

That English (and Australian) Law has much to learn from European wisdom is also clear from a most humane and perceptive essay from Madzy Rood-de Boer, probably the best-known Dutch Family Lawyer. Mme de Boer is inclined to lament the diminution of state intervention in Holland.

Susan Maidment (Chapt. 10) looks at the effect of children on divorce. She is critical of the philosophical basis of the provision by which a divorce can be refused if the judge is not satisfied with the arrangements made for the children. (Cf. Family Law Act 1975, s.63). For my part, I find this provision not only justifiable but scandalously glossed over. Nor can I unequivocally accept Mrs. Maidment's thesis that the effects of divorce on children are "not as serious as is believed". (p.177).

Part 3 deals with financial aspects of family law, and once again reveals the tensions between public and private responsibilities for the victims of family breakdown. Jennifer Levin is critical of the new Matrimonial and Family Proceedings Act, surely the *bête noire* of this team! She pours wrath on the successive British governments that have failed to implement the recommendation of the Finer Committee (1974) that a guaranteed

maintenance amount be paid to single parents. She advocates a Child Support procedure, quite separate from the proceedings ancillary to divorce by which child maintenance is usually assessed. It is difficult not to agree that the maintenance awarded to child victims of divorce is scandalously low and imperfect in its enforcement.

Dr. Eric Clive analyses recent Scottish proposals for deferred community of matrimonial property. This essay is particularly topical in Australia.

John Eekelaar and Mavis Maclean neatly analyse the types of wives who seek maintenance in divorce cases, and consider that the law should prescribe different rules for childless marriages and those where children are involved.

Judith Masson's essay deals with the thorny question, whether a step-parent should be permitted to adopt the child of his new spouse. She would abolish this practice altogether. She points out that, despite the provision of the Children Act 1975, discouraging adoption of step-children, in fact many adoption orders are still being made.

Ruth Deech (Chap. 15) points to the unsatisfactory state of English matrimonial property law.

Part 4 of the book deals with proposals for family courts and for conciliation in divorce cases. The essays of Elizabeth Szwed, Antonia Gerard and Ann Bottomley all reveal great dissatisfaction with English tribunals which deal with family matters. It is, perhaps, a pity that an Australian scholar was not called upon to give an account of the Family Court of Australia, which, frankly, is far ahead of the models studied by the said authors.

This is undoubtedly the most important collection of essays on English Family Law that has yet been compiled. It reveals great scholarship, wisdom and humanity, and justifies careful consideration by Australian scholars of laws and other disciplines who are grappling with similar issues.

Apart from consistent misspelling of the noun, "dependant", and the bizarre plural, "guardian *ad litem*" (p. 270), the only serious stylistic solecism that I could trace was Miss Masson's constant use of "she/he", "her/him" and "her/his". No doubt she would claim this as a victory for "non-sexist" language, but let her re-write *Paradise Lost* in this fashion, and we shall see how Masson compares with Milton.

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## RESOURCE BOOKLETS

- Development in Childhood
- Development in Adolescence

*Kuring-gai College of Advanced Education, School of Library and Information Studies, Lindfield, 1984, 102 pages (paperback).*

Reviewed by:

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This publication consists of two booklets describing development in childhood and development in adolescence. It has been specifically designed as a resource for students studying within the Graduate Diploma in Information Studies (Child/Young Adult) at the Kuring-gai College of Advanced Education.

As the resource booklet is compiled for such students, it may be easy to assume that the publication might only be relevant to a specific audience. However, this is arguably not the case.

The booklet is structured in such a way that the reader is presented with a chronologically presented overview of child and adolescent development.

The first section clearly explains to the reader the format of the booklets, by providing explanations of how the material is presented. The authors also include a section on extension activities, designed

to enable the reader to further explore the material presented. The nature of some of the material discussed under this heading, is quite specific to the particular students for whom this booklet was written, however, the scope of most of the material could arguably be relevant to people from a variety of backgrounds.

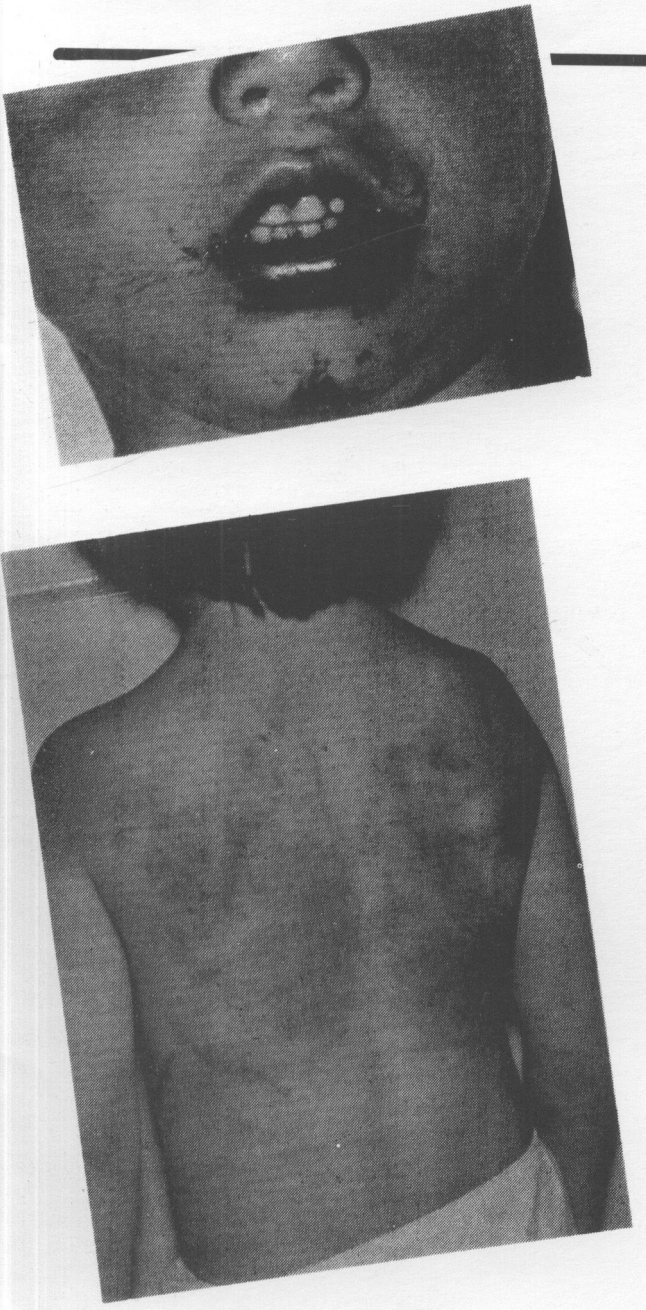
The authors further divide the booklet into sections providing an overview of development in childhood and adolescence, and highlight some principles and practices for studying children and adolescents. The booklet then proceeds to take the reader through the various stages of development in childhood and adolescence, covering in each stage such areas as physical development, perceptual development, through to social development. Emphasis is also given to the influence of the environment, including cultural and socio-economic considerations, with some limited attention given to issues of gender. Each section is then completed with a list of extension activities and a bibliography. As such, the reader is presented with a comprehensive overview of material.

The bibliography at the end of each section while quite extensive, is directed in part to the audience for which the booklets were designed. As such, some narrowing of focus is apparent. Absent from the bibliographies, however, are references to some of the major theorists discussed? for example, Piaget, Erikson, Bandura, To name a few. As the authors state in the introduction to the booklets, they have written the material with the purpose of

being introductory. The absence of such references in the bibliographies could possibly prove problematic for some readers who lack any familiarity with this area. Another relevant point here may be that, although overall the authors do provide clear explanations of some of the concepts they discuss, there are occasions where this does not occur. In particular, this is apparent when they discuss some of the concepts contained in the theories of the above-mentioned authors. Again, as this material is introductory, this omission could prove problematic for some readers new to it.

In spite of these omissions, the format of the booklets provides a most useful overview of development in childhood and adolescence. The content is generally precise in its attention to the issues, and whilst introductory in its nature, it is sufficiently covered to enable the reader to obtain a basic level of understanding of the material presented. The bibliographies provided can then guide the reader into more of the specifics as they see appropriate.

In presenting the material in such a comprehensive manner, the authors have provided a useful resource for students and others who are looking for an introduction into the area of development in childhood and adolescent. It is also a useful basis for those more familiar with the material to build upon their knowledge. As such, these booklets are useful for both students and practitioners from a variety of disciplines.



# THE SYSTEMS FOR MANAGING CHILD MALTREATMENT IN AUSTRALIA

## A STUDY OF THE SIX STATES

**Peter Boss  
(1987)**

This study is based on research at first hand which was carried out in 1986 by the present Executive Director of the Children's Bureau of Australia Inc. when he was working at Monash University, Melbourne, as chairman and professor in the department of social work. The publication of the study has been made possible through generous financial assistance from the Creswick Foundation, and is published under the auspices of the Children's Bureau of Australia.

This is the first time that facts have been brought together on how child maltreatment systems are managed in the six States. Each state is, of course, autonomous in its management of child maltreatment and the study shows up both common elements and distinctive differences.

Facets covered in the study include:

- \* major source of legislation
- \* definitions of child abuse
- \* notifications – requirement and format
- \* investigation process
- \* personnel in child protection
- \* involvement of public agencies and bodies
- \* involvement of other agencies and bodies
- \* discussion of findings
- \* incidence data

Cost of report: \$6.00 per copy (postage paid)



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