

Coming to conclusion



Coming to Conclusions: A Summary Review Social workers are often burdened with the undue responsibility for delays in the child care system that can impact the child for life. A study by Beckett, McKeigue, and Taylor (2007) explored the ways that the decision about a child's future can be the victim of the need for immediacy and its impact upon the thoroughness of the evidence (p. 54). The study focused on the care proceeding system in England and Wales where the care proceeding system generates a care order that removes the child from the parental home and places the child in the custody of the state. While it is necessary to consider the input offered by the stakeholders, such as grandparents and the social workers, long delays in gathering and evaluating the information can work to the detriment of the child. The study used in-depth focus groups with social workers to determine how, why, and in which fashion evidence could become tainted or distorted.

The study pointed out the areas that the interviewees perceived as being prone to rendering an inadequate decision. The ability to weigh chronic and ongoing abuse against the emotionally charged single event of acute abuse was one of the difficulties pointed out by the study (Beckett, McKeigue, and Taylor, 2007, p. 57). The study contended that the less significant abuse that formed a pattern was often disregarded if there was some more recent evidence that demonstrated an ability to change (Beckett, McKeigue, and Taylor, 2007, p. 61). The study also demonstrated that the social workers were caught in a situation of conflicting roles. The study noted that while the social workers were expected to advocate for the parents, they are also in an adversarial role of, "...limit setters, enforcers and, if the case comes to court, witnesses " for the prosecution"" (Beckett, McKeigue, and Taylor, 2007, p.

59). These scenarios produce a situation where the parents and the children are not fully and adequately represented.

The study recognized that delayed proceedings always work to the detriment of the child (Beckett, McKeigue, and Taylor, 2007, p. 60). Yet, all of the steps needed to acquire adequate and complete information results in delays. The study concluded by suggesting that the proceedings could be sped up and give a better outcome by eliminating the adversarial format that is currently used (Beckett, McKeigue, and Taylor, 2007, p. 62). The researchers further recommend that the participants in the proceedings have a better support system to reduce the effect of personal goals and aid to keep the past in its proper perspective (Beckett, McKeigue, and Taylor, 2007, p. 62). The study was an important contribution in regards to its recognition of the need to reduce delay, while presenting ample evidence during the child care proceedings.

The study was written in a standard research paper format where the paragraphs are focused on a topic that is supported by evidence. The authors have integrated other literature into the study, both in the case for the importance and relevance of the study as well as confirming their findings. The authors cited a study by Tonkiss (2004) to validate their own viewpoint that " focus groups are a means of generating qualitative data so as to explore different perspectives on it, rather than to access representative or generalizable views about it" (Beckett, McKeigue, and Taylor, 2007, p. 57). The study also cited McKeigue and Beckett (2004) and Thomas et al. (1993) to bolster their argument that delays have gotten longer and are unacceptable (Beckett, McKeigue, and Taylor, 2007, p. 54-55). In addition, their analysis was broken down by topic and individually

discussed in light of their findings. The study utilized the previous research of Reder (2003) to confirm their own findings that the past history of a child's chronic abuse needs to be carefully considered (Beckett, McKeigue, and Taylor, 2007, p. 58). In the events that previous literature was utilized, it was cited in proper APA format with the date and page number. Credibility was further established by using research that had been published in peer reviewed journals.

In the analysis section of the article the authors would state the topic and have it followed by the responses of the interviewees. In the sub-section on kinds of evidence, and the perception of chronic versus acute abuse, the study states that "...agency politics and the politics of the court could lead to delay in bringing the chronic cases to court" (Beckett, McKeigue, and Taylor, 2007, p. 57). This was supported by the comment from one participant in the study who remarked, " It had to be quite a serious level of neglect [to be seen as] neglectful by a senior manager [who would otherwise say] " Oh no, keep it under the child in need umbrella"... " (Beckett, McKeigue, and Taylor, 2007, p. 57). This supporting format was used throughout the analysis section.

Poverty was not the focus of the paper and was not raised as an issue. However, when the issue of child neglect and abuse are raised, poverty is indirectly implicated. Children who are raised in an environment that is in the lower socio-economic classes are placed at greater risk for abuse. Poverty is often associated with substance abuse, single parenting, and lower quality neighborhoods and schools. In addition, poverty makes it more difficult for the parents to be heard or adequately represented. Whenever the issues that encompass the social challenges faced by a child at risk are raised,

poverty will necessarily be a significant component of the discussion.

References

Beckett, C., McKeigue, B., & Taylor, H. (2007). Coming to conclusions: Social workers perceptions of the decision-making process in care proceedings [Electronic version]. *Child and Family Social Work*, 12(1), 54-63. from Blackwell.