points to an increase in the number of children remaining in departmental care since the restructure in 1997. Other statistical data indicates that whilst there has been no increase in CMA investigations, there has been an increase in apprehensions and Care & Protection applications. Although this may be directly linked with demographic growth, such increases require closer scrutiny. The use of specialized teams also needs to be critically examined.



**Fig 1 - Illustration of interactions between client family, FCS officers and other agencies/professional under generic team structure.**



**Figure 2 - This flowchart illustrates relationships developed between client family, FCS officers and other agencies/professionals under the new 'service delivery structure'. Please note the added complexity in communication between key players and client family.**

Apart from the potential to create a de-skilled work force, with professionals being forced to specialize in one specific area, the use of six specialized teams is, at the same time, creating difficulties in communication between field teams, issues recognized by Simpson et al (1999). With this new structure in place, the need for ongoing professional training for supervisors and field staff alike is essential.

### **6.3 Research Findings: Implications for Practice; Effective Cross-Cultural Intervention**

#### **6.3.1 Developing Cross-Cultural Competencies**

*Clearly good cultural practice in child protection and substitute care requires rethinking and challenging taken for granted assumptions, and greater consciousness of clients' and one's own ethnicity. It is a reality that people of color suffer racism and its effects. It is crucial to develop practice strategies that sensitize professional workers to its impact and consequences (Fernandez 1996, p. 273-274).*

This quote from Fernandez' work strengthens the view that child protection professionals and other professionals in health, education and welfare areas need to rethink their practice with clients from a CALD background. This applies equally to professionals who themselves come from various cultural and linguistic backgrounds. Being a professional from a CALD background does not automatically equip you with the necessary competencies for cross-cultural work. In any agency, government or non-government, professionals from CALD backgrounds become valuable resources for their colleagues. They can, and should, be used as consultants on cross-cultural issues. They can, in certain situations, be used as valuable interpreters or translators. However, their cross-cultural competencies need to be developed in the same way as those of other professionals. Respondents to the survey questionnaire raised the importance of cross-cultural training.

*There are issues that need to be addressed. The biggest one is the lack of knowledge of cultural aspects even in the provision of services. [...] The fact that we don't have Foundation Training or other training properly covering the area of working with NESB's. There are three days of*

*working with Aboriginal people. [...]There should be some training re working with interpreters and trying to learn how to access services for NESB's, and find out information. The department does not even consider placing any urgency on multicultural issues (FCS respondent).*

This observation from one of the respondents during a one-to-one interview raised the important issue of professional training for State child protection workers on multicultural issues. This was but one of the many comments made in regards to matters of practice. Another respondent added that cross-cultural training should also

*target Team Leaders and Senior Case Work Supervisors, focusing training on higher levels and keeping training in the context of the Australian situation.*

The statements of the two ethnic leaders, Mary and Vince, raise the importance of professionals' awareness, knowledge and skills on cross-cultural issues. Cross-cultural competence can be improved for social workers and professionals in child protection and other areas, through the implementation of cross-cultural training programs. These training programs should include workshops on relevant CALD issues and be held on a regular basis. Refresher workshops should be held at regular intervals. Such training would contribute to increased awareness of CALD issues and improved competencies in cross-cultural work, which in turn would lead to: a) improved relationships with clients; b) improvement in cross-cultural practice; and c) better outcomes for families and children from a CALD background. Workshops or training sessions should be prepared in cooperation with relevant ethnic organizations and focus on child rearing practices, family values and settlement issues for members of the relevant ethnic groups. Workshops prepared and presented at a local level and by members of local communities would, at the same time, contribute to the development of positive relationships and links between professionals and members of those communities.

### 6.3.2 Statutory Implications

On the subject of issues related to statutory intervention and the legal process, there are two aspects covered in this research. One is related to CALD people's knowledge or awareness with regards to laws and statute in Australia. The other relates to child protection and statutory action taken by departmental officers in the course of Care & Protection applications. Many CALD people who arrive in Australia come from countries with government and judicial systems different from ours. In some of those countries, there is no dedicated child protection system or child protection laws. Some child rearing methods, mainly to do with discipline and even traditional 'healing' methods (in cases of common ailments), might land those people in potentially difficult situations. Respondents noted that there was a need to educate and inform CALD families about legal issues, particularly concerning child protection. Other respondents stated that those people from CALD backgrounds who had been living in Australia for a number of years, were in some instances not aware that in their countries of origin laws for the protection of children had already been enacted. Even child rearing/parenting practices had changed or were going through changes.

Information and awareness raising are two of the important measures that should be taken to ensure that CALD families arriving in Australia become aware of our social, political and welfare systems. In Western Australia, significant steps have been taken to ensure that information on parenting in Australia reaches people from a CALD background. An example of this is the *'Parenting in a multicultural Society; factsheet'*<sup>1</sup> (Family & Children's Services 2000) which is printed in twelve different languages. Improvements could be achieved in this area with two simple steps ensuring that a larger audience could have access to this information, both locally and internationally: a) having this fact sheet advertised and published in the different languages on the FCS Website, and b) ensuring that newly arrived migrants or refugees receive this information upon arrival in Western Australia. This latest measure could be achieved via co-operation with the Department of Immigration and Multicultural Affairs (DIMA).

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<sup>1</sup> This booklet is available in the following languages: English, Serbian, Arabic, Chinese, Farsi, Portuguese, Indonesian, Croatian, Bosnian, Somali, Vietnamese, Italian, Spanish and Greek. The FCS website displays only its English version.

And for CALD families who find themselves involved in a statutory manner with the department due to child protection issues? There are also ways in which practice can improve in this area. One of them is ensuring that parents are provided with information in their own language, if their proficiency in English is not adequate. The other is providing families with prompt access to interpreter services. Once again, interagency co-operation, in this case between the Ministry of Justice and FCS, would contribute to develop strategies in this area. Finally, the long awaited enactment of the proposed new Family & Children's Act will contribute to an improvement in statutory practice. This new Act will replace a clearly outdated piece of legislation, the Child Protection Act 1947, introducing more flexibility in the delivery of child protection services in Western Australia.

#### **6.4 Implications for Relationships with Communities and Non-Government Organizations**

*Sometimes I had to go to Non-Government Organizations in order to work with clients from different ethnic backgrounds. One of them was a Muslim organization and in another case a Burmese NGO. The workers at these organizations were always very co-operative. There were no barriers and they were willing to work with FCS. However NGO workers do not have the same training FCS workers have (FCS respondent).*

The crucial role of Family & Children's Services in the statewide funding, purchasing and provision of welfare services needs to be acknowledged. With this crucial role come responsibilities of ensuring that services reach the target population. How many people from a given CALD background access any given departmental work units? How many different CALD background groups in a given geographical area do departmental officers contact? What are the needs of CALD background communities in a given geographical area? It is my view that, at present, there can be no precise answer to these questions. With the emphasis placed by the department on the implementation of the *Funder/Purchaser/Provider* model, gaps in the area of CALD service delivery need to be identified with the use of more accurate data collection and closer consultation with ethnic groups or their peak bodies.

Efforts should be made to collect information on ethnicity at the point of duty and intake. This information should then be recorded on the department's information system (CCSS). Collection of more accurate ethnicity information should be extended to non-government welfare agencies. This should also be accompanied by the adequate mapping, with the assistance of CALD peak bodies, of relevant non-government agencies providing services to CALD people. One respondent commented on the lack of CALD statistical data as follows:

*S. mentioned the lack of data (statistical) on the incidence of contact by CALDB people. This may lead to the impression that we assist Aboriginal people more than other people. The department needs to keep more accurate statistics.*

Another area where improvements can be made is in the establishment of regular, positive contact between FCS and non-government CALD organizations or associations, or improve existing relationships. Becoming 'pro active' in this area includes participation in significant social events or celebrations where the department can take its message about available services and assistance, and help minimize some of the fears and concerns of CALD people. This would at the same time encourage people from CALD backgrounds to come forward and talk about their needs in areas of family support, youth services and parenting. These strategies would provide a valuable tool for departmental officers without the need to form a specialized team. Additionally, people from a CALD background could be actively encouraged to apply for positions with the department of Family and Children's Services.

The development of educational or support services for families of CALD backgrounds should be carried out in consultation with people from relevant communities. In all respects, this would be a process similar to the 'train the trainer' technique. This process could also assist in the recruitment of foster carers or volunteers from a CALD background. This strategy would create a group of skilled people who could then work in areas where significant numbers of CALD people live.



## **Conclusion and Recommendations**

The summary presented in the introductory chapter of this study is intended at raising the awareness of the reader as to the diverse culturally specific child rearing and discipline practices in Australia. The chapter that follows attempts to locate Australia's current child rearing and child disciplining practices within an historical context as it evolved from early settlement to late twentieth century. The current study explored child rearing and discipline from a cultural perspective within a child protection framework. Prior research has, to a certain extent, addressed the need to train child protection professionals in cross-cultural practice (Thorpe 1994, Dawson 1999) and suggests that the assessment or investigation of child maltreatment allegations must not be undertaken in a cultural void, but taking into account the families' cultural background (Fernandez 1996, Dawson 1999). Currently in Australia, however, only policy and practice matters relating to work with Australian Aboriginal background appear to attract the attention of governments, practitioners and policy makers.

The last two questions of the survey questionnaire asked for respondents' views as to the need for culturally specific child abuse treatment or prevention programs. A total of 56.9% of respondents considered that there was a need for such programs. Improving services to people of CALD backgrounds would not require allocation of massive resources, as there would be no need for the creation of specific teams or the development of complex policies or guidelines in the area of CALD service delivery. Development of complex, highly structured approaches to case practice in child protection only complicates matters and stifles effective intervention. The emphasis should be on the development of good quality and regular training on cross-cultural issues, with refresher workshops being held at regular intervals.

Workshops and training sessions should be practice based and dynamic, focusing on professional needs and the needs of the particular service delivery unit or zone office. Some of these workshops should be prepared and delivered with the collaboration and contribution of relevant CALD groups or associations. Members of ethnic communities should be able to provide valuable information on what it is like to raise children in a new social and cultural environment. This interaction would certainly turn into a mutual learning process for professionals and parents alike. It would also contribute

to dispel myths held by some professionals in regards to parenting methods in certain ethnic groups and ease possible fears and concerns of parents from certain ethnic backgrounds.

The ongoing arrival of new migrants and the increasing number of refugees and boat people coming to Australia, in spite of government attempts to stem the flow, emphasize the multicultural nature of our society. The successful settlement of these people in the community depends to a large extent on the level of support they receive from the host country. Developing strategies to deal with cross-cultural issues and improving cross-cultural competencies in service delivery will greatly improve the quality of service to people from a CALD background.

The issues raised by respondents to this research, departmental staff, ethnic leaders and CALD parents, are relevant not just to FCS professionals. Increasingly, there should be a push for interagency co-operation in the delivery of services to people of a CALD background. All professionals in health, education and welfare organizations, whether government or non-government, should take the findings of this research into account. The focus on the State's child protection agency was due to the fact that the majority of data collected came from FCS respondents. The findings of this research highlight the need for an improvement in cross-cultural practice, across the board, and the improvement of cross-cultural competencies for professionals across different areas. This can be achieved through:

- **Improvement in communication through:**
  - Prompt and easy access to interpreters or translators whenever appropriate
  - Provision of relevant literature, information booklets or official correspondence in languages other than English
- **Allowing professionals in service delivery areas access to Internet resources**
- **Provision of regular cross-cultural training**
- **Encouraging/fostering the formation of a CALD reference group within agencies.** These groups can be made available to provide consultancy and/or advice on CALD (internally or externally).
- **Fostering co-operation and interaction with ethnic groups and associations.**

- This would extend to the preparation and delivery of workshops and seminars, and
- Development of new services in health, welfare or education areas
- **Collection of ethnic-specific data.**
- **Encouraging multi-disciplinary research on cross-cultural issues.**
- **Increasing inter-agency co-operation in the delivery and development of programs for people of CALD backgrounds.**

Developments in NSW as this document is being completed, highlight the importance of the topic discussed. The 'Crimes Amendment (Child Protection – Excessive Punishment) Bill 2000' was introduced to the NSW parliament in October 2000 (NSW Parliament 2000). This important piece of legislation immediately raised heated discussion in the public and political arenas. Issues now being raised have been covered in this thesis, with an emphasis on cross-cultural issues related to the use of child corporal punishment vis-à-vis child protection practice. I hope that this thesis will contribute positively to the current discourse. I hope as well that it will become a useful tool for child protection practitioners in WA. Western Australia has the potential and the expertise to become a leader in the development of good cross-cultural practice across government and non-government areas.

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## **APPENDICES**

## Appendix 1

Family & Children's Services  
Field Staff  
Metropolitan Directorate  
Perth, Western Australia

Dear Colleague

Enclosed you will find a survey questionnaire prepared for my Masters of Social Work degree. This research, entitled 'Ethnicity and Child Discipline; Implications for Child Protection', will examine the extent to which **ethnic background** and **cultural factors** are taken into account by Child Protection Workers, and other Field Officers, investigating allegations or concerns stemming from incidents of inappropriate or excessive discipline.

Being a Field Officer for Family and Children's Services myself I understand that you will be pressed for time, however I believe that this research will contribute to a better understanding of the work we do with Australian families from **Culturally and Linguistically Diverse Backgrounds**. I also hope that the results of this research will contribute to an improvement of the service we provide.

Once completed please place this questionnaire in the envelope provided. I will collect the questionnaire from your District Office on the .....  
**Please don't leave it in the bottom drawer!**

If you agree to a one to one **follow-up interview** please return the form on **page 10** in the other envelope enclosed.

If you have any further queries please feel free to contact me at work, on (09) 432 0800, or after hours on (09) 524 7430 or 041 9919460.

Thanking you in advance.

Yours Sincerely

**EDUARDO FARATE**  
Curtin University, 30 July 1996  
Enc.

Appendix 2  
**QUESTIONNAIRE**

**ETHNICITY AND CHILD DISCIPLINE**

**IMPLICATIONS FOR CHILD PROTECTION**

In order to answer this questionnaire I would like you to refer to your current case load. If you have **no current open cases** involving families of different ethnic backgrounds please refer to **previous recent cases**. You can add more cases if necessary (i.e. Case D, E etc.). The information provided will be kept confidential. Please do not provide any identifying details about you or your clients.

**PLEASE ANSWER ALL QUESTIONS**

---

**Q 1. How many cases involving Australians from Cultural and Linguistically Diverse Backgrounds\* have you currently got, or recently had, in your case load?**

If the answer to this question is 'None' please go to **question 22**, otherwise go to next question.

**Q 2. How many children are involved in these cases?**

Girls                 **Ages**   

Boys                 **Ages**   

---

\* This designator replaces the acronym NESB, Non- English Speaking Background, by recommendation of the 'Ministerial Council of Immigration and Multicultural Affairs in Canberra' (June 1996).

qq

**Q 3. What are the families' cultural background in each case? (please include 'mixed' marriages)**

Case A -.....

Case B -.....

Case C -.....

**Q 4. Do you know for how many years they have been living in Australia?**  
Please 4

Yes    **q**    No    **q**

If 'Yes', How Many?

	Less than one	One to three	Three to five	More than five (Please specify)
Case A	- <input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	.....
Case B	- <input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	.....
Case C	- <input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	.....

**Q 5. In line with 'New Directions' guidelines what were these cases classified as on intake (e.g.. CMA, CCR):** Please 4

	CCR	CMA	Other
Case A	- <input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Case B	- <input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Case C	- <input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

**Q 6. What are/were the main reasons for contact in these cases? (e.g. child discipline, parent-teen conflict)** Please 4

	Substance Abuse	P/Teen Conflict	Dom. Viol.	Child Manag.	Other (pls. specify)
Case A	- <input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	.....
Case B	- <input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	.....
Case C	- <input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	.....



Any comments?.....

**Q 7. If the main reason for contact was related to child discipline, did you believe these parents/families were aware about the potential legal consequences of their disciplining methods in Western Australia? Please 4**

	Yes	No	Don' know
Case A -	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Case B -	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Case C -	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Any comments?.....

**Q 8. Is departmental involvement of a 'statutory' or 'non-statutory' nature? Please 4**

	Statutory	Non- Statutory
Case A -	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Case B -	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Case C -	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

**Q 9. In your opinion are/were any 'cultural issues' present in any of the cases? Please 4**

	Yes	No	Not sure
Case A -	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Case B -	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Case C -	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Any comments.....

**Q 9.1. Do you believe that these 'cultural issues' were identified at the intake or allocation stages?**

		Intake	Allocation	Not identified
Case A	-	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Case B	-	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Case C	-	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Any comments?.....  
 .....

**Q 10. Do you speak any other languages apart from English?**

Please 4

Yes Q No Q

**Q 10.1 If your answer to the question above was 'Yes' which other languages do you speak? Please 4**

Spanish Portuguese Italian Vietnamese Mandarin Slav Other (Pls. specify)  
 .    .....

**Q 11. Did you have any difficulties in explaining the reason for your intervention to any of the parents? Please rate using the following scale:**

**Case A**  
 Extremely difficult 1      2      3      4      5      6      Not difficult at all

**Case B**  
 Extremely difficult 1      2      3      4      5      6      Not difficult at all

**Case C**  
 Extremely difficult 1      2      3      4      5      6      Not difficult at all

Any comments? .....

.....  
**Q 11.1**

**Do you believe the parents had any difficulty in understanding the reason for your intervention? Please use the following scale:**

**Case A**  
**Great difficulty**    1    2    3    4    5    6    **No difficulty**

**Case B**  
**Great difficulty**    1    2    3    4    5    6    **No difficulty**

**Case C**  
**Great difficulty**    1    2    3    4    5    6    **No difficulty**

**Any Comments?** .....

.....  
**Q 12. If you experienced difficulties can you please describe them (e.g. were they due to language, religious or culturally different concepts )**

**Please 4**

	<b>Religion</b>	<b>Cultural Concepts</b>	<b>Language</b>	<b>Age</b>	<b>Gender</b>	<b>Other (pls. specify)</b>
<b>Case A -</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	.....
<b>Case B -</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	.....
<b>Case C -</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	.....

**Any comments?** .....

.....  
**Q 13. did you need to use interpreters in any of the cases?**

**Please 4**

	<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>
<b>Case A -</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Case B -</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Case C -</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

If you answered 'No' to all these

Please go to Q 14 +

**Q 13.1. If you answered 'Yes' to any of the above, how often did you have to use their services?**

	First contact	All times	Occasionally	In court	Other (pls. specify)
Case A -	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	.....
Case B -	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	.....
Case C -	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	.....

**Q 13.2. If you answered 'Yes' to question 13, how did you find the interpreter services ? Please use the following scale:**

<b>Case A</b>							
Extremely helpful	1	2	3	4	5	6	Not helpful at all
<b>Case B -</b>							
Extremely helpful	1	2	3	4	5	6	Not helpful at all
<b>Case C -</b>							
Extremely helpful	1	2	3	4	5	6	Not helpful at all

**Comments**

.....  
 .....

**Q 14. Did you need to refer any of the parents in these cases to treatment or preventative programs?**

	Counselling	Mediation	Psychologist	Parenting Course	Self Help	Other (pls. Specify)
Case A -	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>		.....
Case B -	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>		
Case C -	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>		

If your answer is 'No', please go to Q 21 +

**Q 15. Did any of the parents refuse or decline to attend these services?**

Please 4

	Yes	No	Outcome unknown
Case A -	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Case B -	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Case C -	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Any comments? .....

.....

**Q 16. Did you have any difficulty in locating the appropriate services ?**

Please use the following scale:

Case A -  
Extremely difficult 1    2    3    4    5    6    Not difficult at all

Case B -  
Extremely difficult 1    2    3    4    5    6    Not difficult at all

Case C -  
Extremely difficult 1    2    3    4    5    6    Not difficult at all

**Q 17. If any difficulties were found, can you please describe some of them?**

	Service not available in the District	Language barrier	No vacancies listed	Service not Other (pls. specify)
Case A -	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	.....
Case B -	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	..... .....

Case C -                                                   .  .....

Any comments?.....  
.....

**Q 18. Do you think those services were culturally appropriate?**

Case A -

Very appropriate    1      2      3      4      5      6      Not appropriate at all

Case B -

Very appropriate    1      2      3      4      5      6      Not appropriate at all

Case C -

Very appropriate    1      2      3      4      5      6      Not appropriate at all

Any Comments?.....  
.....

**Q 19. If you found those services not totally appropriate can you please state some of the reasons?**

Case A - .....

Case B - .....

Case C - .....

**Q 20. Do you think the services you used were:**

Case A -

Very useful            1      2      3      4      5      6      Not useful at all

Case B -

Very useful            1      2      3      4      5      6      Not useful at all

Case B -

Very useful            1      2      3      4      5      6      Not useful at all

**Q 21. In view of the initial concerns in each case was any change in the family/parental attitude noticed in any of the cases?**

	No improvement	Minimal improvement	Reasonable improvement	Great improvement	Outcome unknown
Case A -	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Case B -	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Case C -	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

**Any comments?**

.....  
 .....  
 .....

**Q 22. Do you believe there is a need for culturally specific 'child abuse' treatment or prevention programs in your district?**

Yes       No       Not Sure

**Q 23. If your answer to the question above was 'yes', what type of services do you think are needed?**

.....  
 .....  
 .....  
 .....

**Q 24. Please use the space below to make any further comments or suggestions about this topic.**

.....  
 .....  
 .....  
 .....

**Thank you very much for the time and effort you put into this research questionnaire.**

**If you agree to be contacted at a later stage for a follow-up interview please use the separate page and return it in the self addressed envelope enclosed.**



**YES!**

**I agree to be contacted by the principal researcher for a follow-up interview. I understand that the interview will cover issues related to the research topic.**

**In order to arrange a mutually convenient time please contact me on:**

**Phone:** \_\_\_\_\_ **(Work or home)**

**Between:** \_\_\_\_\_ **hours on** \_\_\_\_\_ **(weekday)**

**Name** \_\_\_\_\_

**Signed** \_\_\_\_\_

**Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

## Appendix 3

Mr  
Fremantle District Office  
FREMANTLE 6160

Dear

**RE:            Research Interviews - Transcript**

Please find enclosed transcripts of our interview of January 15, 1997. These transcripts intend to present only the main topics discussed. I have left some extra space in between paragraphs so that you can enter any corrections or further comments on your individual copies.

**The data won't be used until it has been verified by you. Please use the reply paid envelope to return it to me.**

I have only used your initials and no other identifying demographic details. The information provided is covered by 'Confidentiality Anonymity Guarantee' (please find attached copy for your information).

If you have any further queries please feel free to contact me at work, on (09) 432 0800, or after hours on (09) 524 7430 or 041 9919460.

Once again thank you very much for your invaluable contribution.

Yours Sincerely

**EDUARDO FARATE**  
Curtin University, 20 May 1997

Enc.

## Appendix 4

**INFORMED CONSENT AGREEMENT**

I, \_\_\_\_\_, agree to participate in the research project entitled 'Ethnicity and Child Discipline; Implications for Child Protection', developed by Eduardo Farate, principle researcher, and supervised by Mr. Peter McDonald, School of Social Work, Curtin University. This Project I understand to be a requirement for the degree of Masters by Research at the School of Social Work, Curtin University of Technology. I understand that I can withdraw from the research at any time without this prejudicing me in any way.

It has been explained to me that I cannot in principle consent to any use of information which is harmful to me and that the information used in the research will be disguised in such manner as to protect my anonymity.

It has been explained to me that there will not be any use of information given by me for any purpose other than that defined in the goals of the thesis. Information given by me will not be integrated with any other data banks.

Signed \_\_\_\_\_

Signed \_\_\_\_\_

Investigator

Signed \_\_\_\_\_

School of Social Work Supervisor

Date \_\_\_\_\_

## Appendix 5

**CONFIDENTIALITY ANONYMITY GUARANTEE**

I, \_\_\_\_\_, agree to participate in the research project developed by Eduardo Farate, principle researcher, and supervised by Mr. Peter McDonald, School of Social Work, Curtin University. I understand that this project is a requirement for the degree of Masters by Research at the School of Social Work, Curtin University of Technology. While the degree remains the property of the University I understand that all information provided by me will protect my anonymity. All information given by me will be kept confidential (coded) and all records will be destroyed at the completion of the research or within two years. All information given by me will be kept in such a way that I cannot be identified and will not be released to any other person other than the researcher without my consent. I understand that the information I give will not be used for any other purpose than for the aims of the thesis.

I understand that any information given by me and used in the research will be disguised to protect my anonymity. I understand that no data given by me will be integrated with any other data bank or used in any other way.

Signed \_\_\_\_\_

Signed \_\_\_\_\_

Investigator

Signed \_\_\_\_\_

School of Social Work Supervisor

Date \_\_\_\_\_

Appendix 6  
**QUESTIONNAIRE**

**ETHNICITY AND CHILD DISCIPLINE  
IMPLICATIONS FOR CHILD PROTECTION**

Once this questionnaire has been completed please place it in the reply paid envelope provided and post it. Please feel free to add extra pages if necessary.

**Please do not write your name, address or any other identifying information in the questionnaire or envelope.**

Your information will be treated with confidentiality.

---

1 - How many years have you been living in Western Australia?

Less than one   One to three   Three to five   More than five  
Γ                    Γ                    Γ                    Γ.....Pls specify   .....

2 - Can you describe some of the problems or difficulties you may have experienced in regard to parenting/raising your child(ren) in Western Australia.

---

---

---

3 - If you have experienced any problems or difficulties who did you approach for help?

---

---

---

4 - Do you have a specific way of disciplining your child(ren) when they are disobedient or misbehave?

---

---

---

5 -Are you aware of services or assistance available for parents and their children in Perth.

---

---

---

Thank you very much for your assistance.

## Appendix 7

-> frequencies variables=q1 q2.1 q2.2/statistics=all.

Q1 number of cases

Value Label	Value	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cum Percent
	0	22	33.8	33.8	33.8
	1	20	30.8	30.8	64.6
	2	11	16.9	16.9	81.5
	3	6	9.2	9.2	90.8
	4	2	3.1	3.1	93.8
	5	2	3.1	3.1	96.9
	10	1	1.5	1.5	98.5
	11	1	1.5	1.5	100.0
Total		65	100.0	100.0	

Mean	1.523	Std err	.255	Median	1.000
Mode	.000	Std dev	2.055	Variance	4.222
Kurtosis	10.088	S E Kurt	.586	Skewness	2.815
S E Skew	.297	Range	11.000	Minimum	.000
Maximum	11.000	Sum	99.000		

Valid cases 65 Missing cases 0

Q2.1 number of girls in cases

Value Label	Value	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cum Percent
	1	11	16.9	31.4	31.4
	2	10	15.4	28.6	60.0
	3	8	12.3	22.9	82.9
	4	2	3.1	5.7	88.6
	5	1	1.5	2.9	91.4
	7	1	1.5	2.9	94.3
	8	2	3.1	5.7	100.0
	.	30	46.2	Missing	
Total		65	100.0	100.0	

Mean	2.600	Std err	.318	Median	2.000
Mode	1.000	Std dev	1.882	Variance	3.541
Kurtosis	2.844	S E Kurt	.778	Skewness	1.745
S E Skew	.398	Range	7.000	Minimum	1.000
Maximum	8.000	Sum	91.000		

Valid cases 35 Missing cases 30

Q2.2 number of boys in cases

Value Label	Value	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cum Percent
	1	10	15.4	34.5	34.5
	2	9	13.8	31.0	65.5
	3	3	4.6	10.3	75.9
	4	3	4.6	10.3	86.2
	5	3	4.6	10.3	96.6
	9	1	1.5	3.4	100.0
	.	36	55.4	Missing	
Total		65	100.0	100.0	

Mean	2.517	Std err	.339	Median	2.000
Mode	1.000	Std dev	1.825	Variance	3.330
Kurtosis	4.427	S E Kurt	.845	Skewness	1.845
S E Skew	.434	Range	8.000	Minimum	1.000
Maximum	9.000	Sum	73.000		

Valid cases 29 Missing cases 36

```

-> mult response groups=q2.1 'ages of girls'
->   (q2.11 to q2.18(0,21))
->   q2.2 'ages of boys'
->   (q2.21 to q2.29(0,21))
->   /frequencies=q2.1 q2.2.

```

~~Group~~ Q2.1 ages of girls

Category label	Code	Count	Pct of Responses	Pct of Cases
	0	2	2.7	6.3
	1	3	4.1	9.4
	3	2	2.7	6.3
	4	3	4.1	9.4
	5	5	6.8	15.6
	6	6	8.2	18.8
	7	6	8.2	18.8
	8	5	6.8	15.6
	9	1	1.4	3.1
	10	4	5.5	12.5
	11	5	6.8	15.6
	12	6	8.2	18.8
	13	6	8.2	18.8
	14	8	11.0	25.0
	15	5	6.8	15.6
	16	5	6.8	15.6
	17	1	1.4	3.1
		-----	-----	-----
	Total responses	73	100.0	228.1

33 missing cases; 32 valid cases

Group Q2.2 ages of boys

Category label	Code	Count	Pct of Responses	Pct of Cases
	0	2	3.1	6.9
	1	1	1.5	3.4
	2	4	6.2	13.8
	3	6	9.2	20.7
	4	2	3.1	6.9
	5	4	6.2	13.8
	6	5	7.7	17.2
	7	3	4.6	10.3
	8	3	4.6	10.3
	9	3	4.6	10.3
	10	3	4.6	10.3
	11	3	4.6	10.3
	12	6	9.2	20.7
	13	5	7.7	17.2
	14	3	4.6	10.3
	15	4	6.2	13.8
	16	5	7.7	17.2
	17	3	4.6	10.3
		-----	-----	-----
	Total responses	65	100.0	224.1

36 missing cases; 29 valid cases



```

-> mult response groups=q3 'cultural backgrounds'
-> (q3.1 to q3.4(1,38))
-> /frequencies=q3.

```

~~Group 03 cultural backgrounds~~

Category label	Code	Count	Pct of Responses	Pct of Cases
Egyptian	1	2	2.5	4.7
Aboriginal	2	18	22.5	41.9
Yugoslav	3	2	2.5	4.7
Indian	4	3	3.8	7.0
Maori	5	2	2.5	4.7
Fijian	6	1	1.3	2.3
Malay/Pakistan	7	1	1.3	2.3
Hungarian/Australian	8	1	1.3	2.3
Italian	9	5	6.3	11.6
German/English	10	1	1.3	2.3
Polish	11	2	2.5	4.7
Chilean	12	2	2.5	4.7
Vietnamese	13	6	7.5	14.0
Muslim	14	1	1.3	2.3
El Salvadorean	15	1	1.3	2.3
Indian/Figian/Eng	16	1	1.3	2.3
Namibian/Aust	17	1	1.3	2.3
Aborig/Aust	18	2	2.5	4.7
Burmese	19	2	2.5	4.7
German	20	3	3.8	7.0
Portugese	21	3	3.8	7.0
Croatian	22	1	1.3	2.3
Sth African	23	1	1.3	2.3
New Guinea	24	1	1.3	2.3
Chinese/Vietnamese	25	2	2.5	4.7
Russina	26	1	1.3	2.3
Indonesian/American	27	1	1.3	2.3
mixed	28	1	1.3	2.3
Malay	29	2	2.5	4.7
PNG?Australian	30	1	1.3	2.3
Samoan	31	1	1.3	2.3
Burmese/Angl Ind	32	1	1.3	2.3
Romanian	33	1	1.3	2.3
Cambodian	34	1	1.3	2.3
Thai	35	1	1.3	2.3
African	36	1	1.3	2.3
Malay/NZ	37	1	1.3	2.3
Afganistan	38	2	2.5	4.7
Total responses		80	100.0	186.0

22 missing cases; 43 valid cases

-> frequencies variables=q4 to q4.4.

Q4 know how long living in Australia

Value Label	Value	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cum Percent
yes	1	34	52.3	81.0	81.0
no	2	8	12.3	19.0	100.0
.	.	23	35.4	Missing	
Total		65	100.0	100.0	
Valid cases	42	Missing cases	23		

Q4.1 A: how long in Australia

Value Label	Value	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cum Percent
less than 1	1	5	7.7	14.7	14.7
1 - 3	2	6	9.2	17.6	32.4
3 - 5	3	6	9.2	17.6	50.0
more than 5	4	17	26.2	50.0	100.0
.	.	31	47.7	Missing	
Total		65	100.0	100.0	
Valid cases	34	Missing cases	31		

Q4.2 B: how long in Australia

Value Label	Value	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cum Percent
less than 1	1	2	3.1	9.5	9.5
1 - 3	2	1	1.5	4.8	14.3
3 - 5	3	6	9.2	28.6	42.9
more than 5	4	12	18.5	57.1	100.0
.	.	44	67.7	Missing	
Total		65	100.0	100.0	
Valid cases	21	Missing cases	44		

Q4.3 C: how long in Australia

Value Label	Value	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cum Percent
1 - 3	2	1	1.5	10.0	10.0
3 - 5	3	4	6.2	40.0	50.0
more than 5	4	5	7.7	50.0	100.0
.	.	55	84.6	Missing	
Total		65	100.0	100.0	
Valid cases	10	Missing cases	55		

Q4.4 D: how long in Australia

Value Label	Value	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cum Percent
3 - 5	3	1	1.5	50.0	50.0
more than 5	4	1	1.5	50.0	100.0
.	.	63	96.9	Missing	
Total		65	100.0	100.0	
Valid cases	2	Missing cases	63		

```

-> mult response groups=q5 'all classifications'
->   (q5.11 to q5.43(1,3))
->   q5.1 'Case A classification'
->   (q5.11 to q5.13(1,3))
->   q5.2 'Case B classification'
->   (q5.21 to q5.23(1,3))
->   q5.3 'Case C classification'
->   (q5.31 to q5.33(1,3))
->   q5.4 'Case D classification'
->   (q5.41 to q5.43(1,3))
->   /frequencies=q5 to q5.4.

```

~~Group Q5~~ all classifications

Category label	Code	Count	Pct of Responses	Pct of Cases
CCR	1	28	35.0	68.3
CMA	2	37	46.3	90.2
other	3	15	18.8	36.6
Total responses		80	100.0	195.1

24 missing cases; 41 valid cases

Group Q5.1 Case A classification

Category label	Code	Count	Pct of Responses	Pct of Cases
CCR	1	16	36.4	39.0
CMA	2	22	50.0	53.7
other	3	6	13.6	14.6
Total responses		44	100.0	107.3

24 missing cases; 41 valid cases

Group Q5.2 Case B classification

Category label	Code	Count	Pct of Responses	Pct of Cases
CCR	1	8	33.3	34.8
CMA	2	11	45.8	47.8
other	3	5	20.8	21.7
Total responses		24	100.0	104.3

42 missing cases; 23 valid cases

Group Q5.3 Case C classification

Category label	Code	Count	Pct of Responses	Pct of Cases
CCR	1	4	40.0	40.0
CMA	2	4	40.0	40.0
other	3	2	20.0	20.0
Total responses		10	100.0	100.0

55 missing cases; 10 valid cases

Group Q5.4 Case D classification

Category label	Code	Count	Pct of Responses	Pct of Cases
other	3	2	100.0	100.0
Total responses		2	100.0	100.0

63 missing cases; 2 valid cases

6

```

-> mult response groups=q6 'reasons for contacts'
-> (q6.11 to q6.45(1,5))
-> q6.1 'Case A reason for contact'
-> (q6.11 to q6.15(1,5))
-> q6.2 'Case B reason for contact'
-> (q6.21 to q6.25(1,5))
-> q6.3 'Case C reason for contact'
-> (q6.31 to q6.35(1,5))
-> q6.4 'Case D reason for contact'
-> (q6.41 to q6.45(1,5))
-> /frequencities=q6 to q6.4.

```

~~Group Q6.1~~ reasons for contacts

Category label	Code	Count	Pct of Responses	Pct of Cases
substance abuse	1	5	5.2	11.6
P/Teen conflict	2	16	16.5	37.2
domestic violence	3	10	10.3	23.3
child management	4	28	28.9	65.1
other	5	38	39.2	88.4
Total responses		97	100.0	225.6

22 missing cases; 43 valid cases

Group Q6.1 Case A reason for contact

Category label	Code	Count	Pct of Responses	Pct of Cases
substance abuse	1	4	7.3	9.3
P/Teen conflict	2	8	14.5	18.6
domestic violence	3	7	12.7	16.3
child management	4	15	27.3	34.9
other	5	21	38.2	48.8
Total responses		55	100.0	127.9

22 missing cases; 43 valid cases

Group Q6.2 Case B reason for contact

Category label	Code	Count	Pct of Responses	Pct of Cases
P/Teen conflict	2	5	20.0	20.8
child management	4	8	32.0	33.3
other	5	12	48.0	50.0
Total responses		25	100.0	104.2

41 missing cases; 24 valid cases

Group Q6.3 Case C reason for contact

Category label	Code	Count	Pct of Responses	Pct of Cases
P/Teen conflict	2	2	15.4	18.2
domestic violence	3	2	15.4	18.2
child management	4	4	30.8	36.4
other	5	5	38.5	45.5
Total responses		13	100.0	118.2

54 missing cases; 11 valid cases

Group Q6.4 Case D reason for contact

Category label	Code	Count	Pct of Responses	Pct of Cases
substance abuse	1	1	25.0	50.0
P/Teen conflict	2	1	25.0	50.0
domestic violence	3	1	25.0	50.0
child management	4	1	25.0	50.0
Total responses		4	100.0	200.0

63 missing cases; 2 valid cases

-> frequencies variables=q7.1 to q10.

Q7.1 A: aware of disciplining legalities

Value Label	Value	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cum Percent
yes	1	10	15.4	34.5	34.5
no	2	12	18.5	41.4	75.9
don't know	3	7	10.8	24.1	100.0
.	.	36	55.4	Missing	
Total		65	100.0	100.0	

Valid cases 29 Missing cases 36

Q7.2 B: aware of disciplining legalities

Value Label	Value	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cum Percent
yes	1	8	12.3	47.1	47.1
no	2	5	7.7	29.4	76.5
don't know	3	4	6.2	23.5	100.0
.	.	48	73.8	Missing	
Total		65	100.0	100.0	

Valid cases 17 Missing cases 48

Q7.3 C: aware of disciplining legalities

Value Label	Value	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cum Percent
yes	1	3	4.6	37.5	37.5
no	2	1	1.5	12.5	50.0
don't know	3	4	6.2	50.0	100.0
.	.	57	87.7	Missing	
Total		65	100.0	100.0	

Valid cases 8 Missing cases 57

Q7.4 D: aware of disciplining legalities

Value Label	Value	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cum Percent
don't know	3	1	1.5	100.0	100.0
.	.	64	98.5	Missing	
Total		65	100.0	100.0	

Valid cases 1 Missing cases 64

Q8.1 A: departmental involvement

Value Label	Value	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cum Percent
statutory	1	18	27.7	41.9	41.9
non-statutory	2	25	38.5	58.1	100.0
.	.	22	33.8	Missing	
Total		65	100.0	100.0	

Valid cases 43 Missing cases 22

Q8.2 B: departmental involvement

Value Label	Value	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cum Percent
statutory	1	9	13.8	37.5	37.5
non-statutory	2	15	23.1	62.5	100.0
.	.	41	63.1	Missing	
Total		65	100.0	100.0	

Valid cases 24 Missing cases 41

Q8.3 C: departmental involvement

Value Label	Value	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cum Percent
statutory	1	3	4.6	27.3	27.3
non-statutory	2	8	12.3	72.7	100.0
.	.	54	83.1	Missing	
Total		65	100.0	100.0	

Valid cases 11 Missing cases 54

Q8.4 D: departmental involvement

Value Label	Value	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cum Percent
statutory	1	2	3.1	100.0	100.0
.	.	63	96.9	Missing	
Total		65	100.0	100.0	

Valid cases 2 Missing cases 63

Q9.1 A: cultural issues present

Value Label	Value	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cum Percent
yes	1	35	53.8	81.4	81.4
no	2	3	4.6	7.0	88.4
not sure	3	5	7.7	11.6	100.0
.	.	22	33.8	Missing	
Total		65	100.0	100.0	

Valid cases 43 Missing cases 22

Q9.2 B: cultural issues present

Value Label	Value	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cum Percent
yes	1	19	29.2	82.6	82.6
no	2	4	6.2	17.4	100.0
.	.	42	64.6	Missing	
Total		65	100.0	100.0	

Valid cases 23 Missing cases 42

Q9.3 C: cultural issues present

Value Label	Value	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cum Percent
yes	1	9	13.8	90.0	90.0
not sure	3	1	1.5	10.0	100.0
.	.	55	84.6	Missing	
Total		65	100.0	100.0	
Valid cases	10	Missing cases	55		

Q9.4 D: cultural issues present

Value Label	Value	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cum Percent
yes	1	2	3.1	100.0	100.0
.	.	63	96.9	Missing	
Total		65	100.0	100.0	
Valid cases	2	Missing cases	63		

Q9.1.1 A: how cultural issues identified

Value Label	Value	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cum Percent
intake	1	22	33.8	57.9	57.9
alocation	2	7	10.8	18.4	76.3
not identified	3	9	13.8	23.7	100.0
.	.	27	41.5	Missing	
Total		65	100.0	100.0	
Valid cases	38	Missing cases	27		

Q9.1.2 B: how cultural issues identified

Value Label	Value	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cum Percent
intake	1	12	18.5	52.2	52.2
alocation	2	6	9.2	26.1	78.3
not identified	3	5	7.7	21.7	100.0
.	.	42	64.6	Missing	
Total		65	100.0	100.0	
Valid cases	23	Missing cases	42		

Q9.1.3 C: how cultural issues identified

Value Label	Value	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cum Percent
intake	1	5	7.7	50.0	50.0
alocation	2	2	3.1	20.0	70.0
not identified	3	3	4.6	30.0	100.0
.	.	55	84.6	Missing	
Total		65	100.0	100.0	
Valid cases	10	Missing cases	55		

10  
 Q9.1.4 D: how cultural issues identified

Value Label	Value	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cum Percent
alocation	2	1	1.5	50.0	50.0
not identified	3	1	1.5	50.0	100.0
	.	63	96.9	Missing	
	Total	65	100.0	100.0	

Valid cases 2 Missing cases 63

-----  
 Q10 speak languages other than English

Value Label	Value	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cum Percent
yes	1	12	18.5	27.9	27.9
no	2	31	47.7	72.1	100.0
	.	22	33.8	Missing	
	Total	65	100.0	100.0	

Valid cases 43 Missing cases 22

-> mult response groups=q10 'languages spoken'  
 -> (q10.1 to q10.7(1,7))  
 -> /frequencies=q10.

Group Q10 languages spoken

Category label	Code	Count	Pct of Responses	Pct of Cases
Spanish	1	2	14.3	16.7
Portugese	2	1	7.1	8.3
Italian	3	1	7.1	8.3
other	7	10	71.4	83.3
	Total responses	14	100.0	116.7

53 missing cases; 12 valid cases

-> frequencies variables=q11.1 to q11.1.4/statistics=all.

Q11.1 As explaining intervention to parents

Value Label	Value	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cum Percent
extremely difficult	1	4	6.2	10.3	10.3
	2	5	7.7	12.8	23.1
	3	7	10.8	17.9	41.0
	4	7	10.8	17.9	59.0
	5	9	13.8	23.1	82.1
not difficult at all	6	7	10.8	17.9	100.0
	.	26	40.0	Missing	
	Total	65	100.0	100.0	

Mean	3.846	Std err	.259	Median	4.000
Mode	5.000	Std dev	1.615	Variance	2.607
Kurtosis	-1.027	S E Kurt	.741	Skewness	-.291
S E Skew	.378	Range	5.000	Minimum	1.000
Maximum	6.000	Sum	150.000		

Valid cases 39 Missing cases 26



Q11.2 B: explaining intervention to parents

Value Label	Value	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cum Percent
extremely difficult	1	2	3.1	9.1	9.1
	2	3	4.6	13.6	22.7
	3	2	3.1	9.1	31.8
	4	5	7.7	22.7	54.5
	5	4	6.2	18.2	72.7
not difficult at all	6	6	9.2	27.3	100.0
	.	43	66.2	Missing	
Total		65	100.0	100.0	

Mean	4.091	Std err	.360	Median	4.000
Mode	6.000	Std dev	1.688	Variance	2.848
Kurtosis	-.941	S E Kurt	.953	Skewness	-.483
S E Skew	.491	Range	5.000	Minimum	1.000
Maximum	6.000	Sum	90.000		

Valid cases 22 Missing cases 43

Q11.3 C: explaining intervention to parents

Value Label	Value	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cum Percent
extremely difficult	1	1	1.5	10.0	10.0
	2	1	1.5	10.0	20.0
	3	2	3.1	20.0	40.0
	5	3	4.6	30.0	70.0
	6	3	4.6	30.0	100.0
not difficult at all	.	55	84.6	Missing	
	Total		65	100.0	100.0

Mean	4.200	Std err	.573	Median	5.000
Mode	5.000	Std dev	1.814	Variance	3.289
Kurtosis	-1.007	S E Kurt	1.334	Skewness	-.648
S E Skew	.687	Range	5.000	Minimum	1.000
Maximum	6.000	Sum	42.000		

\* Multiple modes exist. The smallest value is shown.

Valid cases 10 Missing cases 55

Q11.4 D: explaining intervention to parents

Value Label	Value	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cum Percent
not difficult at all	5	1	1.5	50.0	50.0
	6	1	1.5	50.0	100.0
	.	63	96.9	Missing	
Total		65	100.0	100.0	

Mean	5.500	Std err	.500	Median	5.500
Mode	5.000	Std dev	.707	Variance	.500
Range	1.000	Minimum	5.000	Maximum	6.000
Sum	11.000				

\* Multiple modes exist. The smallest value is shown.

Valid cases 2 Missing cases 63

12

Q11.1.1 A: parents understand intervention

Value Label	Value	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cum Percent
great difficulty	1	5	7.7	12.8	12.8
	2	4	6.2	10.3	23.1
	3	9	13.8	23.1	46.2
	4	9	13.8	23.1	69.2
	5	7	10.8	17.9	87.2
not difficulty	6	5	7.7	12.8	100.0
	.	26	40.0	Missing	
Total		65	100.0	100.0	
Mean	3.615	Std err	.248	Median	4.000
Mode	3.000	Std dev	1.549	Variance	2.401
Kurtosis	-.846	S E Kurt	.741	Skewness	-.160
S E Skew	.378	Range	5.000	Minimum	1.000
Maximum	6.000	Sum	141.000		

\* Multiple modes exist. The smallest value is shown.

Valid cases 39 Missing cases 26

Q11.1.2 B: parents understand intervention

Value Label	Value	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cum Percent
great difficulty	1	4	6.2	18.2	18.2
	2	4	6.2	18.2	36.4
	3	3	4.6	13.6	50.0
	4	5	7.7	22.7	72.7
	5	2	3.1	9.1	81.8
not difficulty	6	4	6.2	18.2	100.0
	.	43	66.2	Missing	
Total		65	100.0	100.0	
Mean	3.409	Std err	.376	Median	3.500
Mode	4.000	Std dev	1.764	Variance	3.110
Kurtosis	-1.225	S E Kurt	.953	Skewness	.108
S E Skew	.491	Range	5.000	Minimum	1.000
Maximum	6.000	Sum	75.000		

Valid cases 22 Missing cases 43

Q11.1.3 C: parents understand intervention

Value Label	Value	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cum Percent
	2	3	4.6	30.0	30.0
	3	1	1.5	10.0	40.0
	4	2	3.1	20.0	60.0
	5	3	4.6	30.0	90.0
not difficulty	6	1	1.5	10.0	100.0
	.	55	84.6	Missing	
Total		65	100.0	100.0	
Mean	3.800	Std err	.467	Median	4.000
Mode	2.000	Std dev	1.476	Variance	2.178
Kurtosis	-1.507	S E Kurt	1.334	Skewness	-.093
S E Skew	.687	Range	4.000	Minimum	2.000
Maximum	6.000	Sum	38.000		

\* Multiple modes exist. The smallest value is shown.

Valid cases 10 Missing cases 55

Q11.1.4 D: parents understand intervention

Value Label	Value	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cum Percent
not difficulty	5	1	1.5	50.0	50.0
	6	1	1.5	50.0	100.0
	.	63	96.9	Missing	
	Total	65	100.0	100.0	
Mean	5.500	Std err	.500	Median	5.500
Mode	5.000	Std dev	.707	Variance	.500
Range	1.000	Minimum	5.000	Maximum	6.000
Sum	11.000				

\* Multiple modes exist. The smallest value is shown.

Valid cases 2 Missing cases 63

```

-> mult response groups=q12 'difficulties experienced'
-> (q12.11 to q12.46(1,6))
-> q12.1 'Case A difficulties experienced'
-> (q12.11 to q12.16(1,6))
-> q12.2 'Case B difficulties experienced'
-> (q12.21 to q12.26(1,6))
-> q12.3 'Case C difficulties experienced'
-> (q12.31 to q12.36(1,6))
-> q12.4 'Case D difficulties experienced'
-> (q12.41 to q12.46(1,6))
-> /frequencies=q12 to q12.4.

```

Group Q12 difficulties experienced

Category label	Code	Count	Pct of Responses	Pct of Cases
religion	1	6	7.1	18.2
cultural concepts	2	43	51.2	130.3
language	3	17	20.2	51.5
age	4	2	2.4	6.1
gender	5	15	17.9	45.5
other	6	1	1.2	3.0
	Total responses	84	100.0	254.5

32 missing cases; 33 valid cases

Group Q12.1 Case A difficulties experienced

Category label	Code	Count	Pct of Responses	Pct of Cases
religion	1	4	8.2	12.9
cultural concepts	2	24	49.0	77.4
language	3	10	20.4	32.3
age	4	1	2.0	3.2
gender	5	10	20.4	32.3
	Total responses	49	100.0	158.1

34 missing cases; 31 valid cases

Group Q12.2 Case B difficulties experienced

Category label	Code	Count	Pct of Responses	Pct of Cases
religion	1	1	4.3	5.9
cultural concepts	2	14	60.9	82.4
language	3	5	21.7	29.4
gender	5	3	13.0	17.6
	Total responses	23	100.0	135.3

48 missing cases; 17 valid cases

14

Group Q12.3 Case C difficulties experienced

Category label	Code	Count	Pct of Responses	Pct of Cases
religion	1	1	10.0	16.7
cultural concepts	2	4	40.0	66.7
language	3	2	20.0	33.3
gender	5	2	20.0	33.3
other	6	1	10.0	16.7
Total responses		10	100.0	166.7

59 missing cases; 6 valid cases

Group Q12.4 Case D difficulties experienced

Category label	Code	Count	Pct of Responses	Pct of Cases
cultural concepts	2	1	50.0	100.0
age	4	1	50.0	100.0
Total responses		2	100.0	200.0

64 missing cases; 1 valid cases

-> frequencies variables=q13.1 to q13.1.4.

Q13.1 A: need to use interpreters

Value Label	Value	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cum Percent
yes	1	9	13.8	20.9	20.9
no	2	34	52.3	79.1	100.0
.	.	22	33.8	Missing	
Total		65	100.0	100.0	

Valid cases 43 Missing cases 22

Q13.2 B: need to use interpreters

Value Label	Value	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cum Percent
yes	1	5	7.7	20.8	20.8
no	2	19	29.2	79.2	100.0
.	.	41	63.1	Missing	
Total		65	100.0	100.0	

Valid cases 24 Missing cases 41

Q13.3 C: need to use interpreters

Value Label	Value	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cum Percent
no	2	11	16.9	100.0	100.0
.	.	54	83.1	Missing	
Total		65	100.0	100.0	

Valid cases 11 Missing cases 54

Q13.4 D: need to use interpreters

Value Label	Value	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cum Percent
yes	1	1	1.5	50.0	50.0
no	2	1	1.5	50.0	100.0
.	.	63	96.9	Missing	
Total		65	100.0	100.0	
Valid cases	2	Missing cases	63		

Q13.1.1 A: how often use interpreters

Value Label	Value	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cum Percent
first contact	1	2	3.1	22.2	22.2
all times	2	3	4.6	33.3	55.6
occasionally	3	2	3.1	22.2	77.8
other	5	2	3.1	22.2	100.0
.	.	56	86.2	Missing	
Total		65	100.0	100.0	
Valid cases	9	Missing cases	56		

Q13.1.2 B: how often use interpreters

Value Label	Value	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cum Percent
first contact	1	2	3.1	50.0	50.0
occasionally	3	1	1.5	25.0	75.0
in court	4	1	1.5	25.0	100.0
.	.	61	93.8	Missing	
Total		65	100.0	100.0	
Valid cases	4	Missing cases	61		

Q13.1.3 C: how often use interpreters

Value Label	Value	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cum Percent
.	.	65	100.0	Missing	
Total		65	100.0	100.0	
Valid cases	0	Missing cases	65		

Q13.1.4 D: how often use interpreters

Value Label	Value	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cum Percent
occasionally	3	1	1.5	100.0	100.0
.	.	64	98.5	Missing	
Total		65	100.0	100.0	
Valid cases	1	Missing cases	64		

-> frequencies variables=q13.2.1 to q13.2.4/statistics=all.

Q13.2.1 A: how helpful were interpreters

Value Label	Value	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cum Percent
extremely helpful	1	6	9.2	66.7	66.7
	2	2	3.1	22.2	88.9
	4	1	1.5	11.1	100.0
	.	56	86.2	Missing	
	Total	65	100.0	100.0	
Mean	1.556	Std err	.338	Median	1.000
Mode	1.000	Std dev	1.014	Variance	1.028
Kurtosis	4.647	S E Kurt	1.400	Skewness	2.121
S E Skew	.717	Range	3.000	Minimum	1.000
Maximum	4.000	Sum	14.000		
Valid cases	9	Missing cases	56		

Q13.2.2 B: how helpful were interpreters

Value Label	Value	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cum Percent
extremely helpful	1	2	3.1	66.7	66.7
	2	1	1.5	33.3	100.0
	.	62	95.4	Missing	
	Total	65	100.0	100.0	
Mean	1.333	Std err	.333	Median	1.000
Mode	1.000	Std dev	.577	Variance	.333
Skewness	1.732	S E Skew	1.225	Range	1.000
Minimum	1.000	Maximum	2.000	Sum	4.000
Valid cases	3	Missing cases	62		

Q13.2.3 C: how helpful were interpreters

Value Label	Value	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cum Percent
	.	65	100.0	Missing	
	Total	65	100.0	100.0	
Valid cases	0	Missing cases	65		

Q13.2.4 D: how helpful were interpreters

Value Label	Value	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cum Percent
	3	1	1.5	100.0	100.0
	.	64	98.5	Missing	
	Total	65	100.0	100.0	
Mean	3.000	Mode	3.000	Range	.000
Minimum	3.000	Maximum	3.000	Sum	3.000
Valid cases	1	Missing cases	64		

17

```

-> mult response groups=q14 'refer parents to treatments'
-> (q14.11 to q14.46(1,6))
-> q14.1 'Case A refer parents to treatments'
-> (q14.11 to q14.16(1,6))
-> q14.2 'Case B refer parents to treatments'
-> (q14.21 to q14.26(1,6))
-> q14.3 'Case C refer parents to treatments'
-> (q14.31 to q14.46(1,6))
-> q14.4 'Case D refer parents to treatments'
-> (q14.41 to q14.46(1,6))
-> /frequencies=q14 to q14.4.

```

**Group Q14 refer parents to treatments**

Category label	Code	Count	Pct of Responses	Pct of Cases
Counselling	1	21	28.0	70.0
Mediation	2	7	9.3	23.3
Psychology	3	15	20.0	50.0
Parenting Course	4	14	18.7	46.7
Self Help	5	8	10.7	26.7
other	6	10	13.3	33.3
Total responses		75	100.0	250.0

35 missing cases; 30 valid cases

**Group Q14.1 Case A refer parents to treatments**

Category label	Code	Count	Pct of Responses	Pct of Cases
Counselling	1	12	26.7	41.4
Mediation	2	4	8.9	13.8
Psychology	3	7	15.6	24.1
Parenting Course	4	9	20.0	31.0
Self Help	5	7	15.6	24.1
other	6	6	13.3	20.7
Total responses		45	100.0	155.2

36 missing cases; 29 valid cases

**Group Q14.2 Case B refer parents to treatments**

Category label	Code	Count	Pct of Responses	Pct of Cases
Counselling	1	5	27.8	38.5
Mediation	2	3	16.7	23.1
Psychology	3	4	22.2	30.8
Parenting Course	4	2	11.1	15.4
Self Help	5	1	5.6	7.7
other	6	3	16.7	23.1
Total responses		18	100.0	138.5

52 missing cases; 13 valid cases

**Group Q14.3 Case C refer parents to treatments**

Category label	Code	Count	Pct of Responses	Pct of Cases
Counselling	1	4	33.3	57.1
Psychology	3	4	33.3	57.1
Parenting Course	4	3	25.0	42.9
other	6	1	8.3	14.3
Total responses		12	100.0	171.4

58 missing cases; 7 valid cases

**Group Q14.4 Case D refer parents to treatments**

Category label	Code	Count	Pct of Responses	Pct of Cases
Counselling	1	1	50.0	50.0
Parenting Course	4	1	50.0	50.0
Total responses		2	100.0	100.0

63 missing cases; 2 valid cases

-> frequencies variables=q15.1 to q15.4.

Q15.1 A: parents refuse these services

Value Label	Value	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cum Percent
yes	1	11	16.9	34.4	34.4
no	2	21	32.3	65.6	100.0
.	.	33	50.8	Missing	
Total		65	100.0	100.0	

Valid cases 32 Missing cases 33

Q15.2 B: parents refuse these services

Value Label	Value	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cum Percent
yes	1	3	4.6	17.6	17.6
no	2	11	16.9	64.7	82.4
outcome unknown	3	3	4.6	17.6	100.0
.	.	48	73.8	Missing	
Total		65	100.0	100.0	

Valid cases 17 Missing cases 48

Q15.3 C: parents refuse these services

Value Label	Value	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cum Percent
yes	1	2	3.1	33.3	33.3
no	2	4	6.2	66.7	100.0
.	.	59	90.8	Missing	
Total		65	100.0	100.0	

Valid cases 6 Missing cases 59

Q15.4 D: parents refuse these services

Value Label	Value	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cum Percent
yes	1	2	3.1	100.0	100.0
.	.	63	96.9	Missing	
Total		65	100.0	100.0	

Valid cases 2 Missing cases 63



-> frequencies variables=q16.1 to q16.4/statistics=all.

Q16.1 ~~locating~~ locating appropriate service

Value Label	Value	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cum Percent
extremely difficult	1	2	3.1	6.7	6.7
	2	8	12.3	26.7	33.3
	3	4	6.2	13.3	46.7
	4	4	6.2	13.3	60.0
	5	3	4.6	10.0	70.0
not difficult at all	6	9	13.8	30.0	100.0
	.	35	53.8	Missing	
Total		65	100.0	100.0	

Mean	3.833	Std err	.325	Median	4.000
Mode	6.000	Std dev	1.783	Variance	3.178
Kurtosis	-1.552	S E Kurt	.833	Skewness	-.005
S E Skew	.427	Range	5.000	Minimum	1.000
Maximum	6.000	Sum	115.000		

Valid cases 30 Missing cases 35

Q16.2 B: locating appropriate service

Value Label	Value	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cum Percent
extremely difficult	1	1	1.5	6.3	6.3
	2	1	1.5	6.3	12.5
	3	5	7.7	31.3	43.8
	4	2	3.1	12.5	56.3
	5	3	4.6	18.8	75.0
not difficult at all	6	4	6.2	25.0	100.0
	.	49	75.4	Missing	
Total		65	100.0	100.0	

Mean	4.063	Std err	.392	Median	4.000
Mode	3.000	Std dev	1.569	Variance	2.463
Kurtosis	-.897	S E Kurt	1.091	Skewness	-.235
S E Skew	.564	Range	5.000	Minimum	1.000
Maximum	6.000	Sum	65.000		

Valid cases 16 Missing cases 49

Q16.3 C: locating appropriate service

Value Label	Value	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cum Percent
	2	2	3.1	40.0	40.0
	3	2	3.1	40.0	80.0
	5	1	1.5	20.0	100.0
.		60	92.3	Missing	
Total		65	100.0	100.0	

Mean	3.000	Std err	.548	Median	3.000
Mode	2.000	Std dev	1.225	Variance	1.500
Kurtosis	2.000	S E Kurt	2.000	Skewness	1.361
S E Skew	.913	Range	3.000	Minimum	2.000
Maximum	5.000	Sum	15.000		

\* Multiple modes exist. The smallest value is shown.

Valid cases 5 Missing cases 60

Q16.4 D: locating appropriate service

Value Label	Value	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cum Percent
	3	1	1.5	100.0	100.0
	.	64	98.5	Missing	
	Total	65	100.0	100.0	
Mean	3.000	Mode	3.000	Range	.000
Minimum	3.000	Maximum	3.000	Sum	3.000

Valid cases 1 Missing cases 64

```

-> mult response groups=q17 'difficulties with service'
-> (q17.11 to q17.45(1,5))
-> q17.1 'Case A diificulties with service'
-> (q17.11 to q17.15(1,5))
-> q17.2 'Case B diificulties with service'
-> (q17.21 to q17.25(1,5))
-> q17.3 'Case C diificulties with service'
-> (q17.31 to q17.35(1,5))
-> q17.4 'Case D diificulties with service'
-> (q17.41 to q17.45(1,5))
-> /frequencies=q17 to q17.4.
  
```

Group Q17 difficulties with service

Category label	Code	Count	Pct of Responses	Pct of Cases
not in district	1	18	52.9	112.5
language barrier	2	11	32.4	68.8
no vacancies	3	5	14.7	31.3
	Total responses	34	100.0	212.5

49 missing cases; 16 valid cases

Group Q17.1 Case A diificulties with service

Category label	Code	Count	Pct of Responses	Pct of Cases
not in district	1	10	50.0	71.4
language barrier	2	6	30.0	42.9
no vacancies	3	4	20.0	28.6
	Total responses	20	100.0	142.9

51 missing cases; 14 valid cases

Group Q17.2 Case B diificulties with service

Category label	Code	Count	Pct of Responses	Pct of Cases
not in district	1	4	44.4	57.1
language barrier	2	4	44.4	57.1
no vacancies	3	1	11.1	14.3
	Total responses	9	100.0	128.6

58 missing cases; 7 valid cases

Group Q17.3 Case C diificulties with service

Category label	Code	Count	Pct of Responses	Pct of Cases
not in district	1	3	75.0	100.0
language barrier	2	1	25.0	33.3
	Total responses	4	100.0	133.3

62 missing cases; 3 valid cases

Group Q17.4 Case D difficulties with service

Category label	Code	Count	Pct of Responses	Pct of Cases
not in district	1	1	100.0	100.0
Total responses		1	100.0	100.0

64 missing cases; 1 valid cases

-> frequencies variables=q18.1 to q21.4/statistics=all.

Q18.1 A: services culturally appropriate

Value Label	Value	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cum Percent
very appropriate	1	3	4.6	10.7	10.7
	2	7	10.8	25.0	35.7
	3	8	12.3	28.6	64.3
	4	4	6.2	14.3	78.6
	5	3	4.6	10.7	89.3
not appropriate at a	6	3	4.6	10.7	100.0
	.	37	56.9	Missing	
Total		65	100.0	100.0	

Mean	3.214	Std err	.283	Median	3.000
Mode	3.000	Std dev	1.500	Variance	2.249
Kurtosis	-.619	S E Kurt	.858	Skewness	.458
S E Skew	.441	Range	5.000	Minimum	1.000
Maximum	6.000	Sum	90.000		

Valid cases 28 Missing cases 37

Q18.2 B: services culturally appropriate

Value Label	Value	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cum Percent
very appropriate	1	2	3.1	12.5	12.5
	2	1	1.5	6.3	18.8
	3	3	4.6	18.8	37.5
	4	4	6.2	25.0	62.5
	5	5	7.7	31.3	93.8
not appropriate at a	6	1	1.5	6.3	100.0
	.	49	75.4	Missing	
Total		65	100.0	100.0	

Mean	3.750	Std err	.371	Median	4.000
Mode	5.000	Std dev	1.483	Variance	2.200
Kurtosis	-.362	S E Kurt	1.091	Skewness	-.630
S E Skew	.564	Range	5.000	Minimum	1.000
Maximum	6.000	Sum	60.000		

Valid cases 16 Missing cases 49

Q18.3 C: services culturally appropriate

Value Label	Value	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cum Percent
	3	2	3.1	40.0	40.0
	4	1	1.5	20.0	60.0
	5	1	1.5	20.0	80.0
not appropriate at a	6	1	1.5	20.0	100.0
	.	60	92.3	Missing	
	Total	65	100.0	100.0	
Mean	4.200	Std err	.583	Median	4.000
Mode	3.000	Std dev	1.304	Variance	1.700
Kurtosis	-1.488	S E Kurt	2.000	Skewness	.541
S E Skew	.913	Range	3.000	Minimum	3.000
Maximum	6.000	Sum	21.000		

Valid cases 5 Missing cases 60

Q18.4 D: services culturally appropriate

Value Label	Value	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cum Percent
very appropriate	1	1	1.5	100.0	100.0
	.	64	98.5	Missing	
	Total	65	100.0	100.0	
Mean	1.000	Mode	1.000	Range	.000
Minimum	1.000	Maximum	1.000	Sum	1.000

Valid cases 1 Missing cases 64

Q20.1 A: services used were

Value Label	Value	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cum Percent
very useful	1	4	6.2	14.8	14.8
	2	9	13.8	33.3	48.1
	3	7	10.8	25.9	74.1
	4	3	4.6	11.1	85.2
	5	3	4.6	11.1	96.3
not useful at all	6	1	1.5	3.7	100.0
	.	38	58.5	Missing	
	Total	65	100.0	100.0	
Mean	2.815	Std err	.262	Median	3.000
Mode	2.000	Std dev	1.360	Variance	1.849
Kurtosis	-.196	S E Kurt	.872	Skewness	.659
S E Skew	.448	Range	5.000	Minimum	1.000
Maximum	6.000	Sum	76.000		

Valid cases 27 Missing cases 38

Q20.2 B: services used were

Value Label	Value	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cum Percent
very useful	1	1	1.5	6.7	6.7
	2	4	6.2	26.7	33.3
	3	1	1.5	6.7	40.0
	4	3	4.6	20.0	60.0
	5	6	9.2	40.0	100.0
	.	50	76.9	Missing	
Total		65	100.0	100.0	

Mean	3.600	Std err	.375	Median	4.000
Mode	5.000	Std dev	1.454	Variance	2.114
Kurtosis	-1.430	S E Kurt	1.121	Skewness	-.470
S E Skew	.580	Range	4.000	Minimum	1.000
Maximum	5.000	Sum	54.000		

Valid cases 15 Missing cases 50

Q20.3 C: services used were

Value Label	Value	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cum Percent
	3	2	3.1	40.0	40.0
	4	2	3.1	40.0	80.0
	5	1	1.5	20.0	100.0
	.	60	92.3	Missing	
Total		65	100.0	100.0	

Mean	3.800	Std err	.374	Median	4.000
Mode	3.000	Std dev	.837	Variance	.700
Kurtosis	-.612	S E Kurt	2.000	Skewness	.512
S E Skew	.913	Range	2.000	Minimum	3.000
Maximum	5.000	Sum	19.000		

\* Multiple modes exist. The smallest value is shown.

Valid cases 5 Missing cases 60

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 Q20.4 D: services used were

Value Label	Value	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cum Percent
very useful	1	1	1.5	100.0	100.0
	.	64	98.5	Missing	
Total		65	100.0	100.0	

Mean	1.000	Mode	1.000	Range	.000
Minimum	1.000	Maximum	1.000	Sum	1.000

Valid cases 1 Missing cases 64

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Q21.1 A: changes in family attitude

Value Label	Value	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cum Percent
no improvement	1	5	7.7	13.2	13.2
minimal improvement	2	9	13.8	23.7	36.8
reasonable improve	3	11	16.9	28.9	65.8
great improvement	4	8	12.3	21.1	86.8
outcome unknown	5	5	7.7	13.2	100.0
.	.	27	41.5	Missing	
Total		65	100.0	100.0	

Mean	2.974	Std err	.201	Median	3.000
Mode	3.000	Std dev	1.241	Variance	1.540
Kurtosis	-.885	S E Kurt	.750	Skewness	.052
S E Skew	.383	Range	4.000	Minimum	1.000
Maximum	5.000	Sum	113.000		

Valid cases 38 Missing cases 27

Q21.2 B: changes in family attitude

Value Label	Value	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cum Percent
no improvement	1	2	3.1	10.0	10.0
minimal improvement	2	8	12.3	40.0	50.0
reasonable improve	3	3	4.6	15.0	65.0
great improvement	4	4	6.2	20.0	85.0
outcome unknown	5	3	4.6	15.0	100.0
.	.	45	69.2	Missing	
Total		65	100.0	100.0	

Mean	2.900	Std err	.289	Median	2.500
Mode	2.000	Std dev	1.294	Variance	1.674
Kurtosis	-1.076	S E Kurt	.992	Skewness	.366
S E Skew	.512	Range	4.000	Minimum	1.000
Maximum	5.000	Sum	58.000		

Valid cases 20 Missing cases 45

Q21.3 C: changes in family attitude

Value Label	Value	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cum Percent
minimal improvement	2	4	6.2	44.4	44.4
reasonable improve	3	2	3.1	22.2	66.7
great improvement	4	1	1.5	11.1	77.8
outcome unknown	5	2	3.1	22.2	100.0
.	.	56	86.2	Missing	
Total		65	100.0	100.0	

Mean	3.111	Std err	.423	Median	3.000
Mode	2.000	Std dev	1.269	Variance	1.611
Kurtosis	-1.251	S E Kurt	1.400	Skewness	.683
S E Skew	.717	Range	3.000	Minimum	2.000
Maximum	5.000	Sum	28.000		

Valid cases 9 Missing cases 56

Q21.4 D: changes in family attitude

Value Label	Value	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cum Percent
no improvement	1	1	1.5	100.0	100.0
	.	64	98.5	Missing	
	Total	65	100.0	100.0	
Mean	1.000	Mode	1.000	Range	.000
Minimum	1.000	Maximum	1.000	Sum	1.000

Valid cases 1 Missing cases 64

-> frequencies variables=q22.

Q22 need for culturally specific program

Value Label	Value	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cum Percent
yes	1	37	56.9	57.8	57.8
no	2	11	16.9	17.2	75.0
not sure	3	16	24.6	25.0	100.0
	.	1	1.5	Missing	
	Total	65	100.0	100.0	

Valid cases 64 Missing cases 1