

International Journal on Child Maltreatment



Research, Policy and Practice: Special Issue on Child Wellbeing after Child Welfare System Involvement

Guest Editors:

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Aims and scope of the special issue:

A – or perhaps, the – fundamental questions about the child welfare system (CWS, and/or child protection system) is, does it help children? Of late, many activists, as well as some scholars and governmental officials, have argued that CWS – at least in the US context – does more harm than good, especially (but not solely) when it places children in out-of-home (formal foster, kinship, or residential) care. Unfortunately, the evidence on child wellbeing following any form of CWS intervention remains underdeveloped and struggles to differentiate the effects of child maltreatment from the effects of any action or inaction by CWS. A great deal of research has focused on a narrow range of process/system outcomes: recurrent involvement with CWS, experiences of children within out-of-home care (e.g., placement stability), and patterns of out-of-home care entry and exit. Though such studies are important, too often, this leads to child wellbeing being framed in terms of whether system goals were met. System goals may be weakly related, unrelated, or even contrary to a child's health, functioning, or quality of life. We lack a more comprehensive understanding of whether, how, and for whom child welfare systems impact wellbeing across the life course.

This call solicits studies on the wellbeing outcomes of children after involvement with the formal child welfare system (CWS; or other governmental entity with recognized authority for child protection).

The call specifically seeks studies that speak to the impact of CWS decisions and actions (e.g., services, foster care, adoption, reunification) on children's short and long-term wellbeing (broadly defined).

The goals of this special issue are to (1) increase understanding of the range of wellbeing outcomes for children subject to CWS intervention across various places and contexts; and (2) gain broader insight about the strategies, practices, and policies of CWS that are most (and least) conducive to promoting child wellbeing.

We welcome quantitative, qualitative, and mixed-method studies from any country, region, or locale.

Submission instructions:

Manuscript abstracts are invited between June 1, 2021 and September 15, 2021. Abstracts should include the objective and aims of the study, the methodology, findings, and conclusions. Findings may be preliminary. Abstracts should not exceed 1,000 words. We welcome quantitative, qualitative, and mixed-method studies from any country, region, or locale as well as systematic reviews and commentaries.

Important dates:

Abstracts accepted: June 1, 2021 through September 15, 2021
Invitation for full manuscript submission: October 31, 2021
Full manuscript submission: April 30, 2022

Abstracts should be sent to the guest editors:

Following an invitation to submit a full manuscript, authors should prepare the paper in compliance with the International Journal on Child Maltreatment: Research, Policy and Practice's guide for authors (<https://www.springer.com/journal/42448/submission-guidelines>) and submitted through Editorial Manager (EM) submission site <https://www.editorialmanager.com/malt/default.aspx>

Manuscripts will be peer reviewed. Please indicate in the cover letter accompanying your manuscript that your paper is considered for the Special Issue on Child Wellbeing after Child Welfare System Involvement.

For questions regarding this special issue, please contact:

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For general questions or inquiries about the journal, please contact the Editor-in-Chief Carmit Katz, PhD carmitkatz@tauex.tau.ac.il