

Order in the Court! Workers in Support!



Presentation at the

**DVCAN 5th State-wide Conference
Cairns October 2005**





Making Children Count

Children, Violence, Homelessness
and the Law.

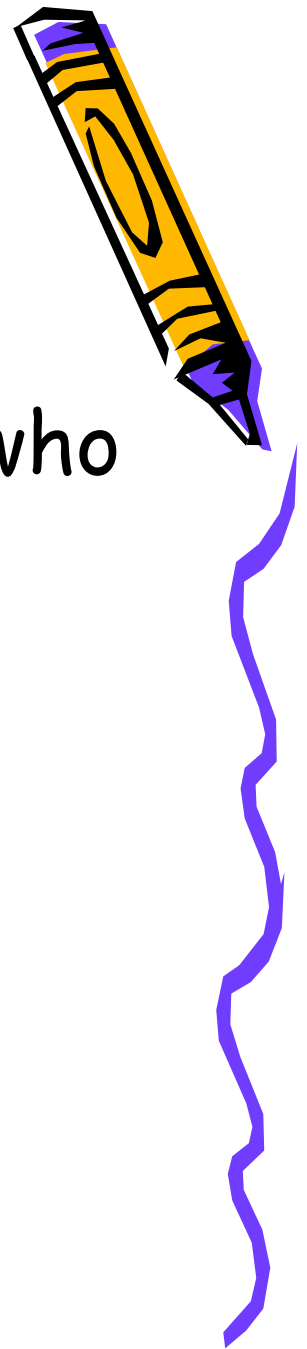


WESNET Inc (Women's Services Network)
GPO Box 1579 Canberra City ACT 2601 Australia
Phone: 61 2 6247 1616

www.wesnet.org.au
Email: wesnet@wesnet.org.au

The book was authored and collated by Julie Oberin, Pamela Foster and Cara Kirkwood.



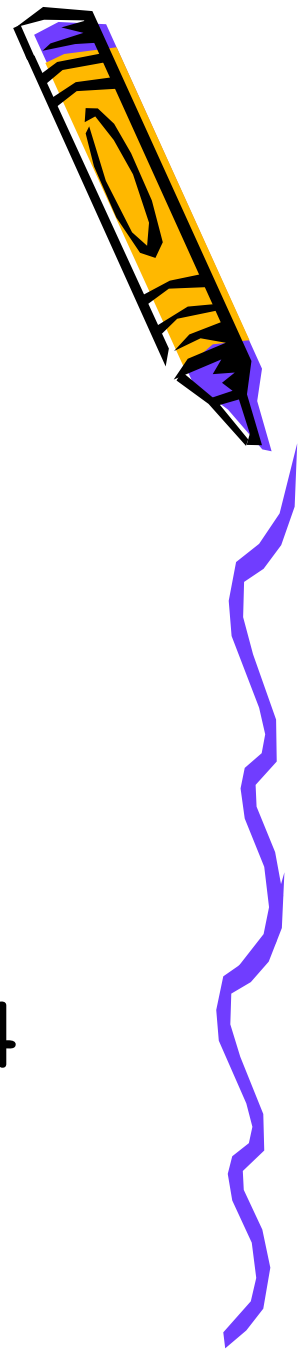


Background and Overview

- Resource for workers and women who have experienced DV
- Snapshots of statistics, research, resources
- Recommendations
- Including Family Law Reform



The Facts about Children and Homelessness

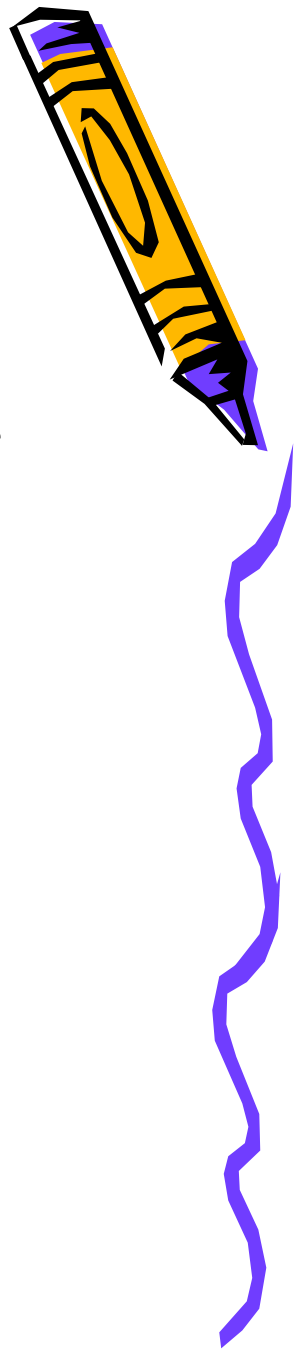


- Children over represented
- 52,700 children in homelessness services
- 200 children per day turned away
- Most children in services under 12
- Most children turned away under 4



The Impacts of Homelessness on Children

- Loss of family & social connections
- Poor health
- Difficulties with education
- Depression & anxiety
- Danger of predation
- Poor role models



The Link Between Domestic Violence and Homelessness



The primary reason for children's homelessness is domestic violence

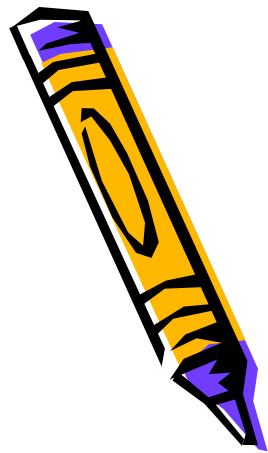


Children May Learn:

- That the only way to cope with stress is through the use of violence
- Disrespect for women
- That it is possible to love and physically hurt someone at the same time
- That violence is an appropriate tool for conflict resolution
- That it is legitimate to use physical force to accomplish your goals



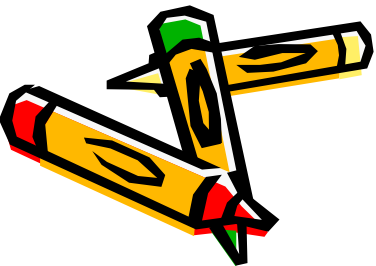
... if a child is old enough to be effected by trauma in his/her own right, then he/she is old enough to be helped in his/her own right. Early supportive intervention is vital for mother-infant couples exposed to domestic violence". Jennifer McIntosh (2000)



The Cost of Domestic Violence

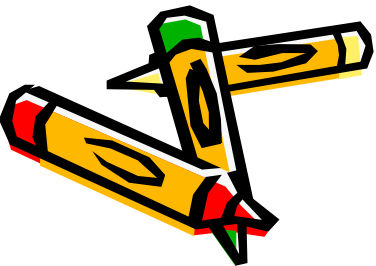


- 263,800 children living with victims of domestic violence
- 181,200 children witnessed domestic violence in 2002/03





- The annual cost of domestic violence experienced by children estimated at \$769 million
- Cost of DV to second generation impacts \$220.2 million



SAAP (Supported Accommodation Assistance Program)



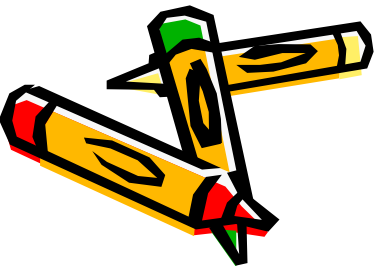
- Children need to be recognised as clients in their own right and funded accordingly



Other Program & Policy Concerns



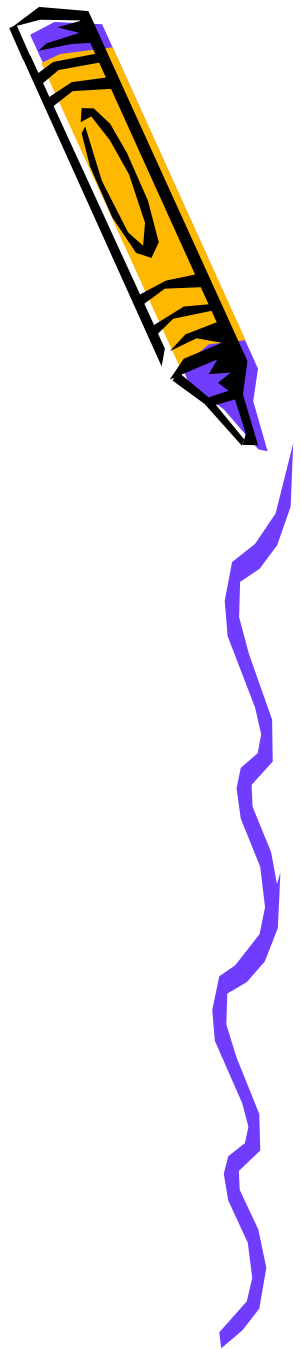
- Links between domestic violence and child protection



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Recommendations

1. Improved physical resources
2. Expanded resources for disadvantaged and marginalised children
3. Healing programs
4. Remedial education programs



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Recommendations cont.

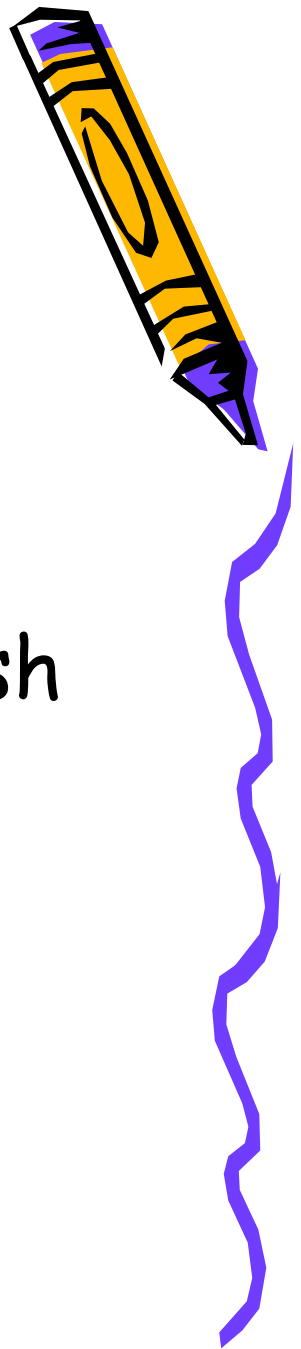
5. Domestic violence training for child protection workers
6. Child protection training for domestic violence & homelessness agency workers
7. Developmental & health needs of children training



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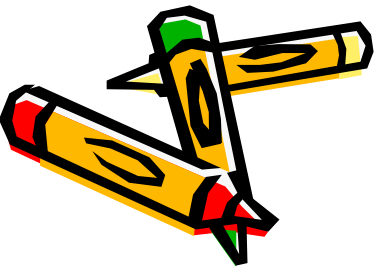
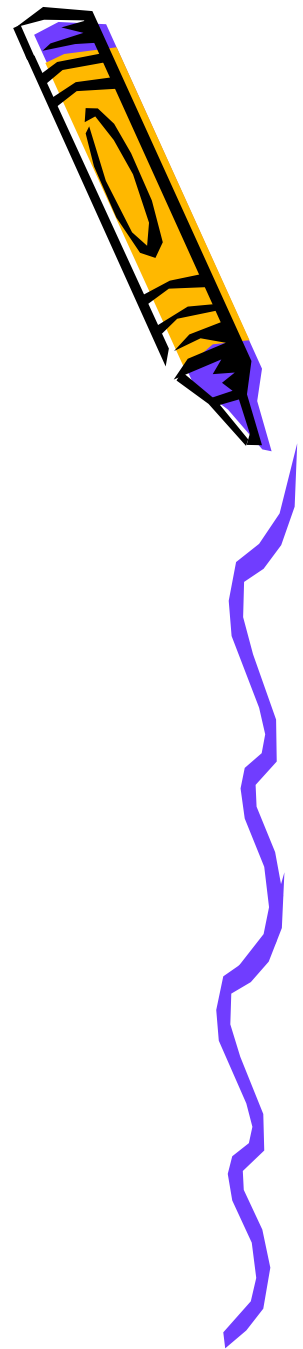
Recommendations cont.

8. Cross cultural awareness training
9. Expand appropriate supported accommodation options and abolish the use of caravans, hotels and motels because of the lack of appropriate facilities



Family Law Reform

10. New Zealand Model
11. Safety first principle
12. The best interests of the child
13. Listen to the children
14. Appropriate screening tools be developed



Family Law Reform cont.

15. Accountability of the violence
16. No penalties for women who allege DV but do not have medical or legal evidence
17. Shared Parenting presumption not appropriate when DV is present
18. Case by case basis



Children are not the people of tomorrow, but are people of today. They have a right to be taken seriously, and treated with tenderness and respect. They should be allowed to grow into whoever they were meant to be. The unknown person inside each of them is our hope for the future.

