

PRINT MEDIA AND CHILD WELFARE:
A DISCOURSE ANALYSIS

by

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ABSTRACT
Print Media and child welfare:
A Discourse Analysis

Child welfare is an important social issue which the public is generally interested in hearing about. The media plays an important role in delivering child welfare news to the public. Media portrayals of child welfare issues are important because the discourses have the power to influence public opinion and perception.

Presented are the findings using a qualitative methodology; a discourse analysis of how child welfare intervention is portrayed in 282 Canadian daily newspapers over a six year period between 2008 and 2014.

The data shows that there is a tendency for the media to present an unfavourable view of child welfare and to classify child welfare intervention as having failed. The predominant discourses across the themes related to: blame of the child welfare system and government, for child welfare failures. The principal source of blame directed at the child welfare system was their failure to keep children safe, and government were found to be responsible for failing to provide child welfare agencies with sufficient resources to adequately function.

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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this study was to examine how child welfare intervention is portrayed in Canadian print media. This study consists of an in-depth examination of how the print media addressed issues related to child welfare over a period of 6 years from 2008 to 2014, using ethnographic content analysis as a methodological approach (Altheide and Schneider, 2013). Although there are other means by which news is distributed, this study exclusively examined daily newspapers. The range of media portrayals of child welfare interventions was explored as the central focus; thus the research question at the outset of the study was: How is child welfare intervention portrayed in the print media? The tracking and analysis the discourses used in newspapers was the central focus of an integrated approach of ethnographic content analysis that was utilized in this study. Examining discourse in media is important because language has the power to shape people's perceptions. "When language changes and the new or revised frameworks of meaning become of the public domain and are routinely used, then social life has been changed, even in a small way" (Altheide & Schneider, 2013, p. 115).

Media portrayals of child welfare issues are important because the discourses and frames used to depict child welfare have the power to influence public opinion and to impact those who work in the field of child welfare and the media. Whether print media is perceived to have accurately captured the issues within the child welfare system, or to have deliberately or inadvertently distorted the issues cannot be determined objectively, given the variance in subjective criteria across several players. It was not an objective of this study to discern accuracy from distortion in the reporting of child welfare issues, but rather to provide those involved with media production and child welfare professionals with a better understanding of media portrayals of child welfare. Media is a powerful force in society, as it is the vehicle

through which most social issues, including those in child welfare are relayed to the general public. The media has the ability to influence and persuade public opinion. The public is generally quite interested in child protection (Cooper, 2005), and studies have found a relationship between media reports of child welfare issues and the number of cases reported to child welfare agencies (McDevit, 1996; Saint-Jacques, Turcotte & Ivers, 2012; Ray et al, 2013; Goodard & Saunders, 2001). By accurately informing the general public of the issues in child welfare, it may empower people to act both preventatively and protectively.

Child welfare policy and practice is an area which is vulnerable to be misunderstood by the general public, which includes professionals working in other disciplines, including those in media production. Likewise, the production process of print media is an area that may not be well understood by media consumers, and/or those working in other disciplines, such as those who work in the area of child welfare, from service providers to policy makers. When the media misrepresents a child welfare story and/or fails to accurately reflect the central issues, those working within the field may assume that the media misrepresentation was deliberate or malicious. And those working in the production of media are likely frustrated with working with systems, such as child welfare, that are bound by confidentiality and thus withhold detailed information. The goal of this study is not just to provide both the field of child welfare and media production with insight into how child welfare is portrayed in the media, but to provide information about the potential harm associated with misrepresenting child welfare issues and the potential benefits of representation of the key issues in a meaningful manner. Perhaps the findings in this study may serve to inspire those working in the fields to find a way to work together more harmoniously.

This research is important to the field of social work because child welfare is a significant area of social work and child welfare is impacted by media representation, both positively and negatively. The study highlights the manner in which the media represents child welfare and how this may impact child welfare practice and policy. This study demonstrates that not just how child welfare is portrayed, but which issues are being represented and why they are important. This study may improve the adversarial relationship between the media and child welfare system in Canada by creating awareness of the issues associated with media discourse and the way in which child welfare is affected.

The media has a tendency to episodically represent the most extreme and sensationalistic child welfare cases (Goodard, 1996; Medes, 2000; Ayer, 2001), and lay blame on child welfare service providers, while highlighting their failures (Chenot, 2010; Cooper, 2005). Child welfare organizations tend to be media avoidant (Ayer, 2001); thus the media have to rely on other sources to gather information, and the media is “not in the business of faithfully recording the most common events, they are in the business of finding, constructing, and selling news” (Kitzinger, 1996, p. 320). The literature demonstrates the need for child welfare policy makers and agencies to learn to effectively interact with the media in a structured and cooperative way that allows them to control the agenda while strengthening their relationship with the media (Tonmyr & Jack, 2010; Ayer, 2001; Medes, 2000; Briar-Lawson et al, 2010; Goodard & Liddell, 1995).

Is there a social role for the media to engage in ethical reporting practices which honor human rights? According to Curry (2011), reporting on human rights issues demands thorough information gathering and analysis, rather than the media’s tendency to focus on a sensationalistic style of reporting, and therefore, “Human rights and media have not been able to come to a happy marriage.” (28). Investigative reporting requires the journalist to have background information on

the issues at hand and the perspectives of people involved that go beyond a two sided story. The type of reporting that investigative journalists produce is described by Ettema and Glasser (1998) as follows, “skillfully narrated accounts of specific inquiry and injustice....Thier stories call attention to the breakdown of social systems and the disorder within public institutions that cause injury and injustice; in turn, their stories implicitly demand the response of public officials-and the public itself- to that breakdown and disorder” (3). In terms of reporting on child welfare issues, investigative reporting is necessary to ensure that both the issues and their underlying causes are exposed; as well as accurate and ethical reporting on the sources of the problem and the necessary reforms. “Investigative journalists have made a major contribution to our understanding of the full extent of child abuse.” (Goodard & Saunders, 1995).

Tonmyr & Jack (2010) found that the media reported key issues with accuracy, in a non-sensationalized manner following a dissemination strategy during a child welfare media launch, whereby the key messages were delivered to the media in a press conference, which included a question and answer period. Child welfare organizations would benefit from developing a media relations strategy, such as the co-operation that most of the major police departments in North America have with the media. Media relations refer to the relationship that organizations shape with media personnel in the interest of meeting both the objectives of the organization as well as those of the media. Howard and Mathews (2013) developed strategies for organizations to consider to effectively manage media relations, which are summarized as follows:

-Develop a clear communication policy and a media relations plan including designating authorized spokespersons for the organization, and getting acquainted with who will assist in meeting the goals and objectives of the organization.

-Gain a rich understanding of what constitutes “news” from the perspective of the reporter to better ensure that the shared information makes it to the public. Become familiar with how the

different types of media operate, including their audience demographics to ensure that the selected media-medium is best suited to the organization's objectives.

-Determine how best to disseminate your organization's news. Given the time and effort required to put together a news conference, it is recommended that consideration should be given to whether the information could be shared through simpler means, such as telephone, e-mail, briefing, or news release.

-Having an awareness of the media's deadlines is noted to serve both the media and the organizations interests. By asking the reporter about her or his deadline, the trust relationship between the organization and reporter is strengthened, when he or she learns that you are working to meet the deadline, and the reporter, in turn, will be less demanding with the less-time sensitive information. Knowledge of deadlines when issuing a news release or news conference is noted to be "critical" because the time of day will determine which media-medium will be the first to carry the news, and thus, the type of coverage the story receives.

-Caution is given to organizations trying to build a relationship with the media to refrain from responding with "No comment". In the interest of meeting both the organization's objective to not inappropriately release information and the media's objective to quote organizational representatives, it is recommended that the organization tell the reporter why it cannot discuss an issue, whether it is related to policy or that information will be provided at a later date.

-In the event that a particular reporter has been repeatedly found to have a bias or to be exercising carelessness, such that the stories are not accurate and/or are unfavourable, it is recommended that the organization contact the editor to discuss the well documented allegation in a professional manner in the interest of having another reporter assigned.

This study hopes to motivate both the media and child welfare fields to take steps towards enhancing and strengthen their relationship in a way that allows them to work cooperatively and mutually to attain their objectives, while providing the public with accurate information about important child welfare issues.

CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

Child welfare issues are of interest to the general public and the media is their primary and usually sole source of gaining access to information. There has been scholarly research into the manner in which child welfare is reflected in the media. This chapter will identify and discuss the research on child welfare in the media, especially those studies that relate to discourse analysis, which is the chosen qualitative method of research for this thesis. The relevant terms related to media analysis and child welfare, such as: discourse, discourse analysis, media analysis, and child welfare will be discussed, as well as the processes of media production.

Discourse and Discourse Analysis

This qualitative analysis of the portrayal of child welfare intervention used discourse analysis. Discourse is the presentation of specific information or experiences through the use of language, either written or spoken, to produce meaning that is relative to both the cultural and historical context to which it is applied. According to Foucault, “Discourses under examination-are always themselves reflexive categories, principles of classification, normative rules, institutional types....” (1982, p. 25). Discourse has the power to influence people’s thinking, which is usually intentional. If the statement, “children were taken from their parents at an early age and they were never returned” is communicated without any contextual information, it may be perceived by the reader as an unfavourable action. This would be the appropriate response if the children were abducted from a safe and loving home, however if the children were apprehended after being abused by sadistic paedophile parents, the actions would have been deemed favourable.

Discourse analysis is described by Gee (2011) as “the movement from context to language and from language to context” (p.14) and once information is acquired about the context of the

language, it enables a hypothesis to be formed about the intended meaning. Gee (2011) identified seven areas of “reality” that are always constructed in both written and spoken language: significance; activities; identities; relationships; politics (distribution of social goods); connections; sign systems and knowledge. These seven areas of “reality”, can be addressed in discourse analysis through the following seven questions presented by Gee:

1. *How is this piece of language being used to make certain things significant or not and in what ways?*
2. *What activity is this piece of language being used to enact?*
3. *What identity is this piece of language being used to enact?*
4. *What sort of relationship is this piece of language seeking to enact with others?*
5. *What perspective on social goods is this piece of language communicating as to what is normal, right, good, correct, proper, appropriate, valuable, the way things are, the way things ought to be, high status or low status?*
6. *How does this piece of language connect or disconnect things; how does it make one thing relevant or irrelevant to another?*
7. *How does this piece of language privilege or disprivilege specific sign systems (eg. Spanish vs. English, words vs images) or different ways of knowing and believing or claims to knowledge and belief.*

Anne O’Keeffe (2006) broadly describes the term media discourse as the way in which reality is represented through broadcast and print media. The “reality” that is represented in the media is contingent upon the processes of producing the news from sources of information, decisions of what and how to present the information, and stringent time and fiscal constraints.

According to Schudson (2011), the news is best analysed in frames as this shifts away from the notion that the news has a deliberate bias, and opens analysis up to recognizing that “Every narrative account of reality necessarily presents some things and not others; consciously or unconsciously, every narrative makes assumptions about how the world works, what is important, what makes sense, and what should be.” Altheide & Schneider (2013) discuss how frame and discourse work together and the utility in considering these concepts when studying reports of the

news, as they present a structured approach to discourse analysis. These related concepts are distinguished by Altheide & Schneider (2013), “Discourse refers to the parameters of relevant meaning that one uses to talk about things. Frame refers to the particular perspective one uses to bracket or mark off something as one thing rather than another” (p. 53).

Generally speaking, “discourse” is written or spoken language within a context intended to communicate information and “discourse analysis” examines the use of the language in the discourse. There are various factors that influence discourse, such as considerations about the source/presenter of the information. The discourse in any given article is not exclusive of the author, but rather a collective process which is determined by media culture.

Media Processing of News

How the media process the news is an essential consideration in media discourse analysis. Alan Bell (1991) describes the news as “not just the facts, but a product of organizational and professional practices.” Bell provides a basic example of the path of a news story as follows: News source – chief reporter – Journalist – chief reporter - journalist - subeditor – editor – receiving media, noting that the journalist is only responsible for the story, not the end product. This process would vary depending on the size of the newspaper staff, as a small town newspaper would have a much smaller editorial staff than a larger city. Language changes, additions and omissions occur at various stages of the article production process, within the context of preserving the meaning. The production of the news is dependent on sources to gather information, which comes in various forms. Bell (1991) charts the roles of the many players in news production which is summarized as follows:

Journalists: As authors, journalists generate news language and are responsible for original syntactic and discourse form. Bell points out that the journalists are not the original authors that they are commonly thought to be because they often rely on inserting existing text into their stories.

Editors: There are various types of editing that take place through the process. The chief reporter and chief subeditor generate specific language prescriptions. News copy editors modify language from its intermediate to its final form. Interpreter News editor/News reader are responsible for prominence and presentation (order, headlines, graphological form).

The media are dependent on their sources; therefore the information gathered is always other people's versions of what or how things are or will be. News sources come in various forms through research, interviews, observing events, press conferences or press releases. According to Schudson (2011), government sources are key in developing news stories, and the majority of the news comes from government initiated events, like press releases, press conferences, public hearings or deliberations, and background briefings for the press.

Child Welfare Defined:

“Child welfare is defined as institutions and services concerned with the physical, social, and psychological well-being of children....particularly lacking normal parental care and supervision.”
(Child Welfare. Encyclopedia Britannica, 2008)

The protective services provided by these organizations vary in legislation and content between and within countries. In Canada, child welfare is governed by provincial legislative acts. Not only is there structural variation between child protection agencies across the provinces; there are different child welfare agencies and services within some provinces with their own policies

and practices, despite being governed by the same provincial act (Bala, Zapt, Williams et al, 2004). Despite policy and practice variations among provinces and agencies, the child welfare laws in all of the provinces stipulate that all suspected cases of abuse and neglect must be reported and investigated (Hick, 2009).

There are various types of acts of omission and commission that constitute child maltreatment that can be classified in the following forms: child neglect, child physical abuse, child sexual abuse, and child emotional abuse. Child neglect typically involves parents depriving their children of the basic necessities, such as food, shelter, medical treatment, and inadequate supervision. According to Finkelhor (1994), child sexual abuse involves a broad range of acts, and, generally speaking, includes the following two elements: “1. Sexual activities involving a child. 2. An abusive condition such as coercion or a large age gap between participants, indicating a lack of consensuality” (p. 32). The definition of physical abuse varies across the literature. According to Kolko (2002), this variation in child physical abuse definitions relates to the “blurred distinctions” between what constitutes physical abuse, such as beatings and parents using physical discipline, such as spankings. Generally speaking, child physical abuse is defined in the literature as a deliberate act, directed towards a child that results in harm or injury (Kelly, 1983 & National Center on Child Abuse and Neglect, 1988). Smith Slep, et al (2011) claim that how to define child emotional abuse is debated across the literature, but usually involves verbal or psychological punishment. Hart and Glaser (2011) note that not only is it difficult to define psychological maltreatment; it is also challenging to recognize and prove. Children who are subjected to one form of abuse are more likely to experience another form of abuse (Mullen, 1996); and according to Hansen, Warner-Rodgers and Hecht (1998), neglect and physical abuse often co-occur.

Roles of child protection workers:

Through provincial legislation, child welfare agencies have the legal authority and are morally obligated to intervene in families to protect children from abuse and neglect (Bala, et al, 2004). Child protection workers determine the intervention required to ensure the safety of the children ranging from providing in or out of home supportive services to removal of the children from the home. Child protection worker roles include, but are not limited to, the following: emergency response to imminent danger to a child, completion of an initial safety assessment, apprehension of children, arranging alternate care for children, participating in legal processes, connecting parents to relevant resources, conducting investigations (abuse and neglect), scheduling appointments, making referrals to other agencies and services, communicating with collateral agencies (education, medical, police, counselors, mental health, crisis services), and completing various written documentation (Bala, et al, 2004; Hick, 2010). Child protection workers experience the burden of the stressful nature of their work, high caseload demands, and the conflicted role of providing supportive services, while functioning in an investigative manner. (Bala, et al 2004). Although there are voluntary services offered by child welfare agencies, when families receive involuntary protection services, it is typically regarded by the parents, and often the children as unwelcome intrusion in their lives; which poses yet another challenge to child welfare workers and service delivery.

Table 1: Summary of Research Studies in Literature

The following table describes empirical research conducted on newspapers' treatment of child welfare issues.

Study Title and Author	Purpose / Research Question	Methods	Findings
<p>Media Analysis of Early Dissemination of Canadian Maltreatment Surveillance. <i>Tonmyr & Jack, (2010)</i></p> <p>This study used a dissemination strategy during a media launch of CIS-2003 (Canadian Incidence of Reported Child Abuse and Neglect of 2003) investigators/ knowledge broker highlighted findings, delivering key messages and stood for question/answer period</p>	<p>To assess informational accuracy and understand how the media framed the issue of maltreatment.</p> <p>Two objectives: (1) to identify and analyze the articles found in the Canadian print media in the week following the launch, and (2) to share “lessons learned” from the evaluation of the media coverage</p>	<p>Researchers completed a comprehensive review and analysis of the print media, following the media launch to determine accuracy of reporting and how child maltreatment was framed.</p> <p>Through the data search the following articles were identified in the study: 19 newspaper articles; 29 media articles; 4 letters to the editor. Those articles were located in one national paper and 18 print media papers which represented 7 of the 10 provinces and 1 of the 3 territories.</p>	<p>The researchers found that their two questions that guided the media analysis were answered: The reporting of findings from the CIS-2003 was accurate and the issues were generally appropriately framed and contextualized.</p> <p>Although there were key points that were not mentioned in the articles, the ones that were reflected the key point accurately.</p> <p>Another finding noted in the study was that sexual abuse receives more media attention, despite being the least prevalent form of maltreatment. Neglect however, is rarely mentioned despite being the most prevalent form of child maltreatment.</p> <p>The researchers found the framing to be appropriate in this study. For example, it was noted that sexual abuse is usually sensationalized in media coverage, but in this study it was not. It is noted that there were attention grabbing headlines such as, “Studies show fewer cases of sexual assault on children”, but the article content was assessed by</p>

			<p>the researchers to be “fair and factual”</p> <p>Although the articles presented factual information in relation to sexual abuse, it was the most mentioned form of abuse, despite the fact that it is the least prevalent form of abuse (3% confirmed cases). Neglect was mentioned the least even though it is the most common form of confirmed abuse. The article notes that this is thought to be intentional to generate reader interest, which might, however, create a false public perception that sexual abuse is more prevalent, and that neglect is of a lesser concern.</p>
<p>COMMENTS ON PREVIOUS ARTICLE:</p> <p>Media Analysis of Early Dissemination of Canadian Maltreatment Surveillance.</p> <p><i>Tonmyr & Jack, (2010)</i></p>	<p>Although the study does not indicate how the media outlets were selected, it was noted that there was large and varied representation at the media launch. Media reports selected for analysis by the researchers were representative of most of the provinces and one out of the three territories.</p>		
<p>Moral Tales: representation of Child Abuse in</p>	<p>This paper reports some of the key themes to emerge from the analysis:</p>	<p>The sample consisted of all the coverage of child maltreatment during</p>	<p>The study found that the sample findings confirmed that the print media coverage of child abuse is</p>

<p>the Quality and Tabloid Media. <i>Wilczynski, Young, Sinclair, (1999)</i></p> <p>This study examined media construction of child abuse in a comprehensive sample of all 1302 reports on the subject during 1995 in a representative quality and tabloid newspaper in New South Wales.</p>	<p>Child abuse as 'hard news' (the focus on individual cases); the 'child abuse horror story'; the emphasis on irony or incongruity; child abuse as 'soft news' (the human interest story); the reliance on official criminal justice sources; the individualisation and demonisation of child abusers, with an emphasis on the appropriateness of punitive criminal justice responses; and the lack of attention paid to the social causes of and prevention of abuse.</p> <p>Based on the criminology literature on how the media portrays crime, the researchers sought to address the following issues:</p> <p>1. Theories of "moral panic" are often used to analyse media portrayal of crime. Part of the process of creating moral panic involves the</p>	<p>a 12-month period (January-December 1995) in both quality newspapers and tabloid type newspapers. A combination of qualitative and quantitative methodology was used (the latter using the statistical package SPSS).</p> <p>The nature of the statistical analysis was inferential as this research included all of the newspaper articles on the subject of child abuse in NSW.</p> <p>The coverage was coded on the following variables: the newspaper; location (Australian versus overseas); article size; page number; the subject of any illustrations; whether the headline immediately indicated (a) that the article was about child abuse and (h) the sex of the perpetrator; category of coverage (news story, editorial or other); type of abuse; scene of the abuse; primary source of information for the</p>	<p>largely stereotyped, and superficial, and that there is a lack of coverage of issues of social causation and prevention.</p> <p>The study results were noted to have confirmed that there is a tendency for the tabloid press to report crime issues in a more sensational manner than the quality press. They found that there were some key areas of similarity between the quality and tabloid papers, primarily in their concentration on the more extreme forms of abuse such as homicide. Results of the study showed that the papers had a tendency to portray 'moral panic' in the sense that the perception of the threat posed by the behaviour in question is not commensurate with the objective facts</p>
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	<p>media defining a social issue as a problem which threatens traditional values and the creation of stereotypes through media distortion and dramatization.</p> <p>2. The newsworthiness of an event is determined by the news value matrix resulting in the less frequent offences which tend to be more violent in nature. Thus, media crime reports focus on offences which threaten the traditional moral values.</p> <p>3. Crime is portrayed in the media as increasing and requiring an immediate and punitive response.</p> <p>4. Studies in the area of media portrayal of child abuse lack interdisciplinary analysis.</p>	<p>article; primary focus of the article; perpetrator number and sex; victim number, sex and age; and the relationship between perpetrator and victim..</p>	
<p>COMMENTS ON PREVIOUS ARTICLE:</p> <p>Moral Tales: representation of Child Abuse in the Quality and Tabloid Media.</p>	<p>The sampling strategy was adequate in that the research included all articles over a period of one year.</p> <p>The research questions in this study are not clearly stated in the article.</p>		

<p><i>Wilczynski, Young, Sinclair, (1999)</i></p>			
<p>Newspaper Portrayals of Child Abuse: Frequency of Coverage and Frames of the Issue <i>Hove, Paek, Isaacson, & Cole, (2013)</i></p> <p>This study reports on content analysis of child abuse coverage in major national and urban U.S. newspapers from 2000 to 2008 in terms of frequency of coverage of child abuse; whether child abuse has been framed as either an isolated phenomenon or a broadly systemic and public problem; and changes in coverage frequency and media frames over time.</p>	<p>This study addresses the three following questions:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. What is the frequency of different types of child abuse in newspaper coverage? 2. What is the frequency of news frames—specifically in terms of episodic versus thematic story frames; individual versus societal frames of causes; and individual versus societal frames of solutions used in newspaper stories on child abuse. 3. How are the frames used differently according to type of child abuse? 	<p>Researchers in this study used content analysis of newspaper stories on child abuse, between January 2000 and March 2009. They used a keyword search of the LexiaNexia database of the following keywords: child abuse, sexual abuse, physical abuse, verbal abuse, mental/emotional abuse, and neglect. It is noted that there were 666 new stories found in 8 national and urban U.S papers. Coding categories were developed and the coding procedure involved two coders-blind to the research questions. The inter-coder reliability was noted to be high (values were between .95 and .76)</p>	<p>Researchers found that descriptive statistics indicate that about 49% of all the child abuse stories were about sexual abuse; 24% of the child abuse stories were multiple types of abuse within the same case; and neglect issues comprised 12% of abuse stories. Other findings were that stories on child abuse in general, sexual abuse, neglect, and multiple types of abuse were framed thematically more often than episodically, whereas stories on physical abuse and verbal abuse were framed episodically more often than thematically. It is noted that most of the stories on types of child abuse used a societal cause frame more frequently than an individual cause frame, except for verbal abuse stories, which used an individual cause frame more frequently. A societal solution frame appeared more frequently in news stories for most types of child abuse, except for verbal abuse.</p>
<p>Media Coverage of Agency-Related Child</p>	<p>The researchers used existing state-level data from three years, and examined the</p>	<p>Researchers compiled the independent variable by reviewing news stories one year</p>	<p>The results were reported to indicate that policy makers in states with high media attention to agency-related child maltreatment</p>

<p>Maltreatment Fatalities: Does It Result in State Legislative Change Intended to Prevent Future Fatalities? <i>Douglas (2009)</i></p> <p><i>This study examined whether child maltreatment fatalities of children receiving child welfare services (either in their birth home or in foster care) prompts legislative changes to policy and practice.</i></p>	<p>influence of news stories, state characteristics, and child welfare policy practice factors on the passage of new child welfare legislations.</p>	<p>before each year in which legislation was passed. News stories in 2001, 2002, and 2003 were collected to examine the impact on legislation that was passed in 2002, 2003, and 2004. Stories used were those that implied or indicated state agency responsibility in a child's death. The dependent variable was a count of new child welfare legislation that is intended to prevent future child maltreatment fatalities.</p>	<p>fatalities respond by passing substantive legislation. The authors noted that the findings were consistent with the rational actor or rational choice theory of policy-making.</p>
<p>COMMENTS ON PREVIOUS ARTICLE:</p> <p>Media Coverage of Agency-Related Child Maltreatment Fatalities: Does It Result in State Legislative Change Intended to Prevent Future Fatalities?</p> <p><i>Douglas (2009)</i></p>	<p>The article does not clearly indicate whether the 8 newspapers used in the study were the only newspapers found to contain the keywords in their search or whether there was a reason they selected those specific 8 newspapers. It seems unlikely that only 8 papers in the entire U.S. would have contained those key words over a nine year period.</p>		
<p>Implications of Media Scrutiny for a Child</p>	<p>In this study, researchers asked:</p>	<p>Researchers used inductive, holistic research methods to</p>	<p>The researchers in this study reported that data show that the public is</p>

<p>Protection Agency <i>Cooper (2005)</i></p> <p>This paper was noted to be a product of a year-long study examining agency reaction to media-induced public opinion. It examined media impact on job efficacy in a child protection agency.</p>	<p>What is the bureaucratic response to involvement of external environmental forces? Is it beneficial or detrimental to the child protection agency, the workers, and the children the agency serves to protect?</p>	<p>examine the effect of media scrutiny on changes in management dictates, worker duties and responsibilities, and agency services. Data were collected from media sources, interviews, archival materials, and participant observation, and were analyzed via qualitative content analysis, providing an ethnographic description of perceptions and behavior.</p>	<p>generally quite interested in child protection. The study found that everyone (media, workers, clients, general public) tend to put this aspect first in their concerns, except agency management who are more concerned with accountability than actual “child protection” Data were reported to show that media sources tend to be very critical of agencies that are responsible for protecting children, to which agency management react with placing restrictions on the employees. Findings indicate a vicious circle as follows: management desperately tries to correct a bad image, employees are angry and frustrated over that which they cannot do for their clients, the clients are not receiving services that intended to correct their dire situations, and the media sensationalize every new case that comes to their attention.</p>
<p>The Impact of News Media on Child Abuse Reporting <i>McDevit (1996)</i></p> <p>This study compared news stories from metropolitan newspapers with reports of child</p>	<p>This study examined the possible relationship between news stories and reports of maltreatment to mandated agencies, exploring the trends from 1963-1989.</p>	<p>The researchers compared the number of news stories appearing in local and national newspapers between the years 1963-1989 with the number of child abuse/neglect reports made to child welfare agencies.</p>	<p>The reported findings were that both the number of news stories and the number of child maltreatment reports increased dramatically between the years 1963-1989.</p> <p>The researchers noted that the findings revealed a strong correlation, and that</p>

<p>abuse and neglect made to mandated child welfare agencies locally and nationally over a period of 25 years.</p>	<p>Research Question: Does the media have a role in the explosion of child maltreatment reporting?</p>	<p>Only two newspapers were used in this study. The New York Times represented the national newspaper and was selected because it was the widest circulated national paper for the period of analysis and the stories were indexed. The Pittsburgh Post-Gazette was the local daily metropolitan paper selected for the study because it represented a large American county and the newspaper library was available to the researchers.</p> <p>The articles were selected if the newspaper heading seemed to be related to child abuse or neglect.</p>	<p>the correlations contained no evidence of a possible causal relationship or whether the increases in both variables are the result of one variable on the other or are both the results of external factors.</p>
<p>The Role of Media in Reporting Child Abuse <i>Saint-Jacques, Villeneuve, Turcotte, Drapeau, & Ivers, (2012)</i></p> <p>This study examined the short-term impact that the media</p>	<p>Researchers in this study sought to answer the following research questions: Do newspaper articles influence people's tendency to report their suspicions of child maltreatment to Child Protection Services? Can a relationship be established</p>	<p>The following is the methodology as reported in the study: The number of reports ($N = 11,646$) made to these agencies in Canada was tallied each week during a 24-month period (Divided in two cycles of a one year period each)</p>	<p>Reported findings were as follows: Results of the main analysis show a statistically significant relationship between media coverage and the number of cases reported to child protection agencies.</p> <p>The correlation in the main analysis was quite strong: ($r_s(51) = .48, p = .03$)</p>

<p>coverage of children in need of protection had on the number of cases reported to child protection agencies.</p>	<p>between the fluctuation in media coverage regarding child maltreatment (IV) and/or CPS and the number of reports made to CPS (DV)?</p>	<p>Data for IV and DV were analysed using two different types of procedures.</p> <p>First the main analysis examined the relationship between relevant articles every week and the number or reports to child protection agencies on the same and following weeks. Non-parametric correlation coefficients (spearman's r) were calculated for weekly data. Second, to address the "media frenzy" articles, an initial intervention time series analysis was conducted on the total number of articles per week to identity the weeks with greater than what would be expected number of articles (outliers) each week and the natural variation from one week to the next. A second intervention time series analysis was conducted to study whether or not the identified frenzy events were associated with the number of reports to</p>	<p>This positive relationship was higher in cycle 2: Cycle 1: (rs (51)=.16, p=.27) Cycle 2: (rs (51)=.48, p=.003)</p> <p>The media frenzy events analysis using an intervention time series analysis showed that none of the media frenzy events appeared to be significantly associated with variation in the number of cases reported to child welfare agencies.</p> <p>The researchers stated that they could infer causality of the two variables because they met the criteria for causal inference, as per Rubin and Babbie (2010).</p>
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		<p>child protections agencies.</p> <p>During the same period, a content analysis of print media was conducted regarding child maltreatment and/or child protection services (CPS) to identify and count the number of articles published ($N = 1,211$) and single out media frenzy events.</p>	
<p>The Impact of Media Reporting of High-Profile Cases on Child Protection Medical Assessments <i>Ray, Conn, Liebeschuetz, Costoli, & Tan (2013)</i></p> <p>This study examined the child protection medical caseload within a London borough in the 12 months before and after the first report of the case of Baby P. (Peter Connelly). It was noted that in the UK, the case of Baby P had been the most widely media reported case,</p>	<p>This study explored the impact of the case of Baby P on the referral patterns and outcomes of child protection medical assessments.</p>	<p>Researchers conducted a retrospective analysis of all referrals for child protection medical assessments within a London borough between the dates November 2007-October 2009.</p> <p>Data were collected from the medical reports of the assessing doctor with reason for referral categories as follows: ‘Physical injury’, ‘Allegation or suspicion of abuse’ and ‘Sibling of index case’. Assessment outcome data were also collected under the categories: ‘Non-accidental injury’,</p>	<p>The results were reported to show that the number of child protection medical referrals almost doubled in the 12 months after the first reports of the Baby P case compared to the 12 months before. Outcomes of the medical assessments showed an increase in the proportion of reports confirming signs consistent with non-accidental injury and reports which were inconclusive. The researcher noted that this finding indicates a change in the referral behaviour.</p>

<p>compared to others.</p>		<p>‘Accidental injury’, ‘Inconclusive examination’ and ‘Normal examination’.</p> <p>Data were tabulated according to calendar month.</p> <p>Paired sample t-tests compared the number of children seen before and after the reporting of Baby P. Chi-square tests compared the distribution of referral patterns and outcomes.</p>	
<p>COMMENTS ON PREVIOUS ARTICLE:</p> <p>The Impact of Media Reporting of High-Profile Cases on Child Protection Medical Assessments <i>Ray, Conn, Liebeschuetz, Costoli, & Tan (2013)</i></p>	<p>The article does not clearly indicate in which borough the study took place, or for what reason. Although the case of Baby P (Peter Connelly) is from the Borough of Haringey, it is not likely that this is the borough in which the study took place, as the researchers state “our” borough, and since four of the five researchers are employed in the Borough of Newham, this is likely where the study took place.</p> <p>This study did not examine how the media covered the case of Baby P or to what extent; it only mentions that it had been the most widely reported case, compared to others. The study simply measures the child protection medical referrals 12 months prior to the death of Baby P and 12 months afterwards. The researchers did not give consideration to the possibility that there may have been changes in how the incidents were assessed</p>		
<p>The News about Child Sexual Abuse: A Systematic Analysis of Reports in the South African English-Language Press <i>Corbella, & Collings, (2007)</i></p>	<p>The goals identified in this research were to conduct a baseline study of CSA press reporting and to establish the extent to which press coverage in selected South African English-language papers accurately reflects the</p>	<p>Researchers obtained baseline data from the database of the KwaZulu-Natal Child Rape Project (cf., Collings & Wiles, 2004a, 2004b), which had a complete record of all cases</p>	<p>The researchers in this study noted that the findings suggested that press coverage of CSA in the South African English-language press is insufficient; the published articles represented less than one percent of cases reported to the police. Only one of the published articles received <i>primary</i></p>

<p>This study provided an indication of the extent and representativeness of press coverage of child sexual assault incidents in the South African press.</p>	<p>extent and nature of the problem.</p> <p>Researchers selected newspaper articles for this study using online archives of the largest distributor of newspapers in the Durban area of South Africa, called Independent Newspapers. News reports were selected only if they met all three of the following criteria:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Published during 2004 2. Involved the sexual abuse of a child. 3. Contained one of more of the following search terms: <i>Child abuse, sexual abuse, child sexual abuse, molestation, rape child rape, indecent assault, child pornography and pedophile.</i> 	<p>of CSA reported to the police in the North Durban Policing area from January 2001 to present. Baseline data and selected newspaper reports were coded, to provide information relating to the offender (gender, age, relationship to the child, number of offenders), the victim (gender, age) and the abuse incident (nature, frequency, location, additional crimes). The extent of media coverage for each incident of abuse was coded, into one of three mutually exclusive categories: primary coverage (more than 1,000 words and multiple coverage), secondary coverage (200 to 1,000 words), and tertiary coverage (less than 200 words).</p>	<p>coverage (>1000 words and multiple coverage) with only four of the articles appearing on the front page of the paper. The findings were reported to indicate that the nature of cases covered in the English-language South African press is representative of the types of cases reported to the South African police services.</p>
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<p>Child Abuse and Neglect in China: What the Papers Say <i>Hesketh, & Lynch, (1996)</i></p> <p>The authors noted that the Chinese press was controlled by the government, through its propaganda departments. The reporting style tends to be brief with little detail and comment. When dealing with issues such as child abuse the approach is factual and non-sensational. This study sought to gain an insight into attitudes towards child abuse in China, by reviewing a number of newspapers for a period of 3 months</p>	<p>The researchers noted that the purpose of this study was to explore the recognition of child abuse and neglect, both by the public and by professionals, in China. It was intended as a preliminary step in initiating discussions with Chinese colleagues and students on child protection issues.</p>	<p>Issues for May and June 1996 of the national papers <i>The People's Daily, The Law Daily</i> and <i>The Education Daily</i> together with the local paper, the <i>Qianjiang Wanbao</i>, were scanned for any stories relating to child abuse or neglect. Because the number of stories in the local press was much higher, the scanning of <i>Qianjiang Wanbao</i> was extended to also include April 1996.</p>	<p>The research reported the following findings: There were no stories related to child abuse or neglect in <i>The People's Daily</i>, and only a few in <i>The Law Daily</i> and <i>The Education Daily</i>. The <i>Qianjiang Wanbao</i> had the most coverage of child abuse related stories including some articles on intra-familial physical, sexual, and emotional abuse and extra-familial abuse such as child labor. However, the highest number of stories related to abuse/neglect were reports about the psychological pressures on children by both parents and teachers to succeed academically. The minimal direct or indirect reference to incidents of child abuse in the national news was attributed to the fact that newspapers are controlled by the government, for which child abuse is still a taboo problem.</p>
<p>COMMENTS ON PREVIOUS ARTICLE:</p> <p>Child Abuse and Neglect in China: What the Papers Say</p>	<p>Researchers do not indicate in the article how or why the particular newspapers in the study were selected, but it is noted that every city in China has a local paper and that most people in China read the local paper. Although the researchers note that the local papers carry a wide range of provincial and national news, the article does not indicate how this constitutes a representative sample for China. According to the researchers, the <i>Qianjiang Wanbao</i> is typical of most local papers and has a circulation of 1.5 million daily.</p>		

<p><i>Hesketh, & Lynch, (1996)</i></p>	<p>The Qianjiang Wanbao was noted to have had the most coverage of child abuse related stories, which were not only local cases, as the examples provided were across various Chinese provinces.</p>		
<p>The ‘social tsunami’: Media coverage of child abuse in Malaysia’s English-language newspapers in 2010 <i>Niner, S., Ahmad, Y., & Cuthbert, D. (2013)</i></p> <p>This research analysed media coverage of child abuse in two mainstream English-language daily newspapers in Malaysia throughout 2010.</p>	<p>This analysis focuses on how this issue of child abuse is presented and ‘framed’ in the media.</p> <p>This research sought to demonstrate that through the use of simple episodic framing and a distorted focus on extreme cases of child abuse, media coverage internationally obscures the reality of child abuse as it occurs within the context of contemporary social, cultural, religious or political systems.</p> <p>The authors noted that in addition to this international pattern of media reporting of child abuse, that is replicated in Malaysia, due to the gendered socialization processes in Malaysia there is a tendency to blame and punish mothers for child abuse even when they are not the perpetrators.</p>	<p>Researchers used media content analysis, to monitor two English-language newspapers, <i>TS</i> and the <i>NST</i>, in 2010 for their coverage of child abuse. All newspaper articles with the subject of child abuse and children’s issues were retained to form an initial database of 1694 articles. Of these articles, the ones that did not fit with the WHO definition of child abuse were excluded leaving 675 articles to be assessed.</p> <p>The quantitative analysis of data on page number, size of articles and graphics were entered into SPSS (18.0 version) software. The articles were coded as either episodic or thematic.</p> <p>Categorization of the type of abuse</p>	<p>The reported findings of the media content analysis of <i>TS</i> and the <i>NST</i> detected patterns of over-representation of the relatively rare, horrific incidents of child abuse and the effects of the use of episodic framing. It was noted that these patterns distort the reality of child abuse in Malaysia and fail to reveal the underlying causes of abuse such as issues of poverty, social disadvantage, social isolation, mental illness and discrimination. The extreme complexity of the situation was found to be reduced to and reported in simple good and evil scenarios, whereby one evil individual takes advantage of a vulnerable child. It was found that women are disproportionately blamed in the media, even when they are not the perpetrators of the child abuse.</p>

		<p>covered, such as child murder, sexual abuse and abandonment or baby dumping or neglect was completed.</p> <p>The researchers reported that they selected the two English language newspapers (TS and NST) because the content is more representative to a wider national audience, rather than the other papers that are more bound to a specific ethnicity. Of the three main ethnic groups/languages in Malaysia (Malay, Indian, and Chinese), the English papers are consumed by all three groups whereas the Malay and Chinese papers are more exclusive to each ethnicity.</p>	
<p>What hysteria? A systematic study of newspaper coverage of accused child molesters</p>	<p>Researchers in this study noted the following three aims of the study: First, to determine the extent to which those charged with child</p>	<p>The following methodology was reported: Researchers created two data bases. The first one identified all</p>	<p>Study findings noted that most defendants (56.1%) were not identified in the newspaper. Factors associated with a greater chance of coverage were noted to include: cases</p>

<p><i>Cheit (2003)</i></p> <p>This study examined newspaper coverage of people charged with child molestation.</p>	<p>molestation receive newspaper coverage; second, to analyze the nature of that coverage; and third, to compare the universe of coverage to the nature of child molestation charges in the criminal justice system as a whole.</p>	<p>defendants charged with child molestation in Rhode Island in 1993. The database was updated after 5 years to include relevant information about case disposition. The second database was created by electronic searching of the Providence Journal for every story that mentioned each defendant.</p> <p>It was noted that only this newspaper was selected as the researchers found the Rhode Island area best suited for their study and the Providence Journal is a statewide newspaper with an electronic version allowing full access to all articles facilitating name searches of the charged defendants. The other reason that Rhode Island was suited to the study was because its</p>	<p>involving first-degree charges, cases with multiple counts, cases involving additional violence or multiple victims, and cases resulting in long prison sentences. The data were reported to indicate that the press exaggerates “stranger danger,” while intra-familial cases are underreported. Newspaper accounts were noted to minimize the extent to which guilty defendants avoid prison.</p>
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		<p>3.Third degree sexual assault (commonly called Statutory Rape)</p> <p>Each of the 192 defendants in this study was tracked from the time of arrest until ultimate disposition. In 1995 a search was conducted and, as long as the case was still pending, in 1998 and 2001, every confirmed story where a defendant was named was downloaded for coding and analysis. The stories were coded to reflect the total word count, the stage of the criminal proceeding (pretrial, trial, sentence, post-trial), the editions of the newspaper in which the story appeared, whether it was a police report or a free-standing story, and whether there was a by-line.</p>	
Informative or Not? Media coverage of Child Social Policy Issues	This research study examined television and newspaper media to determine whether stories provided	Systematic content analysis procedures were used by researchers to	The researchers found that of the five topic areas which the stories had to fall under to be included in the study, Youth Violent

<p><i>Kunkel, Smith, Suding, & Biely, (2006)</i></p> <p>The purpose of this study was to examine how well the news media was informing the public about important issues facing American children.</p>	<p>readers with relevant contextual information to make sense of what was being reported focusing on five areas. The five area of critical significance to the well-being of U.S. children that were established were noted as follows: 1. Child abuse and neglect, 2. Child care, 3. Child health insurance, 4. Teen child bearing, and; 5. Youth violent crime. Prior to commencing the study, on each of the five areas of significance, briefing papers were created using experts in the field, presenting a bullet point summary of the most important information available in each realm.</p>	<p>analyze media coverage from April 21-July 20, 2001 by examining 12 major metropolitan newspapers and 30 minutes of nightly newscasts from the 4 leading national T.V networks in the U.S.A. Stories included in the study had to contain a primary focus on children or a child-related focus in one of the five topic areas: 1. Child abuse and neglect 2. Child care 3. Child health insurance 4. Teen child bearing 5. Youth and violent crimes Editorials, opinion based stories, and stories with an international orientation were excluded. Each story was analyzed on descriptive measures, such as story length, story placement, story position, and story frame.</p>	<p>Crime and Child Abuse and Neglect accounted for more than 9 of 10 stories in all five topic areas. Youth crime and child abuse were framed in a shorter and more episodic manner (breaking news) and rarely did they include statistical information. 3 of every 4 child care and teen child-bearing stories included some important contextual information. The most important finding was noted to be the significantly low rate at which stories of youth violent crime and child abuse provided any contextual information.</p>
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<p>COMMENTS ON PREVIOUS ARTICLE:</p> <p>Informative or Not? Media coverage of Child Social Policy Issues <i>Kunkel, Smith, Suding, & Biely, (2006)</i></p>	<p>The authors of the article did not discuss how or why the 12 newspapers were selected. It would have been useful if the authors had included a brief note on sampling strategy and how the sample is representative of the population.</p>		
<p>How the News Frames Child Maltreatment: Unintended</p>	<p>Researchers noted that there were two key questions which were the focus of this</p>	<p>This article highlights the key narratives, frames and causal stories</p>	<p>The article concluded that important child maltreatment issues such as risk factors, protective</p>

<p>Consequences <i>Aubrun, & Grady (2003)</i></p> <p>This research paper was noted to be a supplement to Cultural Logic’s report: “Two Cognitive Obstacles to Preventing Child Abuse: The ‘Other-Mind’ and the ‘Family Bubble’”. This article summarized patterns in the media of child maltreatment.</p>	<p>analysis: 1. “Why do certain kinds of stories (framed in a particular way) count as news?” and, 2. “What patterns of reasoning are reinforced by the way the stories are presented in the news?”</p>	<p>that were presented in the media on the issue of child maltreatment by analyzing approximately 120 news articles. The articles were collected by Prevent Child Abuse America and Cultural Logic and a collection of TV news stories was assembled by the Center for Communications and Community at UCLA.</p>	<p>factors, and trends do not get enough media attention because “good” news stories are simple, sensational or episodic. Findings suggest that the relevant contextual issues may not qualify as “news” as they are just background information about the world, rather than a “surprising incident”. Recommendations were made that advocates must encourage journalists to write stories that promote frames to include the value of social connection as well as a developmental perspective and information about causes and solutions.</p>
<p>COMMENTS ON PREVIOUS ARTICLE:</p> <p>How the News Frames Child Maltreatment: Unintended Consequences <i>Aubrun, & Grady (2003)</i></p>	<p>This article does not identify a sampling strategy.</p>		
<p>Playing Safe: Media Coverage of Child Sexual Abuse Prevention Strategies <i>Kitzinger & Skidmore (1995)</i></p> <p>This study examined the</p>	<p>Researchers in this study used a content analysis of all press and television coverage of child sexual abuse that occurred over a twelve month period in 1991.</p>	<p>Researchers completed a content analysis of archives of all 1668 press articles and 149 TV news bulletins which covered the topic of child sexual abuse from 1991. Using a</p>	<p>Researchers found that most articles (71% of press and 83% of TV) were based on a specific case, describing events around one incident, rather than discussing areas of general concern. Only 68 press items and 12 TV news items focused on prevention. And, only 60%</p>

<p>coverage of child abuse prevention in the U.K. over a period of 12 months.</p>	<p>Research Question: What is the nature and frequency of the media coverage of child sexual abuse prevention, in items that discuss child sexual abuse?</p>	<p>special software package, each item was coded, which allowed researchers to search by headline, date, origin, journalist’s name, and format. Other information recorded included the main topic, how people were described and who was interviewed.</p>	<p>of these were an actual news report, while 40% were in “alternate” formats, such as letters or a feature on a woman’s page. Most of the articles focused on out of the home types of child sexual abuse, such as those involving abduction, abuse within a school, or institution, and little attention was given to assault/abuse by friends and family members. The reports that discuss prevention tend to be reactive and attached to specific events, not presented as a general topic.</p> <p>The researchers found that the fact that prevention is not a general topic in the news is not solely the responsibility of the media. Given that the media tends to report ‘news of the day’, it is suggested that new initiatives and ‘news of the day’ prevention based events be created to attract media attention.</p>
<p>COMMENTS ON PREVIOUS ARTICLE:</p> <p>Playing Safe: Media Coverage of Child Sexual Abuse Prevention Strategies</p>	<p>This article only indicates that the study gathered information from within the U.K. without drawing any comparisons across regions or specifying local vs wider region.</p>		

<i>Kitzinger & Skidmore (1995)</i>			
<p>Notes on a (sex crime scandal): The impact of media coverage of sexual abuse in the Catholic Church on public opinion <i>Mancini, C., Shields, R.T. (2014)</i></p> <p>This research is noted to be based on the scholarly opinion that media drives negative public views about crime and justice. Thus the researchers examine whether the highly publicized sexual abuse scandal within the Catholic Church impacted public opinion.</p>	<p>The study focused on the following four research questions: 1. First, how does media consumption affect perceptions of the Church? 2. Do perceptions of the coverage (as biased or as fair and balanced) impact public confidence? 3. Do these media effects hold for both non-Catholics and Catholics? 4. Does religiosity among Catholics moderate the effect of media exposure on confidence in the Church?</p>	<p>Using data from a 2010 CBS/New York Times national poll the researchers examined how exposure to news coverage detailing the abuse affected the levels of public confidence in the Church’s ability to protect children.</p>	<p>Researchers found a positive impact of media exposure. It was found that Catholics with greater media consumption about the scandal were significantly more confident in the Church’s ability to prevent sexual abuse. Also in a “boomerang” effect of coverage, Catholics who felt the media coverage unfairly targeted the Church held more optimistic views. Supporting the substitution thesis, religiosity mediated these effects among this group. A positive impact was also shown in non-Catholics who perceived the media coverage to be biased, and were more positive about the Church’s ability to address sex crime in the future. Thus researchers’ overall finding was that media consumption of the sexual abuse scandal does not exert a negative influence on public confidence in the Church.</p>

The literature on child welfare in the media includes relevant non-research based descriptive papers that offer insight and proposed solutions into the area of study. The relevant articles are summarized in the following chart as follows:

Table 2: Summary of Descriptive Papers in the Literature

Study	Purpose/Description	Key points/Quotes	Discussion/Recommendations
<p>“Child Protection and the Media: Lessons from the last three decades” Ayre (2001)</p>	<p>This discussion paper examined the role of media in creating a climate of fear, mistrust, and blame within the child protection system.</p>	<p>The following key points were taken from the article:</p> <p>Fear: The media select stories that are more sensational and rare incidents of child abuse, such as child murders and child sex rings. This type of reporting involves distorting the risk and creating fear. Fear is noted to extend to policy makers and professionals in the field, who do not want to be subjected to media scrutiny.</p> <p>Mistrust: Key news stories on child abuse are centered on criticism of the competency and motivation of child protection worker. This portrays the image of the professional practice of child welfare to be unsafe and unreliable which influences the perceptions of the</p>	<p>The author recommended that child welfare organizations abandon their conventional media avoidant strategies to gain an understanding of the media and the creation of news. Then develop a media strategy to work cooperatively with the media so as to not force their hand at reporting one side of the story, which is likely from a source that holds an unfavourable view of child welfare. It is noted that the police services have gained success in media relations by deploying the media to their advantage, presenting information that is neutral and/or favourable.</p>

		<p>public, policy makers, and government managers. This, in turn, impacts the patterns of child welfare service delivery.</p> <p>Blame: Child welfare agencies that work hard to prevent child abuse are reported by the media to be responsible for the incident through faults and failures.</p>	
<p>COMMENTS ON PREVIOUS ARTICLE:</p> <p>“Child Protection and the Media: Lessons from the last three decades” Ayre (2001)</p>	<p>This discussion paper does not refer to any specific type of media other than “news media”.</p>		
<p>Social Conservatism vs Social Justice: The Portrayal of Child Abuse in the Press in Victoria, Australia <i>Mendes (2000)</i></p> <p>The role of media in influencing child protection</p>	<p>This discussion paper argues that media coverage of child abuse has both positive and negative consequences on child protection.</p> <p>The positive consequences of media coverage is noted in this discussion paper to have been: increased public awareness of</p>	<p>Positive consequence example cited in paper:</p> <p>The media have contributed to placing the cause of children’s rights firmly on the public policy agenda.</p> <p>The death of a toddler, Daniel Valeriio in 1990</p>	<p>This article concluded that much reporting, especially in the tabloid media has been ill-informed with a focus on sensationalism. Print media was reported to ignore the causes of, and potential solutions to, child abuse. The article surmised that the media will likely continue to play a role in bringing deficits of child protection systems and the importance of children’s rights to public attention. Human services professionals were encouraged to engage the</p>

<p>policies in Australia is examined.</p>	<p>harm to children (Stephanson, 1987; Goodard, 1996); children's rights have been placed on the public policy agenda, and helping to trigger program reforms. Negative effects of media coverage has been: sensationalistic reporting; promotion of simplistic solutions to complex problems and focus on a few cases that were not representative rather than on the child welfare system in general.</p>	<p>lead to public outrage from pressure groups which led to a campaign by the Herald Sun, which led the Liberal government to change its mind, helping on mandatory reporting.</p> <p>Negative consequence example cited in the paper:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Public's understanding of causes and solution to the problem ie.) Non-familial abuse is markedly over-reported and acts of commission are over reported rather than acts of omission. -Child protection workers are labeled as 'wrongdoers' who are worse than the abuser. -Child protection workers feel 'besieged and demoralized' as a result of media criticism (Clark, 1998; Paterson, 1993) leading to children being unnecessarily removed from parental care at a 	<p>media in an attempt to channel their energies into constructive and realistic problem diagnosis and outcomes.</p>
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		<p>cost to the both child’s and family’s welfare (Scott and O’Neil, 1996; Hatch, 1997). Alternately, child protection focuses on family preservation, underestimating the risk (Wilczynski and Sinclair, 1998).</p> <p>-“The news media have generally not operated autonomously” -“Consumer groups view the media as a powerful tool in assisting their objective of system reform” -“Regulation of Australian newspapers is minimal”</p>	
<p>“The gender neglect and textual abuse of children in the print media” Goodard, Saunders (2000)</p>	<p>This paper discussed research in progress that was the result of a ‘serendipitous’ discovery of language usage while conducting an exploratory analysis of some U.K. newspapers for comparison of their previous research, which involved examining three Australian newspapers. As such, the researchers decided to examine</p>	<p>Researchers noted that they loosely followed Robinson’s (1996) approach to exploratory analysis by posing three questions:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Is the representation of events the only plausible explanation of what happened? 2. Is any account apparently neutral or are evaluative 	<p>Researchers noted the following two findings thus far:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. A child who is identified as abused, neglected, or at risk may lose his/her gender as the story is reported. The language used in print media has been shown to objectify by using the pronoun “it” to reference children, even when the child’s gender has been previously identified. 2. The descriptive language used by the some of articles has minimized the seriousness of the offenses, which have been reframed as a consensual relationship between adults.

	<p>the use of language in the newspaper's portrayal of child victims of abuse and neglect and the offences perpetrated against them.</p>	<p>terms used to discredit any of the actors? 3. Are the reports of other...papers all in agreement with other countries as well as within this country? (Robinson, 1996, p.186).</p> <p>Researchers discussed the importance of language and how it is used to represent social issues, social structures, processes, and relationships. Discourse analysis was noted to be significant in examining media representations of child abuse.</p>	<p>They have done so through the use of terms like "affair" and "relationship" in discussing certain situations of sexual abuse. For example: "Man jailed for sex with 10 year old girl".... "A relationship developed until they were having sex every week".... "The couple denied having sexual intercourse."</p> <p>Given that this is a discussion around research in progress, no recommendations were made.</p>
<p>Narrative Transformation in Reporting Child Abuse <i>Hall, Srikant, & Slembrouck, (1997)</i> This article compared how the trade press and the national press report</p>	<p>This paper examined how a case of child abuse is turned into 'political news', raising the following questions: 1. Which moments in the chain of events concerning child abuse are selected for coverage by the media?; 2. What is the nature of the transformation of</p>	<p>-“Versions of social reality are constructed and communicated by elite groups” -“The persuasion of readerships, versions of family relations and the allocation of blame and responsibility” -“Blame is simultaneously</p>	<p>The authors noted that a broad range of other `narrative transformers' have used the death of Stephanie Fox in order to make comments and support their position. The authors also noted that they see child abuse as a critical arena for the depiction of important contemporary issues related to the family, the government, and power of the professional employed in the field. These</p>

<p>child abuse by concentrating on three different cycles of a particular case, Stephanie Fox cycle 1: discovery of Stephanie’s death; cycle 2: the conviction of Stephen Fox; and cycle 3: the inquiry report). *Trade Press (Community Care) is a newspaper in the United Kingdom that addresses a smaller audience with specific interests and is more likely to structure coverage around event categories and explanations which allow the professional community and its institutions to defend their own actions and categories.</p>	<p>institutional events into a particular type of covered event? 3. What are the dynamics of struggle over definitions of reality and the projection of certain causal links? This study focuses on the narrative transformation of the storyline as different voices and discourses are recruited to substantiate different agendas.</p>	<p>targeted at the parents and the professionals” - “signs of collusion between the trade and national press as they had a common cause to capitalize on” The National Press used the case of Stephanie Fox to transform it into a political story and critique of the poll tax. The Trade Press transforms the story into a report about increasing numbers of child abuse and the need for more social worker resources.</p>	<p>important issues are said to be more newsworthy than the political interests of newspapers.</p>
<p>The Vicious Cycle: Recurrent Interactions among the Media, Politicians, the Public, and Child Welfare</p>	<p>The ‘vicious cycle’ was noted by the author to refer to the interaction and events among the media, politicians, the public, and child welfare organizations following incidents of</p>	<p>Media coverage of incidents of child maltreatment tends to negatively regard child welfare workers blaming them for failing to protect the child or</p>	<p>The author recommended that the public needs to be aware that child welfare agencies will not be able to prevent all instances of child abuse, like police services cannot prevent crime. Prevention should be seen as a collective responsibility.</p>

<p>Services Organizations <i>Chenot, (2010)</i></p> <p>This is a discussion paper on the cyclic interaction among media, politicians, the public, and child welfare organizations in response to serious incidents of child maltreatment. The cycle and the influence that it has on child welfare organizations are explored.</p>	<p>serious child abuse. The author notes that this cycle has a profound impact on child welfare services and those who work within them, focusing on climates and cultures in these organizations. The article focuses on the climate and culture within child welfare organizations in response to the cyclic interactions, and the author proposed solutions for managing these effects.</p>	<p>prevent the incident.</p> <p>It is noted that the expectations on child welfare agencies are too high and unrealistic and that they are held to a standard that is higher than any other service providing agency.</p>	<p>It is suggested that high profile individuals and groups promote the necessity of child welfare, while highlighting the agencies' difficulties to the media, public, and policy makers.</p> <p>More practical solutions are recommended, such as concentrating on resources geared towards prevention strategies, while recognizing that this will not lead to absolute prevention, but may lower the number and frequency of child abuse incidents.</p>
<p>Child Welfare, the Media and Capacity Building <i>Briar-Lawson, , Martinson, Briar-Bonpane & Zox, (2010)</i></p>	<p>This article discussed community initiatives in child welfare practice and how media coverage could help to increase people's understanding of child welfare. Suggestions are made for ways that child protection agencies could work with the media in a meaningful way that creates opportunity to reduce risk factors for children and families.</p>	<p>The author notes that the manner in which the media covers problematic child welfare cases through scrutiny and blame may actually jeopardize the child welfare workers and the families who receive service.</p> <p>It is also noted that media strategies should enhance rather than deride the image of child welfare workers and work to inform the public about the issues related to</p>	<p>It is recommended that child welfare leaders need to recognize the powerful influence of the media and to be more prepared to respond to the media with the mindset that this is an opportunity for community engagement, to educate the public, and to mobilize support for families and service providers. It was suggested that child protection leaders could call a press conference to create an action agenda. Child welfare leaders then have the opportunity to 'reframe each media crisis as an opportunity'</p>

		child abuse and neglect.	
<p>“Child Abuse Fatalities and the Media: Lessons from a case study” <i>Goddard & Liddell (1995)</i></p>	<p>Using a case study of the death of a 2 year old child in Australia, this paper explored the role of the media in influencing child protection policy.</p>	<p>The author notes that media coverage of child abuse fatalities should not be focused exclusively on mistakes that individual made. And the child protection agenda is strongly influenced by the media. Also noted in the paper was that the media campaign that proceeded the death of 2 year old Daniel Valerio (killed by his step father) succeeded in their goal of introduction of mandatory reporting of child abuse by designated professionals.</p>	<p>It is recommended by the authors that child protection needs to use the media constructively, given that child abuse will be covered by the media due to the fact that it is political and it is a crime.</p>
<p>Read all about it! The news about child abuse, <i>Goddard (1996)</i></p>	<p>This paper examines how many of the health and welfare professionals in the child protection field see the media as a social problem in the manner in which they cover the topic of child abuse. The author examines the trends in the media while reflecting on some of the relevant studies in the field. The author points out</p>	<p>It was noted in the article that newspapers tend to rely on ‘eye catching headlines’ that are sensationalised. The media was noted to tend to report the most ‘grotesque’ cases while ignoring the cases of higher frequency and fatality rates that involve neglect.</p>	<p>The author noted that children themselves are silent in most media coverage of child abuse. It was recommended that in the future abused children’s voices should play a more central role in the media stories.</p> <p>The author makes the point that despite the manner in which the media covers child abuse for which they receive much criticism, problems, such as carelessness of child protection services and child abuse would</p>

	<p>that the news plays a large role in our lives. It is noted that there is a large focus on crime and social deviancy in the media and journalists hold a powerful role in in constructing what is deviant.</p>	<p>The author points out that there is a lot of criticism on media coverage of child abuse, but the positive contributions were noted to be increased public awareness and aiding the development of solutions to the problem.</p>	<p>have continued without being exposed by the media.</p>
<p>Media Representations of Sexual Abuse Risks <i>Kitzinger(1996)</i></p> <p>This paper explored how the media shifted away from risks to children, to risks of children making false reports of sexual abuse in the family. In 1993 the phenomenon ‘False Memory Syndrome’ (FMS) had been identified by the media as a risk to parents by way of being falsely accused of sexual abuse.</p>	<p>This paper focused on media production processed using interviews with journalists from research (Kitzinger and Reilly, 1996) concerned with examining the media reporting on risk. Journalists were interviewed on how they reported risk related to Genetic Research, Mad Cow Disease, and False Memory Syndrome. Ten of the journalists interviewed covered False Memory Syndrome stories.</p> <p>The authors focus was on answering these questions.</p> <p>How was it that ‘False Memory Syndrome’, whereby parents are wrongfully accused of sexual</p>	<p>When journalists were asked why they wrote about False Memory Syndrome five key factors were identified as to what attracted the to the story.</p> <p>1. Good story. It was thought to be a “good story” as it directly related to and coincided with the Ramona Case (a father sued the therapist who was alleged to have created false memories of sexual abuse in his daughter) which had attracted National media attention.</p> <p>2. New story. FMS was considered to be a “hot” topic because it is new and emotional.</p>	<p>Although the topic of FMS had lost its newsworthiness by the time of the writing of this paper (1996), its impacts were noted by the author to have remained as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Some professionals have regarded the coverage of FMS as positive in that it caused therapists to reflect on their practice, especially around memory. -Other professionals were of the view that the FMS coverage was a set-back in terms of recognizing the vastness of sexual violence against children. -It is noted that there was a danger in the media alerting the public to one risk (FMS) in that they may have introduced a new one (failure to report abuse). Concerns were raised that community members may be reluctant to report disclosures based on worry that a child will be unnecessarily taken away from her or his parent’s care when he or she was only experiencing FMS. Another

	<p>abuse has come to be the focus of public debate?</p> <p>Why is it that the risks of parents being falsely accused of sexual abuse have proved so much more newsworthy (than child sexual abuse)?</p>	<p>Stories of injustice were said to make good stories and they create a climate of “let’s find out if it isn’t true?” Whereas routine child abuse was no longer classified as “news”.</p> <p>3. Political and Social importance. Part of the agenda of certain newspapers was the injustice against the family (perpetrated by the state) with respect to the false memory issue. Concerns about therapeutic practice were raised and that they abuse their position to create false memories.</p> <p>4. Belief in FMS. Due to their belief in the validity of FMS, they were interested in representing this point of view. Journalists were sympathetic towards the parents and angry with those who were believed to be manipulating the child’s disclosures.</p> <p>5. Credibility of parents. The journalists found</p>	<p>noted concern about the residual effects of FMS news coverage was that children or adult survivors of child abuse will not come forward.</p> <p>-It is suggested that the emphasis on the strength of the parent’s credibility in the FMS reports, undermined the credibility of survivors of sexual abuse survivors.</p>
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		the parents to be more credible than the children with respect to the allegation of sexual abuse.	
<p>Portrayals of Child Abuse Scandals in the Media in Australia and England: Impacts on Practice, Policy, and Systems <i>Lonne, B., Parton, N. (2014)</i></p>	<p>The article describes how media played a key role in placing the issue of child protection high on public and political agendas over the last 50 years. Presented is a critical analysis of how the Australian and English media portray child abuse scandals, and the impact that it has had on practice, policy, and systems</p>	<p>Comparison between Australia and England: Similar trends in reporting such as disclosing tragedies and uncovering systemic failures to the public. Differences were noted in focus and tone. England was noted to take a more hostile attitude towards social workers and their managers than hospital staff and police. Australia media were noted to be ‘more tame’ with a focus on systems rather than individuals. One possible explanation for this difference was said to be that there is less media rival competition in Australia. Thus England may sensationalize more to compete for readers.</p>	<p>Media play a critical role of ensuring that child maltreatment comes into the attention of the public and to advocate for the right of state intervention to protect children. Benefits of media reporting on child welfare matters were noted to be creating accountability and policy and practice reform. The counterproductive aspects of media reporting were noted to be the demanding aspects of media production to deliver news in a timely manner, compromising accuracy. The tendency was to place too much emphasis on criminal cases such as physical and sexual abuse, and too little focus on neglect and emotional maltreatment. Also by focusing on individuals, social and structural determinants of child welfare are hidden, such as poverty. By sensationalizing the news, media reporting on child abuse has politicized the issue through demands for inquiries, which contribute to risk averse and punitive systems. Media coverage of inquiries which focused on individual blame was noted to impact affect staff moral and reinforce lack of reflection and transparency. Other impacts were noted to be difficulties in staff recruitment and retention and organizational sensitivity to criticism.</p>

<p>How Do Australian Print Media Representations of Child Abuse and Neglect Inform the Public and System Reform? <i>Lonne, B., Gillespie, K. (2014)</i></p>	<p>This study highlighted the vital role Australian print media play in informing the public about child abuse and neglect. Criminal matters involving sexual and physical abuse are noted to be featured more than emotional abuse and neglect, which have the highest incidence.</p>	<p>Although coverage of Indigenous people was reported to be distorted there were benefits to the coverage, such as promoting public support for the protection of children and uncovering systemic failures and scandals</p>	<p>The authors noted that the public is misinformed by the lack of detail and generalized coverage of maltreatment, the absence of input from families and children, and the attention given to system failures and lack of attention to positive stories about successful interventions. Media coverage was noted to emphasize punitive and legal responses to inform the public of the size, scope, and nature of child maltreatment.. Media reporting on child maltreatment was noted to keep the public better informed and recognize the need for an effective child protective system. What was noted to be lacking was early intervention and prevention strategies necessary to protect children and support vulnerable families.</p>
<p>The Media Abuse of Children: Jake’s progress from demonic icon to restored childhood innocent <i>Franklin & Horwath (1986)</i></p> <p>This article examined the ways in which the media have depicted children as inherently evil and the social consequences for doing so</p>	<p>The article argues that the portrayal of children as evil has adverse implications for child protection, in that it serves to absolve perpetrators of guilt and inhibition and reinforces victims to accept and internalize the negative messages of their perpetrators who blame them for the abuse.</p> <p>This article is divided into a three part discussion:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Analysis of how newspaper reporting of the James Bulger 	<p>Content analysis of the way the media presented 10 year old child perpetrators as inherently evil after torturing and murdering a 4 year old child (James Bulger). The Today newspaper (November 25, 1993, p4) was noted to refer to Thompson and Veneables as, ‘The chemistry of evil-a lethal cocktail’. The Telegraph newspaper was noted by the authors to refer to James Bulger’s</p>	<p>This article concluded that the perception of childhood innocence is replaced with an image of children being inherently evil in the media reports of the trial of Thompson and Venables (10 year old child perpetrators of murdering James Bulger)..</p> <p>The media representation of the case was thought to promote perpetrators of abuse to “blame the victim” and justify their actions and to alleviate guilt. The media’s portrayal of children as evil is noted by the authors to potentially impact child victims by internalizing the self- blaming messages of their perpetrating, rather than recognize their disempowered position. The discussion pointed</p>

	<p>case replaced the perception of childhood innocence with one of evil.</p> <p>2. The child character, Jake is analysed to demonstrate this new construction of childhood as inherently evil.</p> <p>3. The messages through this media portrayal of children as evil that are conveyed to perpetrators and victims of child abuse.</p>	<p>killers as evil by reporting that one the boys had been known to pull the heads off of baby pigeons, noting that Thompson's nickname was Damien and Venables was born on Friday the 13th.</p> <p>The authors note that the media started to form generalizations from the James Bulger case that all children were inherently evil. The Mail newspaper (November 25, 1993, p.8) was noted to have cited Lord of the Flies 'any ordinary group of children...can turn into prepubescent savages capable of killing one of their number.' The Times newspaper was noted by the authors to have reported that childhood has a darker side and that children should not be presumed to be innately good.</p> <p>A child character (Jake) in a television series is</p>	<p>to the shift in policy from protecting children from society to protecting society from children.</p>
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		<p>examined in the article. He was noted to have been portrayed as an evil and destructive child who attempted to murder his grandmother and younger brother, in separate episodes.</p>	
<p>COMMENTS ON PREVIOUS ARTICLE:</p> <p>The Media Abuse of Children:</p> <p>Jake’s progress from demonic icon to restored childhood innocent</p> <p><i>Franklin & Horwath (1986)</i></p>	<p>The authors state that the perception of childhood innocence was “replaced” with an image of children being inherently evil in the media reports following the trial of Thompson and Venables. The article reports that the media generalized the actions of Venables and Thompson to all children, after depicting Venables and Thompson as ‘born to kill’, while unwilling to consider any mitigation factors, which were apparent in both children’s social circumstances.</p> <p>This article states that the media’s reporting of children and child abuse may be a form of abuse in itself, referring to the impact it has on public mood and policy climate, which is harmful to children’s best interests. Although most would agree that it seems negligent to ignore potential mitigating social factors in the lives of Thompson and Venables, the article does not demonstrate “impact”.</p> <p>The article notes that the media were “unequivocal” in their denunciation of Thomas and Venables and then only references the remarks of four newspapers (Today, The Telegraph, The Mail, and The Times). The authors report that the media had made generalizations to all children from reports that Venables and Thompson were inherently evil, and cited only two examples where this had occurred, which were in two of the four newspapers mentioned in the article (the Times and the Mail).</p>		

Conclusions from the literature:

Newspaper framing of child abuse was an issue discussed within the literature with notable findings that child welfare issues are often subjected to newspaper’s tendency to rely on “eye

catching headlines” (Goodard, 1996) and a “news of the day” (Kitzinger & Skidmore, 1995) style of reporting. One of the findings from the literature was that newspaper reports on child welfare have demonstrated a trend to report in a sensationalistic manner (Aubrun & Grady, 2003; Goodard, 1996), even more so among the tabloid type press than the quality press (Mendes, 2008; Wilczynski, Young, Sinclair, 1999). Horrific cases, especially those resulting in a death or serious injury account for a small percentage of the overall cases of child abuse; but tend to be over-represented by the media (Niner, S., Ahmad, Y, & Cuthbert, D., 2013). A thematic and episodic style of reporting child abuse was noted as a media reporting tendency in the literature, with less of a focus on contextual issues, risk factors, and protective factors (Aubrun & Grady, 2003; Hove, Paek, Isaacson, & Cole, 2013).

The literature shows a trend in the media that there is an over representation of sexual abuse reports, whereas physical abuse (excluding fatalities) and neglect which have a much higher occurrence rates receive less media exposure (Tonmyr & Jack, 2010). Although sexual abuse cases have been shown to receive more media acknowledgement, the nature of the abuse and frequency of incidents of sexual abuse are not accurately reflected in the media. The media focuses more on cases of sexual abuse that occur outside of the home, or by a non-family member (Kitzinger & Skidmore, 1995). Newspapers have been criticized for creating a ‘stranger danger’ narrative, while neglecting to inform the general public of the actual risks, which are that children are more likely to be sexually abused by someone known to them and in their own home (Cheit, 2009 and Kitzinger, 2002). The media’s selectiveness in prioritization of sexual abuse articles was noted by Tonmyr & Jack (2010) to be done intentionally to gain reader interest, with the impact being potentially creating a false public perception that sexual abuse is more prevalent than neglect.

Various forms of blame within the newspaper reports of child welfare was a reoccurring theme noted within the literature; as well as some discussion of the potential impacts of laying blame. One of the findings in the literature was that there tends to be more focus on child welfare agencies' failure to protect children and ultimately bearing more blame for incidents of child abuse, than the actual person responsible for committing the abuse (Ayer, 2001; Mendez, 2000; Chenot, 2010). Another reported trend discussed in the literature was that blame is simultaneously targeted at the parents and the professionals in the media reports of child abuse (Hall, Srikant, & Slembrouck, 1997). One of the studies of child abuse reporting in Malaysia English Language newspapers found that women were disproportionately blamed in the media, even in cases where they did not commit the child abuse (Niner, Ahmad, Cuthbert, 2013). A different interpretation on the theme of "blame" within the media was found in a discussion paper by Frankin & Horwath (1996) on how children are depicted in the media, where it was noted that the media's representation of the James Bulger case was thought to promote perpetrators of abuse to "blame the victim" by portraying children as "evil".

A lack of media reporting of child abuse prevention was identified in the literature (Mendes, 2000; Kitzinger & Skidmore, 1995), as well as a failure to reveal underlying social causes of abuse (Niner, Ahmad, Cuthbert, 2013; Mendes, 2000, Wilczynski, Young, Sinclair, 1999). A provocative argument was put forth by Chenot (2010), suggesting that there is too much expectation on child welfare agencies to prevent child abuse and that the public should be made aware through media reporting that prevention is as unrealistic an expectation on a child welfare worker as crime prevention is on a police officer, noting that child abuse prevention is a collective responsibility. Kitzinger & Skidmore (1995) suggested that because the media tends to report

‘news of the day’, new initiatives and prevention based ‘news of the day’ events be created to attract media attention to address important issues like child abuse prevention.

The literature demonstrated that media coverage of abuse can have a positive impact, as found in the research by Mancini and Shields (2014), who investigated the effects of sexual abuse media reports on public opinion. The researchers found that media coverage of sexual abuse in the Catholic Church increased confidence in the Church among Catholics and both Catholics and non-Catholics, who perceived bias in the coverage, were more confident in the Church’s ability to respond to any future sexual abuse allegations within the church. Another finding in the study by Mancini and Shields was that religiosity mediated the effect of exposure to the media coverage in terms of sex abuse prevention among Catholics.

Both the research and discussion literature demonstrate that the media is not solely responsible for misrepresentation of child welfare issues in the news. In one study that demonstrated that by holding a press conference which sends clear and concise messages the media is influenced to capture and convey the key points, it was suggested that child welfare agencies should develop a relationship with reporters to increase their knowledge and interest in the topic of child maltreatment (Tonmyr & Jack, 2010). In his discussion paper on the role of the media in creating a climate of fear, mistrust, and blame within the child welfare system, Ayre (2000) recommended that the agencies gain an understanding of how news is created and develop a strategy to work cooperatively, with the media to discourage one sided reporting. Similarly, one of the discussion papers suggests that child welfare leaders recognize the powerful influence of the media and that working with them, such as calling a press conferences creates an opportunity to create an agenda leading to a more enhanced image of the child welfare system, while educating the public (Briar-Lawson, Martinson, Briar-Bonpane & Zox, 2010).

Among the findings in the literature were that there may be a relationship between newspaper reporting of child abuse incidents and increased reporting of child abuse incidents to child welfare authorities. Three of the studies in the literature which examined the possible relationship between newspaper reports of child abuse and reports of abuse to child protection agencies, had similar findings, two studies found there to be a strong positive correlation (McDevit, 1996; Saint-Jacques, Villeneuve, Turcotte, Drapeau, & Ivers, 2012), whereas one study found only a modest positive relationship. Similarly, another study examined the impact of the most highly reported child welfare case on referral behavior by comparing child protection medical assessments 12 months before and after the first news report of the incident, revealing that the reports doubled after the first report (Ray, Conn, Liebeschuetz, Costoli, & Tan, 2013).

In their discussion paper, Lonne and Parton (2014) noted that media reporting on public inquiries, where blame was directed at social workers, has an adverse effect staff morale, staff recruitment and retention. It is suggested by Briar-Lawson, Martinson, et al. (2011) that rather than criticizing the child welfare system and practice, the media should create opportunities to engage their readers in a more meaningful and productive manner. According to Lonne and Parton (2014), the “reductionist and individual portrayals” (849) of child abuse by the media about only serve to conceal the social and systemic issues. Social and legal reform are likely to not occur when the media relies on episodically framing issues of child abuse, and presenting crime related reports of physical and sexual abuse, while ignoring the more frequent occurring forms of maltreatment such as neglect and emotional abuse (Lonne and Parton, 2014).

Social reforms are discussed by Briar-Lawson, Martinson, et al. (2011), in terms of neighborhood capacity building whereby child welfare leaders and the media form a relationship, to then create opportunities to educate, engage and empower the community to share

responsibility for child safety and to strengthen their community. The authors suggest that by reframing child deaths and child abuse as community and state issues the media can also present ways which the problems can and should be addressed at those levels. Building on work, which found a significant relationship between media reporting and child welfare policy reforms, research by Douglas (2009) demonstrated that policy makers in states with high media attention to agency-related child maltreatment fatalities respond by passing legislation.

Limitations in the literature:

It should be noted that of the three of studies on newspaper reporting of child abuse in relation to reports of child abuse to child protection agencies or medical facilities, the methodology and findings in all of the studies was correlational and only one of the studies met the criteria for make a causal inference. According to Rubin and Babbie (2001), the following three specific criteria, as per Paul Lazarfield (1959), must be met to consider a relationship between two variables to be causal: The cause must precede the effect in time; Two variables must be empirically correlated with one another; The observed empirical relationship between two variables cannot be explained away as the result of the influence of a third variable that causes the relationship between the two variables under consideration. Following a close review of the methodology and findings in the three studies, the following chart examines whether or not the criteria was met to infer a causal relationship between the variables:

Table 3: Criteria to Infer a Causal Relationship

Study	Correlation	Causal Ordering	Spuriousness
<p>The Impact of News Media on Child Abuse Reporting <i>McDevitt (1996)</i></p>	<p>A significant correlation was established between news stories and reports of maltreatment to mandated agencies.</p>	<p>The media reports did not precede the increase in reports to child welfare agencies. They increased at the same time.</p>	<p>Other factors were not controlled for in this study. Thus the increase in both media reports and reports to mandated agencies could have been the result of other factors. The researcher concluded that it was likely changes in socio-economic conditions and social policy changes that led to the number of reports to child protection agencies.</p>
<p>The Role of Media in Reporting Child Abuse <i>Saint-Jacques, Villeneuve, Turcotte, Drapeau, & Ivers, (2012)</i></p>	<p>A statistically significant relationship was found between the number of media reports of child maltreatment and reports to agencies.</p>	<p>The media reports did precede the reports to child welfare agencies. The main analysis examined the relationship between relevant articles every week and the number of reports to child protection agencies on the same and following weeks.</p>	<p>The researchers noted that there were no changes to policy or in the socio-economic conditions that would have influenced the increase in reports to child protection agencies, citing a previous study by McDevitt (1996) whereby these factors influenced the findings. Using an Intervention time series analysis (Box & Tiao, 1975), the researchers in this study controlled for “media frenzy” events to have influenced reports to child welfare agencies.</p>
<p>The Impact of Media Reporting of High-Profile Cases on Child Protection Medical Assessments <i>Ray, Conn, Liebeschuetz, Costoli, & Tan (2013)</i></p>	<p>A significant correlation was established between the number of child protection medical referrals received following the death of Baby P, compared to the number of referrals prior to his death.</p>	<p>The increase in child protection medical referrals did not precede the death of Baby P.</p>	<p>Even though referrals after Baby P almost doubled following the death of Baby P, other factors may have led to this change other than media reports. Although it is unlikely that there could have actually been twice as many child abuse related injuries, it could in fact have been so. Additionally, because the death of Baby P led</p>

			to an inquiry, child protection agencies could have changed their practice (assessment/criteria for medical referrals) which would have caused the increase in referrals, independent of media coverage.
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Most of the studies in the literature review rely on qualitative research methods, many of which use a content analysis approach. Two of the studies combined both qualitative and quantitative methods and only two of the studies used an exclusive quantitative approach. Some of the studies had poor sampling, which resulted in samples which were not representative. Finally, there were no Canadian studies in the literature.

CHAPTER THREE: METHODOLOGY

The purpose of this study was to examine the range of media portrayals of child welfare interventions to potentially enhance the field of child welfare for service providers and recipients of child welfare services. Media portrayals of child welfare issues are important because they can raise public awareness, which may lead to social and political responses to the problems leading to potentially meaningful changes. As previously noted, some of the research found that there was a correlational relationship between media coverage and the number of cases reported to child welfare agencies (Saint-Jacques, Villeneuve, et al, 2012; Goddard & Sanders, 2001). Another study showed a correlational relationship between high media attention to agency related child maltreatment fatalities and state response by passing legislation (Douglas, 2009). The nature of the process of media production can be a powerful determinant of the accuracy of the information that reaches the public. These processes are subject to misrepresentations of child welfare issues and thus have the potential for public opinion to form based on inaccurate information. This study examined the process and content of the information source, which for the purposes of this study was exclusively print media, in only the English language, as accessed from the online database: Canadian Newsstand Major Dailies-ProQuest. Broadcast, electronic, and social media was not used for this study.

This research inquiry used a qualitative method of research by applying ethnographic content analysis as its methodological approach to this research, focusing primarily on discourses used in print media. A general definition of qualitative research is provided by Denzin and Lincoln (2011), “Qualitative research is a situated activity that locates the observer in the world. It consists of a set of interpretative material processes that make the world visible.....Qualitative researchers study things in their natural settings attempting to make sense of them or interpret

phenomenon in terms of the meaning people bring to them.” (p.3). In general terms, ethnographic content analysis is described by Altheide & Schneider (2013), as a reflexive analysis of documents which combine ethnographic research methods with qualitative content analysis. Ethnographic research is defined by Cresswell (2003) as ... “the researcher studies an intact cultural group in a natural setting over a prolonged period of time by collecting primarily observational data (p.14).

Qualitative content analysis is “a research method for the subjective interpretation of the content of text data through the systematic classification process of coding and identifying themes and patterns” (Hsieh & Shannon, 2005, p.1278). Ethnographic content analysis (ECA) refers to an integrated method, procedure, and technique for locating, identifying, retrieving, and analyzing documents for their relevance, significance, and meaning (**Altheide & Schneider, 2013**).

The specific approach of method and analysis which guided this research is the twelve step process of qualitative document analysis outlined by Altheide & Schneider (2013). The following procedural outline is based on Altheide’s and Schneider’s (2013) twelve step process of qualitative analysis and served as a guide to the subsequent discussion around the research method and analysis.

Step 1: Pursue a specific problem to be investigated. (Research Question)

According to Altheid & Schneider (2013), once the research problem is identified, the researcher is able to determine the most appropriate aspects of the relevant documentation to investigate. Although it is desirable in qualitative research to have a clear, specific, and attainable research question, this research focused on a somewhat broad and general question,

“What is the range of media portrayals of instances of child welfare interventions?” Cresswell (2007) recommends that a primary all-encompassing question guide the research with potential sub-questions developing throughout the research process. According to Maxwell (2005), the research question is often altered and refined during the research process. In this study, a large number of documents were examined, which primarily focused on some aspect of child welfare intervention.

Step 2: Become familiar with the process and context of the information source:

The newspapers that were initially included in the search were over a 15 year period, between the years 2000 to 2014 which addressed aspects of intervention within or involving the child welfare system. This search originally yielded what seemed to be a manageable population of articles to review, but after spending some time interacting with the articles, it was discovered that the original search terms needed to be revised (this will be explained in more detail in step two). Through the process of modifying the search terms, a much larger population of articles was generated, necessitating the date range of articles to be included in this study to be reduced. As such, the articles which were included in this study were every second year beginning with the year 2008 to 2014. This included a time span of 7 years with the years included in the study being 2008; 2010; 2012; 2014. The types of newspapers that were examined were daily newspapers for various Canadian cities. In the interest of becoming better acquainted with the process and context of the newspaper articles, this researcher sought to discover why the article presented child welfare intervention in the manner in which it did by asking the following questions:

-What specifically was said? (Attending to obvious omissions/biases)

-How was the child welfare intervention presented and framed?

Step 3. Become familiar with several relevant documents, noting the format and select a unit of analysis:

Several documents were studied in this research in order to allow this researcher to establish a broad range of media portrayals in child welfare interventions. The documents were selected through a process of determining to what degree the article answers the research question. At the outset of this study, it was hypothesized that there was a bias in the media that depicts the intervention of the child welfare system to be inadequate; as such this research sought to establish what variation existed across the documents. Common themes and differences in the literature were noted.

Search terms were generated from the research question to guide the literature review and the article selection process. It was not necessary for a search term to appear in the article verbatim, but rather to correspond to the research question conceptually. The original search used the search terms “child welfare intervention” AND/OR “success”; “failure” but the search results yielded many articles with matters related to families who receive financial government assistance based on the term “welfare”. The articles found in this original search were each assigned the letter A and numbered in sequence such as A1; A2; A3, and through to A88 before it was learned the search terms needed to be broadened. The search terms remained the same as the original search terms, but the term “child welfare protection” was also included in the search. The articles in this search were assigned the letter B with numbers corresponding from B1 through to B96 before it was learned that the search terms needed to be broadened to include the following terms:

(child welfare intervention) OR (child welfare AND neglect) OR (child welfare AND abuse) OR (child welfare success) OR (child welfare failure) OR (child welfare AND case) (child welfare and plan) OR (child welfare and role) OR (child welfare and involvement)OR (child welfare strategy) OR (child protection AND abuse) OR (child protection AND neglect) OR (child protection intervention) OR (child protection AND plan) OR (child protection AND strategy) OR (child protection AND involvement) OR (child protection AND success) OR (child protection AND failure) OR (child protection involvement) OR (child protection case)

The articles from this search were each assigned the letter C along with a number yielding records from C1 through to C234. Following this search the sampling strategy was one again re-evaluated through correspondence with my advisor. It was agreed that the sampling process needed to be modified, to include articles covering inquiries, as they had originally been screened out of the study. It was at this point that it was also decided that the date range of articles to be included in the study would be reduced (as explained in step 2) so the population of articles was manageable. At this point a theoretical sampling strategy was introduced whereby the first five articles from each year were examined with only articles with new themes to be included in the sample, which were assigned the letter T which included records from T1 to T117 which were all retained on an Excel spread sheet. The other articles not included in the theoretical sample were also maintained in an excel spread sheet from which the stratified random sample was later drawn and merged with those on the Theoretical Sample Excel worksheet, forming the completed sample.

Steps four through six are discussed collectively as a means of constructing a protocol (data collection sheet) for analysis by moving from collecting the data to comparing and summarizing the data to writing initial statements about the categorical findings. Atheide & Schneider (2013) refer to the protocol as a list of questions, categories, or variables which guide the data collection from the document and are pre-coded prior to collecting the data.

Steps 4: List several items or categories (variables) to guide data collections, and draft a protocol (data collection sheet).

Step 5: Test the protocol by collecting data from several documents.

Step 6: Revise the protocol, and select several additional cases to further refine the protocol.

During this stage of the research data collection sheets were used to organize the categories to ensure that the units of analysis which were selected were the most appropriate for the research question. In keeping with qualitative content analysis, the typical precoding of the protocol occurred. For the purpose of this research, this entailed developing appropriate questions to consider upon reviewing several documents on child welfare interventions.

During this phase, a steady interplay between the research question, the documents, and the most pertinent issues occurred. Descriptions of the narrative, relevant direct quotations from the document, and discourses were documented. Specific information around the particulars of the child welfare intervention was tracked for the purpose of analysis including: What was done; in what manner it occurred; when and where it occurred; who did what; and for what reason. It was also noted whether the quality of the intervention has been directly or indirectly assessed by the author or someone cited in the article. Respectively, similarities and differences across cases were noted and appropriately categorized in these areas.

Each document from which data were collected was reviewed on each categorical point to safeguard that the protocol data best represents the research question. For each category a brief note was written describing the inclusion criteria for that category.

This researcher used the following recommended “rules of thumb” described by Altheide & Schneider (2013, p. 46) as a general guide:

1. Allow the protocol to develop over several drafts.
2. Begin with only a few categories, adding more as the researcher interacts with the documents.
3. All items in the protocol should be applicable to at least one other item.
4. The protocol should include numeric or letter codes and descriptions.
5. Protocol categories should have more than one possible outcome.
6. Protocols should reflect the goal of demonstrating that the document reflects social activity. Asking what, how, where, why, and when something was done, and by whom allows the researcher to capture the “dramaturgical character” of the social action.
7. The document protocols narrative information.
8. The protocol should include a reflexive component whereby the researcher notes how this case was similar or different from others.

Althiede & Schneider (2013) stress that meaning and emphasis are crucial categories in the qualitative research of documents, which are captured through the analysis of the document’s use of frames, themes, and discourse.

In terms of media production, the literature generally describes frames as the purposeful manner in which the news is presented which influences the audience’s perception of how to

think about the issue being presented (Aubrun, & Grady, 2003; Giles, & Shaw, 2009). Altheide & Schneider (2013) refer to themes as the “general definitions of interpretive frames....different frames can be used within the same theme” (p.52-53). The discourse of the document is the “parameters of the relevant meaning that one uses to talk about things” (Altheide & Schneider, 2013, p.53).

This researcher attended to the themes, frames, and discourse for each of the documents throughout the protocol construction phases and documented the categories respectively.

The documents that were reviewed in the protocol development phase will be selected based on how they correspond with the research problem and the categories. During the protocol revision stage the articles that were already selected were re-read and reviewed on every category, ensuring that the protocol sufficiently addresses the research question.

Step 7: Sampling rationale and strategy:

Of the many sampling strategies, Altheide and Schneider (2013) note that only a few are suited to qualitative document analysis and they recommend a theoretical sampling strategy. Maines (2004) describes the process of theoretical sampling as a version of analytic induction whereby the data collection, coding, and analysis occurs together, allowing the theory to develop as it systematically emerges from data. A theoretical sampling strategy was used for this study. Altheide and Schneider (2013) advise against using a lot of pre-determined categories, but rather to use “progressive theoretical sampling”, whereby document selection occurs as the researcher develops a better understanding of the area of research (p.56).

In this research, material was selected that was theoretically relevant to establish themes that fit with the research questions, while ensuring that differences across themes were noted. Altheide and Schneider (2013) note that as described Glaser & Strauss (1967), in qualitative document analysis the researcher's role is to capture the meaning, emphasis, and themes of the messages, and to understand the organization and process of how they are presented. A broad range of applicable messages was included in the sample, with this researcher making the sample selections based on those most suitable to the research questions during the process of reviewing the material.

For the entire population of articles in this study the following were tracked: Favourable views of child welfare intervention; unfavourable views of child welfare intervention; successful interventions; failed interventions; between the following dates 2008; 2010; 2012; 2014.

Atheide and Schneider (2013) discuss combining theoretical sampling with random sampling strategies, such as stratified random sampling or cluster sampling to ensure that the study is conceptually sufficient. As such, to build on the theoretical sample, once it was well established and refined, a stratified random sample was used to also encompass articles from the years 2008; 2010; 2012; 2014. The strata were major daily newspapers available on the Canadian Newsstand electronic data base which included: Calgary Herald (Calgary, Alberta); Edmonton Journal (Edmonton, Alberta); The Gazette (Montreal, Quebec); Leader Post (Regina, Saskatchewan); The Leader (Surrey, British Columbia); The Ottawa Citizen (Ottawa, Ontario); The Province (Vancouver, British Columbia); Star-Phoenix (Saskatoon, Saskatchewan); Sudbury Star (Sudbury, Ontario); Telegraph-Journal (St. John, New Brunswick); Times-Colonist (Victoria, B.C.); Toronto Star (Toronto, Ontario); The Vancouver Sun (Vancouver, British Columbia); The Windsor Star (Windsor, Ontario); Winnipeg Free Press (Winnipeg, Manitoba);

The Tri-Cities Now (a discontinued newspaper which covered news in five communities in British Columbia including: Coquitlam, Port Coquitlam, Anmore, Port Moody, and Balcarra); The Globe and Mail (National-Canadian); National Post (National-Canadian). These are the newspapers on the database which featured articles and were included in the study. There were two newspapers on the database which were exclusively French, which were not included in the study and two other newspapers which were not present in the search. The sample drawn from each strata (newspaper) was a one in five sampling ratio using a simple random sampling strategy.

8 Data collection:

The data which was collected was from newspaper articles in Canada for the years: 2008; 2010; 2012; 2014 using the Canadian Newsstand electronic data base, including the Canadian newspapers previously noted. The data were collected by assigning a description to the already established protocol categories. For each article, frames, themes, and discourses were described. This researcher became very familiar with the subject matter to facilitate the precision of the analysis.

The following is the protocol adapted from Altheide and Schneider's sample (2013, p. 63-67) which was used for this researcher's inquiry:

Protocol for Tracking Discourse, Child Welfare, Intervention.

- 1) Date of newspaper report
- 2) Length of article (word count):
- 3) Subject matter of article, such as:

- a. risk assessment
 - b. high case loads
 - c. economic issues
 - d. outcome of intervention
 - e. competence of staff
 - f. policy issues (policy soundness, policy context, is the policy being debated?, changed?, contested?, is funding included in policy?)
 - g. skill of management
 - h. race/ ethnicity/ culture (are race, ethnicity, or culture themes in the article?)
- 4) Who is responsible for the “intervention”
- a. social worker discretion
 - b. supervisor direction
 - c. policy and practice guided intervention
 - d. agency discretion
 - e. governing authority
- 5) What was the result of the intervention?
- 6) Was the case evaluated as successful?

Key phrases, quotations, and headlines were documented.

Step 9. Data analysis:

Altheide and Schneider (2013) pose a provocative argument about how qualitative data analysis, and in particular document analysis, is “misunderstood” and they go on to make recommendations about how to avoid falling into a simple coding and counting analysis. It is recommended that the researcher does not depend on coding software programs, because they do not interact with the documents in a manner in which the researcher can. The data analysis process consisted of a rigorous process of reviewing, categorizing, within and cross category comparison, and summarizing accordingly.

Step 10. Compare and contrast extremes and key differences:

In this stage of analysis, as recommended by Altheide & Schneider (2003), following extensively reading through and sorting the materials, a comparison within each category or item was completed, then a process of adding key words/concepts occurred. A comparison between categories involved an article-to-article examination to compare the subject matter. Each document was assigned a number for reference purposes, which included brief written summaries.

Step 11. Combine brief summaries (developed in step 10), including examples of both the typical and the extreme cases.

According to Altheide and Schneider (2013), this step is an extension of the previous one and can be combined in analysis, whereby the researcher becomes very familiar with the data by carefully reading through and comparing the categories. In keeping with Altheid’s and

Schneider's (2013) recommendations, this researcher summarized and documented statements about the range, the atypical, and the typical across the data, and the significance of these findings with respect to the analysis within each category.

Step 12. Integrate the findings with your interpretation and key concept in another draft.

At this stage of analysis, Altheide & Schneider (2013) recommend that the researcher draft a summarized paragraph for each category with both descriptions and quotations. Commonalities in themes across articles and themes were noted. In terms of the documents that are unique in the sense of being different from other articles, this researcher noted the distinctions as well as any unexpected findings in the research. Based on the findings, recommendations were made regarding possible adjustments to protocol or sampling to enhance future studies.

Controlling for research bias:

In Creswell (2013), it is recommended that the researcher use multiple methods of validation strategies in qualitative research to ensure the quality of the research. This researcher used the following three methods of validation, of the eight provided by Creswell (2013): peer review; negative case analysis; and clarifying researcher bias.

Creswell (2013) discusses the importance of the reviewer asking difficult questions about methods, meanings, and interpretation, of which the researcher should keep a written account so as to make necessary adaptations. Peer review in this study occurred in the form of receiving academically sound feedback from this researcher's thesis advisor as well as from the thesis committee members.

Negative case analysis is described by Creswell (2013) as a process in which the researcher refines the working hypothesis as the research progresses. It is recommended that, in the event that negative or “disconfirming” evidence surfaces, that the researcher document the negative finding and provide an assessment based on the negative case. Although this research did not consist of a “working hypothesis”, the process of negative case analysis occurred by analysing those cases which deviated from the typical findings. A thorough analysis of outlying data occurred, thus refining the data analysis, ensuring that the patterns discovered were representative of the majority of the data.

Clarification of research bias occurred at the outset and throughout the research, as it is important in all research that the researcher is aware of any of her or his own biases relevant to the area of study before embarking on the research study. As such, this researcher’s role was not only be aware of any biases, but also to document them, while maintaining an open mind when reviewing the documents to allow the emergence of ideas to occur naturally. After reviewing each article, this researcher cross referenced any known researcher biases with the information gathered and re-read the materials accordingly to ensure that the themes and ideas generated from the article were obtained in the purest, most unbiased manner. Or, at least, that they were not solely the result of researcher bias.

Methodological Strengths:

There are many strengths in this study that are associated with the nature of the research design. One of the strengths of this research is that the data collection occurred in the natural setting, without direct researcher manipulation. The use of ethnographic content analysis in this study is a noteworthy strength as it is unobtrusive by nature of its design. Given that there are no

participants involved in the study, there were not participant specific ethical considerations, nor were there concerns of participant biases tainting or influencing the data.

Another strength of this study which is related to research design is that it allows for easy replication or expansion, given that the raw data (newspaper articles) are available in their exact form for others to use. This study looks at only Canadian newspapers, which may be considered as weakness in some regards, but given that there are only a few Canadian studies in this area, this study aims to fill that gap.

Canadian media production and journalism, and the Canadian child welfare system could benefit from this study, as it may offer insight to those who work in the areas of practice, policy, and/or management, to gain an understanding of how media representations of child welfare can impact policy makers, front line workers, management, public perception, and service delivery.

Although this study is based only on Canadian newspapers, it may be of value to persons interested in this area outside of Canada or for the purpose of contrasting with studies from other regions.

Limitations of this study:

A limitation of this study, as with most qualitative research, is that there is potential for the data to be compromised by researcher judgements or biases based on the nature of the research design of the study. However, the methodology tries to minimize this threat. This study is focused on child welfare intervention, which is the field in which the researcher had been employed for many years. As such, it is recognized that there is a great potential for researcher bias, given the familiarity with being a service provider in the field with pre-existing opinions and values about child welfare policy and practice. Recognizing the potential impact of

researcher bias to the credibility (validity) of this study, efforts were taken to control this vulnerability by keeping reflexive notes, which will be discussed in more detail in the trustworthiness section of this chapter.

Another potential threat to the credibility of this study is that it is subject to potential coding error that may result from not only unintended researcher bias, but misinterpretation by the researcher/coder, which would in turn affect the findings. Measures were taken to manage this potential threat, such as prolonged engagement and an audit trail, which is discussed further in the trustworthiness section of this chapter. Lincoln and Guba (1985) discuss the importance of the researcher being involved with the data long enough to understand the culture and context, and to recognize distortions that may work their way into the data. Because this study was vulnerable to distortions being introduced into the data by the researcher's own values, prolonged engagement with the data allowed the researcher to become familiar with the media culture. As recommended by Lincoln and Guba (1985) this researcher wrote out expected findings prior to data collection, then compared the field notes with those pre-recorded interpretations and adjusted researcher distortions accordingly, which in some cases meant longer engagement was required.

As mentioned in the strengths discussion, this study looked only at Canadian newspapers, which may be considered a threat to the transferability (external validity) of this study in terms of the generalization to geographic regions outside of Canada. Although generalizability is not a goal of this research, the use of a large and varied sample of Canadian newspapers and detailed and specific information about the research methods and results are provided, thus increasing the likelihood of transferability.

Establishing trustworthiness in qualitative research

Qualitative research is often subjected to criticism that challenge the trustworthiness of the findings, compared to quantitative research. Given the paradigmatic and methodological differences between qualitative and quantitative research, the means of establishing trustworthiness need to be established differently. Lincoln and Guba (1985) refer to the “trustworthiness” of research as evaluating the worth of a study which involves establishing credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability, which are more suited to naturalistic inquiry than the common conventional positivist terms: internal validity, external validity, reliability, and objectivity. This current study relied on Lincoln and Guba’s (1985) criteria to achieve the trustworthiness of this research with respect to the accuracy of analysing the content of the newspapers; as well as impact analysis.

Creswell (1994) contrasts the qualitative and quantitative research paradigms as follows: quantitative research uses a deductive process based on theories and hypotheses, using a static design of variables and hypotheses that are fixed throughout the study, with the goal being to generalize, using instruments that are valid and reliable. Qualitative methodology does not identify categories prior to the study; rather they emerge from the subject of research using inductive logic while incorporating steps that will allow for verification.

Lincoln and Guba (1985) contrast naturalistic and positivist paradigms as follows: The positivist paradigm views reality as single and tangible; the knower and the known are independent; time and context free generalizations are possible; there are real causes, temporally precedent to or simultaneous with their effects; inquiry is value free. Naturalistic paradigms believe in multiple realities, which are constructed and holistic; knower and known are

interactive and inseparable; only time and context bound working hypotheses are possible; all entities are in a state of mutual simultaneous shaping, so it is impossible to distinguish cause from effect; inquiry is value-bound.

This study uses a qualitative/naturalistic means of inquiry (ethnographic content analysis) and thus trustworthiness was established using a framework developed by Lincoln and Guba (1985) for naturalistic inquiry using the previously mentioned criteria: credibility, transferability, dependability, confirmability, and recommended techniques, to attain the criteria which are detailed in the remainder of this chapter.

Credibility:

According to Lincoln and Guba (1985) credibility is determined by the researcher's ability to establish confidence in the truth of the findings. They recommend employing the following five techniques to establish credibility (1985), the first four of which were utilized in this study:

1. **Prolonged engagement; Persistent observation; and Triangulation:** Activities to make the production of credible findings more likely.
2. **Peer debriefing:** External check on the inquiry process
3. **Negative case analysis:** Refine working hypothesis as more information becomes available
4. **Referential adequacy:** Check the preliminary findings and interpretations against archived "raw data"
5. **Member checking:** Direct test of findings and interpretations with the human sources from which they have come the constructors of the multiple realities being studied

Prolonged engagement

In this study, prolonged engagement was applied by way of dedicating a significant amount of time to interacting with the material (newspaper articles). This prolonged engagement (interacting with newspaper articles) allowed the researcher to identify any distortions that

inadvertently became part of the data. Given that this research did not involve other human participants, it was not subject to distortions created by respondents. However, it was vulnerable to researcher distortions based on values and constructions of what the researcher intended to find.

Persistent observation

Persistent observation for the purpose of this study was in the form of rigorous interaction with each article to ensure that the characteristics of the material which were the most relevant were the focus, and that they were meticulously studied. This enabled this researcher to scrutinize atypical findings and determine their importance.

Peer debriefing

Peer debriefing is defined by Lincoln and Guba (1995) as follows, “It is a process of exposing oneself to a disinterested peer in a manner paralleling an analytical session and for the purpose of exploring aspects of the inquiry that might otherwise only remain implicit within the inquirer’s mind” (p. 308). According to Lincoln and Guba (1985), peer debriefing serves the researcher in the following four ways: by keeping the researcher “honest”, provides opportunities to test the working hypothesis, provides an opportunity to develop and test next steps in the methodological design, and to provide the researcher an opportunity to clear her or his mind of emotions that may be interfering with judgement or preventing emergence of the next step. Lincoln and Guba (1985) identified the risks of peer debriefing as follows: loss of enthusiasm and energy; researcher may be over influenced by the debriefer; too much criticism can be damaging. It was this researcher’s intention to have a former Social Work student participate in the peer review process, but since that individual was no longer available, feedback was received

by this researcher's thesis advisor who reviewed draft forms of the thesis and asked critical questions about the process, such as determining if opinions were that of the author, someone cited, or this researcher. Methodological questions were also posed by my advisor which promoted critical thinking about alternate considerations.

Negative Case Analysis:

Negative case analysis involves identifying elements of the data that are atypical (disconfirming) from the explanations developed from the data to enhance the analysis of the data. This process may alter, expand, or strengthen the data. To manage error variance, this research sought out any "outliers" to refine the data analysis. Lincoln and Guba (1985) suggest refining the working hypothesis as more information becomes available. Although this research does not have an actual hypothesis, the research question and conceptual framework were refined as more information became available through the data collection process.

Referential Adequacy:

Checking the preliminary findings and interpretations against archived "raw data" to strengthen credibility was employed in this study. All of the online news print articles were coded, categorized, and stored electronically for easy access to recall to test the data analyses and interpretations for adequacy.

Transferability

Lincoln and Guba (1985) note that in naturalistic inquiry the researcher cannot specify the external validity of a study, but rather provides a thick description to equip one to make a determination as to whether a transfer is possible, providing the widest range of information. A detailed description of the study was provided, including details of the purposeful sampling strategy of a broad range of newsprint articles across Canada.

Dependability:

Lincoln and Guba's dependability criterion is concerned with the consistency of the findings by assessing the quality of the data gathering process, analysis of the data, and findings. Although Lincoln and Guba (1985) propose that dependability is established when credibility is demonstrated, they recommend using a technique of "stepwise replication". This is a process of providing a detailed description of the investigative process to allow for others to repeat the study and thus to enhance dependability. This research draws on this technique to address dependability by providing a thorough report of the research process (procedure, data collection, design, and rationale) and reflectively assess the research process.

Confirmability:

Confirmability is concerned with minimizing and controlling for researcher bias by ensuring that the findings come from the data. Lincoln and Guba (1985) promote the use of an audit trail to accomplish confirmability. For developing an audit trail, Lincoln and Guba (1985) recommend using as a guide the following six categories developed by Edward Halpern (1983): raw data, data reduction and analysis products, data reconstruction and synthesis products, process notes, materials relating to intentions and dispositions, and instrument development information. The audit trail allows the researcher to keep track of the development of the concepts that arise from the research by keeping records of what was done, how it was done, and how procedural decisions were made.

To address the issue of confirmability for the purpose of this study, the following categories were used as a guide to keep records (audit trail):

-Raw data (newspaper articles)

-Products of data reduction and analysis to include hand or type written notes on developing concepts.

-Data reconstruction and synthesis products such as categories including themes and relationships, findings and inferences, and connecting the study to the existing literature.

-Process notes covering methodology and trustworthiness.

-Materials relating to intentions and dispositions by way of the inquiry proposal, reflexive notes/journal, and expectations (predictions and intentions).

A reflexive journal is considered by Lincoln and Guba (1985) to be a valuable technique to establish trustworthiness that can be applied to all four areas (credibility, transferability, dependability and confirmability).

As part of this research reflexive notes were taken, and as recommended by Lincoln and Guba (1985), were done in three separate parts. The first part was a schedule and the logistics of the study. The second part was personal notes whereby this researcher reflected on any predispositions, beliefs, values, theories, and interests that were held by this researcher that were not derived from the literature and those that were identified during the course of the research. The final part of the reflexive notes was a methodological log which recorded what was done and why it was done.

As noted in this chapter during step 6 (Revising the protocol), a steady interplay between the research question(s), the documents, and the most pertinent issues occurred. This included documenting specific information around the particulars of the child welfare intervention, such as: what was done, in what manner it occurred, when and where it occurred, who did what, for

what reason and whether the quality of the intervention had been directly or indirectly assessed by the author or someone cited in the article. The purpose of participation and documentation of this process was to minimize researcher bias, as the information being gathered were being carefully scrutinized throughout the data gathering and analysis process to ensure that the ideas were being generated from the data, not the researcher. Each document from which data were collected was reviewed on each categorical point to safeguard that the protocol data best represented the specific research question sought in this study.

CHAPTER FOUR: FINDINGS

This chapter presents the findings of the study, which examined how child welfare in Canada is represented in the media. To gain a broad sense of how child welfare is regarded in the media, general information was gathered on the population of articles prior to drawing the sample. Those findings are presented first in this chapter to provide an overall sense of the findings. The objective of qualitative research is to identify the relationships between themes which occurred in the research as themes emerge through the theoretical sampling process as well as by continuous interaction with the data and refinement of the themes and categories. The themes are presented in a table followed by a discussion of the findings.

The following two tables represent the findings from the research which were based on the population of articles, prior to drawing the sample for this study. Table 4 represents how the articles viewed child welfare in terms of either favourably, unfavourably or neutrally. Of the total, 5 percent of the articles were viewed as favourable, 37 percent of the articles presented child welfare unfavourably, and 58 percent were neutral.

Table 4: View of Child Welfare by Media

Category	Number	Percentage
Favourable	37	5%
Unfavourable	281	37%
Neutral	435	58%
Total	753	100%

Criteria for inclusion in the category favorable: Articles were categorized as favorable if the author and/or people cited for the article were in support of the child welfare intervention, worker, or agency, including how the case was managed. Articles which gave praise to or highly regarded the child welfare staff, agency or actions were also included in this category.

Criteria for inclusion in the category unfavorable: Articles were categorized as unfavorable if the author and/or people cited for the article were not in support of the child welfare intervention, worker, or agency, including how the case was managed. Articles which criticized or regarded poorly the child welfare staff, agency or actions were also included in this category.

Criteria for inclusion in the category neutral: Articles were categorized as neutral if the author and/or people cited for the article were neither in support of or lacked support the child welfare intervention, worker, or agency, including how the case was managed. Articles which did not characterize the child welfare staff, agency or actions were also included in this category. Articles that were strictly fact based and did not take a judgemental stance or imply blame were included in this category.

Table 2 represents how the article classified the intervention as follows: positive, negative, or neutral. Interventions were categorized or referred to as positive in 4 percent of the articles, 43 percent of the articles referred to child welfare intervention as negative, and 53 percent were neutral regarding the intervention.

Table 5: View of Child Welfare Intervention by Media

Category	Number	Percentage
Successful	28	4%

Failed	325	43%
Neutral	400	53%
Total	753	100%

Criteria for inclusion in the category successful: Articles were categorized as successful if the author and/or people cited for the article regarded the child welfare intervention, action, management of the case, or decision making as having a desirable outcome.

Criteria for inclusion in the category failed: Articles were categorized as failed if the author and/or people cited for the article regarded the child welfare intervention, action, management of the case, or decision making as having an undesirable outcome.

Criteria for inclusion in the category neutral: Articles were categorized as neutral if the author and/or people cited for the article did not regard the child welfare intervention, action, case management, or decision making as having an undesirable or desirable outcome. Articles which did not evaluate the child welfare agency intervention or actions were also included in this category. Articles that were strictly fact based and did not take a judgemental stance, or did not specifically address a child welfare intervention, action, or decision was also included in this category.

In terms of how child welfare intervention was regarded in the article, only a small percentage of the articles were favourably viewed. Most of the articles presented child welfare in a neutral manner. When only the favourable and unfavourable categories were compared, eighty eight percent of the articles were observed to present an unfavourable view of child. Intervention was presented as neutral in the majority of the articles. Articles where an intervention was not

discussed were also classified as neutral. Very few of the articles deemed the child welfare intervention to be successful. Of the articles that were classified as a failed or successful intervention, ninety two percent of the articles were presented as a failed child welfare intervention.

Findings for the sample of articles are categorized in Table 3 by themes and subthemes, with a brief description of the content, discourses, as well as the number of articles in that category and the percentage based on the total number of articles.

Table 6: Themes and Subthemes

Theme / Subtheme	Summary descriptions of the content of the articles and the discourse(s)	Number of articles	Percentage of total
Abandonment of a child	<p>Child welfare agency seeking temporary guardianship of a baby found bundled and face down in a stairwell of a plaza parking lot in -14C temperature. Should parents of an abandoned baby appear, they will have to prove their capacity to care for the child. It cannot be said that an abandoned child was abused, even though she had bruises on her body and was bleeding from her nose when she was found face down. (All three articles featured the same case).</p> <p>Discourses: Child welfare agency is effectively meeting the needs of this child. Parents responsible for maltreatment of child. Child is better to remain in care of child welfare.</p>	3	1%
Apprehension, Placement, Guardianship and Adoption	<p>Children in government care were placed in a foster home, group home, or hotel which led to injury, harm, or death. Articles included the following incidents: adolescent introduced to drugs and alcohol “[group home] corrupted</p>	9	3%

Placement put children at risk	me”; sexual abuse; physical abuse; neglect; death. Discourse: child welfare/government are to blame for the negative outcomes.		
Impact of children being removed/moved from home or placement on children and families:	Academic achievement deficit. Emotional and psychological impact on children. Re-victimization through unstable placements, multiple placements have adverse impact, separating siblings, and restricted parental access: "You're always the new kid in school. You're always adjusting, you're always losing friends." One child started “bedwetting and having nightmares.” Emotional impact of loss for parents. Discourses: Predominant discourses of government and child welfare agency failure and ineffectiveness. Other discourses of necessity of apprehension, despite impact for child safety. Also, apprehension does more harm than good in matters of neglect.	17	6%
Issues related to foster homes:	Foster parents fear child welfare; feel powerless; emotional impact on foster parents of child moving; fear of tarnished image by other foster parents’ wrongdoing; foster home safety and licensing issues; placement of too many children in foster home to keep siblings together Discourses: Child welfare agencies disempower and over scrutinize foster parents; Child welfare responsible to provide support to foster parents; Child welfare failure to ensure foster home safety.	11	4%
Inadequate/ Inappropriate placement or care providers for children in government care	Placement with high risk parent; incompetent care givers; unskilled contracted care providers; hotel placements with rotating staff with questionable competency. Discourses: Government responsibility to ensure appropriate placements and care providers. Government failed children in care.	9	3%

<p>Adoption and guardianship issues involving the child welfare system</p>	<p>Historical forced adoption of children of unwed mothers; parent had to fight child welfare for guardianship after other parent surrendered child; historical adoption of Aboriginal children; delays in adoption process due to under resourced, crisis driven child welfare system.</p>	<p>10</p>	<p>4%</p>
<p>Children’s action/reaction to their child welfare involvement</p>	<p>Child fled group home placement to another county. Public protest of child welfare involvement through media. New program allows children to have access to independent legal representation in their child welfare court hearing. Hunger strike. Suing child welfare.</p> <p>Discourses: Child welfare action/inaction put child at further risk. Children have right to independent legal representation in court proceedings which affect their lives.</p>	<p>6</p>	<p>2%</p>
<p>Child welfare programs and services</p> <p>Expansion and development of new program/service/ service delivery model</p>	<p>Child protection mediation and family enhancement service delivery model regarded as “one-of-a-kind child protection reform model”; RESP (Registered Education Savings Plan) for children in government care under 6 yrs. old, using the federal \$100/month child-care benefit, which goes to child welfare services (instead of the parent) for children in care. Government funding for new parent link centers (provide parents and caregivers with free resources and support to develop nurturing environments to support early childhood development) and social work training to assess mental health and domestic violence.</p> <p>Discourses: Government creating educational opportunity for children. Service delivery reform responsible for preventing children coming into care. New program political move of government to divert scrutiny.</p>	<p>5</p>	<p>1%</p>

<p>Extended support for children aging out of care</p>	<p>Increase numbers in youth agreement program (16-19 supported by child welfare services to live independently) because it is less expensive than foster care placement. Poorer social/educational outcomes in adulthood for children who grow up in care compared to those who do not.</p> <p>Discourses: Children who grow up in care deserve to have equal opportunities to extended support in early adulthood. Government responsibility to create opportunities for success through extended support. Extended care for children benefits the child, the taxpayer, and society.</p>	<p>6</p>	<p>2%</p>
<p>Collaboration/ communication between professionals and agencies</p> <p>Lack of collaboration / communication</p>	<p>Unaddressed disconnects between systems; police, social workers and corrections regarding domestic violence. Lack of child welfare interagency information system. Lack of investigative collaboration in child death and discrepancies in professional findings. Lack of coordination and information sharing between medical professionals and child welfare agency. Lack of and improper interagency communication.</p> <p>Discourses: Serving best interest of the child (through access to family history) should dominate privacy concerns. Government responsibility for death of the children by failing to implement previous recommendations regarding domestic violence and systems collaboration. Government failure for not implementing changes from previous report regarding the issue of lack of collaboration between professionals in domestic violence matters.</p>	<p>11</p>	<p>4%</p>
<p>Effective collaboration / communication</p>	<p>Amendments to the Child and Youth Advocate Act passed in the legislature to clarify that the sharing of personal information is allowed to provide the best help to children and youth. Development of a multi-disciplinary centre for abused children. Review findings on a foster home</p>	<p>2</p>	<p>0.71%</p>

	<p>investigation noted that a thorough, timely and complete multidisciplinary investigation occurred.</p> <p>Discourse: Effective communication and collaboration between professionals lessens risk to children.</p>		
<p>Culture, race, religion issues in child welfare</p> <p>Aboriginal culture and child welfare services</p>	<p>Provincial government transferring child welfare services. Aboriginal children placed with non-Aboriginal family. Aboriginal child moving from non-Aboriginal placement to Aboriginal placement. Placement in non-Aboriginal homes further victimizes Aboriginal children.</p> <p>Discourses: Aboriginal children deserve culturally appropriate child welfare services and Aboriginal placements. Safety should be first consideration over culturally appropriate placement.</p>	9	3%
<p>Cultural/race sensitivity affected decision making</p>	<p>Child welfare agency did not interfere with families' decision for Aboriginal traditional medication for their child. Aboriginal child placed with Aboriginal family where she died; "honour killings" of children by Afghan parents. Refusal of government authorities to investigate polygamous communities.</p> <p>Discourses: Child welfare decision bias towards Aboriginal people's right to decline medical treatment. Humane decision by child welfare agency to allow Aboriginal family to choose alternate treatment. Government failure to protect the children in polygamist community on basis of "freedom of religion". Child welfare agency failed child by placing cultural sensitivity before safety. Child welfare failed children due to lack of cultural knowledge and inadequate risk assessment.</p>	6	2%
<p>Groups identified in child welfare cases based on their beliefs, values</p>	<p>Ultra-orthodox sect under investigation for allegations of underage marriage, physical abuse and neglect, misled, fled and failed to cooperate with child welfare. "Honour</p>	11	4%

<p>and/or practices with respect to race, culture, and religious beliefs or values:</p>	<p>killings” of children by Afghan parents. Apprehension of two children due in part to emotional abuse caused by their parents’ white supremacist beliefs. Order calling for the apprehension of 14 children from ultra-Orthodox Jewish sect. Ultra-Orthodox Jewish sect fled country in advance of child welfare protection proceedings were known to child welfare agency to be a flight risk. The ultra-Orthodox sect was ordered to be returned.</p> <p>Discourses: Child welfare intervention warranted. Social worker cultural competency is crucial to ensure accurate risk assessment. Child welfare failed to keep children safe. Child welfare is imposing its values in their decision making.</p>		
<p>Daycare investigations by child welfare</p>	<p>Daycare investigation by child welfare services who closed the daycare for concerns of verbal abuse, minimal snacks and feces left sitting in the toilet for more than a week, not providing sufficient food to meet nutritional requirements. Daycare provider was under investigation by police and child welfare related to a two-year-old girl who had liver lacerations, four broken ribs and unusual bruising.</p> <p>Discourses: Appropriate action taken by child welfare to ensure safety of children. Child welfare agency justified in closing daycare. Daycare responsible for child’s injuries.</p>	<p>2</p>	<p>0.71%</p>
<p>Domestic violence and child welfare</p>	<p>Children killed by mentally ill father consequential to unaddressed disconnects between the systems: police, social workers and corrections regarding domestic violence. Children placed in home with father, who is the subject of domestic violence charges child’s mother killed her husband resulting in child going into government care. Child stabbed to death by his father, who also killed his wife and her parents, before taking his own life.</p>	<p>4</p>	<p>1%</p>

	<p>Discourses: Government neglect at policy level by failing to implement previous recommendations regarding domestic violence. Child welfare incompetency for leaving the children at risk by ignoring domestic violence as a risk factor. Child is further victimized by not being permitted access to his mother after she killed his father. Government responsible for child's death by not addressing the issue of domestic violence.</p>		
<p>Emotional abuse</p>	<p>Apprehension of two children due, in part to emotional abuse caused by their parents' white supremacist beliefs.</p> <p>Discourses: Child welfare services were justified in their actions. White supremacist parents pose a risk to their children's emotional well-being. Child welfare values guided decision making. Child welfare was not justified in apprehending children of white supremacist parents on grounds of emotional abuse.</p>	3	1
<p>Jurisdiction issues and child welfare</p> <p>Family / child relocates to avoid child welfare intervention</p>	<p>A 14-year-old girl who ran away from her child welfare placement in a group home and fled to a country in the middle east. An infant and her teenaged mother were intercepted out of province, due to apprehension order, in the province from which they fled. Members of ultra-Orthodox community located outside of country after fleeing Canada to avoid apprehension of children. Judge ordered that the 13 children who've left the country be apprehended and returned to Canada.</p> <p>Discourses: Child welfare failed to protect the child by allowing her access to her passport. Child welfare failed its responsibility to take preventative measures against those at risk of fleeing during a child protection investigation. Child welfare responsibility to intervene and recognize the control which members of the sect are under. Exercise social control so court can decide.</p>	4	1%

<p>Child apprehended in jurisdiction outside of apprehension order</p>	<p>Child was born in Canada, but later apprehended in the United States and in care of child welfare in U.S. An infant and her teenaged mother were intercepted out of province, due to apprehension order, in province from which they fled.</p> <p>Discourses: Child needs to return to Canadian child welfare system so that the child has the opportunity to visit with his mother. Child welfare justified in apprehension.</p>	<p>2</p>	<p>0.71%</p>
<p>Child welfare matters complicated by parents relocating to other jurisdiction</p>	<p>Child welfare case involving different jurisdictions in Canada, due to mother's relocation. Parents who were known to the child welfare system in Ontario for child abandonment left for Jamaica where they had another child, whose death they are charged with. Caseworkers did not know that the care providers had been investigated 16 times by child welfare authorities in Ontario.</p> <p>Discourses: Better collaboration is needed across professions and jurisdictions to ensure the safety and well-being of the children are the primary focus. Need for more international cooperation in child welfare cases to safeguard against parents who are deemed a high risk to children. Lack of effectiveness of child welfare system.</p>	<p>3</p>	<p>1%</p>
<p>Medical, health and mental health issues and child welfare:</p> <p>Child welfare decisions to impose or not impose medical treatment for child</p>	<p>Hospital taking the child welfare agency to court over its refusal to force the girl to have chemotherapy. Child welfare did not interfere with family's choice for alternate treatment. Child welfare services is selective as to in which cultural/religious groups it choose to support the family's medical decisions and those upon whom it imposes treatment. 11 year old child and her family won their battle against child welfare to implement native traditional medicine.</p> <p>Discourses: Without the knowledge of the benefit of traditional medicine, it cannot be said that the child is not in need of protection.</p>	<p>12</p>	<p>4%</p>

	<p>Questionable competency of the traditional healers. Child welfare agency made a humane decision, by allowing Aboriginal family to choose traditional medicine. Child welfare lacks consistency on medical decision cases involving different cultures. A child with the capacity and maturity to make decisions has the right to make their own medical decisions. Limitations on state authority and child health preferences. Child welfare apprehended obese children. Child welfare authorized removal of life support from child.</p> <p>Discourse: Legitimate limitations on state authority related to the family obesity. Child welfare was justified in their decision. The best interest of the child can mean deciding on their death.</p>		
Children in care are being over medicated	<p>Children in care are being over medicated because of long waits to access mental health services that might get to the root problems and desperation to make the children “functional” through use of drugs as a "harm reduction model" that can help children be less explosive.</p> <p>Discourse: Government are failing children in care.</p>	1	0.35%
Parents with mental health, health or intellectual disability issues	<p>Family met child welfare requirements (treatment for mental health) while the children remained in the home and their file was closed. Different perspectives on mental health and need for child welfare involvement. Children killed by mentally ill father after government failed to implement previous recommendations regarding domestic violence and systems collaboration. Parent’s hoarding deemed unsafe by child welfare resulting in child apprehension and parent ordered to counselling. Following parent’s fifth apprehended child at birth, the child welfare system’s practice of apprehending children from intellectually</p>	9	3%

	<p>challenged parents is deemed crueller than the abolished practice of forced sterilization. Acknowledging influence of poverty on parent’s fifth apprehension at birth.</p> <p>Discourse: Effective child welfare intervention. Child welfare staff without mental health knowledge increase risk of unsuccessful family involvement and children coming into care. Government failure at policy level. Support for best interest of child based practice.</p>		
<p>Monitoring, assessing, and reforming child welfare:</p> <p>System in place to monitor child welfare evaluated</p>	<p>The public cannot have confidence that the province is serving vulnerable children well when reviews are not taking place. Mediation has repeatedly been offered to improve the “dysfunctional relationship” between the child welfare system and the advocate. Advocate reports that the ministry is resistant to oversight and has not implemented recommendations. Child advocate is feeling the strain of the child welfare crisis; more staff requested to manage the increase in calls. Strain on the advocate due to increased difficulties that children and families are experiencing because the child welfare system is overly focused on responding to crises. No mandatory reviews for children who die with child welfare involvement and there is no mechanism for tracking or monitoring internal reviews and recommendations. Child advocate has not made any review public. Argument for the necessity of a child advocate to provide children a voice. Despite all the child welfare reviews, the system maintains the same flaws with a lack of change. Child welfare system is thoroughly “immunized against blame”. Inability of advocate to share findings of child deaths with public. Findings of an inquest report, which criticized the investigation completed by the advocate for children and youth whose report was said to be unreliable regarding the death of a 20-month-old girl returned to her</p>	<p>8</p>	<p>2%</p>

	<p>drug-addicted mother, who was staying at the facility to help addicted women stabilize.</p> <p>Discourses: Ineffective system of oversight. Government neglect at policy level by failing to implement previous recommendations. Child welfare agency lacks accountability. Crisis driven practice has adverse impact on service delivery. System lacks accountability and transparency. Government responsibility to inform public. Advocate ensures government and child welfare accountability. Child welfare system failure to make effective reforms. Lack of system transparency.</p>		
<p>Reviews/ audits/ reforms/ recommendations</p>	<p>Annual report by the children's advocate stressing that children and youth must be a priority over family rights and jurisdictional battles. Expert panel's recommendations centre on improving services for Aboriginals and addressing the inequality they face in the child-welfare system, such as, child protection services are offered to Aboriginals living off-reserve. Advocate's investigation of case management by child protection staff who did not work with a mother for family reunification, which was against policy. Child advocate report finds child welfare agency failed to investigate after receiving several reports that a boy was at risk of physical abuse. Government defends criticism for length of time to complete the comprehensive review of its child welfare and adoption legislation, stressing the importance of being thorough; Because of the number of children who die that have underlying medical problems, it is unlikely the province could eliminate deaths in the child welfare system. Child welfare agency is making progress with the recommendations because child and youth advocate requested quarterly reports, rather than yearly. Advocate report: social workers failed to protect a 10-year-old boy, who was severely injured in a car crash while with his mother, to whom the maternal grandmother was not to allow access. Advocate blames the</p>	<p>36</p>	<p>12%</p>

	<p>system for not providing social workers adequate resources, “One social worker in the region was doing the job of seven,” and suggests that the government take some monies from another budget and apply it to the children. Review of the death of a one-month-old under apprehension order: Family would like to know why the child died. A review found that a matter was adequately investigated by police, child welfare workers and the Alberta Children's Hospital child-abuse team and that a thorough, timely and complete multidisciplinary initial investigation had been conducted; Advocate report: death may have been prevented, had there been better communication between medical personnel and child welfare professionals. Advocate: provincial government to do more to tackle the risk factors that put children in jeopardy - in particular, poverty, which among Aboriginal people is related to the over representation of Aboriginal people in the child welfare system. Pending advocate report: 14-year-old girl with Down Syndrome left alone with her mother's corpse for nine days, concerns of child welfare failure. Advocate Report: girl failed by three child welfare agencies when grandfather gained custody after child welfare home study found grandfather and his spouse were "clear" and found no child protection concerns, despite his 71 criminal convictions, history of child welfare involvement, drug abuse and potential child exploitation concerns. Advocate report: the death of a six year-old caused by a 10-year-old child may have been preventable if the child welfare services each boy received were not inadequate. Advocate report: Child welfare system left 2 vulnerable children in high-risk situations by returning them to their mother's care without proper monitoring and support, resulting in their deaths (gaps and non-compliance with policy). Advocate Reports death of a toddler was preventable: child protection case file was never opened, despite</p>		
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	<p>frequent signs of neglect and numerous referrals to child welfare services. Child advocate outlined cases of four children who had been left in homes with relatives who had failed criminal record checks. Advocate criticizes social workers who left a vulnerable Aboriginal girl at risk because social workers said they were afraid to visit a First Nations reserve. Advocate report: highest-need children in the care of the government are being failed, such as case of boy sexually abused in foster care. Recommended reforms from a provincial commission into child welfare system including: Reduce the administrative burden on social workers, strategy is needed to improve lives of Aboriginal children in care, agency accountability and transparency. Auditor-General report: over representation of Aboriginal children in care means child welfare system is failing and funding gaps are the result of provincial government inability to make a strong enough case for more funding due to poor data; Advocate report: four children who died between 1999 and 2005, were “failed over and over again by the system that was supposed to protect them”.</p> <p>Discourses: Lack of effectiveness by child welfare. Child welfare agency failure: left child at risk. Putting parents before the children. Government are failing Aboriginal people. Government responsibility for reforms. Child welfare system not responsible for all deaths of children in care. Government responsibility to reduce child deaths. Increased accountability responsible for system reforms. Child welfare responsibility for inadequate resources. Child welfare responsibility to afford family its right to information. Child welfare was not responsible for child maltreatment. System failure. Government responsibility for systemic failure. Advocate investigation justified. Agency failure to comply with</p>		
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	policy. Social worker failure. Government responsibility to commit to reforms.		
Child welfare lack of accountability:	<p>Advocate reports over the past seven years where children have died and the identified problems remain: child welfare services' inability to accept responsibility for their failures. Advocate report calls for child welfare system to be accountable and demonstrate progress towards reform as per recommendations. Children in government care keep dying, the damning reports keep piling up and nothing ever seems to change. Despite the effort and expense on investigative reviews, the child welfare system shows a lack of change and it is "immunized against blame. Government spent more than \$31 million on the program over four years without any proof the money helped a single child.</p> <p>Discourses: Child welfare lack of accountability. Child welfare failure. Child welfare failure demands accountability. Child welfare failure to account for funding.</p>	5	1%
Public inquiry into the death of a child	<p>Death of five year old: author criticizes child welfare lawyers for interrogating the foster parents for not informing agency of information which they had, which is minute compared to the information on risk child welfare already had and failed to act on. Risk calculated by social workers handling the case was found to be different than the investigators for the inquiry: social workers argued that risk is relative (to other cases, not standardized). Final phase of inquiry devoted to looking at how poverty limited economic and employment opportunities, homelessness and substance abuse factored into child's death. Problems identified in other child-death reviews remain unchanged primarily by viewing the parents as the client and not the child. The risks posed by the mother and step-father who killed their child were ignored by child welfare agency. Troubled past of the parents was presented in the context of how</p>	18	6%

	<p>the child welfare system kept putting the child back with her parents of known high risk. Keep the deceased child as the central focus and recognize the attempt by child welfare to divert the public's focus from their responsibility for the child death to a spiritual impetus for change; Rather than look for new details about how the child-welfare system failed her, the inquiry examined the credibility and motivation of the child's former foster parent, who went after the provincial government when she learned the child had been murdered. A social worker and her supervisor testify regarding the supervisor changing the response time from 24 hours to 48 hours, and their disagreement about what the response time should have been. Inquiry highlighted child welfare failures: missing files, shredded notes, and an "altered" report. Time line of the child's life and how child welfare services handled her case and left her at risk. Social worker who handled the child's file from outset only saw the family twice in eight months, despite her noted plan to meet them weekly. Union tries to prevent the media from publishing the names of the social workers. Child welfare agency provided insufficient background information to a psychiatrist resulting in an inadequate assessment, which child welfare accepted to erroneously determine low risk. Lawyers representing child welfare request copies of witness transcripts, which is deemed unfair to the witnesses who were told before the interviews began that their testimony would not be provided in transcript form. The public inquiry is being delayed, and the government is accused of deliberately delaying inquiry until past election.</p> <p>Discourses: Child welfare is deflecting blame for its failure. Social workers flawed risk assessment. Impact of social problems on risk to children. Child welfare agency failed to put child's needs first. Support for best interest of</p>		
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	<p>child based practice. Child welfare ineffectiveness. Child welfare failed to keep child safe. Child welfare avoids accountability. Child welfare system lacks standardized risk assessment. Failure of child welfare agency to adhere to standards. Child welfare actions unscrupulous during inquiry. Government lack of accountability: deliberately delaying inquiry until past election.</p>		
<p>Value of a public inquiry debated/supported</p>	<p>The author shows both sides of a debate on the value of a public inquiry while stressing the magnitude of the death of the child and implicating the culpability of the child welfare system involved. Inquiry commencement said to have experienced too long delays as a result of legal challenges and the union representing social workers fighting to keep the inquiry from happening. Society as a whole shares the blame for the death of the child and the focus should be on the potentially positive outcome of the inquiry, which is system changes that will lead to saving lives.</p> <p>Discourses: Public inquiry necessary to hold child welfare accountable. Child welfare system avoiding accountability. Child welfare system is not solely responsible for death of child.</p>	4	1%
<p>Child welfare agency fails to implement recommended changes</p>	<p>Advocate findings are that lessons learned from previous death reviews, are not being implemented at the front lines. Front-line workers faced constant reorganization and service cuts from the government instead of the positive changes promised and service continues to be crisis driven. Advocate report on four child deaths is being stalled by government, which has been challenging findings and trying to influence the outcome of the report, which concluded that the government has failed to learn from the deaths of children. While stalling the delivery of the new death report, the ministry is noted</p>	6	2%

	<p>to have implemented some recommendations which they were aware were going to be in the report to make it look like they did so on their own, rather than because of the report recommendation. Child advocate report: child welfare system failed to implement previous recommendations and thus "on numerous levels" failed to serve four children who died between 1999 and 2005. Three of the four children were Aboriginal, and all four families had a history of involvement with the child welfare system; Auditor general report: of the 29 improvements to child welfare recommended in 2006, only 15 have been implemented and the system is plagued by information gaps and duplication. The advocate stated that the B.C. government has failed to put a better system in place to help children living with domestic violence, as she recommended in her 2009 report on a child death.</p> <p>Discourse: Government responsibility for recommendations not being implemented at front line. Government avoiding accountability and trying to prevent embarrassment. Child welfare failure to implement recommendations.</p>		
<p>Over representation of child groups in the child welfare system</p> <p>Overrepresentation of Aboriginal children in care of child welfare:</p>	<p>The majority of articles (14 out of 19) featured in this theme are discussed in the systemic/social issues category. The overrepresentation of Aboriginal children in care is linked to systemic/social issues in the majority of the articles in this section and the overrepresentation of Aboriginal children in care is mentioned as consequential to those issues. Poverty, funding inequity between on and off reserve, lack of prevention services and resources, and the intergenerational impact of residential schools are the underlying issues noted to lead to the overrepresentation.</p> <p>Discourses: Governments are not committed to address root causes. Government fails to acknowledge</p>	19	6%

	<p>the scale of the problem and lack any meaningful solution. Unresolved social issues are impacting Aboriginal families in the child welfare system. Child welfare system failure. Government responsibility for the social issues on reserves and the overrepresentation of Aboriginal children in the child welfare system. Missing and murdered women and the overrepresentation of Aboriginal children in care share the same root social and systemic causes. Complex problem which requires commitment by both government and Aboriginal people to address the underlying issues. Impacts of residential school, colonialism, and generations of racism are the roots of current social issues affecting Aboriginal people. Government and child welfare agencies are responsible for systemic failures affecting Aboriginal children in the child welfare system.</p> <p>Two of the articles feature a public inquiry into the death of a young Aboriginal girl and note the issue of the overrepresentation of Aboriginal children in the child welfare system.</p> <p>Discourses: Aboriginal children in government care deserve better child welfare service. Government failure to address issue.</p> <p>Two of the articles in this category are based on child welfare reviews which note the issue of overrepresentation of Aboriginal children in care. In one article the Auditor General critically reports that over the last eight years significant progress has been made in reducing the number of non-Aboriginal children in care but there has not been success with First Nations children, and the Ministry is failing in addressing the problem. The other article features discussion of a panel which is looking at ways to reform the child welfare system. With respect to the overrepresentation of Aboriginal children in child welfare, prevention and early intervention were</p>		
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	<p>recommended. It was noted by the committee chair that many First Nations families will not try to access help because of fear of having their children taken away.</p> <p>Discourses: Government failure to address the issue. Lack of preventative and early intervention services.</p> <p>One article features the personal experience of apprehension on two young children and how it led to the culture shock of being placed in a non-Aboriginal home, which added to the impact of the apprehension. Statistics on the topic are provided: Three times more First Nations children are removed from their families today than at the peak of the residential school system in 1949. Then, approximately 8,900 Aboriginal children were taken from their families and placed in residential schools. Now, more than 27,500 First Nations children are in foster care.</p> <p>Discourse: There are more Aboriginal children apprehended now than during the residential school system. Government repeating historical failures.</p>		
<p>Overrepresentation of black children in care of child welfare:</p>	<p>An investigation by the Toronto Star of child welfare in Toronto found that the overrepresentation of black children in care in Toronto relates to racism, poverty and cultural misunderstanding. The issue has prompted the Children’s Aid Society to team up with the Ministry of Children and Youth Services, the provincial child advocate and the African Canadian Legal Clinic to work towards reducing the numbers. Leaders in Toronto's black community believe that the African Canadian community needs its own children's aid society, noting there are already children's aid societies serving Ontario's Jewish, Catholic and Aboriginal families. The article advocates for placement with relatives or culturally appropriate foster families and that government should mandate the involvement of a "competent and proven" black</p>	<p>2</p>	<p>0.71%</p>

	<p>community member whenever child protection workers respond to calls about the safety of any child of African or Caribbean heritage.</p> <p>Discourses: Child welfare services’ cultural incompetence and racism. Poverty is an underlying social cause. Culturally appropriate or kinship placements.</p>		
<p>Child maltreatment</p> <p>Physical abuse of a child</p>	<p>Child Advocate reports: two-year-old boy beaten so badly by his father that he is now paralyzed on one side of his body. Physical abuse investigation of two year old foster child concluded that the injuries were accidental, despite a different opinion by a doctor. Daycare provider under investigation for physical abuse culpable, after parents cleared. Child subjected to physical abuse and neglect by her grandfather (guardian). Child moved from foster care and placed with her “hard-drinking”, “unstable” aunt who beat and starved her almost to the point of death. Criminal investigation of physical abuse after a 2-month-old boy suffered multiple injuries leaving him in critical condition. Child welfare service is seeking permanent guardianship of a two-year-old girl, whose forehead was split open by her father.</p> <p>Discourses: Lack of effectiveness by child welfare. Child welfare agency left child at risk. Putting parents before the children. Child welfare effectiveness; justified in its intervention.</p>	7	2%
<p>Child sexual abuse and sexual exploitation</p>	<p>Child sexually abused by older brother continued to be exposed to him after child welfare erroneously deemed it safe, case referred to child welfare. Child was subjected to sexual abuse, physical abuse and neglect by her father, after he was sent home after serving a nine month sentence for the sexual assault of her and six other children. Article references two sexual abuse cases which</p>	9	3%

	<p>occurred in foster care (one perpetrated by the foster parent, the other by the adolescent foster sibling) in a discussion on child in care safety. Foster parent, who cared for 55 high risk youths over the past 20 years is accused and charged with paying 3 children in his care for sexual acts. The author notes that under its guidelines for foster homes, staff were required to check on the home every three months, but it is not indicated whether or not this occurred. Announcement by government that it will implement the first two of 28 recommendations of an inquest report into the suicide death of a 14-year-old runaway by calling a summit of stakeholders to develop a strategy to deal with sexual exploitation of children. A sibling group of six Aboriginal children has been in the care of child welfare services since their mother, who was arrested for running a child-prostitution ring is alleged to have also sold her children into prostitution; Court proceedings presented and tactics used by attorneys are discussed with respect to a case of child sexual assault perpetrated by an adult relative. Adolescent sexually offended against his three younger foster siblings.</p> <p>Discourses: Child welfare services failed to keep child safe. Ineffectiveness of system. Rigid consistent foster home checks are crucial to ensure safety. Child welfare system and government ineffectiveness and responsibility for failing children. Government accepting responsibility for implementation of recommendations to address issues related to exploited children and youth. Danger of perpetrators.</p>		
Neglect of a child	A couple who had all of their four children apprehended for neglect, were also neglected as children. Despite child welfare’s assistance and support to the couple, their parental capacity was insufficient to regain custody. Children were apprehended from their	4	1%

	<p>grandmother’s care because of her hoarding. Child severely neglected after child welfare agency erroneously indicated a record check of the grandfather and his spouse were "clear" and found "no child protection concerns." Death of a two- year-old who suffered from obvious neglect after a child protection case file was never opened despite frequent signs of neglect and numerous referrals to child welfare agency.</p> <p>Discourses: Effective child welfare interventions. Needs of child put first. Support for best interest of child based practice. Child welfare agency left child at risk. Lack of effectiveness of child welfare. Under-resourced child welfare services leads to child neglect. Crisis driven child welfare practice leads to neglect.</p>		
Prevention	<p>The article discusses the discontinuance of Saskatchewan’s Teen and Young Parent Program (designed to help young parents who may be vulnerable and need support) for children requiring protection services. Article discusses reforms to New Brunswick child welfare services delivery that prevent children from coming into government care. The reforms have been classified as a “one-of-a-kind child protection reform model where child protection mediation and family enhancement services were designed, as well as the creation of immediate response conferencing and family group conferencing, which includes the child, the parents, the immediate family concerned, as well as extended family. The program is noted to lead to a decrease in children in care by 18%. Article discussed the need for a prevention strategy for Aboriginal families. Child and youth advocate for Saskatchewan, recommends a gradual shift in control to First Nations and Metis organizations to address the issue of overrepresentation of aboriginal children in government care. Federation of Saskatchewan Indian Nations (FSIN) vice-</p>	11	4%

	<p>chief is cited as saying that the number of First Nations children in foster care on a reserve has stabilized since a comprehensive prevention and "continuum of care" strategy was adopted; Article focuses on a new federal approach to First Nations child welfare services, emphasizing prevention over the apprehension and dislocation of children. The federal government announcement of five-year, \$177-million initiative that will put Manitoba First Nations child welfare services on par with those off reserve. The author notes that the child welfare workers in First Nations Communities will be able to intervene when there are early signs of family breakdown or child neglect and parents may receive such support as addictions treatment and parenting classes. An article presents the central idea that the child welfare system needs to be more prevention oriented rather than simply reactive. It is noted that unaddressed underlying social causes such as poverty, and the crisis driven child welfare system leads to increased child deaths. An article discusses expected federal funding for aboriginal children and families on reserves based on a new child welfare funding formula that could prevent abuse and neglect. For non-aboriginal children and aboriginal children living off-reserve, the federal government spends 78 cents on kids living on reserves. One of the goals for the more flexible formula is to allow child-welfare workers to do more prevention and help struggling families before abuse or neglect starts. Under the current formula on-reserve children get the same funding as off-reserve children only after they are taken into care.</p> <p>Discourses: Risk to children reduced by redirecting resources from prevention program to child protection program. Reforms to child welfare services prevents need for child apprehension. Government responsibility to focus on prevention strategies by addressing the systemic issues.</p>		
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	Equitable funding to reduce child apprehension.		
<p>Privacy issues</p> <p>Publication ban on the names children who die in care</p>	<p>In a call for an amendment to the publication ban in Alberta, comparison is made across provinces noting that in Manitoba it is not illegal to report the name of a child who was known to the child welfare system. After over-turning a publication ban that made it illegal to publish the names and pictures of children and adolescents, who died while receiving child welfare services in Alberta, the names, photographs, ages and a brief summary of the circumstances around the deaths for some of these children are featured. An article discusses a provincial roundtable called after a joint Edmonton Journal-Calgary series on the deaths of children in care featured young adult former foster children voicing their opinions on the publication ban. Media outlets will be free to publish names and photographs unless a judge grants a publication ban in an individual case. Reports explaining what happened in the death of four of the children were heavily redacted beyond clear comprehension. Criticism is given regarding the fact that child and youth advocate's reports are only accessible to the family services minister, the chief medical examiner and the ombudsman, rather than publically accessible.</p> <p>Discourses: Government responsibility to amend law. Child welfare needs to be publicly accountable for its role in the deaths of children. Deceased children and their families are impacted by the publication ban. Government needs to be held publically accountable, while maintaining the dignity of the children and the families of the deceased child. Child welfare culture of transparency and accountability is crucial. Need to balance privacy for the family with informing the public. Government had no choice but to lift the ban as a result of the pressure put upon it</p>	15	5%

	<p>by the series Calgary Herald and Edmonton Journal published a series on the many deaths of children in government care. The public has a right to know what role child welfare played in the death of children in its care. Media plays important role in holding government accountable. Government uses privacy laws to avoid public embarrassment.</p>		
<p>Child advocacy reports and privacy legislation:</p>	<p>Child and youth advocate and child welfare came under fire because they failed for the last three years to file reports annually to the minister as required. Child and youth advocate argues why the death of a child should not carry an assumption that the public has a right to hear about it. The death of a 15 year old foster child whose body was found wrapped in a bag in the river, has many wanting change to the privacy legislation. A representative for the child and youth advocate speaks about the need for privacy in certain respects to child death investigations. It is noted that public disclosure of family details “can and has previously resulted in increased risk for young people and their caregivers.” The child advocate states, “When public discourse focuses on issues instead of individuals, systemic changes can happen.”</p> <p>Discourses: Government needs to honour the rights of the public to information on the abuse of children in care. Government need to reform privacy legislation.</p>	3	1%
<p>Confidentiality/ privacy in child welfare legal proceedings</p>	<p>A child welfare agency refused to turn over a child’s confidential records in a court proceeding of a sexual abuse case involving a nine year old child. Union attempts to try to prevent the media from publishing the names of the social workers involved in the case of a child death for which a public inquiry is set to occur.</p> <p>Discourses: The court process and legal tactics to protect agencies have the potential to interfere with convictions in child abuse</p>	3	1%

	cases. Names of social workers should be published to keep them accountable.		
Reporting protection concerns to child welfare	<p>Increase in reporting noted after highly publicized case of “honour killings”. Changes were reported in the way incoming calls are managed as a result of a case of child death because there was some ambiguity and confusion about whether school staff were calling to report abuse or for a consultation. Child Abuse Protocol was reported as intending to make the process more user friendly and led to better reporting practices. Presented is the issue of how child welfare should be responding to cases where the reporter (of child abuse to a child welfare agency) references social media items (such as Facebook images, or Twitter text) to support the allegations that are being reported. Failure to report child protection concerns was described as still occurring, and despite professionals’ legal obligation to report, legal action has yet to be pursued for their failure to report.</p> <p>Discourses: Legitimacy of reporting child abuse. Limitations in government response to failure to report child abuse. Child welfare agencies need to advance their training and policies in the wake of increased social media based referrals. Publicity increases reporting.</p>	6	2%
Risk-Safety Assessments: Family-parent needs before those of child; family placement over child safety	Case featured in an advocate’s report of a two-year-old boy who was beaten so badly by his father that he is now paralyzed on one side of his body in a discussion on risks associated with child welfare practice which is family-centered, which places the need to keep children with family above child safety. Case presented in which a child was placed with a family member, despite apparent risks in the interest of a kinship and culturally appropriate placement where judge holds the caregiver solely responsible, but the author demonstrates how child welfare authorities	9	3%

	<p>share blame. An article presents an internal review of a three months old who died from positional asphyxiation found that the private guardianship was "not supported by a thorough home study" and that "the needs the parents were the primary focus of the interventions and that (the child's) needs were at times placed in the secondary or tertiary position." One of the articles collectively discusses two of six child deaths, noting that the parents' needs were put before the child. One article presents a case of Afghan family 'honour killings' where the parents' needs were placed before those of the children. Firstly social workers interviewed the children in the presence of their parents and secondly, both the police and social workers wrongly assessed the parents as posing less of a risk based on the fact that they were financially well off and presented well.</p> <p>Discourses: Parent needs before child. Both child welfare and caregiver culpable in child's death. Child welfare responsible for leaving child at risk. Presentation of parents influence risk assessment. Child welfare failure in understanding parental risk.</p>		
<p>Caregiver risks were known to child welfare</p>	<p>Former probation officer to the step father provides testimony at an inquiry that she wrote a warning letter to child welfare services about the step father, who was a "high risk to reoffend in a violent fashion". An article presented two cases discussed where children were left in the care of their parents, whose risks were known to child welfare, where the children died in their care. "Where else in Canada is it possible to find within two short city blocks a wide-ranging provincial inquiry going on into the death of one little Aboriginal girl, and at the Law Courts just down the street, a fatality inquest starting up into the death of another?" One article discussed a case where child welfare services placed a newborn in the care of parents who had been known for their chronic</p>	<p>12</p>	<p>4%</p>

	<p>addictions, domestic violence, criminal activity, homelessness, neglect and inadequate supervision of their other children who are in foster homes. An article looked at a four year old who died because of " violent, prolonged assault" caused by his mother’s boyfriend, who had previously been convicted of assaulting the child, for which the child was removed from his mother's care, but later returned. In one article a child welfare agency is criticized, by the author who notes that various workers and their superiors collectively knew that the parents, who themselves were wards of the state, were dangerous, but kept putting the child back in their care, where her parents killed her. An article discusses the death of a child who was left in the a care of caregiver whose risks were known to the agency: “allegedly trained child welfare workers prove incapable of connecting the dots that lead from the tragedy of a young boy who died at the hands of his ex-con great-aunt?”</p> <p>Discourses: Child welfare services ignored risk factors. Child welfare failures of city recognized nationally. Child welfare failure to review family history left a child at risk. Child welfare fails to consider criminal history in risk assessment. Child welfare does not effectively protect children.</p>		
<p>No risk / inadequate / questionable risk-safety assessment</p>	<p>Advocate reports failure in assessment of risk to the children by erroneously determining the children to not be in need of protection, which is said to be largely attributable to shortcuts taken in investigative processes. An article presents a case where social workers interviewed a child sexual abuse victim at his mother's home - in front of her and her older son, who sexually abused him. After the child denied any wrongdoing, the file was subsequently closed. One article discusses a case in which a child welfare agency had involvement with a 5 year old child virtually her entire life, yet her “battered remains”</p>	<p>33</p>	<p>12%</p>

	<p>were not discovered in a dump on a northern reserve for 10 months after her death: concerns with respect to child welfare involvement included missing files, shredded notes, and an "altered" report. Child welfare agency is sharply criticized during an inquiry for being able to access files to serve its own purpose, but yet records that were potentially damning have gone amiss. An article presents an advocate which report raises concerns on investigations of child abuse after finding that child welfare services, failed to investigate after receiving several reports that the six year old boy was at risk of physical abuse. An article discusses a case where a man was awarded custody of his 2 year old granddaughter, and the child was noted by the child advocate to have been failed by three agencies. When social workers responded to reported concerns they spoke to the grandparents, but never entered the home or saw the little girl. One article presented an advocate report which expressed concern that a new risk assessment tool will be ineffective if social worker caseloads are not reduced. In an article, deaths of two children born to drug-addicted mothers are profiled, reporting that the child welfare agency left them in high-risk situations. Another article featuring an advocate report which looked at the death of a child after a child welfare agency received 16 referrals on the child's family, with numerous signs of drug abuse, allegations of physical and sexual abuse, and possible malnourishment, yet a child protection case file was never opened. An article discusses an audit of child welfare services is to be completed by the child advocate based on the placement of children in homes with people who had a history of offences ranging from drunk driving to sexual assault. An advocate reported is featured in an article, which looks at the death of an adolescent after social workers left her at risk because they were afraid to visit a First Nations reserve where they had been</p>		
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	<p>previously threatened with a knife and a gun. An article discusses a case where a high needs boy placed in a foster home, was kept by his foster parent in a separate nearby house, minding him during the day and hiring staff to care for him at night. The child disclosed sexual assault by a night caregiver who had just been fired for a drug relapse. An article features criticism from the Auditor General directed at a child welfare agency for not adhering to recommendations made in an audit five years ago with respect to delay in foster home reviews for foster homes which are renewing their license.</p> <p>Discourses: Lack of thoroughness, impacted risk assessment. Failed risk assessment process. Child welfare responsibility for mishandling case and failed risk assessment. Child welfare agency deflecting blame. Child welfare failure to respond to reported risk. High caseloads interfere with proper risk assessment. Social worker incompetency (neglected to get police assistance to ensure both their safety and safety of child). Failure to ensure safety of care providers in foster home. Child welfare agency fails to maintain standards to ensure the safety of children in government care. Child welfare neglecting their responsibility to protect and support children until they are legal adults Child welfare agency failures. Government funding failures.</p>		
<p>Child welfare system reliance on third party for risk assessment</p>	<p>Child welfare relies on pathologist findings in child deaths, and the pathologist is the subject of an inquiry which was called after an outside review found that he made significant errors in 20 of 45 criminally suspicious child deaths he investigated. An article presents the child advocate’s concern about discrepancies in findings in the death of a child because the child welfare services relied upon police and medical findings as part of its investigation: a provincial medical examiner found the</p>	<p>9</p>	<p>3%</p>

	<p>manner of the child’s death to be undetermined, but Manitoba's top child-abuse medical expert called the death murder, and the RCMP have said that the death was accidental. One article features reliability concerns of hair-strand tests which are routinely accepted in child welfare cases in Ontario as evidence of parental drug or alcohol abuse were expressed. An article features a specific case where the challenges and defensive arguments are presented about the reliability of the hair-strand tests performed by the Motherisk program, following a call for the government to review the laboratory's analysis, which has had a bearing on many child protection cases. An article on a public inquiry reports that a child welfare agency accepted an inadequate assessment by a psychiatrist after failing to provide sufficient background information at the time of referral.</p> <p>Discourses: Flawed third party findings have serious implications for children and their families. Discrepancies in professional third party findings pose a challenge for child welfare system. Unreliable third party findings poses challenges for child welfare services and families. Child welfare responsible for flawed risk assessment, by providing insufficient background information. Child welfare agency does not critically assess medical and police findings. Government fail to keep children in their care safe.</p>		
<p>Staff competency, judgement, decision making, and presentation</p>	<p>Child advocate report: Child welfare agency neglected to withdraw its application for permanent wardship, despite a mother’s extraordinary progress during the court process, which was deemed by the advocate to be "substantively unfair to the children.” Staff did not continue to work with the mother for family reunification, which was against policy. An article discusses two cases</p>	<p>11</p>	<p>3%</p>

	<p>in which children were left in the care of their parents and the social workers are said to be incompetent. In an article the author refers to the rare few social workers that are not “inept” as having limited decision making authority due to being either overruled by their superiors or defeated by the bureaucracy. An article looks at the need for social worker training to address challenges posed by social media referrals’ such as in the following cases: a woman tried to sell her child on Kiji, a Youtube video depicts a child being physically assaulted, photographs were posted of weapons in the home with a child there. An article looked at a child death case review which raised multiple concerns about poor decision-making, failure to follow policies and concerns about the "haste" with which a private guardianship was approved. One article discussed a social worker’s lack of familiarity with the family's religious beliefs and not using an interpreter were reported to have interfered with child welfare service delivery in a case of a child death. One article focused on the issue of many social workers lacking the proper training to effectively do their job. The author compares social work practice to other professions, such as a surgery and engineering and argues that society would not tolerate these professionals not having the necessary educational requirements. Despite this the government is noted to allow social workers to be hired with diplomas and unrelated degrees. An article discusses the report of a child advocate, which looks at the deaths of four children and identified the following failures of the system: overworked social workers, lack of training, poor communication, management failure to track family’s history of abuse, and the Liberal government making changes which increased front line worker stress.</p> <p>Discourses: Child welfare denied family of their rights and children of their best interests. Poor service delivery. Ineffective child</p>		
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	<p>welfare system impedes social worker decision making. Social media cause for expanding ways of assessing risk. Social worker lacked necessary cultural knowledge which interfered with decision making. Government responsibility for the lack of a standard hiring practice of qualified staff with social work degrees. Government responsibility for child welfare failures. Lack of a standardized risk assessment: risk is calculated as relative to other cases Ineffectual social workers. System does not support worker competence. Arbitrary decision-making.</p>		
Factors in assessing risk	<p>Social workers testified at an inquiry that workers were burdened with balancing the index child’s needs against the needs of hundreds of other children, and that risk is relative, not something strictly dictated by a manual. The investigators reviewing the case after the child death, did not have this burden, but had all the information laid out before them to form an assessment. Another article describes adolescence as not being an independent risk factor for parenting. Rather, homelessness, drug addictions, mental health problems, partner abuse and lack of prenatal care are described as more likely risk factors of a mother being unable to care for her child.</p> <p>Discourses: Lack of a standardized risk assessment: risk is calculated as relative to other cases. Adolescence is not an independent risk factor for parenting Risk assessment has limited validity.</p>	2	0.71%
Risk assessment and electronic data	<p>Social workers are unable to access a new government child-welfare computer system, due to flaws, which may be putting children and families at risk. Another article discusses a new electronic tracking system which is supposed to aid social workers in risk assessment, including after-hours services,</p>	6	2%

	<p>because workers will be able to better access case information and make decisions. An article discusses a case involving Afghan “honour killings” in which previous risk factors were unknown because there was no database for a child welfare agency to access the family’s history with another child welfare agency. One article looks at the gaps in a centralized computer record system, which are noted to have had a role in the death of a child who was the subject of a public inquiry. The government is criticized for choosing to not to fix computers, thus leaving social workers ill-equipped to make good decisions. One article looks at a child advocate report about a new integrated case management system, which was supposed to reduce the time child protection workers spend on data entry, provide better access to information across multiple ministries and free social workers up to work more with children and families. However, numerous overwhelmed staff reported the computer system has had the opposite effect, and child safety cannot be assured.</p> <p>Discourses: Inadequate computer system is impacting risk assessment. Electronic access to information enhances risk assessment and decision making. Interagency communication is essential for adequate risk assessment. Government responsibility to ensure that social workers have adequate tools to effectively assess risk. Flawed computer system adversely affecting service delivery and child safety System lack of coordination causes harm. Automation has perverse effects.</p>		
<p>Social worker roles</p> <p>Social worker workload/caseload</p>	<p>During a public inquiry social workers, were found to be carrying caseloads too high to safely manage. A social worker’s union and the government disagree on what is a reasonable caseload and how to measure workload so funding based on the number of cases can be appropriately set. Child Welfare</p>	<p>4</p>	<p>1%</p>

	<p>League of America's standards for good practice recommend 17 cases per social worker, whereas the government does not follow these guidelines and only funds agencies to a level of one worker to 20 to 25 cases. An article discusses the issue of social workers struggling with a work overload and work many long hours, even on their own time to try to keep up, only for the audit to paint them as villains who ignore these children in need. A union representative said the "crisis" in the child protection system is due in part to a lack of front-line workers and inappropriate resources to handle the demand for services for at-risk children. Another article features the perspective of an advocate for children, who notes that the heavy workloads of social workers increases the risk to vulnerable children. He cites two cases in his annual report into child deaths where caseloads critically impacted the management of the cases. One article which presents an advocate's report, noted that high social worker caseloads were identified as an unresolved issue, which is going to interfere with a new risk assessment tool, if not rectified.</p> <p>Discourses: Lack of a consensus on appropriate caseload size. Social workers bear the brunt of the blame for government failure to provide adequate staffing and resources. Ineffective social work results from excessive caseloads. Agency failure to adhere to recommendations to reduce social worker caseloads. Government failure to fund appropriate size caseloads.</p>		
Social worker accountability / affect/ conduct	A four year-old who drew a picture (immediately erased from the chalkboard) of her dad "shooting monsters and bad men" resulted in the police taking the man into custody and child welfare services apprehending d the child temporarily. The author comments on the lack of regard the child welfare agency had for acting	6	2%

	<p>(apprehending) with the complete and utter lack of any evidence of wrongdoing in this case. An article featuring a public inquiry, the author contrasts her continued feeling of shame and remorse over the death of a kitten which she neglected as a young adult, with the lack of expressed remorse by social workers who contributed to the death of a child. One article features a family’s perspective on how they were treated by social workers (insensitively) and how social workers handled their case (incompetently) was part of a series on foster homes. A social worker was noted to discuss sensitive issues in front of a crowded waiting room. An article features a case where parents requested to know the reasons their children were apprehended, why the apprehension was not explained to them, why it took so long for the children to be returned, and why they were not provided a translator as their English was poor. It is noted that the parents never received satisfactory answers to their questions and they had not received an apology.</p> <p>Discourses: Child welfare agency unjustified in their actions, for which they refused to accept responsibility. Emotional detachment of social worker. Family dissatisfied with the way child welfare managed their case. Child welfare agency arbitrary decisions and lack of accountability. Social worker insensitivity and lack of compassion.</p>		
<p>Social worker self-efficacy and satisfaction with their job:</p>	<p>Social worker recruitment article discusses benefits of becoming a social worker, while noting the challenges. It is acknowledged that social workers receive negative press, such as being over-worked and experiencing job related stress, but that most of the publicity is connected to child welfare cases. It is noted that there are other areas to practice in social work. Another article discusses social worker job satisfaction for those working for a child welfare agency. It is noted that child welfare</p>	<p>2</p>	<p>0.71%</p>

	<p>workers work long, unpredictable hours, are exposed to potential danger, are subjected to public scrutiny, education requirements are high, and salaries are relatively low. Despite this, there are significant personal compensations which draw and keep employees.</p> <p>Discourses: Social workers in child welfare are subjected to negative press, focused on challenges, not rewards. Child welfare work is rewarding through helping people and making a difference, not monetary rewards. Child welfare work is stressful and underpaid; but balanced by intrinsic rewards.</p>		
Social worker safety:	<p>A child advocate representative reports on a child death where social workers left the vulnerable girl in a community, which they refused to enter because they were fearful based on previous threats. The advocate reported that threats of violence toward social workers should not deter them from fulfilling their legal duties to protect vulnerable children from abuse, as they can employ a police escort to check on a young person's well-being. An article discusses a case where a child protection worker was stabbed while off duty. The Social Services deputy minister has taken steps, like increasing safety awareness and providing more training to staff on how to respond to angry clients or inappropriate behaviour. A social worker union representative states that the union is "acutely aware of the importance of the role many of our members have as social workers in society, and the risks that they can encounter in their jobs."</p> <p>Discourses: Social worker neglect of duty. Social worker as objects of risk.</p>	3	1%
Systemic/social issues related to child welfare	<p>Author discusses the magnitude of the problem with respect to Saskatchewan foster homes and the child welfare system, for which the government has neither a long-term plan nor the political will to deal with the</p>	10	4%

<p>Government responsibility and systemic failures</p>	<p>problems. Root causes of the problem, such as the disparities between rich and poor and Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal persons have yet to be addressed by any government because they lack the capacity and desire, considering there is little political gain to doing so. An article reports the government's immediate response to those recommendations by the child advocate regarding the crisis in child welfare are regarded by the author to lack information that would suggest that the government has a solution or even comprehends the magnitude of problem. Another article links two cases in which 2 Aboriginal children whose parents killed them to intergenerational unresolved Aboriginal issues such as generations of alcohol abuse, residential schools underlie current issues in child welfare. One article looks at a "toxic combination" of poverty, poor housing and substance abuse are responsible for the tragically and disproportionately overrepresentation of Aboriginal children "at every point of contact in the child welfare system." An article reporting on the child welfare system being "antiquated" notes that studies continue to show that children are taken into care of child welfare for reasons of neglect which result from poverty (poor housing, lack of food) and addictions more than for reasons of abuse. One article looks at a human rights matter before the Federal Court, which is to determine whether the government can be held legally responsible for the circumstances of native children in the child-welfare system. First Nations groups allege the federal government discriminates against Aboriginal children by consistently underfunding services on reserves, leading to poverty, poor housing, substance abuse and a vast overrepresentation of Aboriginal children in state care. In one article, the author cites a recent case where a 15 year old Aboriginal girl left her hotel placement, then was later found dead in the river in a province where nearly</p>		
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	<p>90 per cent of children in care are Aboriginal, which is deemed as unacceptable. An article notes that an upcoming national round table to look at the issue of missing and murdered Aboriginal women, should also discuss the basic problems of alcohol, drug abuse, poverty. One article which reports on the death of an adolescent Aboriginal girl who was in the care of the child welfare system, points out the major faults of the system related to the disproportionate number of Aboriginal children in care. At the core of the problem is that the federal government does not fund child welfare services on reserve at the same level provincial governments fund off-reserve services, which leads to a lack of resources and thus a high rate of Aboriginal children are taken into government care.</p> <p>Discourses: Governments are not commitment to addressing root cause. Governments fail to acknowledge the scale of the problem and lack any meaningful solution. Unresolved social issues are impacting Aboriginal families in the child welfare system. Child welfare system failure to consider social issues in their assessments. Government responsibility for the social issues on reserves and the overrepresentation of Aboriginal children in child welfare. Missing and murdered women and the overrepresentation of Aboriginal children in care share the same root social and systemic causes.</p>		
<p>Impact of systemic/social issues on child welfare system</p>	<p>Article features part 9 of a 12-part series on what parents and government need to do to give B.C. children a better start in life, which looks at social/systemic issues and their impact related to the 'epidemic' of more than half of children taken into provincial care being Aboriginal. The impact on Aboriginal children is noted as education inequity: 48 per cent of Aboriginal students in B.C. completed Grade 12, compared with 80 per cent for non-Aboriginal students. The child advocate notes</p>	<p>8</p>	<p>2%</p>

	<p>that more work needs to be done to in the area of prevention, by addressing the social/systemic issues. An advocate for greater self-reliance for Aboriginals believes that the solution lies in Aboriginal people owning their own problems, accepting responsibility for them and making a commitment to do something about them, regardless of who created the problem. An article focuses on the third and final phase of a public inquiry into the death of a child. An article examines how poverty, limited economic and employment opportunities, homelessness and substance abuse factored into the child’s death. “Roots of these issues can be traced to issues that the First Nations people in our community have faced for decades, relating to racism, colonialism and the residential school system.” One article cites two separate cases from the same city in which two Aboriginal children who were killed by their parents, linking their deaths to intergenerational unresolved Aboriginal issues to point at the failure of the child welfare agencies within the city. One article presented a Statistics Canada report on children living in foster care in Canada is cited in a discussion on First Nations children being more likely to be placed in government care than non-Aboriginal children due to issues related to poverty, poor housing and substance abuse. An adult who grew up in foster care is cited explaining the impact of the multiple placements while growing up in foster care. An article featured a child welfare practice model which recognizes that neglect is rooted in deep seated social issues: "a differential response" system (one track of workers connecting families to community resources, another attending to high-risk cases and apprehensions) is recommended for a province deemed to have an “antiquated” child welfare system. An article discusses the limitations of inquiries as they only examine the “narrow systems failures” – while avoiding the “awful” big picture (the broken</p>		
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	<p>state of Aboriginal culture) looking at the issue of Canadian murdered and missing Aboriginal women. One article features two cases which examines the deaths of Aboriginal children who died at the hands of their mothers, who were allowed to “parent” despite a known history of violence, abuse and dysfunction, including a child welfare history in their family of origin. It is noted that of Manitoba's approximately 9,000 children who are in care, 8,000 are Aboriginal. An article discusses a round table in response to missing and murdered Aboriginal women: a retired judge, recommends that the discussion not be limited to the missing and murdered women, but be expanded to include Aboriginal issues, such as unemployment levels, suicide rates, substance abuse and high school dropout rates, which lead to Aboriginal women going missing and being murdered, as well as the “gross disproportion” of Aboriginal children in provincial care.</p> <p>Discourses: Government responsibility to address underlying root causes of Aboriginal children coming into contact with the child welfare system. Complex problem which requires commitment by both government and Aboriginal people to address the underlying issues. Impacts of residential school, colonialism, and generations of racism which influence current social issues affecting Aboriginal people. Government and child welfare agencies are responsible for systemic failures affecting Aboriginal children in the child welfare system. Systemic issues adversely impact children in care</p>		
<p>Funding issues and Aboriginal child welfare</p>	<p>In response to the overrepresentation of Aboriginal children in government care it is recommended that there be a gradual shift in control to First Nations and Metis. Also, because preventative services are woefully underfunded for on-reserve children and agencies, increased funding would allow child</p>	<p>11</p>	<p>4%</p>

	<p>welfare agencies to address issues such as poverty, abuse and housing to prevent Aboriginal children from entering into care. An article features a report by the child and youth advocate who deems the child welfare system to be in chaos. Family Services Minister identifies a funding gap as a central issue. The minister reported that the federal government needs to invest more money and resources to address the funding gap between Aboriginal children on and off reserve to enhance social services and prevent family breakdown. One article discusses a government's plan to decrease funding of \$20 million for 2014-2015 to the province's 16 youth centres will impact the system. It is noted that the demand on social workers leads to higher employee turnover and further increase risk to children. An article presents the author's position that the system has not worked for decades and as well-meaning as the child advocate's 18 recommendations were, they will not change anything in a social services system plagued by underfunding, overwork and serious systemic shortcomings. One article looks at the issue of there being a 34 per cent discrepancy between federal funding and what is spent by provinces on child and family services was discussed. Impacts of the underfunding and decreases to programs and services are discussed, noting that decreases to education, child welfare and other youth-related programs are creating the loss of an entire generation. The author states that in Saskatchewan, a young First Nations man has a better chance of going to jail than graduating from high school. Services are being cut, or underfunded to the point that Aboriginal people are being forced to leave the reserve to survive. One article features a government announced that it will implement the first two of 28 recommendations of an inquest report into the suicide death of a 14-year-old Aboriginal girl, by calling a summit of stakeholders to develop a strategy to deal</p>		
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	<p>with sexual exploitation of children. Key points to address: poverty and lack of resources on the 14 year old child's home reserve ,the federal government's refusal to adequately deal with living conditions in First Nations communities and its refusal to adequately fund native child welfare agencies. An article looks at how non-mandated First Nation child welfare agencies have not received any of the \$772-million that the provincial government spends each year on child protection, nor have they been allotted any portion of the \$123 million in one-time funding or the \$114 million in annual funding given to the province's 53 children's aid societies in 2000-2001 by the Ministry of Community and Social Services. The lack of funding is noted to contribute to the alienation of some of young Aboriginal people from their own families and communities. A ministry spokesman explained that non-mandated First Nation agencies will not receive any of the funding as they are funded separately. One article looks at the Auditor-General's latest report, which features the impact on Aboriginal children as a result of years of poorly funded child-welfare programs. Aside from the inadequate government funding, of \$450-million per year of federal funding to the First Nations Child and Family Services Program, Indian Affairs does not know whether on-reserve First Nations children are adequately protected and are receiving appropriate services. Another article discusses how expected federal funding for Aboriginal children and families on reserves is based on a new child welfare funding formula that could prevent abuse and neglect, as the previous formula for funding was outdated. One of the goals for the more flexible formula is to allow child-welfare workers to do more prevention and help struggling families before abuse or neglect starts. Because on-reserve children receive the same funding as off-reserve children only after they are taken into care they must be</p>		
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	<p>formally apprehended before money for most counselling and support services becomes available.</p> <p>Discourses: Government failure to adequately fund children on reserve. Government responsibility to address funding gap. Government funding cuts will over burden child welfare system, leaving children at risk. Funding disparity is forcing Aboriginal people off reserves. Funding inequity blocks opportunity for Aboriginal people. Governments are failing Aboriginal people. Government underfunding Aboriginal people responsible for underlying issues that put children at risk. Different sources of government funding between Aboriginal agencies is a source of tension for non-mandated Aboriginal agencies. Government responsibility for impact on Aboriginal children due to lack of funding and monitoring spending; Funding inequity for on-reserve children encourages apprehension by design.</p> <p>Overall predominant discourses: Government treating Aboriginal children inequitably. Government ignoring its responsibility to Aboriginal children.</p>		
<p>Child Deaths</p> <p>Child death is only referenced or mentioned to make other point</p>	<p>An advocate’s review, which she named after the four children she investigated, in which she found that lessons learned from previous death reviews are not leading to change in practice at the front lines. The advocate is cited stating that there have been some positive changes, but overall cut backs while trying to make changes to the system causes child welfare practice to continue to be crisis driven. An article reflects back on historical cases involving child death, which led to system reforms, which is the central topic. The reforms have been classified as a “one-of-a-kind child protection reform model” by a member of the American Humane Association who has assisted with other child</p>	<p>21</p>	<p>7%</p>

	<p>protection reforms internationally. One article features announcements of system changes to increase communication and collaboration among professionals, referencing a government report on a 14-month-old child's death which found gaping holes in the social safety net for children and miscommunication among officials. An article discusses a high profile case of the "honour killings" of three sisters and their step mother, which is reported to have resulted in a 10 per cent increase in the number of new files opened in Montreal last year. One article covers a case in which the accidental death of a child was seen as suspicions by child welfare services leading to the apprehension of his stepbrother who was placed in foster care. The central issue is that the family is suing after it became known that the pathologist assigned to the case is under investigation for errors in findings in child death cases. An article discusses the need for enhancement to information sharing between agencies and better cultural awareness and training following a high profile case involving a family of Afghan culture, whereby the three girls (and their step mother) died in "honour killings" orchestrated by their parents and brother. When the children were reaching out in crisis a worker with a child welfare agency, the worker typed in one of the girls' names but the computer system did not show that another agency, had dealt with the girl a year earlier. An article covered an announcement by government that it will implement the first two of 28 recommendations of an inquest report into the suicide death of a 14-year-old aboriginal girl by calling a summit of stakeholders to develop a strategy to deal with sexual exploitation of children. An article discusses child welfare's reliance on pathologist findings in child deaths, where the pathologist is the subject of an inquiry after an outside review found that he made significant errors in 20 of 45 criminally suspicious child deaths he investigated. One</p>		
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	<p>article presents author's view that children in government care keep dying and that nothing ever seems to change in a discussion about the necessity of the child and youth advocate agency in B.C. because the government lacks accountability. Another article discusses a case in which parents who were known to the child welfare system in Ontario for child abandonment, left for Jamaica where they had another child, with whose death they are charged. The child's mummified body was found in a suitcase. In one article, the author discusses the failures of Manitoba's 'devolution' (Changes to the structure of the child welfare system, intended to deliver culturally appropriate child welfare services to Aboriginal families). These failures are said to be responsible for the death of two children, which were high profile cases. The author cites the child advocate who had previously deemed the province's child welfare system to be in 'chaos'. An article presents child advocate report dedicated to a deceased 16- year-old and 13-year-old. The report lays out in detail, for the public, how the system has failed the children of New Brunswick's First Nations and how three levels of government must come together to implement changes. An article presents a retrospective examination of the case of 'honour killings' of three children by their parents and brother in a discussion around areas which need to be improved in the child welfare system and on those areas where changes have already been made. Another article looks at how society as a whole have failed and continue to fail to provide a place where First Nations children could grow up in safety and security. It is argued that the First Nations community has never been given the economic or social support to help the next generations following the residential school crisis. The author refers to cases of child deaths in general where blame is in pointed every direction, no one wants to admit that everyone is responsible by choosing to ignore,</p>		
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	<p>rather than confront, the root causes; An article focuses on changes to the Child Abuse Protocol, the rules set in place to report suspected cases of child abuse, to make the protocols more user friendly. The rules around reporting obligations are explained. A report by the Children's Advocate is cited about the death of a six year old boy, who was killed by a 10 year old boy. Both children had child welfare involvement. The article attempts to create public awareness about reporting responsibilities. It states that reporting any reasonable suspicion of child abuse is everyone's responsibility, not something that is to be left to those such as teachers or caregivers. Article notes that government came under intense scrutiny after a 15year-old aboriginal child in care ran away from her hotel placement in August and was found dead in a river, which is presented in the context of a larger discussion of appropriate placements for children in care. An article discusses an interview with a prominent retired judge who encourages that premiers and native leaders calling for a national roundtable should not limit their scope to murdered and missing Aboriginal women and should instead tackle the systemic failures underlying a range of problems, including the over-representation of Aboriginals in jail and in the child-welfare system. An article presents a case involving a lack of collaboration between two professional agencies: police and child welfare. The case involves a child death, prior to which, police neglected to contact child welfare about child protection concerns, then on a separate occasion involving the same child, the child welfare agency neglected to report other concerns to police. Other child welfare failures were noted. Another article features announcement that children's advocate is expected to soon table his annual report, and also release a special report on a child death. One article mentions the death of a 15 year old adolescent who was killed after</p>		
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	<p>running away from her child welfare placement, in a larger discussion on foster home shortages and staff competency.</p> <p>Predominant discourses: Failures of funding, policy, administration, and practice leads to child death. Inadequate placements and incompetent staff lead to child deaths.</p>		
<p>Child in care deaths discussed collectively, generally, or statistically</p>	<p>In a discussion on the need for child welfare reforms the article cites various child welfare cases, including a case of a child death that led to changes to the child welfare system. It is noted that an expert panel found police and social services officials failed to apprehend a child despite grandparents contacting social services and police with concerns of abuse. One article makes the point that unlike deaths in foster care, the death of a child receiving services is not subject to mandatory review by the medical examiner, the Ministry of Human Services quality assurance council, or Alberta's fatality review board. Fewer than one in five is subject to an in-depth internal review. An article presents the Saskatchewan Social Services Minister's perspective on child deaths over the last 20 years, the minister admits that the 500 deaths in the child welfare system over the past two decades are "staggering." It reports on the minister's upcoming meeting with her counterpart in Alberta to discuss child welfare practices and interprovincial movement of children in care. The minister states that there are a number of children who die that have underlying medical problems, and because of this, it is unlikely the province could eliminate deaths in the child welfare system. One article discusses a joint investigation by Calgary Herald and Edmonton Journal regarding a publication ban and the need for child welfare system accountability. It is reported that Alberta's Ministry of Human Services revealed 691 children known to it died between Jan. 1, 1999 and Sept. 30, 2013 (plus 50 more who were over 18). Out of</p>	8	2%

	<p>context, the number seems shocking. In context, it seems even more so: In 2011, 12,287 Albertan children were receiving child intervention services, or about 1.5% of the provincial population under 18. If 71 children in care died that year - the annual average between 1999 and 2013 - that would represent more than 17% of child deaths in the province.</p>		
<p>Review of child welfare/child advocate reports on child death</p>	<p>An advocate reports over the past seven years where children have died and the identified problems remain is presented. An article reports that B.C.'s child welfare system failed "on numerous levels" to serve four children who died between 1999 and 2005, says a report released Wednesday by the province's representative for children and youth. In an article the focus is on some of the recommendations for improving Alberta's child-protection system, after a review was ordered after a series of high-profile deaths and injuries of foster children and homicide charges against four youths in government care. Involved in the review and recommendations were a government-appointed expert panel of child welfare specialists from across Canada. Many made the recommendation to improve services for aboriginals and to address the inequality they face in the child-welfare system, noting the overrepresentation of aboriginal children in care. An article presents case in which children are killed by mentally ill father, consequential to disconnect between systems: police, social workers and corrections with respect to domestic violence. Another article presents case findings after a child death review was completed by the child and youth advocate, where the child welfare agency failed to investigate after receiving several reports that the boy was at risk of physical abuse. It is noted that neither the police nor the child welfare agency were complying with the province's Child Abuse Protocol when the police neglected to contact child welfare</p>	<p>20</p>	<p>7%</p>

	<p>about child protection concerns, and on a separate occasion involving the same child, the child welfare agency assigned to the case neglected to report concerns to police. One article features an announcement that children's advocate is expected to soon table his annual report, and also release a special report on a child death. It is noted that other deaths have also prompted public scrutiny. An article features a case where social workers refused to visit a First Nations reserve where they had been previously threatened with a knife and a gun, resulting in the girl hanging herself. One article features a discussion on the progress child welfare is making with the 18 recommendations made by the child and youth advocate following an investigation into the death of a child who had child welfare involvement. An article presents a report released by the Saskatchewan's child and youth advocate, following the death of a six year old child who had child welfare involvement and who was killed by a ten year old boy. Another article discusses the death of a child, which was investigated by child welfare services, which relied upon police and medical findings as part of their investigation, where there were discrepancies in findings: According to the provincial medical examiner, the manner of the child's death is undetermined, but Manitoba's top child-abuse expert and doctor called the death murder, and the RCMP have said the death was accidental. An article looks at case where social workers left a girl on reserve at risk after declaring the reserve a "no go zone" after they had been threatened by people on the reserve. One article discusses the release of the Ombudsman report into the death-by-neglect of a two-year old child, regarding her death as surely one of the most shameful accounts of official incompetence in this province's history. When the child died, she had been the subject of 16 referral calls - but government staff had never opened an on-going, open child protection file on her. An</p>		
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	<p>article presents a report by the representative for children and youth who examined 15 suicides over a three-year period and 74 incidents in which young people in the child welfare system injured themselves deliberately. The advocate states how the child welfare system fails in its mandate for children in care and that access to mental health services is confusing. The Children's Minister is cited for the article referencing improvements to the system that will follow. An article notes that the child advocate slated to look into the death of a two week old infant after medical staff and child intervention workers allowed the infant to be with the mother when four older siblings were already in foster homes. An article presents the findings of Saskatchewan's advocate for children and youth, who discusses child in care deaths of children who have died in the care of or in contact with Saskatchewan's child welfare system in the last two decades. An article features the Children's Advocate's detailed account of the child welfare failures in a case involving a six year-old foster child who was beaten to death by a 10-year-old. An article features a report by Saskatchewan's advocate for children and youth in follow up of an incident whereby a six year-old died from blunt force trauma for which a 10-year-old child was responsible. An article features a report by Saskatchewan's advocate for children and youth in which the deaths of two children born to drug-addicted mothers are contrasted with a new program for high risk pregnant mothers. Another article features the report of the child and youth advocate who examined the death of a two- year-old who suffered from obvious neglect (by mother). It is reported that a child protection case file was never opened during the child's short life, despite frequent signs of neglect and numerous referrals to child welfare agency. One article is focused on a report by B.C.'s children advocate representative documenting the findings of all the child protection</p>		
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	<p>shortcomings in northern B.C., regarding child deaths that occurred eight years prior. One article reports on the release of a new report on three similar child deaths, the child and youth advocate representative reported that there has been only "partial progress" since her investigation into the murder of a six-year-old child, five years prior. Regarding one of the current investigations, the advocate concluded that the deaths of the children could have been prevented if police, justice, child welfare, mental health and income assistance systems had worked effectively and in partnership. An article notes that the child advocate will be investigating 12 child deaths where there was a connection between the services and supports the children did or did not receive and their deaths. One article discusses the child advocate reviews the death of the four children who died in B.C. between 1999 and 2005 where children were “failed over and over again by the system that was supposed to protect them”. An article presents the findings of an inquest report on the death of a 20-month-old girl returned to her drug-addicted mother who was staying at a facility to help addicted women stabilize. The inquest report details ways in which a child welfare agency failed to keep the child safe which include: assessing risk, supervision flaws, lack of documentation, high caseloads, and lack of training.</p> <p>Overall discourse for this category: Child welfare system and government failures are responsible for leaving children at risk of harm and death.</p> <p>Discourses: Child welfare agency neglects to make meaningful reforms and does not accept responsibility. Government failure to implement recommendations. Government responsibility to address issues contributing to the over-representation of aboriginal children in their care. Provincial government responsibility to provide funding and</p>		
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	<p>resources for Aboriginal families, off-reserve. Government neglect at policy level. Government responsibility for death of the children by failing to implement previous recommendations regarding domestic violence and systems collaboration. Failure to report child abuse puts children at further risk. Child welfare agency failure to follow protocol placed child at risk. Child welfare system responsible for leaving children at risk. Advocate's increased demand on child welfare accountability lead system reforms. Government failing children through underfunding of child welfare services. Discrepancies in professional findings lead to poor child death investigations. Lack of investigative collaboration in child death. Child welfare responsible for leaving child at risk. Child welfare agency incompetency. The child welfare system responsible for failing to adequately meet the needs of children in care. Child welfare failure to check family history: Risks of caregiver were known to the child welfare agency. Child welfare system needs to be more proactive than reactive. Government needs to address the systemic issues in child welfare which lead to child welfare involvement: Poverty; Limitations of inquiries. Macro systemic/social failures are responsible for aboriginal people being overrepresented in child welfare system. Child welfare agency responsible for leaving child at risk. Child welfare system transformation required. High caseloads interfered with proper risk assessment. Government responsibility to address poverty issue. Government failure to implement previous recommendations. Child welfare agency left child at risk. Social worker incompetency. Child welfare and government accountability is a lacking. Government and child welfare system is responsible for the deaths of children.</p>		
<p>Publication ban on child deaths</p>	<p>One article focuses on the overturning of a publication ban which made it illegal to</p>	<p>11</p>	<p>3%</p>

	<p>publish the names and pictures of children who died while receiving child welfare services in Alberta. Presented are the names, photographs, ages and a brief summary of the circumstances around the deaths of some of the children. Another article discusses the upcoming Child Intervention Roundtable that will debate the future of the child death review system and the provincial law that makes it illegal to publish the name of a child who has died in government care. An article discusses controversial newly tabled laws that seek to overturn publication bans that could stop Alberta news outlets from reporting the name of a child who dies in foster care. An article looks at how the long standing “draconian ban” on publicizing the names of children in Alberta who die in care has been lifted as a result of pressure resulting from media exposure of the issue. Another article presents issue of a publication ban in Alberta and the impact it has on the children and families. The article quoted a young adult who is opposed to the ban and she gives her personal perspective on the matter. One article promotes reform in the area of tracking deaths of children in government care. It notes that in the last 14 years, 145 children died while in the care of the province. In 89 of those cases, those deaths were kept secret - not just from the public, but from the Alberta legislature; the newspaper has received records for 287 children known to child welfare who died between 1999 and 2013. In an article six cases are discussed briefly, which includes how the child died, the age of the child and a brief line or two about the child welfare involvement. It is either stated or implied how the child welfare system failed each child. Four of the six case refer to inadequate risk assessment by the child welfare agency, two of these cases specify that the parent’s needs were put before the child’s needs. An article criticizes the fact that the only people privy to the advocate’s report are the family services minister, the chief</p>		
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	<p>medical examiner and the ombudsman and questions who will be tasked with ensuring that the “secret” recommendations are followed. It is noted that the province is beginning to discuss whether to loosen those rules to allow the minister and children's advocate, to speak more freely about children who die in care. An article features the case of a 15 year old adolescent girl who was killed after leaving her child welfare placement in a larger discussion on what information the public will have access to, and that much of the information will be restricted from the public. The issue of reporting in child death cases is discussed, noting that more information on the case of the 15 year old will be discussed only if there is an inquest.</p> <p>Discourses: Child welfare needs to be publicly accountable for its role in the deaths of these children. Government responsibility to amend law. Deceased children and their families are impacted by the publication ban. Government needs to be publically accountable, while maintaining the dignity of the children and the families of the deceased child. Child welfare culture of transparency and accountability is crucial. Need to balance privacy for the family with informing the public. Media plays an important role in holding government accountable. Government uses privacy laws to avoid public embarrassment. Information restriction on deaths of children.</p> <p>Overall discourse: Government and Child welfare system need to be publically accountable for the deaths of children.</p>		
<p>Crime reports on child death</p>	<p>One article discusses a case in which children were placed with a family member, despite apparent risks in the interest of a kinship and culturally appropriate placement and to keep the siblings together (causing the foster home to go over capacity). One of the children died, for which the caregiver was charged with</p>	<p>5</p>	<p>%?</p>

	<p>manslaughter. An article details the child’s injuries and notes that the child had suffered with the injuries in the days prior to her death and used sensational language such as: "through the entire bone," making it apparent "terrific force was applied." It is noted that following the deceased child’s birth, she had been recovering from morphine withdrawal, resulting from her mother's drug use before being taken into the care of a child welfare agency. The child was eventually permitted to be in her father’s care, after he informed the child welfare worker that he no longer used alcohol or drugs. On the night in question the father was said to be "dope sick and took a couple of Valium to help overcome this issue". One article features the criminal findings of murders of four girls by their Afghan parents, which was referred to in their culture as an “honour killings”. Strong opinions against the family’s cultural values beliefs and practices are expressed.</p> <p>Discourses: Child welfare system shares the blame for their poor judgement in placing the child in the home. Father responsible for killing his child; Child welfare ineffectiveness.</p>		
Public inquiry on child death	<p>Article features a court hearing of a public inquiry into the death of a child, where the former foster parents of the child are giving testimony. The author criticizes the fact that the lawyers who represent the child welfare system are interrogating the foster parents for withholding information from the child welfare agency, which the author deems as insignificant, given the information which child welfare already had access to in its own files to determine risk. One article discusses the testimony of social workers at a public inquiry, who were noted to have been blunt in telling lawyers they had children and families that were at much higher risk than the deceased child featured at the public inquiry. Social workers testified that workers were</p>	27	9%

	<p>burdened with balancing this child's needs against the hundreds of other children, and that risk is relative, not something strictly dictated by a manual. Another article discussed public inquiry into the death of a child in the context of looking at how poverty limited economic and employment opportunities, homelessness and substance abuse factored into her death. Another article based on public inquiry testimony is critical of the way child welfare agency managed the case and how it failed to protect the child. It is noted that the same problems were identified years ago in other child-death probes which remain unchanged primarily because the child welfare system views the parents as the client and not the child. An article covers public inquiry testimony of a former probation officer to the step father who is responsible for the death of the child. Testimony states that the probation officer wrote a letter to child welfare services stating that he was at a "high risk to reoffend in a violent fashion" and that children have been present when he was violent. "We have serious concern for the safety of (the woman) and her children." An article covering inquiry on death of child killed by her parents, presents historical background on the parents and points to child welfare failure to address obvious risks. In one article, the issue of child-welfare workers workload was addressed in reference to a public inquiry and how the overburdened system led to the child death. An article links two cases of 2 Aboriginal children (killed by their caregivers) to intergenerational unresolved aboriginal issues. The author remarks about the shame on a city where there is an inquiry going on at the same time as they are reviewing the death of another. An article discusses a child death public inquiry in its preliminary stages. As the author expresses contempt for the child's parents who killed her and the child welfare system which failed to protect her, it is stressed that the focus be kept on the deceased child, rather</p>		
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	<p>than the child welfare system diverting people’s attention elsewhere to avoid responsibility. An article covers the testimony of a former caregiver for the deceased child. It is noted that rather than uncovering new details about how the child “fell through the cracks of the child welfare system, it examined the credibility and motivation of the previous caregiver. Another article covers the testimony of a social worker and her supervisor regarding, her supervisor changing the response time from 24 hours to 48 hours on a report regarding the deceased child. Although the supervisor states that she does not remember altering the response time, the pair continue to disagree on what the response time should have been. An article’s author contrasts her continued feeling of shame and remorse over the death of a kitten which she neglected as a young adult, with the lack of expressed remorse by social workers who contributed to the death of a child at inquiry. One article highlights the fact that it was the Employment and Income Assistance worker who brought concerns to the agencies attention regarding both parents claiming to be caring for the child and that the mother was residing with a man who she was informed by CFS should not be in the home with the child. The child welfare worker advised that she does not have that information in her notes. An article covers the testimony of foster parents for [child], who testified about child welfare services not doing as they said they had. In an attempt to discredit one of the foster parents, the child welfare agency accessed the child welfare records of the foster parent, whose child was apprehended when she was a teenager. The author sharply criticizes the child welfare agency for being able to access files to serve its own purpose, but yet records that were potentially damning for the child welfare agency have gone amiss. An article provides a time line of the child’s life and how child welfare services handled her case and the</p>		
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	<p>ways in which she was left at risk by the child welfare system. It is noted that until now, the child-welfare system's role in the case has largely been kept quiet, and that now the public will hear about all the missed opportunities that were there to protect the child. Another article focuses on testimony provided by the former supervisor to the social worker who handled the child's file from November 2000 until July 2001, during which time she only saw the family twice, despite her noted plan to meet them weekly. An article discusses the child welfare workers union's efforts to try to prevent the media from publishing the names of the social workers involved in the case of a child death for which a public inquiry is set to occur. An article covering public inquiry points to the obvious risk factors and how they were ignored by the child welfare agency, and that they accepted an inadequate assessment by a psychiatrist after failing to provide sufficient background information at the time of referral. An article focuses on a request from [Province] Court of Appeal for help getting copies of witness transcripts in advance of the inquiry commencement. One of the noted concerns was that this process would result in further delays to the already many delays. An article looks at the child death inquiry commencement, which is said to have had too long of delays as a result of legal challenges and the union representing social workers fought to keep the inquiry from happening. The article highlights the information which surfaced at the inquiry of the child welfare system's failure to protect the child, suggesting that this is why the child welfare system did not want the inquiry. One article discusses the potential positive outcomes of a public inquiry. Examples of the changes that have been implemented since the death of a teenage girl are noted to inspire hope that change will come from the inquiry and that this hope will have life-saving potential.</p>		
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	<p>Discourses: Child welfare is deflecting blame. Child welfare system failure to accept responsibility for death of the child. Risk assessment subjectivity leads to child death. Underlying socio-economic issues contribute to child death. Child welfare system failure leads to child death. Overburdened child welfare system leads to child death. Government failure to adequately address the underlying issues affecting Aboriginal families puts Aboriginal children at risk of death. Emotional detachment of social workers indicative of their lack of remorse for death of the child. Failure of child welfare agency to adhere to standards leads to child death. Shared societal responsibility for death of child.</p>		
<p>Issues related to child death (not case specific)</p>	<p>An article discusses report of the children and youth advocate who expressed concern about the lack of sustained action regarding the government's implementation of recommendations from the Hughes report, and that the government has failed to learn from the deaths of children who were in the child-protection system. Another article focuses on the “dysfunctional relationship” between the ministry and the advocate and the decline in audits from the child and youth advocate office in B.C. The advocate representative believes that the public cannot have confidence that the province is serving vulnerable children well when those reviews are not taking place. The ministry is noted to be reporting to the advocate, with monthly and quarterly meetings to share information on critical injuries and deaths. An article discusses the issue of children who die while they have child welfare involvement, without an investigation into their death being completed. It is stressed that unlike deaths in foster care, the death of a child receiving services is not subject to mandatory review by the medical examiner and that fewer than one in five is subject to an in-depth internal</p>	<p>9</p>	<p>3%</p>

	<p>review. An article announces that the children's advocate is expected to soon table his annual report, and also release a special report on a child death. The author presents previous child death reviews and inquiries in which the child welfare system failed. The Minister is quoted, stressing the value and necessity of the up and coming proposed changes to child welfare, which continues to be a collaborative endeavor; The article presents the Saskatchewan Social Services Minister's perspective on child deaths over the last 20 years, the minister admits the 500 deaths in the child welfare system over the past two decades are "staggering." But, given that a number of the children who die have underlying medical problems it is unlikely the province could eliminate deaths in the child welfare system. One article discussed announces that Saskatchewan children's advocate investigation into the deaths of two cousins who recently died in foster homes will be publicly released in a report that reveals how the toddlers died and how the deaths might have been prevented. The necessity of completing reviews of child deaths to keep the child welfare system accountable is noted. An article discusses the new program announcement by the government, which resulted from an Edmonton Journal-Calgary Herald investigation into the deaths of foster children in Alberta. Another article discusses the publication ban in Alberta with respect to information sharing about children who die in care. An article discusses a child in care death for which there will be an investigation by the children's advocate in Manitoba, but based on privacy laws, the findings and recommendations will not be made public. The article emphasizes the need for the information to be public, citing a representative from the child advocate who recognizes value in publicizing findings/recommendations and is hopeful for change. An article discusses the issue of child</p>		
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	<p>deaths in foster homes. A common theme identified in the cases of deaths in foster homes referenced was that foster parents were over stressed and had more high needs children than they could handle. It is noted that taking children away from homes deemed unsafe requires assurance that they are going somewhere safer.</p> <p>Discourses: The government is not accepting responsibility for failures leading to child death. Government avoids embarrassment by making reforms, in advance of the advocates report; government accountability is necessary to reduce child death. Government lack accountability for child deaths. Necessity of child welfare system transformation to reduce child deaths. Child welfare system is not responsible for all deaths of children in care. Necessity of child death investigations to reduce child deaths. Media exposure about child deaths leads to government action. Transparency leads to accountability, which leads to reduced child deaths. Foster parents who are overcapacity or under-skilled leads to child death.</p>		
<p>Incident(s) of child death, which is the central focus</p>	<p>One article discusses the review of the death of a one-month-old infant who died in care, while being transferred to a foster home by a child welfare worker. Another article discusses a case where a judge granted a child welfare agency's request, following from a physician's request, to remove a crack cocaine addicted baby from life support, following which the baby died. An article discusses two separate cases of the death of two children. The first, it is reported was an infant who died in the care of his mother in his reserve home, noting that the four siblings had been apprehended by child welfare services when his mother was pregnant with this child. The other case involves a 16-year-old boy who committed suicide at his foster home. The conduct of the involved child welfare agencies is criticized for not</p>	<p>10</p>	<p>3%</p>

	<p>following protocol. An article discusses a case where a 7 year old child died after prolonged abuse in the care of “unemployed, crack-addicted legal guardians,” who plead guilty to second-degree murder and were sentenced to mandatory life imprisonment with no parole eligibility for 15 years. It is noted that, prior to the child’s death the mother had called a Toronto child welfare agency reporting that she wanted the child gone. The agency passed the case on to Native Child and Family Services, at the mother’s request after she untruthfully told a social worker she was receiving help from the child’s school. An article featured the pictures and names of children who died in care, as well as the circumstances around their death after a publication ban in Alberta was over-turned. An article discusses a case of the death of a seven year old child whose mother is charged with her death. The author notes that the child was failed by at least two child service agencies. One article examines the circumstances around the house fire death of an 11 year old boy who was in the care of the child welfare agency, which did not know that he was missing until about 80 hours after the fire. The boy had been staying with his grandparents instead of his foster family over the holidays. The grandparents were noted to be spending the night elsewhere and it is not clear why the boy was in the home. Although the article notes that the Minister of Family Services does not believe there is fault on the part of child welfare agency yet, the government opposition party believes that in there is government responsibility in general, as turning over care to Aboriginal agencies was rushed without the proper training or proper protocols, without ensuring the safety of children first. An article discusses a case of the death of a child who was left in the care of an aunt whose risks were known to the agency. The article charts the child’s involvement with the child welfare system as described in the social workers “terse” notes,</p>		
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	<p>which speak to their own poor judgement and risk assessment skills. The author concluded the article as follows: “Why did a collection of allegedly trained child welfare workers prove incapable of connecting the dots that lead from the tragedy of [child's] birth to a 15-year-old drug-addicted mother to the tragedy of his death, allegedly at the hands of his ex-con great-aunt?” An article discusses the deaths of child in care, whom the child welfare agency assigned to the case had intended on apprehending, but did not do so. The mother caring for the child when he died was known to the agency, as her four other children were in its care. Although the infant death was regarded as death by natural causes, the author challenges this finding based on the report of a close source which made allegations of neglect. An article points to previous reviews and failures of the agency responsible for the child, indicating that it is evident that little has changed.</p> <p>Discourses: Predominant discourse of child welfare responsibility for leaving children at risk, leading to their death. Child welfare ineffectiveness leads to child death. Two articles had a discourse of parental responsibility for the child’s death. Government responsibility for unsupported transfer of control to Aboriginal child welfare agencies.</p>		
TOTAL NUMBER OF ARTICLES		282	

Discourses from the data

This next part of the chapter focuses on the discourses (summarized in the table number 6) discovered in the articles, and how they are presented within the content themes. Blame was one of the most predominant discourses, usually present within the context of failure and neglect,

which was primarily directed at government and the child welfare system, agencies, and staff. Some of the blame related discourses were characterized by irresponsibility, ineffectiveness, incompetency, unaccountability, inequity, and lack of commitment. Death of a child was the most common type of harm to a child discussed, whether it was the primary focus, or cited in the article to emphasize other points. Some of the less frequent discourses were child welfare system or government actions which were deemed appropriate, acceptable, effective, and humane.

Discourses of government irresponsibility and failure were predominant in the category (theme and subthemes) of systemic and social issues related to child welfare. It should be noted that within this category only three of the 29 total articles were not focused on issues related to Aboriginal people and child welfare. A government irresponsibility discourse was the key discourse in articles which discussed funding inequity between services for Aboriginal children on reserves and those off reserves. One of the key issues linked with the funding disparity is the high rate of Aboriginal children in government care. Issues impacting Aboriginal children and families due to the lack of funding were and a lack of resources and prevention services and Aboriginal children on reserve receiving the same funding as non-reserve Aboriginal children only when they are taken into care. Referenced in many of the articles is the government's lack of commitment to address underlying causes, which lead to Aboriginal families coming into contact with the child welfare system, such as poverty, poor housing, and substance abuse. These factors are associated with neglect. Connected to the discourse of government irresponsibility was the claim that governments lack commitment to address the unresolved social issues which are impacting Aboriginal families in the child welfare system, which are noted in some of the articles, date back to residential schools and colonialism. Government failure and irresponsibility are the predominant discourses in all the articles that discuss the overrepresentation of

Aboriginal children in the child welfare system. The issue of overrepresentation of Aboriginal children in the child welfare system has also been noted to share the same root causes as missing and murdered Aboriginal females. An article in the Globe and Mail discusses the issue of violence against Aboriginal women following the death of an adolescent who fled her hotel placement. It is noted that since the federal government dismissed pleas for a public inquiry on the issue, the Federal Status of Women Minister agreed to sit down with the provincial, territorial, and native leaders at a national roundtable. A retired judge who led a public inquiry into a child death in the same province is cited:

"For goodness sakes, why are so many [Aboriginal children] in care?" "The causes ... are no different than all the reasons these Aboriginal women are on the streets and getting attacked." "The roundtable is an opportunity to really attack this," Mr. Hughes said. "They need to look at the basic problems of alcohol, drug abuse, poverty, etc." (Blaze Carlson, K., 2014).

The articles within the category Monitoring, Assessing and Reforming Child Welfare and its subcategories, were found to have predominant discourses of government and child welfare blame and responsibility, which stands to reason, given that the articles within this section are primarily based on reviews of child welfare services. Many of the articles in the sub-category "Reviews/ Audits/ Reforms/ Recommendations" overlap with other categories, but for the most part the articles were based on assessing and reviewing child welfare services following a reported complaint or the death of a child.

Some of the articles have discourses of both government and child welfare agency responsibility. One such article features a report by a child and youth advocate in which the issue of the child welfare system's lack of resources are discussed in connection with recent cases in which children were consequently harmed after being left at risk. The vice-president of the B.C.

Government and Service Employees Union is cited in the article in the Times-Colonist on this matter:

"They [social workers] just don't have enough resources to do the work they are mandated to do." "[Social workers] have an incredible load." "The ministry pretty much relies on free overtime to get the work done." "It's frustrating. When I tell them to quit doing free overtime, they say they can't. They just want to be sure the kids are safe. I think the Ministry takes advantage of that." ("Social workers need support", 2014).

The author of the article stresses the government's responsibility to ensure that agencies are adequately resourced:

"The B.C. government has the unenviable task of balancing the budget; nevertheless, every effort should be made to ensure MCFD social workers have sufficient support and resources to do their jobs." ("Social workers need support", 2014).

Another article in this category which featured a discourse of government and child welfare responsibility focused on a report by the Auditor-General which is focused on failure of the child welfare system with respect to the over representation of Aboriginal children in government care. This was noted to be the result of provincial government inability to make a strong enough case to the federal government for more funding, due to poor data. The Auditor-General is cited in The Vancouver Sun article:

"Neither the federal nor the B.C. government knows enough about the outcomes," Doyle said. "What happens to these children who receive child welfare services? Are they better off?" (Kines, 2008)

Discourses of lack of child welfare effectiveness were commonly noted in the review findings. One article included a discourse of agency failure to comply with policy in a child death review by the child and youth advocate. It was found that the child welfare agency failed to investigate after receiving several reports that a boy was at risk of physical abuse and neglected to report the case to police, and, even though a bruise was visible on a photograph, the

child was not seen by a doctor, which was not in compliance with the province's Child Abuse Protocol.

In the subcategory “Child welfare system lack of accountability” the discourses predominantly related to child welfare ineffectiveness and failure. One article in this subcategory featured in the Times-Colonist presented a report by the children and youth advocate representative who states that child welfare “dropped the ball in handling four cases over the past several years where children have died in suspicious or disturbing circumstances, (Leyne, 2008). The author of the article highlights the child welfare described in the report, and then notes how the child welfare system and minister responded to the expressed concerns by “passing the buck” and failing to accept responsibility.

In the Times-Colonist, is another article which focuses on a children advocate representative documenting the findings of all child deaths, which occurred eight years prior. The report is criticized by the author for being wasteful, given that all the effort and expense that goes into conducting investigative reviews of the child welfare system results in an absence of change. The author states that the problems listed back then still exist in child protection work today and that the child welfare system is thoroughly “immunized against blame.” The child advocate is quoted, "The standard of practice has not appreciably improved during the entire period until today." "Many teachable moments have been missed." Blame discourses directed at child welfare agencies were the predominant discourses in the public inquiry category. The discourse in the majority of the public inquiry articles was on child welfare agency/worker blame for leaving the child at risk through mismanagement of the case and poor risk assessment. One article points out an example in which blatant risk was ignored by child welfare workers by

referencing a statement from a case review of one of the parents left to care for the child, "[Parent] remains to be a highly disturbed individual who should not be left in charge of dependent children," (Lambert, 2012).

Deflecting blame and lack of accountability were discourses that were prevalent among the public inquiry articles, and the two discourses were connected in some of the articles. For example, one of the articles was covering the court testimony at an inquiry where child welfare lawyers were attacking the credibility of one of the child's foster care providers, charging that she was not forthcoming about separating from her husband, and that the child welfare agency had accessed the woman's own child welfare records. The author of the Leader Post article points to the irrelevancy of this information and the irony that the child welfare agency lost notes pertaining to their handling of the case featured in the inquiry, but somehow were able to locate records pertaining to an inquiry witness:

"And there's the rub: The CFS, it appears, can get its hands on any file quickly, and is prepared to go to any lengths, if its own arse is on the line. When it's the tinier bum of a vulnerable child, like [name] not so much. It is quite disgraceful." (Blatchford, 2012).

The articles in the subcategory "Child welfare agency fails to implement recommended changes" were linked with discourses of government responsibility and government avoiding accountability. One article reports on a review by the children and youth advocate, whose findings were that the lessons learned from previous death reviews are not being implemented at the front lines because of government cut backs, which rather than encouraging change, cause child welfare practice to continue to be crisis driven. In the The Province article, the opposition party was cited:

"This devastating report tells a sad story of seven years where front-line workers faced constant reorganization and service cuts from the government instead of the positive change that Gordon Campbell promised." (Austin, 2008)

Another article which features a discourse of child welfare agency failure to implement recommended changes is based on a report by the child and youth advocate which she was scheduled to present, however, the government continued to deliberately stall her to allow for time to implement some recommendations to make it look as if it was ahead of the child and youth advocate.

Discourses of child welfare agency and worker blame dominated the risk assessment category with many articles demonstrating case examples of flawed risk assessments. Child welfare agencies were blamed for putting the needs of parents before those of the child, including a family centered approach over a child centered approach to child welfare practice. Family preservation was deemed to be a flaw in child welfare practice in cases where the needs of the child and child risk were secondary to keeping the family together or placing children with extended family, despite the presence of risk factors. In the vast majority of articles pertaining to child maltreatment resulting in harm to a child, including child death, child welfare agencies were held more responsible than the person who committed the harm. An article in the Edmonton Journal discussed the sentencing of a woman who killed her four-year-old niece, for whom she was the child welfare agency designated caregiver, as a culturally appropriate familial placement. The judge who deemed the aunt to be responsible for the death of the child, not the child welfare agency, is quoted,

"Whatever the circumstances, the offender had the final choice here. Responsibility rests on this offender, not on the support system. The buck has to stop somewhere, and it has to stop with this offender," (Simons, 2012).

However, the author of the article countered the judge's opinion,

"That's nonsense. The system that placed six children in a manifestly unsuitable home, and then failed to monitor their care, is also culpable for setting in motion this catastrophic chain of events." (Simons, 2012).

Another case which was presented by the media to have been a situation where the needs of the parents were placed before those of the children was in a high profile case involving the drowning of three children by their Afghan parents and brother, considered an "honour" killing. The parents were said to have been affluent and presented well, which contributed to an erroneous miscalculation of risk.

There were many articles in which child welfare agencies were found to be responsible for children being left at risk, harmed, or killed by being left with caregivers who presented risks which were known by child welfare services. Discourses included: Child welfare ignored risk factors; Child welfare failure to review family history left a child at risk; Child welfare failure to consider criminal history in risk assessment. In an article which presents a case where a child was taken from a foster home and placed with an extended family member, the author sharply criticized social workers,

"Why did a collection of allegedly trained child welfare workers prove incapable of connecting the dots that lead from the tragedy of [child's] birth to a 15-year-old drug-addicted mother to the tragedy of his death, allegedly at the hands of his ex-con great-aunt? Could no one have known where this was leading?" They had information that spoke to child neglect, abuse, hunger and depraved indifference. They wrote it all down..." ('Social workers kept good notes of depraved care,' 2008)

Another high profile media case involved an ultra-orthodox sect under investigation by child welfare services, which fled just before their scheduled court appearance where they would appeal an apprehension order. The child welfare agency was criticized for not taking the children's passports from the family as the author stated that they should have known that they posed a clear flight risk, based on the group's history of fleeing. A Queen's University law professor and expert on family law is cited in the article,

"....there's no doubt that there's a significant flight risk because they've already done it. One would reasonably know that a group like this has contacts outside the country as well and can support international moves, potentially. It's a good question why they didn't take the passports," Alamenciak, T. (2014)

Child welfare agencies were noted in some of the articles to not respond to adolescents requesting assistance, out of fears about their safety. The following two articles present cases with the following discourses: Child welfare neglecting its responsibility to protect and support children until they are legal adults and child welfare agency blame for leaving adolescents in high risk situations. A child and youth advocate representative is cited, in an article in the Vancouver Sun (Bramham, 2014), reporting on how adolescents request to leave their home because of their parents' addictions or mental illness, or their parent's partner's abusive or sexually aggressive behavior, only to have that request denied, *"The ministry's threshold is very low in terms of parental capacity. I have (cases of) kids who are living with active addicts, and the ministry takes the view that this can be handled with a safety plan - which may be nothing more than the kids running across the street to a neighbour,"* (Bramham, 2014). An adolescent who left her home due to parental violence, addiction, and her mother's sexually inappropriate partner was denied her request to be placed in government care and told to return home. The adolescent was cited as saying:

"The ministry is doing nothing to help me," she says. "As teens and young kids we see posters and ads saying if you're feeling unsafe to call and you'll get help. It takes guts to leave. But I did that and I'm still waiting for someone to help me ... My life is crumbling and nobody is helping me." (Bramham, 2014).

Child welfare system blame/responsibility was also the prevalent broader discourse throughout the articles within the category of "Child maltreatment." Almost half the articles (forty-eight percent) in this category presented discourses of lack of child welfare effectiveness. It should be noted that the second most prevalent discourse in this category (forty-two percent) was effectiveness of child welfare, where system actions were justified or deemed appropriate.

Discourses of both effectiveness and ineffectiveness of the actions of the child welfare system were equally frequent in the subcategory of "Neglect". Discourses of ineffective child welfare actions were found in two of the four articles which featured neglect cases. The first case, featured in the Star Phoenix, involved a child who was noted to be found extremely neglected as well as abused, after the child welfare agency placed her with her grandparents, who were erroneously deemed to be safe, by a flawed risk assessment. The author points to how the child was left further at risk when a child welfare worker responded to reported concerns by attending the home and speaking to the grandparents, but failed to enter the home or to see the child. The author provides the history of the child's life and involvement with the child welfare system, as well as the findings from the child and youth advocate representative's report to demonstrate the ineffectiveness of the child welfare system. The author states, *"Deep in a report on the girl's case is a disturbing prequel, revealing generations of state care, dysfunction and abuse. It builds toward an equally troubling conclusion about a complex and confounding child welfare system that doesn't always ensure protection and care."* (Pacholik, 2014)

The child and youth advocate representative who investigated how child welfare handled the case was quoted in the Star Phoenix article as follows,

"It's like we've lost our way in child welfare. It's not about the child." "...And the one thing I've certainly seen in child welfare systems is they can be chaotic, disorganized and lack accountability..." "Has anybody actually said they're sorry to her? No, they haven't." (Pacholik, 2014)

The other case of neglect indicative of the discourse "child welfare system ineffectiveness" was featured in the Telegraph Journal, where the author presented the findings of the child and youth advocate report on a child death. The author points to the failures of the child welfare system in the matter where a child protection case file was never opened despite frequent signs of neglect and numerous referrals to child welfare services,

"The death of a New Brunswick toddler in 2004 was clearly preventable and should leave New Brunswickers ashamed of the paltry help provided to a two- year-old suffering from obvious neglect, concluded the province's Child and Youth Advocate in a report released Thursday,"

(Casey, 2008). The child and youth advocate was quoted in the Telegraph Journal article as follows:

"There can be no doubt that the signs of neglect in [child's] life should have provoked a more diligent response from professionals tasked with the responsibility of protecting her.

"But it is also undeniable that the delay or reluctance to adopt the improvements put forward by successive Child Death Review Committees and the department's own report cannot be (attributed) to frontline workers," (Casey, 2008).

The author noted that the advocate referred to recommendations in reports dating back to 1996 before issuing new recommendations, which included hiring more social workers, clearer guidelines on what constitutes neglect, and regular review of both opened and closed files.

The discourses of the other two neglect articles were “child welfare agency effectiveness”, with both of them justifying the child welfare interventions, which were related to apprehension and guardianship. One of the articles, which was featured in *The Ottawa Citizen*, presented a case in which children were apprehended because of their grandmother’s hoarding behavior. The author stated, “A two-year-old Ottawa girl and her brothers, aged 8 and 11, were "apprehended" from their family home by child welfare authorities earlier this year because their grandmother is a hoarder”, (Dimmock, 2012). According to the apprehension order, “[the home] deteriorated to a level of clutter, disorder and disarray to the point of being unsafe,” (Dimmock, 2012). The child welfare agency involved was cited, noting the progress the children were making in foster care. The two year-old girl was said to have gained ‘needed weight and developed age appropriate skills quickly,’ (Dimmock, 2012). The author stated, “In the meantime, their grandmother has cleaned up her home and has sought counselling for her pack-rat ways,” (Dimmock, 2012). The two boys were later returned to their grandmother's home, under supervision and with conditions, while the two year old remained in foster care.

The other article featured in *The Vancouver Sun* presented a case of severe neglect in which apprehension, and permanent agency guardianship of the children was deemed necessary. It also presented a discourse of “justified and effective child welfare actions”. The author provides a detailed account of how the children were impacted by the neglect they were subjected to prior to their apprehension:

“They ate pizza off the floor, had dried mucous on their faces, smelled, had lice for six months and lived in a home that had garbage and broken belongings hoarded in piles, holes in every wall and feces smeared in a child's bedroom.

A four-year-old boy didn't know how to speak; he only grunted. The children tortured another family's dog. They bit and spat at people. A five-year-old boy had already been

suspended from school twice. His temper was short and he didn't know how to play with other children. One child's socks had been on so long they had to be peeled off the soles of his feet,” (Dimmock, 2012).

The judge in the matter was quoted as follows:

"Having considered all the evidence, I conclude that the best interests of the children can only be served by an order of wardship. "The [Child welfare agency] and numerous community services have done everything in their power to assist first [the mother] and [the father], and more recently [the father] on his own, to maintain the family unit," (Dimmock, 2012).

For the subcategory “physical abuse” fifty percent of the articles presented a discourse of child welfare ineffectiveness and the other fifty percent presented discourses of child welfare effectiveness. The articles presenting discourses of child welfare ineffectiveness also contained reports of child welfare officials leaving children at risk and putting the parent’s needs before those of the children, which were also captured in the “Risk Assessment” category. One of the articles featured in the Star Phoenix presented a case in which a two-year-old boy was beaten so badly by his father that he was paralyzed on one side of his body. Although the author does not directly express a personal view on the issue, discourses of “child welfare ineffectiveness” and “family centered practice puts children at risk” are evidenced through the statements of the people cited in the article. The child and youth advocate deemed the incident to be preventable, had the child welfare agency provided the child with child-centered services, rather than family centered services:

"While my office supports the importance and value of children, culture, language and community in the life of any child, the child must, nonetheless, be at the centre of that circle. His or her safety, protection and best interests must always remain paramount." "It is the opinion of this office that the critical injury to [Child] was preventable, had the ministry provided [child] with the child-centred protection services to which he was entitled," (Kyle, 2012).

The Social Services Minister is also cited in the article, expressing her commitment to hire a senior ministry official to take on the responsibility of overseeing child and family services and to review the system and to legislation with the intent of adopting the principles of a child-centred service delivery model. The Federation of Saskatchewan Indian Nations vice-chief is also cited expressing that the federation supports child centered services to children and youth both on- and off-reserve.

One of the other cases of physical abuse involved a two-year-old girl, whose forehead was split open by her father, a discourse of child welfare effectiveness was present with respect to child welfare officials denying both parents access to the children. Although the mother was not responsible for the injury, she has been deemed to have failed to protect the child from her father's violence and likely to continue to be unable to protect her child.

Five out of the nine articles in the subcategory of child sexual abuse/sexual exploitation featured discourses of blame of child welfare organizations for ineffectiveness. Unlike the other maltreatment categories (neglect and physical abuse), the child sexual abuse/exploitation subcategory did not contain any articles with a discourse of child welfare effectiveness.

One of the articles appearing in the Edmonton Journal details a case in which a child was sexually abused by her father, whose care she was returned to after he served time for the offence, only to reoffend against the child. When child welfare services responded to reported concerns in the home, they interviewed the sexually abused child with her father on the other side of the door, and thus the child was too fearful to disclose. The author of the Edmonton Journal article makes a strong statement of the blameworthiness of child welfare authorities:

“You know that nightmare where you scream and scream for help, and nobody can hear you? Imagine living in a world where such a dream comes true. ...the child welfare system that were supposed to protect her instead delivered her straight into her father's clutches and condemned her to 13 years of hell,” (Simons, 2008).

Another discourse within the same article was the impact of the child welfare system's ineffectiveness on children, demonstrated in the abused child's impact statement, which was cited in the article:

"I would be sitting on my bed crying for hours, or I would pray to the Lord and hope for a miracle," T.L.'s youngest sister, now 12, said in her victim impact statement. "The only thing that kept me going (was) when I said, "Sometime, someone's going to come along and help us." To which the author wrote, "There was no miracle. No one came along to help," (Simons, 2009).

A discourse of governments' and child welfare agencies' failure to keep children in their care safe was commonly noted in the articles within the apprehension and placement categories. Provincial governments were noted to be responsible for court delays, in apprehension hearings, which were said to be a threat to both society and the family unit. A government failure discourse was presented in the context of not prioritizing or expediting the adoption process, keeping children in government care longer than necessary. In an article featured in Times Colonist, it is noted that adoptions are moving through the system slowly because child welfare prioritizes crisis work over adoptions, which impacts children,

“An abandoned or abused young girl is waiting to be adopted. She tells the child-welfare officer assigned to her case that she doesn't want a social worker for a mother. She wants a "forever" family to live with, for the rest of her life, and confides what she's hoping her adoptive parents will be like,” (‘Adoption delays are too long,’ 2014).

A discourse of government neglect at the policy level was found in an article featured in The Vancouver Sun, which discusses a case in which a mentally ill father killed his three children after the government failed to implement previous recommendations regarding domestic

violence. In response to a recent report of the child and youth advocate representative the author states,

“The murders of three young children at the hands of their father in Merritt four years ago could have been prevented if the province's child welfare, justice and mental health systems had worked properly,” (Kines, 2012).

The child and youth advocate was quoted in the article:

“Instead [of improvements], today we still see unaddressed disconnects between systems that so urgently need to be working closely together in domestic violence situations – child protection, income assistance, mental health, police and judicial systems, (Kines, 2012).”

Child welfare system ineffectiveness and failure were the predominant discourses in the category “Impact of removing children from their home or placement on children and families.”

One article within this category presents a case involving a 14-year-old girl who had her passport in her possession before she ran away from her child welfare placement in a group home, and then she made her way to Baghdad. The author of the article from the Winnipeg Free Press presented the details of the controversial case pointing to the challenges of trying to protect adolescents who do not want child welfare involvement,

“CFS garners a great deal of criticism for its dealings with troubled children. But the runaway case puts the agency in a seldom-seen light. In short, it raises the question: How does CFS provide protection to a child who does not want protection -- who in fact fights against it?” (Giroday, 2010).

The Winnipeg Free Press located the runaway adolescent, who informed the reporter that she prefers life in the Middle East to living under CFS control, which she said corrupted her due to the children she met while in care:

“When I went to CFS I started dealing with drugs, I started dealing with drinking... I got messed up with that stuff.” She said she found Canadian authorities “mean” about her Iraqi heritage.

"What kind of life is that?" she said. "They want me to be happy in (the care home)? I didn't do nothing and they locked me up. I didn't smell fresh air for five months. That's not a life," (Giroday, 2010).

The author cited the Child and Family Services assistant deputy minister who said that she does not see it as a child welfare system failure when a child flees her placement and stated, "The kids that we deal with are extremely vulnerable. They present some very high challenges." Although, not deemed a child welfare system failure, by the assistant deputy minister, she was noted by the author to have reported that the child welfare system will be educating workers on their ability to take away the passports of vulnerable children in care, revealing a discourse of child welfare system ineffectiveness.

Another article within this category published the Census Canada statistics which, for the first time, provided a one-day, Canada-wide snapshot of children and youth who have been removed from their families. The Calgary Herald article shares the personal experience of the volunteer executive director of the Foster Care Council of Canada who lived in 13 different homes over his 16 years in foster care (from 18 months old to 18 years old):

"You're always the new kid in school. You're always adjusting, you're always losing friends."

"Sometimes it's instant. You don't have time to say goodbye. You're just gone one day from school." "I used to call it like a constant state of mourning," (Kirkey, 2012).

The author notes that Census Canada does not break down the population by Aboriginal status, despite Aboriginal children being "tragically and disproportionately overrepresented."

One article stresses not only the impact of apprehension on the child, but on the parents. The article opens with, *"I would far prefer to be sent to jail than to have my children permanently taken away from me."* Within the article discourses of "child welfare failure and

ineffectiveness” interact with “apprehension does more harm than good in matters of neglect.”

The author argues that the child welfare system re-victimizes families which are already struggling by removing children from their care primarily for reasons related to poverty and substance abuse; noting that only a quarter of children taken into care have suffered physical or sexual abuse. Like the opening remark, the author closes this Toronto Star article with a bold statement,

“In law, the provincial government is the parent of children who are taken away from their families. In the process it uses to do so, and the effects it produces, it appears to be a neglectful and sometimes abusive parent; a parent exposing those it is responsible for to considerable harm. It's a situation that cries out for intervention,” (Keenan, 2012).

Also stressing parental impact within the category of “Impact of removing a child from home or placement on child and family” is an article which features a case in which a woman has just had her sixth child apprehended at birth due to the parents being classified as intellectually challenged. Discourses interacting within the article include: government failure at both policy and service delivery levels; necessity of apprehension; support for best interest of child based practice; controversial and cruel practice of repeated apprehensions. A lawyer quoted in the article states:

“Canada stopped sterilizing handicapped women four decades ago, but says the government has effectively achieved the same goal by seizing Barbara’s children at birth. This is worse than forced sterilization because you carry the baby for nine months with the knowledge they’re going to seize it,” (Mulgrew, 2008).

The mother of the apprehended children expresses the impact of the situation on her,

"It is horrific. All the labour, carrying and delivering a baby, and then they rip it from your arms. It's cruel. They take the baby to the special care nursery and I'm discharged later the same day."

They have all been apprehended right at birth," Barbara repeated in a flat monotone. "It's been very emotionally hard to deal with. ... I don't receive any information, pictures, letters, updates, nothing at all," (Mulgrew, 2008).

The author points to government failures:

"The case raises questions about the balancing of constitutional rights, the role of the government in people's lives and the managing of public resources.

Enormous sums have been spent here on process, social services for the individual children, legal fees and court resources when a much smaller investment in family support might have produced a better outcome. Moreover, although each of these apprehensions is justifiable individually, the bigger picture raises hard questions about the public policy driving those decisions and the province's failure to ensure services are available for the disadvantaged.

Barbara and Vince are not bad people. They are simply two of the tragic faces of 21st century poverty, a couple often unable to cope with the demands made on them because of their low intellectual capacity and concomitant lack of judgment," (Mulgrew, 2008).

Thirty-nine percent of the articles in the study fell into the general category "Child deaths," which included articles which, in some form, mentioned the death of a child in government care or with child welfare involvement. It should be noted that there were many articles in which a single case or topic received a high level of coverage, both locally and nationally. One such case involved a public inquiry which occurred in Manitoba, where the child welfare system came under immense scrutiny and criticism after the death of a five year old child who had had child welfare contact throughout almost her entire life. Also saturated in the media was the topic of publication bans, which stemmed from a four year joint investigation called 'Fatal Care' by the two major newspapers in Alberta. They succeeded in their efforts to overturn the ban, which previously prevented the name or photograph of any child in care from being published.

The most prevalent discourses within all of the eight “Child Death” subcategories were government and child welfare responsibility and accountability. In the subcategory “Incidents of child death” a discourse of child welfare responsibility for leaving a child at risk was present in sixty percent of the articles. One of the articles discussed a case in which a child welfare agency moved a child from a safe foster home, to a kinship placement with his aunt who had a criminal history and no former relationship with the child, whom she ended up killing. The author highlights the discourse of child welfare responsibility by demonstrating the agency’s failure to act on risks known to it,

‘The very people who were sworn to protect [child] and his sister knew what was happening to them every step of the way. They took notes. They phoned each other. They gave second, third and fourth chances to everyone except [now deceased child], his sister and the loving foster family who could have saved them both.’ (Social workers kept good notes of depraved care, 2008).

One of the articles in the child death category with a discourse of “child welfare accountability” stressed the necessity of child welfare system oversight identified by a child advocate, who criticized a child welfare agency for failing to learn from past child death mistakes. The author of this article featured in The Province states,

“Floors inlaid with images of mythological figures, a gold-coloured wraparound reception desk, textile artwork draping the walls, frosted-glass French doors and a two-metre carved cedar totem pole by the board room. These extravagances were the ministry’s priorities last fall when children in their care were dying, child-death investigations were being forgotten and sent to a warehouse and the recommendations of report after report were ignored,” (Smyth, 2008).

Discourses of child welfare lack of accountability and irresponsibility and government irresponsibility and lack of accountability were present in most of the articles reporting on the publication ban on the names and photographs of children who die in government care in Alberta. An example is found in one article which contrasts the ‘draconian’ publication ban in

Alberta, with a public inquiry in Manitoba, where the child's name, photograph, and case details were all made public through media outlets. The author of this Edmonton Journal article suggests that the motive for the publication ban is not to serve the child or the family of the deceased child, but rather self-serving:

“That secrecy exists, ostensibly, to protect the dead child's reputation and that of the child's family. In practice, the ban prevents public scrutiny. It protects the system and the government, not the child. Here in Alberta, we've had far too many deaths as disturbing as that of [Manitoba child]. But even when they've provoked public fatality inquiries or murder trials, we've been forbidden to print the names and images of the victims... Their stories have come and gone. They have not haunted us, nor shamed us nor inspired us. We have not honoured their spirits or their suffering. They've died twice over - once in real life and once in our collective imagination,” (Simons, 2014).

A discourse of the child welfare system imposing its values on other people was found in two sub-categories, the subcategory: “Groups identified in child welfare cases based on their beliefs, values and/or practices with respect to race, culture, and religious beliefs or values” and “Child welfare involvement in medical/health decisions for child.” The first article presents a case in which a child welfare agency apprehended children from their white supremacist parents'. The article also exhibits a discourse of “Child welfare intervention, not justified”. The author of The Ottawa Citizen article puts forth an argument that the role of government is to apprehend children when the threat of harm is evident and that emotional well-being is difficult to measure:

“When does bad parenting become abuse?”

“People who grew up in extremely religious homes have on occasion felt damaged by the isolation and indeed intolerance they say they were exposed to. Could religious fundamentalism be reason to remove children from the home?”

“Other parents simply ignore their children, or insult them, or teach them to hate an ex-spouse. Rescuing all children who are at risk of emotional harm is an impossible task,” (‘The limits of bad parenting,’ 2008)

The author of a Winnipeg Free Press article points to the controversial nature of a case which features a 15 year old, who while hospitalized was apprehended by child welfare authorities and forced against her religious beliefs to undergo a blood transfusion. Two years later the child maintained that child welfare services did not have the "right or obligation" to interfere, just as her parents did not have the right because she had the capacity to make her own decision. A discourse of "Child welfare agency imposing its values on others" is presented in her quotations in the Winnipeg Free Press article as follows:

"Having someone else's blood pumping through my veins, stressing my body, caused me to reflect on how my rights over my body had been taken away by a judge who did not care enough to talk with me,"

"That day, my tears flowed non-stop. Nothing can properly describe how I was feeling and still feel today. I could liken it to being raped and violated but even those words do not express my feelings strong enough," (Tibbetts, 2008).

Although the author points out that this is the first time the Supreme Court has decided to 'weigh in on the issue, the author does not take a stance on the issue,

"Legal clashes over court-ordered blood transfusions and other medical treatments have played out nationwide and the Supreme Court's judgment in the case is expected to set a standard on when children are considered capable of making their own calls." (Tibbetts, 2008)

The author presents the argument from both children's rights position and the position of the child welfare agency to demonstrate the divisiveness of this matter. It is noted that Alberta, British Columbia and Nova Scotia support Manitoba's position, whereas Ontario, Nova Scotia, Prince Edward Island, Newfoundland and Labrador and the Yukon all allow persons of any age deemed capable to decide their own medical treatment, to make treatment decisions without interference. Discourses of child welfare effectiveness and justified child welfare actions were

found to be less frequent than the discourses around child welfare blame, ineffectiveness and failure.

Child welfare agency effectiveness discourses were found in the category of “Child abandonment”, according to which, the child welfare agency was deemed to be meeting the needs of the child. The three articles within this category all covered the same incident of child abandonment. The other discourses in the articles included: parents responsible for mistreatment of child, and the child is better to remain in care of child welfare.

Discourses of child welfare intervention justified were found in some of the articles within the subcategory, “Groups identified in child welfare cases based on their beliefs, values and/or practices with respect to race, culture, and religious beliefs or values” under the general category: “Culture, race, religious issues in child welfare.” There are two articles which pertain to the apprehension of two children from their white supremacist parents, the same case in which it was previously noted that the author did not support the child welfare agency’s action. In the first of the two articles, which is featured in the Winnipeg Free Press, the author makes the following statements:

“When [the judge] decided she wouldn't return two children to their white supremacist parents, she gave the kids their best shot at being saved.”

CFS built a careful and compelling case that the father shouldn't be allowed to guide these kids across the street, let alone through life. We all have the right to our beliefs. We don't have the right to literally mark our children to shame them and shock others. Being able to reproduce doesn't make you a parent. Thankfully, [the judge] understood that,” (‘Judge saw the limits of the rights of parents, 2010).

In the other article, which appears in the National Post, the judge’s written decision is cited, which supports the child welfare agency’s apprehension of the children:

"It is apparent that [biological mom] used her child's body as a personal billboard to espouse racist views," the judge said in a written decision. "[She] sought celebrity, sacrificed her children's dignity on the altar of sensationalism and achieved some notoriety. That was a pathetic cry for attention," (Owen, 2010).

Although the author does not take a stance on the matter, aside from the judge's ruling, the details of the text on the child's body and her interview remarks are presented as follows:

"The markings were in permanent ink -- including references to Adolf Hitler and the slogan "We must secure the existence of our people and a future for white children."

When the girl was interviewed by a Child and Family Services worker, she plainly espoused a number of racist beliefs that she attributed to teachings from her parents.

'Black people don't belong. What people don't understand is that black people should die,' the girl said in a March 2008 interview.

Asked if her parents said things that scared her, she replied: 'No, black people just need to die. That's not scary. This is a white man's world',' (Owen, 2010).

There were two articles in the category "Daycare investigations", both of which contained discourses of "child welfare action justified". In the first case child welfare officials closed the daycare after concerns brought forward by the parents, such as verbal abuse, minimal snacks and feces left sitting in the toilet for more than a week, inappropriate manner when directing children, not providing sufficient food to meet nutritional requirements, the program not meeting children's developmental needs and failure to keep accurate records. The second case involved a two-year-old girl who underwent emergency surgery for liver lacerations and had four broken ribs and unusual bruising for which her daycare provider was under investigation by police and child welfare.

In the subcategory, "Child welfare decisions to impose or not impose medical treatment for child" an article featured a case in which a child welfare agency chose not to interfere with an

Aboriginal family's decision to use traditional medication, rather than conventional medical treatment. Discourses included that "Child welfare was justified in its kind decision" and "Child welfare inconsistency in its decision making." The author is quoted to demonstrate how the point is made of the agencies' paradoxical decision making:

"It was a kind decision, rare in a world where children's aid societies have been less respectful of the cultural values and traditions of other groups, such as the Mexican Mennonites (where in 2002 Child and Family Services of St. Thomas and Elgin County seized seven of the most ridiculously hale youngsters you ever saw from fundamentalist Christian parents whose church advocated physical discipline) or, more recently, the ultra-Orthodox Jewish Lev Tahor sect (where last year the Chatham-Kent Children's Services launched a court battle to seize custody of 14 children and return them to Quebec, where they had been originally ordered into foster care amid allegations of abuse and, well, cultish behaviour)." (Blatchford, 2014)

In another medical case, within the same category a discourse of "child welfare actions were justified" as well as a discourse of "best interest of the child met in deciding on their death" in a case where a judge granted a child welfare agencies request, following a physician's recommendation to remove a crack cocaine addicted baby from life support, following which the baby died.

The most dominant and generalized discourse found in this study was of blame. Blame was directed at both the government and child welfare system for their failed action or inaction on various topics. Dominant discourses of government blame were: failure to implement previous recommendations; failing children through underfunding; not committed to addressing root causes of child maltreatment; failure to acknowledge the scale of the problem; lack any meaningful solutions; failure at policy level; irresponsibility. These discourses prevailed in the following categories: Child death: Systemic and social issues; Over-representation of aboriginal children; Monitoring the child welfare system.

The most prevalent discourses related to child welfare blame were: child welfare system ineffectiveness (especially in terms of leaving children at risk); over-burdened child welfare system; staff incompetency; ineffectual social workers; lack of accountability. These discourses were found predominantly in the death category as well as: Assessing risk; Monitoring the child welfare system; Apprehension and Placement.

CHAPTER FIVE: DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

This chapter presents a discussion of the findings and the conclusion of this study, which examined how child welfare intervention is portrayed in the print media through the tracking and analysis of discourses used in newspapers. A summary of the findings of this study will follow, as well as a comparison of these findings with those in the literature, including other research findings. A brief discussion on the implications of the findings for theory and practice, as well as possibilities for further research will conclude the discussion chapter and thesis.

Summary of the findings:

Following an in depth content and discourse analysis of the print media representation of child welfare, it was learned that there is a strong tendency for the media to regard child welfare interventions negatively and to present child welfare unfavourably. This finding was based on the population of articles, which was consistent with the sample findings where child welfare failure and lack of fulfilling responsibility were the dominant discourses. Despite blame being targeted at the child welfare system, it was noted that the authors used thematic framing more than episodic framing overall. Blame was also targeted at government for failing to address the systemic and social issues that lead to families coming into contact with the child welfare system, and because of the lack of resources they provide for child welfare agencies to offer the necessary services at sufficient quality. The child welfare issues most covered by the media related to the death of children both in government care and those who had child welfare involvement, but were not in care.

The qualitative and quantitative data presented in this research, may appear somewhat divergent given that quantitative classification yields more positive views of child welfare by the

media than does the qualitative findings. One explanation for this difference may be that the quantitative data presented were for the population of articles, not for the sample. A theoretical sampling strategy as well as a random stratified sample were used in this research, and therefore articles were included in the sample based on emerging new themes. The articles with unfavorable views of child welfare, may have had more new themes than those with favorable views of child welfare. The stratified random sample which was drawn from those articles not included in the theoretical sample, were those with repeated themes. Given that child deaths was the most reoccurring theme and that it is connected to discourses of child welfare failure, and thus unfavorable views of child welfare, these are the articles were more likely to have been included in the random sample, rather than the theoretical sample. Another possible explanation for this divergence may have been based on the fact that unlike quantitative data, qualitative analysis is not based on counting, but rather on the richness of themes.

Comparison of findings with the literature:

The literature on media reporting of child welfare issues exhibits both similarities to and differences with the findings in this study. Following a brief summary of the literature review findings, findings in the literature will be made with this study. The literature showed that there was a tendency for the media to report news about child maltreatment episodically and in a sensationalistic manner, with the horrific cases being overrepresented. Other findings revealed that the print media presents child welfare matters both episodically and thematically, with less focus on contextual issues, risk factors, and protective factors (Aubrun & Grady, 2003; Hove, Paek, Isaacson, & Cole, 2013). Sexual abuse cases were reported in the literature to be overrepresented in media reports, with more focus on sexual abuse outside of the home or perpetrated by a non-family member. The literature revealed that a discourse of blame is found in media reports focused

on the child welfare system. A lack of reporting on child abuse prevention was one of the findings in the literature; as well as a failure to reveal underlying social causes of abuse. Findings in the literature showed that there may be a relationship between newspaper reports of child abuse incidents and increased reporting of child abuse incidents to child welfare authorities.

The finding from the literature that child death or serious cases are overrepresented in the media was supported in this study. One of the findings in this study which was consistent with the literature is that newspaper reports on child death or serious injury tend to be overrepresented in the media. This was especially true of the articles on the public inquiries and issues that were controversial or involved notoriety. A public inquiry in Manitoba involving the torture and death of a five year old child, at the hands of her parents, after the child welfare agency which followed the child since birth closed the file, was covered extensively by both the local (Manitoba) and national media. Another example was a Quebec case involving notorious 'honour killings' in which a husband, wife, and their son were responsible for the deaths of their three daughters/siblings and their aunt. This case was also overrepresented in the media, both locally (Quebec) and nationally. Likewise, cases involving child welfare involvement or lack of involvement in medical decisions regarding seriously ill children became high profile media topics, both locally and nationally.

Similar to the findings in research by Hove, Paek, Isaacson, & Cole (2013) and Tonmyr & Jack (2010), this study showed that sexual abuse cases were discussed more in the media than child neglect cases, despite child neglect being much more prevalent. Although it is noted in the research literature that sexual abuse cases tend to be presented in a more sensational manner, this was not the case in this current study, save for one article. The one article which did sensationalize a case of sexual abuse where the perpetrator was an older foster sibling was based

on a crime report. The author used language such as, "shocking"; "horrifying"; "They've suffered" and a discourse of 'danger of perpetrator.'

In their research on sexual abuse coverage, Kitzinger & Skidmore (1995) found that most articles (71% of press and 83% of television) were based on a specific case, describing events around one incident, rather than discussing areas of general concern. This was consistent with the findings in this study, in which the focus was on specific cases, rather than sexual abuse in general.

Findings in this study were consistent with research by Hove, Paek, Isaacson, & Cole (2013), which found that most of the stories on types of child abuse used a frame of societal cause and solution more frequently than a frame of individual cause and solution, except for verbal abuse. The majority of the articles in this study were framed thematically, which presented the problem and solution as a public problem, rather than an individual problem. Even in articles which presented a particular case of abuse, the individual responsible for the harm to the child was not the focus of blame, but rather the child welfare system, government and other systems, as well as unresolved social issues. Like the research by Cole (2003), this study also found that in the articles which featured a case of emotional abuse (white supremacist parents), individual responsibility was applied, rather than societal. Unlike these findings, another study by Aubrun, & Grady (2003) concluded that important child maltreatment issues such as risk factors, protective factors, and trends do not receive enough media attention because "good" news stories are simple, sensational or episodic. Findings in this study indicated that risk factors, such as underlying social causes and previous child welfare involvement were discussed, especially within the categories 'systemic issues in child welfare'; 'monitoring child welfare'; and overrepresentation of Aboriginal people in child welfare, as well as in many of the articles in

the 'child death' category. Thematic and societal responsibility framing were more prevalent than frames of episodic or individualistic responsibility.

Failure to reveal underlying social causes of abuse was found in the literature, which was the case in some of the articles; but many of the articles analyzed in this research did address these issues, and, in many, they were the central focus of the article.

A significant finding in this study, which was consistent with the literature was that the reporting of child welfare issues tends to be blame focused. Both the government and child welfare system were subject to blame for child welfare system failures. For example, research by Cooper (2005), found that media sources tend to be very critical of agencies that are responsible for protecting children, which was also the case in the current study. Discourses of child welfare staff/agency/system responsibility were predominant in this study across almost all themes. Much of the criticism of the child welfare system in this study related to failure to keep children safe from harm. Many of the noted child welfare failures in the articles focused on the system's reactivity to incidents rather than being proactive or preventative, such as addressing social issues and underlying root causes which lead to child welfare involvement. This finding is consistent with the discussion paper by Chenot (2010), who found that media coverage of child welfare maltreatment blames child welfare workers for failing to protect the child or prevent the incident, that the expectations on child welfare agencies are too high and unrealistic, and that they are held to a standard that is higher than any other service provision agency.

A discussion paper by Franklin & Horwath (1986) examined the ways in which the media have depicted children as inherently evil and the social consequences of doing so. They concluded that the perception of childhood innocence is replaced with an image of children being

inherently evil, in the media reports of the trial in the United Kingdom of Thompson and Venables (10 year old child perpetrators accused of murdering James Bulger). This finding was not supported in the current study. Although, as previously mentioned, one article which covered the case of the older foster sibling who sexually offended against his younger siblings did use a discourse of ‘perpetrator danger’, this was balanced with a discourse of ‘child welfare agency blame’, alluding to the possibility that proper checks on the foster home were not done. The child was not viewed as inherently evil, rather the offense was criticised, rather than the individual. Also, within the category of sexual abuse in this study was a case in which an 11 year old sexually offended against his 5 year old half-brother, and there was no judgement or blame cast upon the 11 year old child who committed the offence. Rather, the discourse was one of ‘child welfare failure/responsibility’ with respect to the investigative follow up/risk assessment. Another case, which received significant media coverage involved a 10 year old boy who killed a 6 year old boy, both of whom had child welfare involvement. Not only was there no demonizing of the child responsible for the death, but none of the articles featuring this case even directed any blame towards the 10 year old child. Again, the articles covering the case featured discourses of ‘child welfare agency responsibility and failures’.

Findings in this study were consistent with previous findings by Douglas (2009), that media reporting on child death can influence passage of new child welfare legislation. An example of this finding in this study was in the media coverage of a publication ban in Alberta and a child death inquiry in Manitoba. A joint investigation by the Calgary Herald and Edmonton Journal was successful in its efforts to overturn a publication ban in Alberta, allowing publication of the names, photographs, and circumstances around children who die in care to be published. A public inquiry on the death of a child, which led to legislative reforms was featured

in many of the articles, both locally and nationally found in this research. Although it is not known whether the media coverage of the inquiry directly influenced legislative changes, it is worth noting the relationship.

One of the findings in this study, which was not identified in the previous research, was that there was extensive media coverage across Canadian newspapers on the issue of Aboriginal children and families involved in the child welfare system across Canada. The issues identified were: the overrepresentation of Aboriginal children in government care, underlying social issues which date back to the residential school system situation, Aboriginal children being more likely to come to the attention of the child welfare system due to issues related to neglect, and inequitable funding for child welfare services on reserves.

These issues were found to be raised across many of the categories in this study, with the dominant discourse on this topic area being ‘government irresponsibility’. Media coverage of the deaths of Aboriginal children in care, especially the aforementioned public inquiry in Manitoba, and the national focus on the issue of murdered and missing Aboriginal women and youth have both contributed to bringing these issues to the forefront of the government agenda for social and child welfare reforms. This phenomenon is noted in Powell’s & Scanlon’s (2015) study. They have adopted the concept of ‘public child’ from Robbie Gilligan (2009), whereby the private life of a child has become public business, which occurs through media coverage on public inquiries into child welfare matters, especially in notorious child abuse and death cases.

Like previous research findings, this study found that blame was a predominant discourse. Some of the previous research findings showed that there was a tendency for the media to report news about child maltreatment episodically; but this research found more so that articles were

framed thematically. Although it is noted in the research literature that sexual abuse cases tend to be presented in a more sensational manner, this was not the case in the current study. However, similar to the findings in the research literature, this study showed that sexual abuse cases were discussed more in the media than child neglect cases, despite child neglect being much more prevalent. A lack of reporting on child abuse prevention was one of the findings in the literature; as well as a failure to reveal underlying social causes of abuse. This study found that, although there was discussion about the need for what prevention based practice, there was minimal discussion on prevention based practice or programs might involve. Findings in the literature showed that there may be a relationship between newspaper reports of child abuse incidents and increased reporting of child abuse incidents to child welfare authorities. This was not a general finding in this study, although it was noted in one article that following the media reports of the high profile ‘honour’ killings of the three sisters, the local child welfare agencies received an increase in reporting.

Implications for theory, practice, and policy:

Media portrayals of child welfare issues have the power to influence public opinion and to impact those who work in both the field of child welfare as well the media. The findings in this study show that the dominant media portrayal of child welfare intervention is negative, and that there is a dominant unfavourable view of child welfare. Given that the public is generally quite interested in child protection (Cooper, 2005), and the media is the vehicle through which most child welfare issues are publically conveyed, more balanced reporting of child welfare portrayals, rather than in such a negative light may be important, given the potential to harm relationships between those who work in the field of child welfare and the family and children they serve. Despite, the lack of reporting on positive child welfare interventions, media scrutiny

and demand for change and accountability have proven to lead to positive outcomes, such as system reforms, legislative changes, and highlighting important issues, such as governments' lack of attention to Aboriginal and structural issues.

One implication for practice is that the media could inform the public that child abuse prevention is a collective responsibility. By educating the public on how to recognize child protection issues and on reporting responsibilities and protocols, people may be more likely to assume an active role. If a media representative proposed a meeting with a child welfare official to only gather information to educate the public on their roles and responsibilities to report child abuse, and recognizing risks in the community, the child welfare representative is more likely to meet with the journalist, given confidentiality issues would not apply. The media could then convey to the public that reporting child welfare issues is not the sole responsibility of professionals, but on everyone including family, friends, neighbors, bystanders and the general public. By informing the public on what child welfare issues are and how child welfare matters are followed up by child welfare agencies, the community could then become an integral part of child abuse/neglect preventative. The public should also be made aware that it is best if they report potential child protection matters while they are in progress, such as intoxicated care providers and unsupervised children, rather than waiting until the following day, would allow for a more immediate response from child welfare agencies and thus reducing the risk to children. Citizens having knowledge that they should promptly report any child abuse disclosures or suspicious child injuries to child welfare authorities, allows them to participate in child safety. The media should ensure that the public is aware that child welfare has 24 hour emergency services, and that confidentiality of the reporter is always assured. This would not only serve the public in improving recognition of risk factors, but it would allow them to make informed decisions, such as not leaving

young aged children alone while they run out to the store, or ensuring that there is a sober care provider in the home at all times. A meeting with the journalist and the child welfare representative to feature educating the public would provide an opportunity to build a relationship, which could not only lead to more information sharing on non-confidential matters and potentially lead to more balanced reporting.

Should the media have the opportunity to meet with a child welfare representative, for the purpose of educating the public, information could be gathered on prevention programs as well as family reunification programs. Media reporting on programs in the child welfare system, such as early intervention programs, which provide supportive services to lower-moderate risk families to prevent increased risk to the children will demonstrate that child welfare agencies work with families in a supportive capacity. Child welfare reunification programs which provide supportive services to reintegrate children, from state care, back into their family, would also be an opportunity for the media to inform the public about the work child welfare agencies do to strengthen families. The media could also present personal stories of adult children who grew up on foster care, with the view that some of them will have had a positive experience to share. And for those who did not have a positive experience, their experiences could provide a learning opportunity for foster parents and child welfare agencies. Although, child welfare agencies would not be able to provide names of people who were in foster care or involved in the system, the media could call for volunteers to share their stories, who would have the option of anonymity.

Children, society's most vulnerable, are our future; and everyone needs to be concerned with their safety and protection, not just child welfare agencies. This, of course, includes the media, which should be employing a social justice approach to addressing the issues in the child welfare system. Social justice approaches in media are discussed by Jensen (2008), who points out the

need for justice in the media given its tendency to regard “human competition” as more newsworthy than human “cooperation” (28). The Media Research and Action Project (MRAP), which involves a collaboration between scholars, advocates, and social movement groups who come together to share information to meet their objectives to “document structural inequalities in media institution; and to collaborate with social justice movements to address those social inequalities” (Jensen, 2008, p. 80). Social justice in media reporting can be attained by employing investigative reporting techniques, such as gathering in depth information on all of the relevant issues, including which social systems are involved, and exposing everyone who is adversely affected by social injustices.

A major contribution to discourse theory relate to the finding that within the stories about child welfare, different discourses relate to different topics. For example, discourses in the category of social and systemic issues in child welfare related to government blame, such as inequitable government funding, failure to decrease poverty, and intergenerational marginalization of certain groups. Similar discourses were found in the child death categories related to government responsibility, but they also included child welfare blame as well such as failures of funding, policy, administration, and practice leading to child death. In addition there were discourses of inadequate placements and incompetent staff leading to child deaths. The category ‘assessing risk’, however, almost exclusively applied discourses of blame to the child welfare system. Articles which identified child maltreatment which did not result in death, often exhibited discourses of child welfare intervention effectiveness and justification for intervention.

An observation in this study was that the media likely have limited resources through which they access information, with the most common source of information gathering being

done through entities which conduct child welfare reviews, typically involving cases in which the actions of child welfare agencies are being evaluated, such as in child death inquiries.

Another source from which media obtain child welfare information, due to its accessibility, is through cases involving criminal charges, which are serious child abuse cases often resulting in child deaths. Given that child welfare agencies are bound by strict confidentiality policies, information does not come from child welfare officials, unless it is through public statements, which again, are usually in response to a review. Given that the media does have access to child and youth advocate reports on their investigation findings, it would best serve the relationships between children, families, and the child welfare agency, if they also reported on child welfare agencies' successes. The lack of job efficacy and staff morale as well as high turnover and poor recruitment that results from negative media representation further impacts social workers' ability to effectively carry out their child protection roles.

Given the public interest in child protection matters, the media will continue to cover child welfare cases, and therefore it would serve professionals in both child welfare and in the media to strategically work together to enhance their working relationship. When the media misrepresents a child welfare story and/or fails to accurately reflect the central issues, which could be based on their limited access to information, this could easily be construed by those in the child welfare system to have been motivated by malice, or self-serving goals. And, likewise, those working in media production may find it frustrating trying to access information from the child welfare system, whose organizations and officials are bound by confidentiality, and thus unable to respond to media inquiries. "While a partnership of equals with some sections of the media may be impossible, a more active partnership is essential if the complexities of child abuse and child protection are to be responsibly debated and appropriate goals are to be set." (Goddard

& Liddell 1995, p.362-363). Finding a common ground for child welfare and the media to share a harmonious relationship is likely to strengthen public perception, reduce families' reluctance to work cooperatively with the child welfare system, and may even decrease social worker job satisfaction and limit burnout. This is because child welfare staff are usually at the brunt of the media's scrutiny and criticism. Legal and legislative changes to enhance the sharing of information in a non-identifying manner are likely to lead to balanced and accurate reporting.

Future research based on findings

Based on the findings of this study, which are supported in the literature, there is a call for child welfare policy makers and agencies to learn to effectively and cooperatively interact with the media. A media relations strategy, such as the co-operation that most major Canadian police departments have with the media, might allow the child welfare system to enhance its relationship with the media while influencing the agenda. As previously cited in a study by Tonmyr & Jack (2010), the media reported key issues with accuracy, and in a non-sensationalized manner, following a dissemination strategy during a child welfare media launch, whereby the key messages were delivered to the media in a press conference, which included a question and answer period.

This study hopes to motivate future research to find ways to encourage both the media and the child welfare system to take steps towards enhancing and strengthening their relationship. Also to promote a working relationship which allows them to work cooperatively to mutually to attain their objectives and provide the public with accurate information about important child welfare issues. The findings in this study showed that media discourses tended to hold child welfare agencies responsible for failure, and to expect them to be more prevention oriented rather than constantly responding to crises. It is recommended that further research build on a discussion by

Chenot (2010), where it is suggested that there is too much expectation on child welfare agencies to prevent child abuse and that the public should be made aware through media reporting that prevention is as unrealistic an expectation on a child welfare worker as crime prevention is on a police officer.

The predominant discourses found in the newspaper articles in this research which related to child welfare and government blame for system failures, were often connected to the discourse of lack of accountability. Although accountability is necessary and critical in the child welfare system, there is no standard definition for accountability in the literature. Acknowledging the challenges of defining accountability, Kopell (2005) organizes accountability in the following five categories: transparency: *"Did the organization reveal the facts of its performance?"*; liability: *"Did the organization face consequences for its performance?"*; controllability; *"Did the organization do what the principal desired"*; responsibility: *"Did the organization follow the rules?"*; responsiveness: *"Did the organization fulfill the substantive expectation/demand/need?"*

In his paper on "multiple accountabilities disorder", Kopell (2005), argues that accountability is universally recognized as essential, and "organizations trying to meet conflicting expectations are likely to be dysfunctional, pleasing no one, while trying to please everyone (p.95). This phenomenon is exemplified in child welfare given the burden of competing interests, such as bureaucratic demands and service delivery expectations. Funding is allotted to child welfare agencies based on a prescribed number of cases deemed manageable; yet social workers have competing demands for their time, such as conducting in person meetings with families within a certain time frame, thoroughly assessing risk in a timely manner, completing many types of time sensitive documentation, with increased demands on time when emergencies arise, such as apprehensions and placement changes, attending court, and participating in multisystem meetings

and case planning. Child welfare management, in turn, is accountable to the government with respect to funding and meeting standards, as well as to other stakeholders, such as families and advocate agencies, especially concerning service delivery. In matters such as the death of a child with child welfare involvement, accountability is critical at many levels within the organization, and outside the organization. Given the complexity of accountability in the child welfare system, by gaining a better understanding of these competing demands with respect to accountability, investigative reporting on the matter to educate the public, could lead to social change.

Lack of government accountability for Aboriginal children and families involved in the child welfare system was a reoccurring theme, and predominant discourse in this research. MacDonald and Levesseur (2014) contrast two models of governing: government and collaborative governance with two types of accountability: vertical accountability and horizontal accountability to illustrate that the ideal model of governing includes both collaborative governance and horizontal accountability (shared accountability between government and non-government agents). Using the case of devolution of Aboriginal child welfare in Manitoba, whereby governance did not include horizontal accountability, MacDonald and Levesseur demonstrate that the consequences to Aboriginal child welfare agencies have been that they continue to bare the blame for agency failures, as the public has been left with the false perception that Aboriginal agencies operate autonomously. Elucidating the disadvantages of the particular accountability structures in governing, provides an opportunity for the media to engage in investigative reporting on the matter, to incite meaningful reforms not just in the child welfare system, but also to address the systemic and social issues.

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Appendix A: Newspaper Article List

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