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A Little Autumn Housekeeping: Updates to Resources, Blogroll

October 15, 2011 Posted by M. P. under News, NRM, Policy, Research

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Just uploaded some long-intended additions to the resource links ([Resources](#) and [Politics and the Nonprofit](#)) and the [Blogroll](#) including,

[Pittsblog](#)

[The Pittsburgh Urban Blog](#)

[Simply Put](#)

[Nullspace](#)

[The Pennsylvania Budget and Policy Center](#)

[Keystone Research Center](#)

[The National Center for Juvenile Justice](#)

[Pittsburgh Today Blog](#).

These organizations and bloggers are excellent resources for data, commentary and timely updates on the policy, politics, data trends and general goings-on that may have an impact on (or be useful knowledge for) nonprofits in western Pennsylvania. In the spirit of full disclosure, my spouse works at one of these organizations – but that had nothing to do with why it took me this long to add the link. **THAT** had everything to do with how I feel about housekeeping in general.

Work-Family Conflict – Juggling Kids, Aging Parents and a Job You Want to Keep

October 12, 2011 Posted by M. P. under Children and Family, Federal Government, Management, Policy

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The latest edition of the policy journal [The Future of Children](#) (a collaborative project between Princeton University and the [Brookings Institution](#)) was formally [released last week at an event](#) in Washington, DC. The theme of the Fall 2011 issue is **Work and Family**, a timely topic what with approximately 70 percent of mothers currently in the workforce and an increasing number of single-parent families in the country. Yet another new demographic trend adding strain to the work-family balance is the large number of aging and elderly parents, grandparents and other relatives who are or will be in need of care as their health declines.

I included a link to the audio of the event at the bottom of this post and encourage interested readers to give it a listen. The presentation concludes with a question and answer segment that expounds on methods to best balance both the needs of businesses and their employees around work-family policy changes such as paid leave (not paid for by the employer) and scheduling flexibility such as “right to request”. An aside – my personal favorite is a comment by a woman who claims that childbirth, based on her experience, only requires a 2-day disability leave.

The [journal features 9 submissions](#) on topics ranging from elder care, to an international examination of family leave practices in competitive economies, to the role of the government in work-family conflicts. With the federal government on the sidelines, unable to move forward with any legislation, now may be the time for state-level policy-makers and businesses to take the lead and address the very real issue of work-family conflicts. Some [takeaways from the journal's executive summary](#) include:

- flexibility in the workplace is a win-win as it is associated with higher productivity for employers and better health, job engagement and satisfaction for employees;
- family leave policies are not equitable – they are more often seen in higher-paying professions; and
- there is a need for policies in the workplace that realistically support men and women carrying the responsibility for young child and elder care to reduce work-family conflict at little to no additional cost to the employer.

Work and Family Balance

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Study Declares Communities That Cares a Successful Prevention Program

October 10, 2011 Posted by M. P. under Children and Family, Drug and Alcohol, Evaluation, Juvenile Delinquency, Program Model, Youth Development [No Comments](#)

A [study published online](#) in the journal **Archives of Pediatrics and Adolescent Medicine** offers evidence that the program **Communities That Care** is successful in preventing drug and alcohol use and other high-risk behaviors among youth. Communities That Care is essentially a prevention strategy developed by researchers at the University of Washington. According to the [CTC Facebook page](#), the approach is described as a “coalition-based prevention operating system that uses a public health approach to prevent youth problem behaviors such as violence, delinquency, school drop out and substance abuse”.

The most recent study tracked students (via surveys) for 5 years (from 5th grade to 10th grade), including a period of time after the external support for the CTC program in their community had been withdrawn. According to a new release from the University of Washington, adolescents in the communities where the program operated:

- were half as likely to have tried cigarettes by the 10th grade;
- had 38 percent lower odds of trying alcohol by grade 10;
- 25 percent lower odds of participating in physical violence; and
- 17 percent lower odds of participating in delinquent behaviors including theft, vandalism and drug sales than their peers in other communities.

A brief summary of the study, [Sustained Decreases in Risk Exposure and Youth Problem Behaviors After Installation of the Communities That Care Prevention System in a Randomized Trial](#) by J. David Hawkins, PhD; Sabrina Oesterle, PhD; Eric C. Brown, PhD; Kathryn C. Monahan, PhD; Robert D. Abbott, PhD; Michael W. Arthur, PhD; and Richard F. Catalano, PhD is available at the [Archives of Pediatric Adolescent Medicine website](#). Additional information on this study and comments from the head researcher are included in [the news release](#) from the University of Washington.

The Unknowns Surrounding Foster Children with Incarcerated Parents

October 6, 2011 Posted by M. P. under Children and Family, Federal Government, Policy [No Comments](#)

A [Government Accountability Office \(GAO\)](#) report, [Child Welfare: More Information and Collaboration Could Promote Ties Between Foster Care Children and Their Incarcerated Parents](#), examined the number of youth in foster care with incarcerated parents, how the child welfare and correctional systems worked together to continue family contact, and how larger government agencies, the [Department of Health of Human Services \(HHS\)](#) and the [Department of Justice \(DOJ\)](#), in particular, have supported local level agencies in this goal.

To summarize, the answers are:

- No one really knows;
- occasionally; and
- not much.

Unfortunately, data from the HHS and the Bureau of Justice Statistics do not provide an accurate estimate of the number foster children with at least one parent incarcerated, nor do they provide information on the timing of the incarceration in relation to the removal of the child or children from the home. Known data

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 It used to be about finding a "work-family balance", now the phrase is "work-family conflict" - how do you manage yours?

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from 2009 suggest that more than 14,000 youth were placed in foster care due to the incarceration of a parent.

In the 10 states studied, researchers successfully identified methods used to support families separated by both incarceration and the child welfare system including training for caseworkers, and when possible, parental involvement via telephone in child family court hearings. How often such or similar methods were utilized is unknown. It is also not clear if any long-term strategies were in place across systems to best facilitate goals of family reunification, or if and when kinship care was utilized. It should be noted that caseworkers in the child welfare system face extraordinary challenges working with correctional facilities due to the maze of regulations, policies and procedures found in both systems.

The GAO found that HHS does disseminate information to child welfare and correctional agencies to assist children and families involved in both systems, but the report mentions that such information was not necessarily easily located or timely. Also, the report indicates that federal prisons lack written guidelines for working with child welfare agencies and caseworkers.

The report concludes that routine, standardized distribution of up-to-date information, cross-system collaboration, clear protocols adhering to policy and working relationships between agencies at the local level would go far in maintaining familial bonds between foster children and their incarcerated parents. [These, and several additional recommendations, are listed](#) at the GAO website.

Even over a decade after its passage, the [well-intentioned legislation to more quickly move foster children to permanent homes](#), via either family reunification or an adoptive home, makes the relevance of this report clear. While federal law deems states must make "reasonable efforts" to reunify families, states are [allowed to define those efforts](#) as they see fit. Luckily, [legal advocates](#) and [some policymakers](#) have long recognized and been working to address the issues raised by this report.

Lack of Sleep Associated with Risky Behaviors in Teens

October 4, 2011 Posted by M. P. under Health, Research, Youth Development

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A study conducted by the [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention](#) found that nearly 70 percent of high school students in the United States do not get an adequate amount of sleep.

Data from the 2007 [Youth Risk Behavior Survey](#) indicated a majority of teens did not get the amount of sleep recommended (8 hours or more), particularly on school nights. Insufficient sleep was linked to reduced levels of physical activity, computer use of 3 hours or more daily, and feelings of despair. High-risk behaviors such as alcohol, marijuana and cigarette use were more likely in students who received less sleep than their peers.

A summary of the study, [Relationships between hours of sleep and health-risk behaviors in US adolescent students](#) by Lela R. McKnight-Eilya, Danice K. Eaton, Richard Lowry, Letitia Presley-Cantrella and Geraldine S. Perry is available at the Science Direct website.

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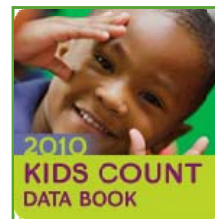
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