About the Rees Centre

The Rees Centre undertakes research and evaluation on fostering and education in the Department of Education, University of Oxford. Set up with funding from the Core Assets Group (an international children’s services provider) in 2012, the Centre works to improve the outcomes and life chances of children and young people in foster care. We do this by:

- reviewing existing international research so as to help young people, foster carers, practitioners and policy makers make better use of current evidence;
- conducting new research projects to address the gaps identified by the reviews and issues raised by adults and young people involved in foster care.

Key principles of our work:
The Rees Centre focuses mainly on fostering. It engages those who can most benefit from research, such as foster carers, young people with care experience, teachers, social workers and service providers throughout the research process. Both foster carers and care-experienced young people, trained in research, work on projects with us. The research we undertake uses a wide variety of rigorous methods. We have established consultation groups of fostering providers, carers and care-experienced young people to ensure that we are asking the right research questions and that reports of our findings are relevant for practice.

Current Rees Centre research includes projects that are investigating:

People’s motivation to foster: a prospective study of those inquiring about fostering in 10 fostering providers (8 Local Authorities [LAs] and 2 Independent Fostering Providers [IFPs]);

Foster carer peer support: evaluating the benefits of foster carer support groups in 3 LAs including specialist groups, for example of male carers;

Bringing siblings together who are placed in care apart: an evaluation funded by Siblings Together;

Teenagers in foster care: a Research Council-funded seminar series generating a handbook for foster carers on fostering teenagers;

Risk and protective factors in educational outcomes: reviewing the evidence on how factors such as placement changes and school changes influence the educational outcomes of children in care;

How to improve educational outcomes for children in care: linking the Children Looked After national dataset with the National Pupil Database (NPD) in England. Funded by the Nuffield Foundation, we are examining influences on educational outcomes of placement stability, school stability, length of time in care and care histories;

Evaluation London Schools Excellence Fund - Children in Care: funded by Greater London Authority;

Children leaving residential care: evaluating the factors in the effectiveness of the provision;

Evaluation Coordinator for the Children’s Social Care Innovation Programme: funded by the DfE.

Evaluation of Attachment Aware Schools training programme, a partnership between Bath & NE Somerset Council, Bath Spa University, National College of Teaching and Leadership and a range of other organisations, schools and attachment specialists;

Allegations of Abuse against Foster Carers funded by Sir Halley Stewart Trust and FosterTalk;

Mental health of looked after children across the school transition involving Universities of Sussex and Surrey, Sussex Partnership NHS Foundation Trust, Virtual Schools and schools across England.
Recent research reviews available on our website:

http://reescentre.education.ox.ac.uk/research/publications/

- motivations to foster
- foster carer peer support
- instruments used in the selection of foster carers
- the impact of fostering on carers’ own children
- effective parent-and-child fostering arrangements
- the role of the supervising social worker
- what works in preventing and treating poor mental health in looked after children?
- the recruitment, assessment, support and supervision of LGBT carers
- the relationship between being in care and the educational outcomes of children

Future review
- the impact of placing siblings separately from one another

Get involved with our work:

We are committed to making our findings accessible and inviting debate about them. To this end we make extensive use of blog posts, Twitter, two-monthly newsletters and webinars as well as holding regular meetings with key organisations.

Join our mailing list by emailing rees.centre@education.ox.ac.uk & receive newsletters 5 times/year

Come along to lectures and seminars and/or join online webinars

Look at resources including recordings of all our seminars on the web

http://reescentre.education.ox.ac.uk/resources/

Comment on our blog – or write a post for us http://reescentre.education.ox.ac.uk/blog/

Follow us on Twitter @ReesCentre. Like us on Facebook – www.facebook.com/reescentreoxford

See our website http://reescentre.education.ox.ac.uk/ for further details.

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