

## SVERIGE - SWEDEN

### Overview of residential child care

### Journal abstracts

Policy measures and the survival of foster infants in Stockholm 1878-1925.

Author: Burstrom, Bo; Oeberg, Lisa; Smedman, Lars.

Publication info: European Journal of Public Health 22. 1 (Feb 2012): 56-60.

**Abstract:** Background: At the end of the 19th century, infant mortality was high in urban and rural areas in Sweden. In Stockholm, the mortality rate was particularly high among foster children. This study addresses the importance for health of targeted public policies and their local implementation in the reduction of excess mortality among foster children in Stockholm at the turn of the 19th century. In response to public concern, a law was passed in 1902 on inspections of foster homes. Stockholm city employed a handful of inspectors who visited foster homes and advised parents on child care and feeding. Methods: Analysis of historical records from the City of Stockholm was combined with epidemiological analysis of mortality rates and hazard ratios on individual-level data for 112,746 children aged <1 year residing in one part of Stockholm between 1878 and 1925. Hazard ratios of mortality were calculated using Cox's regression analysis. Results: Mortality rates of foster infants exceeded 300/1000 before 1903. Ten years later the mortality rates among foster children had declined and were similar to other children born in and out of wedlock. Historical accounts and epidemiological analysis of individual-level data over a longer time period showed similar results. Conclusions: Targeted policy measures to foster children may have potentiated the positive health effects of other universal policies, such as improved living conditions, clean water and sanitation for the whole population in the city, contributing to an equalization of mortality rates between different groups.

Procedures when young people leave care - Views of 111 Swedish social services managers.

Author: Hojer, Ingrid; Sjoblom, Yvonne.

Publication info: Children and Youth Services Review 33. 12 (Dec 2011): 2452-2460.

**Abstract:** In western societies, there is a general tendency towards a protracted transition to adulthood for young people, who thereby may become increasingly dependent on support from family. Young people leaving a placement in out-of-home care often lack such support, and will thus have a disadvantageous position compared to their peers. With the purpose of looking into the procedures when young people leave a placement in out-of-home care, telephone interviews were performed with 111 managers of social service units in two Swedish regions (West Sweden, and Stockholm Region), using a structured interview schedule. Answering rate was 99.1%. Only 6% of the managers had information of the young people's whereabouts once they had left care. 86-88% had general support programmes for all young people concerning housing, employment etc. but only 2-4% had specific programmes for young people leaving care. A majority of the managers were attentive of the difficulties the young people leaving care may encounter, but displayed little awareness of the consequences of a prolonged transition to adulthood, and the need for continued support after leaving care. Several managers referred to the general support of the Swedish welfare state, meaning that young people leaving care had the same access to support as all other young people in Sweden. Consequently, young people leaving care are at risk of being invisible in the welfare system and facing a compressed transition to adulthood.

Managing loss and a threatened identity: experiences of parents of children growing up in foster care, the perspectives of their social workers and implications for practice.

Author: Schofield, Gillian; Moldestad, Bente; Hojer, Ingrid; Ward, Emma; Skilbred, Dag; et al.

Publication info: British Journal of Social Work 41. 1 (Jan 2011): 74-92.

**Abstract:** Parents of children growing up in foster-care have been a largely neglected group in policy, practice and research, in spite of the fact that these parents are often vulnerable adults who experience a profound loss and a threat to their identity. Parents' involvement through contact is also likely to have an impact on children's stability and security in the foster family. This article draws on data from parallel qualitative studies at the University of East Anglia, England, the University of Bergen, Norway, and the University of Gothenburg, Sweden. Interviews and focus groups with parents showed a great deal of similarity in the situation experienced by parents in the three countries. But all three studies found great diversity in how parents managed their loss and their threatened identity over time, including varied strategies for managing cognitive dissonance. What parents shared was the need to be treated by social workers with respect and empathy; to receive information about the children; and to be involved, where possible, in the children's lives. Focus groups with social workers, who had to balance the needs of children and parents, found there was a need for guidance in this difficult work. Reprinted by permission of Oxford University Press.

Care for Sale: The Influence of New Public Management in Child Protection in Sweden.

Author: Hoejer, Staffan; Forkby, Torbjoern.

Publication info: British Journal of Social Work 41. 1 (Jan 2011): 93-110.

Abstract: Market-oriented strategies have been introduced in child welfare in recent years. The aim of the study described in this article was to analyse the significance of two formal instruments that now regulate practice in child protection cases: the system of procurement in which general agreements about placement provision are reached and individual child protection investigations. The research questions were (i) How do procurement processes and general agreements affect the choice of institutions in child welfare cases and (ii) what characterises individual placement processes in relation to decision making and the articulation of needs and treatment goals? The study comprised telephone interviews with social service managers in all of Sweden's 290 municipalities, a content analysis of fifty-one individual formal investigations leading to placements and semi-structured interviews with ten senior managers. Overall, the results showed that practice deviated significantly from how these systems were supposed to work. General agreements could be sidestepped and their influence on quality seemed marginal. In addition, the function of the child protection investigations did not follow the described rational model. Thus, although bureaucratic and market logics dominated the line of thought for the overall systems, in practice, the picture was more complicated.

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Young people leaving care in Sweden.

Author: Hoejer, Ingrid; Sjoebloom, Yvonne.

Publication info: Child and Family Social Work 15. 1 (Feb 2010): 118-127.

Abstract: The transition from a placement in care to an independent life can be a problematic phase for young people. In Sweden, special care-leaving services are almost non-existent. What then happens to young people when they leave a placement in out-of-home care? This paper draws on the results of a study in which 16 young care leavers between the ages of 18 and 22 years were interviewed. Telephone interviews were also performed with the young care leavers' parents, social workers, foster carers and institutional staff. The aim of the study was to investigate how young care leavers perceive the transition from care to an independent life. The Swedish welfare model, the prolonged transition to adulthood and the family-oriented welfare discourse have been used as analytical perspectives. The results show that young care leavers have a pronounced need for social, emotional, practical and financial support. Whilst such support is occasionally provided by foster carers and residential staff, it is seldom given by social services or biological parents. This group is at risk of facing severe problems in the transitional phase from care to independent life, a fact that is not acknowledged by the Swedish welfare system.

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Birth parents' perception of sharing the care of their child with foster parents.

Author: Hojer, Ingrid.

Publication info: Vulnerable Children and Youth Studies 4. 2 (Jun 2009): 161-168.

Abstract: In Sweden, approximately 20,000 children were placed in out-of-home care at some time during 2006. Little is known of how their birth parents perceive their situation. This paper draws upon results from focus groups with 13 parents whose children were placed in care. The parents were invited to a conference centre, where focus group discussions were performed in different constellations over three days. Most parents experienced feelings of inferiority, guilt and shame. The parents' relationship with foster carers was often asymmetrical: parents felt their position to be inferior to that of the foster carers. Parental visits in the foster home were often problematic; it was hard to interact naturally with the children. Most parents asked for more visits in their own home, or at a neutral place. In cases where a positive working relationship between parents and foster carers existed, foster carers respected parents, informed them of the everyday life of children and included them in both minor and major decisions about the child. In cases where parents were well informed about their children's lives, they found it was much easier to have good contact with their children during their time in care.

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Foster children: a longitudinal study of placements and family relationships.

Author: Andersson, Gunvor.

Publication info: International Journal of Social Welfare 18. 1 (Jan 2009): 13-26.

Abstract: Foster children's family relationships have been one of the themes in a longitudinal study, starting with a disadvantaged group of children, 0-4 years of age when taken into care and placed in a children's home in Sweden. Seven rounds of data collection were carried out; the last two when the children were young adults. This article is about those 20 children in the study group who, in addition to temporary residential care at an early age, have experiences from foster care, either for the remainder of their childhood or before or after a period of reunion. Placement history is put in relation to family relationships, i.e. relationships to birth family and foster family. The categorisation in secure and insecure relationships or attachment patterns is based on interviews with the young adults, with a retrospect of previous relationships. The connection between placement history and family relationship is not obvious in this high-risk group. However, inclusive attitudes from the foster family towards the child's family promote continuity and a sense of security, also in periods of reunion or re-placement, and facilitate foster children's hard work in coming to terms with their family background and finding their own way.

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### Does Multidimensional Treatment Foster Care (MTFC) Reduce Placement Breakdown in Foster Care?

Author: Westermarck, Pia Kyhle; Hansson, Kjell; Vinnerljung, Bo.

Publication info: *International Journal of Child and Family Welfare* 11. 4 (Oct 2008): 155-171.

Abstract: This study describes and compares placement breakdown rates between three samples of antisocial youth in a child welfare system: a Swedish and a US MTFC program (Multidimensional Treatment Foster Care), and a Swedish national cohort study focusing on adolescent breakdown in traditional out-of-home care. The Swedish national cohort study had more than a three-fold increase in risk of breakdowns compared to the Swedish MTFC program. Although not all the differences were statistically significant, the trend in the material was clear. Regardless of type of care, gender, and time of breakdown, MTFC youths in Sweden with their combination of high internalizing and externalizing symptoms showed lower breakdown rates compared to the other two studies. The author concludes that multi-contextual treatment programs such as MTFC help youths complete their treatment better than traditional out-of-home care.

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### Long-term residential care for youths in Sweden - approaches to treatment.

Author: Andersson, B; Johansson, J; Hwang, C P.

Publication info: *International Journal of Child and Family Welfare* 10. 1-2 (Jun 2007): 27-43.

Abstract: This article reports on a survey carried out in all homes for care or treatment in Sweden for long-term care of youths. The aim was to investigate what therapeutic underpinnings are involved in long-term residential care for youths in Sweden. A major problem in descriptions of treatment is the variation in the use of concepts. To overcome some of these difficulties operational definitions were created for five approaches. Each approach was defined by three or four statements. Factor analyses of all statements resulted in five factors that corresponded with the five approaches. Despite the diversity of therapeutic underpinnings it was possible to identify five different approaches to care and treatment. These approaches did not exclude each other. They were agreed with to different extent by different homes. In this study different approaches have been found to be related to the variety within residential care.

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### Child protection in Stockholm: A local cohort study on childhood prevalence of investigations and service delivery.

Author: Sundell, Knut; Vinnerljung, Bo; Lofholm, Cecilia Andree; Humlesjo, Eva.

Publication info: *Children and Youth Services Review* 29. 2 (Feb 2007): 180-192.

Abstract: Prevalence figures of child protection investigations and services are dominated by cross-sectional data and annual statistics. So far, no data exist on how many children are investigated or receive services at some time during childhood, from birth to age of majority. This study reports on Child Protection Authorities' (CPA) involvement in a random sample of children born from 1968 to 1975, who resided permanently in Stockholm (Sweden) from birth to age 18 (N = 2.297). Information is based on reviews of CPA case files, registering information of all referrals, investigations and social services received by those children until the age of 20. In the study population, 12% (n = 272) were objects of at least one child protection investigation during their childhood and 7% (n = 162) received social services at least once. When these figures are extrapolated to children who have at any time lived in Stockholm (including those born outside of Stockholm but moving to Stockholm and children born in Stockholm but migrated elsewhere), they increase to point estimates of 19% and 10%. The average total service time was about 5 years. Three out of four children receiving services were at one time or another in out-of-home care. 56% of the service receivers were re-referred to the CPA after terminated services. Implications for the findings are discussed. [Copyright 2006 Elsevier B.V.]

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### Teenage parenthood among child welfare clients: A Swedish national cohort study of prevalence and odds.

Author: Vinnerljung, Bo; Franzen, Eva; Danielsson, Maria.

Publication info: *Journal of Adolescence* 30. 1 (Feb 2007): 97-116.

Abstract: To assess prevalence and odds for teenage parenthood among former child welfare clients, we used national register data for all children born in Sweden 1972-1983 (n = 1,178,207), including 49,582 former child welfare clients with varying intervention experiences. Logistic regression models, adjusted for demographic, socio-economic and familial background factors, were used to estimate odds ratios. Among youth who received interventions in adolescence, 16-19% of the girls and 5-6% of the boys became teenage parents, compared to 3% for girls and 0.7% for boys without child welfare experiences. Youths who entered child welfare services in their teens had four- to fivefold adjusted odds for becoming a teenage parent. For other child welfare clients, adjusted odds were mostly twofold. Youth of both sexes who receive child welfare services in adolescence are a high-risk group for teenage parenthood. Child welfare agencies should, as a minimum, provide each individual client youth with access to birth control counselling and contraceptives. [Copyright 2005 Association for Professionals in Services for Adolescents. Published by Elsevier Ltd.]

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### Living in Residential Care: Experiences in a Treatment Home for Adolescents in Sweden.

Author: Johansson, Jan; Andersson, Bengt.

Publication info: *Child and Youth Care Forum* 35. 4 (Aug 2006): 305-318.

Abstract: This article reports on a qualitative study of adolescents living in residential care in Sweden. Six adolescents, three girls and three boys, who were the first to live in a newly opened treatment home, were interviewed about their experiences 2-3 years after they had left the home. Their experiences were in retrospect very different from each other.

The results are discussed from the perspectives of individual differences, the special situation in an institution, relationships and gender. It is concluded that in spite of the fact that youth who live in a residential care institution live in the same environment, the individuals perceive it in their own unique ways.

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**Schools and Support Staff: Applying the European Pedagogic Model.**

Author: Petrie, Pat.

Publication info: *Support for Learning* 20. 4 (November 2005): 176-180.

Abstract: The following discussion by Pat Petrie draws on a body of research conducted at the Thomas Coram Research Unit, the Institute of Education, University of London. These studies include: a survey of out-of-school services in the European Union (Meijvogel and Petrie, 1996); work on children's services in Sweden (Moss and Petrie, 2002); the changing role of the school internationally (Moss, Petrie and Poland, 1999); social pedagogy and work with looked-after children in six European countries (Petrie, Boddy, Cameron and Wigfall, forthcoming 2006); and the incorporation of childcare into education in Sweden, Scotland and England (Cohen, Moss, Petrie and Wallace, 2004). Methods used in these studies have included commissioning reports from national experts, and local fieldwork involving interviews with policy makers and practitioners at all levels, in national and local governments and in a wide variety of services where pedagogues work face to face with children.

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**Residential Care: From Here to Eternity.**

Author: Barth, Richard P.

Publication info: *International Journal of Social Welfare* 14. 3 (Jul 2005): 158-162.

Abstract: An introduction to a special issue on children and residential care argues that residential care is often a necessary response to a perceived safety crisis but it is not useful in the long run. The importance of family involvement in residential treatment is emphasized, noting the success of Sweden's Children's Village where families are housed in cottages to give them an opportunity to learn more successful ways to care for their children. Other models that involve partial residential and weekend care are described. C. Dowden's and DA Andrews' (2000) human service, risk, need, and responsivity principles of best practice in residential programs for juvenile offenders are examined. Other issues discussed include the need to limit the interaction of delinquents with other delinquents; the importance of the post-discharge environment; and the growing number of residential treatment programs that also operate community-based programs. Although there is little evidence that residential care has resulted in substantial good, it will continue to be part of the youth service system until other alternatives are developed.

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**Boarded out by auction: poor children and their families in nineteenth-century northern Sweden.**

Author: Engberg, Elisabeth.

Publication info: *Continuity and Change* 19. 3 (Dec 2004): 431-457.

Abstract: Boarding out and fostering poor children was a favoured method of poor relief in many rural areas in northern Europe. This article discusses children who were boarded out to foster-parents by public auction in a rural parish in northern nineteenth-century Sweden. Poverty was the main reason why children were boarded out, frequently associated with loss of parents and difficulties in providing for a large household. It is suggested that the Swedish system of boarding out poor children must be understood in the context of a welfare system where cost efficiency was important. The auction method was used in spite of the risks involved because it was considered to be the best way to provide poor children with food, clothes, shelter and care, while keeping the compensation to the foster-parents at a reasonably low level.

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**Social Services Provided for Physically Abused Children in Sweden: Background Factors and Interventions.**

Author: Lindell, Charlotta; Svedin, Carl Goran.

Publication info: *International Journal of Social Welfare* 13. 4 (Oct 2004): 340-349.

Abstract: This study aims at describing and analyzing what kinds of social services are provided for physically abused children in Sweden. The social services files were examined for 113 children under 15 years of age (67 boys and 46 girls) who had been reported to the police as having been physically abused by a parent or equivalent caretaker in a particular police district. The children's social services files indicated an increased risk of a parental abusive behavior prior to the abuse incident. There had been former interventions in 81% of the families and previous reports on neglect or abuse in 44% of the 113 families. After the abuse incident, investigations were opened in 80% of the cases. The three most common interventions were placement in foster care, referrals to Child and Adolescent Psychiatric Service and Social Services support contacts. The study shows that there was a tendency towards more proactive work with injured children, children of immigrant parents and children of mentally ill parents.

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**Breakdown of teenage placements in Swedish foster and residential care.**

Author: Sallnaes, Marie; Vinnerljung, Bo; Kyhle Westermarck, Pia.

Publication info: *Child and Family Social Work* 9. 2 (May 2004): 141-152.

Abstract: This article deals with the problem of breakdown in different types of out-of-home care (foster care-residential care) for Swedish teenagers. How often are such placements prematurely terminated against the wishes and intentions of child welfare authorities? Which factors appear to increase or decrease the risk of placement breakdown? The sample

consists of a national cohort of 776 youths who started 922 placements during 1991. Every placement was followed in municipal case files for a maximum period of five years. Between 30 and 37% of all placements were prematurely terminated, the exact figure depending on whether a narrow or wide definition of breakdown was applied. The lowest rates of breakdown were found in kinship care and secure units, the highest in non-kinship foster homes. Teenagers who display antisocial behaviour and/or have mental health problems constitute a high-risk category for most types of out-of-home care, but especially in non-kinship foster homes. Risk factors in relation to breakdown were analysed in the four main forms of Swedish out-of-home care separately (foster homes, privately-publicly run residential care and secure units). The analysis pointed out that risk factors are not the same in all types of care, but antisocial behaviour at time of placement increased the risk in most forms of care. Prior research indicates that placement breakdown is a major problem of child welfare in other countries, and this study found that Sweden is no exception.

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The motives of foster parents, their family and work circumstances.

Author: Andersson, G.

Publication info: *British Journal of Social Work* 31. 2 (Apr 2001): 235-248.

Abstract: Focuses on the foster parents of 10-11 year old children. They were interviewed about their motives for becoming foster parents, which were linked to their family and work circumstances. Among the 21 foster families included, 4 different but equally frequent reasons or motives for taking care of foster children from the very beginning could be distinguished: relatives who reel responsibility for a certain child; couples who want children and do not think they can have children of their own; families where the mother wants to be at home taking care of biological as well as foster children instead of having unskilled employed work outside the home; and parents with grown-up children who want to fill the 'empty nest' by becoming foster parents, combined with a family business at home or close to home. Changing family and work patterns in Sweden do not seem to have influenced foster families as much as families in general.

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Children in Residential and Foster Care - A Swedish Example.

Author: Andersson, Gunvor.

Publication info: *International Journal of Social Welfare* 8. 4 (Oct 1999): 253-266.

Abstract: Presents findings from a longitudinal study of 26 children placed in a children's home in Malmo, Sweden, at the beginning of the 1980s. Placed when younger than age 4 and staying 4+ weeks in the home, the children were followed up 3 and 9 months after leaving the home as well as 5, 10, and 15 years later; 20 of the children also had later experiences of out-of-home care, including foster care. Interview data collected when the children were ages 15-20 are drawn on to explore three aspects of outcome: (1) degree of stability in children's living conditions; (2) relationships to parents and foster parents; and (3) well-being and emotional and behavior problems. Bearing in mind that the concept of well-being is relative, a cautious conclusion is that 33% of the children experienced well-being, 33% felt "ok," and 33% had serious problems, including criminal activities and drugs. The somewhat unclear connection between well-being, stability in living conditions, and sense of family belonging is discussed.

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Are Girls Really Much More Likely than Boys to Be Placed in Foster Care?

Author: Vinnerljung, Bo.

Publication info: *International Journal of Social Welfare* 8. 1 (Jan 1999): 78-79.

Abstract: A commentary on "Are Girls More than Boys Subjected to Disrupted Conditions of Upbringing?" (Bergman, Lars R., and Wangby, Margit, 1998) refers to three previous studies by Vinnerljung (1995 and 1996) indicating that, compared to girls, boys are overrepresented in foster care in Sweden, making up 53% of the foster child population. This contradicts Bergman and Wangby's findings. It is suggested that the discrepancy may be attributable to sampling differences and sample size - too small to be statistically reliable.

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We Do Not Know If Today, in Sweden, Girls More than Boys Are Subjected to Disruptive Conditions of Upbringing.

Author: Bergman, Lars R; Wangby, Margit.

Publication info: *International Journal of Social Welfare* 8. 1 (Jan 1999): 79-80.

Abstract: A reply to a comment by B. Vinnerljung (1999) on the authors' "Are Girls More than Boys Subjected to Disrupted Conditions of Upbringing?" (1998) argues that the sample they used (a grade school cohort of 1,383, including 52 in foster care) is large enough to be statistically significant for the study of sex differences in foster children. The finding that, compared to boys, girls are overrepresented in foster care in Sweden is suggested to be attributable to the fact that girls are more easily placed with relatives than boys.

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Looking after Children: Assessing Outcomes in Child Care. The Experience of Implementation.

Author: Jones, Helen; Clark, Robin; Kufeldt, Kathleen; Norrman, Monica.

Publication info: *Children and Society* 12. 3 (Jun 1998): 212-222.

Abstract: A Department of Health initiative has supported the implementation of Looking After Children in over 90 per cent of local authorities in England. The process has required major organisational change and new values and attitudes towards children looked after away from home. Difficulties arise where management and monitoring systems are not available to support these wider changes and to assess the quality of practice. Nevertheless clear benefits to using the system can be

identified. Pilot projects in Sweden, Canada and Australia provide an opportunity to compare experiences internationally; strong parallels are evident in some of the current issues facing child welfare. [Copyright 1998 John Wiley and Sons, Ltd.]

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