

Rapid review of the characteristics and outcomes of children involved in private family law proceedings due to parental separation

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Abstract

Private law childrens proceedings typically involve court disputes between parents who have separated and disagree about child arrangements, and are asking the court to make orders that determine where a child should live and with whom they should spend time. Children involved in private law, who potentially represent a vulnerable group, commonly receive less attention in policy than those in public law cases. The aim of this review was to shine a light on the wellbeing and other important characteristics or outcomes of children who are currently, or have been, involved in family law proceedings due to parental separation, to identify the support needs of these children who are often overlooked in policy. This rapid review is intended for policymakers who are responsible for policy concerning children and families as well as for family law professionals and families in private law childrens proceedings.

The literature searches were conducted between June and August 2024. The included literature was published between 2001 and 2022. 22 studies reported in 25 documents were identified (8 published in academic journals and 17 in reports produced by organisations). Originated in England and Wales (n=13), Australia (n=7), Canada (n=1), New Zealand (n=1). Most studies aimed to describe the characteristics of children who are or have been involved in private family law proceedings, whilst only one compared the outcomes of such children to those in the general population.

Almost all of the studies addressed mental health and emotional wellbeing. Written accounts of children, parents, and professionals described children as having anxiety, depression, anger, post-traumatic stress disorder symptoms, and eating disorders, and experiencing self-harm and suicide attempts. In Wales, children with a history of involvement in private law proceedings had higher incidence of depression and anxiety than children in the general population. From the evidence, it was unclear whether the poor mental health was associated with parental separation, the court proceedings, court orders, or some other factors, but some participants attributed difficulties to unwanted court orders. Other key areas of evidence included engagement with mental health services, behaviour, development, social relationships, learning and education, and physical health.

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NOTE: This preprint reports new research that has not been certified by peer review and should not be used to guide clinical practice.



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Review conducted by the Cardiff Evidence Synthesis Collaborative (CESC)

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

What is a Rapid Review?

Our rapid reviews (RR) use a variation of the systematic review approach, abbreviating or omitting some components to generate the evidence to inform stakeholders promptly whilst maintaining attention to bias.

Who is this Rapid Review for?

This rapid review is intended for policymakers who are responsible for policy concerning children and families as well as for family law professionals and families in private law children's proceedings.

Background / Aim of Rapid Review

Private law children's proceedings typically involve court disputes between parents who have separated and disagree about child arrangements, and are asking the court to make orders that determine where a child should live and with whom they should spend time. Children involved in private law, who potentially represent a vulnerable group, commonly receive less attention in policy than those in public law cases. The aim of this review was to shine a light on the wellbeing and other important characteristics or outcomes of children who are currently, or have been, involved in family law proceedings due to parental separation, to identify the support needs of these children who are often overlooked in policy.

Results of the Rapid Review

Recency of the evidence base

- The literature searches were conducted in June–August 2024. The included literature was published between 2001 and 2022.

Extent of the evidence base

- 22 studies reported in 25 documents were identified (8 published in academic journals and 17 in reports produced by organisations).
- Originated in England and Wales (n=13), Australia (n=7), Canada (n=1), New Zealand (n=1).
- Most studies aimed to describe the characteristics of children who are or have been involved in private family law proceedings, whilst only one compared the outcomes of such children to those in the general population.

Key findings

- **Mental health and emotional wellbeing.** Almost all of the studies addressed this topic. Written accounts of children, parents, and professionals described children as having anxiety, depression, anger, post-traumatic stress disorder symptoms, and eating disorders, and experiencing self-harm and suicide attempts. In Wales, children with a history of involvement in private law proceedings had higher incidence of depression and anxiety than children in the general population. From the evidence, it was unclear whether the poor mental health was associated with parental separation, the court proceedings, court orders, or some other factors, but some participants attributed difficulties to unwanted court orders.

- **Engagement with mental health services.** Eight studies were identified and showed variable levels of support accessed by the children. It ranged from school-based support to Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services. However, it is not known how many children in private law needed such mental health support and of those, how many accessed it.
- **Behaviour.** Ten studies were identified. Some studies suggested that a substantial number of children exhibited behavioural difficulties, some of which were attributed to frustration with the situation and difficulty in verbalising their feelings.
- **Development.** Little evidence was available, but some accounts spoke of children experiencing developmental delays and regressing to an earlier developmental stage. It is not clear how widespread this issue is.
- **Social relationships.** Eleven studies were identified. Some, particularly those focused on complex private law cases, showed that some children experienced difficulties in relationships with parents and peers, could not relate to their peers, or stopped socialising with them altogether. In others, especially those not limited to complex cases, both children and parents said that children had few problems with socialising.
- **Learning and education.** Little evidence was available. A few qualitative accounts from England and Wales spoke of children's schooling being negatively affected. In an Australian study, almost 40% of parents thought that their children's learning and schoolwork were worse than their peers'.
- **Physical health.** Accounts of children suffering from severe abuse and neglect, leading to death in some cases, were provided in Cafcass submissions to Serious Case Reviews in England. These were some of the more severe cases and were rare. Physical abuse experienced by children in private law was also highlighted in some qualitative accounts.

Research Implications and Evidence Gaps

- Research is needed into the extent and nature of outcomes of children in private law proceedings compared to those of separated parents who did not use courts, to understand whether and how private law proceedings may exacerbate children's experiences and what their specific support needs are.
- Research into the long-term outcomes of children in private law, and comparing short- and long-term outcomes, is needed to understand support needs and how they may change.

Policy and Practice Implications

- There is a need for a public health response to the needs of children in private law cases, which may include schools, GPs, and mental health services, in order to identify vulnerable children and provide timely support.
- It is important to ensure that support is available irrespective of whether the proceedings have been concluded, because many children in private law cases experience acute distress.

Economic Considerations

- 33% of mothers and 29% of fathers making private family law applications in Wales are from the most deprived quintile. The lack of access to legal aid in the majority of private law proceedings is a compounding economic challenge.
- Resource shortages affect the whole private law system, but cases involving domestic abuse, which is common in private law and can often negatively affect children even if they are not the primary targets, may be at the greatest risk of risk-assessments and or safeguarding measures not being implemented as they are likely to be more resource-intensive to implement than non-abuse cases.
- Children who experience parental separation before the age of 15 can experience an associated 46% reduction in lifetime net wealth compared to those who do not experience it.

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ABBREVIATIONS

Acronym	Full Description
Cafcass	Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service
CAMHS	Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services
GHQ	The General Health Questionnaire
HCRW	Health and Care Research Wales
HR	Hazard Ratio
IRR	Incidence Rate Ratio
MoJ	Ministry of Justice
SCR	Serious Case Review
SDQ	The Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire
PTSD	Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder
WLGP	Welsh Longitudinal General Practice

GLOSSARY

- **Private law** cases involve court disputes between two or more private individuals, typically parents who have separated and disagree about child arrangement orders that determine where a child should live, and who they should spend time with (Ministry of Justice 2015).
- **Public law** involves state interventions to protect children at risk of harm, which may lead to care or supervision orders (Ministry of Justice 2015).
- **Cafcass** is a non-departmental public body in England sponsored by the Ministry of Justice that independently advises family courts about the best interests of children and young people.
- **Cafcass Cymru** operates in the same capacity in Wales. It is part of the Welsh Government.
- **Academic literature** is literature published in peer-reviewed academic journals.
- **Grey literature** is literature published outside of academic journals, for example, reports by government organisations, charities, research institutes etc.
- **Publication bias** is the trend for studies that report positive/statistically significant findings or findings that are perceived to be important to be more likely to be published or published quickly. Can be minimised by searching grey literature.
- **Qualitative research** is research that uses non-numeric data such as people's views, for example, findings from interviews or focus groups.
- **Quantitative research** is research that uses numbers or statistical data.

1. BACKGROUND

1.1 Who is this review for?

This rapid review was conducted as part of the Health and Care Research Wales Evidence Centre Work Programme. The question was suggested by stakeholders from Cafcass Cymru. This review is intended primarily for policymakers who are responsible for policy concerning children and families but also for family law professionals and families in private law children's proceedings.

1.2 Background and purpose of this review

1.2.1 Private law landscape in England and Wales

Private law children's proceedings typically involve court disputes between parents who have separated and disagree about child arrangements, and apply for orders that determine where a child should live and who they should spend time with (Ministry of Justice 2015). These proceedings are often initiated by a separated parent, usually the father (Cusworth et al. 2020). In contrast, public law involves state interventions to protect children at risk of harm, which may lead to care or supervision orders (Ministry of Justice 2015).

The number of private law applications in England and Wales has risen over the past few years, indicating the growing needs in this area (Cusworth et al. 2020), and is twice that of public law cases annually (Nuffield Family Justice Observatory 2021). In 2019/20 England had approximately 46,500 private law applications, increasing from about 35,000 in 2007/08 (Cusworth et al. 2021). Similarly, Wales also showed an increase in the same timeframe, with 3,390 private law applications in 2018 and 2,440 in 2007 (Cusworth et al. 2020). The rate of private family law applications per 10,000 family households has been growing slightly in both England and Wales (Cusworth et al. 2021, Cusworth et al. 2020). However, only a minority of separated families resort to court: this figure is estimated to be 10% or less (Cusworth et al. 2020).

Parental separation can be highly stressful for children. Research shows that children from separated families are more likely to be negatively affected in terms of their social, emotional, and physical wellbeing as well as education, and that adults who experienced parental divorce as children are at higher risk of poor mental health than other people (Symonds et al. 2022). Court involvement may further exacerbate this stress (Jones 2023). While only around 10% of separating parents go to court to settle disputes over their children, these tend to be complex cases of parental separation, marked by the inability to agree on arrangements concerning children. This may be due to a high degree of parental conflict or, frequently, alleged or confirmed domestic abuse. Indeed, the prevalence of alleged or confirmed domestic abuse in private law cases is estimated to be 49% to 62% (Hunter et al. 2020). For children, growing up in a situation of domestic abuse can be highly traumatic and is linked to poorer outcomes in later life (Symonds et al. 2022). Even witnessing abuse happening to a parent, without being a direct subject to it, can be damaging to children (Hunter et al. 2020).

At the same time, children involved in private law commonly receive less attention in policy than those in public law cases. The evidence base to inform private law policymaking is less developed than for public law (Cusworth et al. 2021). There are also concerns that child protection workers are more familiar with public law procedures and do not always have the necessary training to assist children in private law (Hunter et al. 2020). All this points towards the need for more attention towards this vulnerable group of children.

The aim of this review is to shine a light on the wellbeing and other important characteristics or outcomes of children who are currently, or have been, involved in family law proceedings due to parental separation, to paint a realistic picture of the support needs of these children who are often overlooked in policy. This work focuses on literature from England and Wales, but also includes literature from countries with comparable legal systems, as identified by the stakeholders from Cafcass Cymru: Australia, Canada, and New Zealand.

1.2.2 Review question

The question guiding the focus of this review, developed with the stakeholders from Cafcass Cymru and a Health and Care Research Wales (HCRW) Evidence Centre public involvement member, is as follows: *What are the characteristics and outcomes of children involved in private family law proceedings due to parental separation?* The review is intended to inform readers about the mental health and wellbeing, education, and physical health needs of these children, and therefore broadly focuses on these factors.

2. RESULTS

Extensive literature searches were conducted, which included searching bibliographic databases, identifying literature included in existing reviews on similar topics, finding studies cited by or citing those already identified, and searching a large number of websites of relevant government, third sector, and research organisations. Details of the criteria used for selecting studies for inclusion in the review and review methods are provided in Section 5 of this report. The review included both descriptive studies, which describe the characteristics of a specific population, and analytic studies, which assess the impact of a specific exposure or observe the outcomes in a specific population. It included studies reporting quantitative data (numbers or statistics) and qualitative data (words or meaning).

A total of 22 studies reported in 25 documents were identified, originating from England (n=9), Wales (n=2), England and Wales (n=2), Australia (n=7), Canada (n=1), and New Zealand (n=1). The identified literature is a mix of articles published in academic journals (n=8) and grey literature reports (n=17). Ten studies used quantitative methods, eight qualitative methods, and four mixed methods.

The following seven broad themes for the characteristics and outcomes of the children were identified: mental health and emotional wellbeing, engagement with mental health services, behaviour, development, social relationships, learning and education, and physical health. The findings below are summarised according to these seven themes, with the findings from studies conducted in England and Wales presented first. Table 1 provides a summary of which outcomes were described in each study. A more detailed summary of the included studies and the full record of the relevant data extracted from these studies can be found in Section 6.2.

Most of the studies from England and Wales limited inclusion to complex private law cases, for example, involving allegations or confirmed instances of domestic abuse, children for whom a welfare report was prepared or who were made party to the proceedings, or cases that were subject to a Serious Case Review (SCR), which happens when either a child dies and abuse or neglect is suspected to contribute to the death, or when a child has been seriously harmed and there are concerns about how well multi-agency working was performed. Only three of the studies from England and Wales did not limit their samples to particularly complex private law cases, and two of these studies included the same sample of participants. Of the studies from the comparable countries, four were focused on cases that included domestic or child abuse and the other five had no such sample restrictions. More information is available in Table 1.

Table 1: Study characteristics

Reference (First author, year)	Population characteristics	Study design*	Children's characteristics or outcomes						
			Mental health and emotional wellbeing	Engagement with mental health services	Behavioural	Developmental	Social relationships	Learning and educational	Physical health
England and/or Wales									
Bailey 2011†/Timms 2007‡ ¹	Welfare report/party to proceedings	Qualitative (survey)	✓	×	×	×	×	×	×
Bream 2003†	Welfare report	Quantitative (interviews with survey)	✓	×	×	×	×	×	×
Cafcass 2015‡	Cafcass report (unspecified)	Quantitative (case review)	✓	✓	✓	×	×	×	×
Douglas 2006‡	Rule 9.5 (separate representation)	Qualitative (interviews)	✓	✓	×	×	×	×	×
Green 2014‡	Subject to Serious Case Review	Quantitative (case review)	✓	×	×	×	×	×	✓
Green 2016‡	Subject to Serious Case Review	Quantitative (case review)	✓	×	×	×	×	×	✓
Green 2017‡	Subject to Serious Case Review	Quantitative (case review)	✓	×	×	×	×	×	✓
Griffiths 2022a‡/2022b‡ ²	Any	Quantitative comparative (cohort)	✓	×	×	×	×	×	×
Harold 2013‡	Rule 16.4 (party to proceedings)	Mixed (survey)	✓	×	✓	×	✓	×	×
Hunter 2020‡	Any but mostly domestic abuse	Qualitative (various methods)	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Trinder 2006‡	Any	Mixed (interviews with survey)	✓	×	✓	×	✓	×	×
Trinder 2007‡	Any	Quantitative (interviews with survey)	✓	×	✓	×	✓	×	×
Women's Aid 2022‡	Domestic abuse	Qualitative (call for evidence)	✓	✓	×	✓	✓	×	✓
Australia, Canada, or New Zealand									
Black 2021†	Any	Quantitative (cross-sectional)	✓	×	×	×	×	×	✓
Brown 2001‡ / 2002† (1) ³	Child abuse allegations	Quantitative (cross-sectional)	✓	✓	×	×	×	×	×
Brown 2001‡ / 2002† (2) ³	Serious allegations of abuse	Quantitative (cross-sectional)	✓	✓	×	×	×	✓	×
Carson 2018‡	Any	Mixed (interviews)	✓	✓	✓	×	✓	×	✓
Carson 2022‡	Any	Mixed (survey, case review)	✓	×	✓	×	✓	✓	✓
Darlington 2001†	Any	Qualitative (interviews)	×	×	×	×	✓	×	×
Gollop 2020‡	Any	Qualitative (interviews)	✓	✓	✓	×	✓	✓	×
Nelson 2022‡	Domestic abuse	Qualitative (interviews)	✓	×	✓	×	✓	×	×
Shea Hart 2010†/2011† ⁴	Domestic abuse	Qualitative (case review)	✓	×	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓

*If only the qualitative or quantitative part of a mixed-methods study was extracted, it is reported here as qualitative or quantitative accordingly; more detail in Section 6.2.

†Academic publication, ‡grey literature publication.

¹ Referred to as "Bailey et al. 2011", ² as "Griffiths et al. 2022b", ³ as "Brown 2002", ⁴ as "Shea Hart 2011" in this report.

^"The First Study", ^^"The Magellan Study".

2.1 Mental health and emotional wellbeing

2.1.1 Overview of the evidence base

Children's mental health and wellbeing outcomes were described in the majority of the identified studies, including 13 from England and Wales (Bailey et al. 2011, Women's Aid 2022, Bream & Buchanan 2003, Cafcass Policy Team and National Improvement Service 2015, Douglas et al. 2006, Green & Halliday 2017, Green et al. 2014, Green et al. 2016, Griffiths et al. 2022b, Harold 2013, Hunter et al. 2020, Trinder et al. 2006, Trinder & Kellett 2007) and eight from the comparable countries (Black et al. 2021, Brown 2002 (two studies), Carson et al. 2018, Carson et al. 2022, Gollop et al. 2020, Nelson 2022, Shea Hart 2011). In terms of the study designs, seven studies from England and Wales were quantitative, four qualitative, and two mixed methods. The designs of the studies from the comparable countries were as follows: three quantitative, three qualitative, and two mixed methods.

2.1.2 Findings

Evidence from England and Wales

First, we describe the evidence from England and Wales. The thirteen studies from England and Wales reporting mental health and emotional wellbeing included reports of children who were or had been involved in court proceedings due to parental separation experiencing: anxiety (Bailey et al. 2011, Cafcass Policy Team and National Improvement Service 2015, Griffiths et al. 2022b, Hunter et al. 2020, Women's Aid 2022), unhappiness, sadness, and depression (Bailey et al. 2011, Douglas et al. 2006, Harold 2013, Hunter et al. 2020, Griffiths et al. 2022b), anger (Bailey et al. 2011, Hunter et al. 2020), trauma and post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) symptoms, such as nightmares and panic attacks (Women's Aid 2022, Harold 2013, Hunter et al. 2020), eating disorders (Hunter et al. 2020), or self-harm and suicide attempts (Hunter et al. 2020).

Of note is the report of the findings of the Ministry of Justice's (MoJ) expert panel, known as the Harm Panel, assessing the risk of harm to children and parents involved in private law children cases (Hunter et al. 2020). The report includes findings from a call for evidence that attracted more than 1,200 responses from individuals and organisations as well as roundtables and focus groups, much of which focused on cases involving allegations or confirmed instances of domestic abuse.

The responses received by the panel spoke of children experiencing a wide range of mental health problems, such as anxiety, depression, PTSD, complex PTSD, eating disorders, self-harm, and suicide attempts. It also notes a few cases of children's suicide. Many of these were attributed to the, often protracted, private law proceedings. One example includes a childhood victim of domestic abuse responding to the call for evidence recalled becoming "very distressed" when she had to attend the court-ordered meetings with her father and "standing in the doorway of the [contact] centre screaming and refusing to go in" (Hunter et al. 2020, p.142). Another respondent sharing their experiences as a child involved in private law proceedings talked about suffering from anxiety and having problems with eating, sleeping, and toileting as a child and having a "profound fear of authority figures" as a teenager and adult that stemmed from seeing such figures as someone who could force them to do things against their will and punish them (Hunter et al. 2020, p.162). Yet another childhood victim talked about developing PTSD due to the stress they went through.

Reports from parents and professionals published in Hunter et al. (2020) highlight the same issues. One mother talked about her daughter self-harming and her sons being "deeply upset" and having "severe reactions" after receiving letters from their father in jail, who was allowed to contact the children once a month as an interim measure before the final court hearing. Another mother spoke of her son becoming suicidal after the court ordered contact

with the father despite Cafcass's recommendation for a prolonged period of therapy before contact took place. Other parents described their children as suffering from PTSD, "crying and shaking" when forced to attend a contact session with the father, as well as having sleeping problems, feeling "scared, isolated, and depressed", bedwetting, suffering from nightmares, and having chronic stomach aches and vomiting in the week before contact. A divorce and domestic abuse professional responding to the call for evidence recalled examples of children hiding under their beds, locking themselves in rooms, running into a road, and hurting themselves to avoid unwanted contact with a parent, as well as becoming mute and catatonic when asked about the parents that they were scared of.

In response to the Harm Panel's findings, Women's Aid published a report in which survivors of domestic abuse who had been involved in private law proceedings since the Harm Report's publication (n=21), as well as professionals from specialist support services (n=10), shared their experiences with the private law system (Women's Aid 2022). In the report, both survivors' and professionals' accounts showed that "two years on, private law children proceedings continue to be a source of re-traumatisation" (Women's Aid 2022, p.11). Parents talked about their children having anxiety, panic attacks, stress symptoms, and nightmares, waking up multiple times in the night due to trauma, bedwetting, and having stomach aches, mirroring the accounts published in Hunter et al. (2020).

These qualitative findings are supported by quantitative data from nine studies from England and Wales. Bream & Buchanan (2003) interviewed parents (n=100) involved in private law proceedings whose children were subject to a welfare report for the court shortly after the end of the proceedings and one year later. Parents were asked to provide an assessment of their children using two standardised questionnaires: the Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire (SDQ), which measures conduct, hyperactivity, peer relations, emotional problems, and prosocial behaviour, and the General Health Questionnaire (GHQ), which measures short-term changes in mental health and functioning. In this study, at the first interview, according to parental reports (n=56), 52% of boys and 48% of girls had borderline or abnormal scores on the SDQ, and at the second interview (n=47) those figures were 62% and 32% respectively. Children over eight years old (n=28) were also asked to complete the SDQ at the second time point and the percentage of children with borderline or abnormal scores was 36%. Data related to the subscales of the SDQ were not provided in this study, so it is not possible to report them here, even though some of the subscales would better fit other sections of this report. On the GHQ, there was a strong relationship between distress in children and parents, who also provided an assessment of their own wellbeing. The children aged 7–9 years old had the highest scores, and among the children under 7 years of age around half were found to be distressed at the first interview and 80% at the second.

Trinder et al. (2006) and Trinder & Kellett (2007) also used the SDQ. They interviewed parents sampled from court cases that had children named on the application. In the Trinder et al. (2006) study, the interviews happened within a few days of the conciliation appointment (n=250) and then 6–9 months later (n=175). The authors reported that the number of children with borderline or abnormal scores at baseline was double the national average at 42.9%, according to 156 parent-reports. When looking at the numbers reported by resident vs non-resident parent, 51% of the children had borderline or abnormal scores according to the resident parent (n=100) and 28.6% to the non-resident parent (n=56). This difference was statistically significant ($p=0.011$), suggesting a discrepancy in how resident and non-resident parents understood their children's experiences. The authors suggested that resident parents were more likely to provide a more accurate assessment of their children's wellbeing due to having more contact. The difference in the SDQ scores in resident vs non-resident parent-reports may reflect differences in how the children's wellbeing and behaviour are experienced by each parent: for example, a child may be more likely to show distress at home.

At the follow-up in the Trinder et al. (2006) study, when only data from parents that were available at both time points were compared ($n=106$), the average SDQ scores decreased statistically significantly from 13.14 ($SD=7.02$) at baseline to 11.48 ($SD=6.94$) at follow-up ($p=0.002$). However, but there was not a statistically significant difference in the number of children with normal SDQ scores, with 57.5% being in the normal band at baseline and 66.0% at follow-up ($p=0.078$). The same parents were invited to participate in another follow-up on average 27 months after the first baseline interview and 117 parents took part (Trinder & Kellett 2007). In this follow-up study, 43% of the children had borderline or abnormal scores according to the resident parent and 35% according to all parent reports, again exceeding the UK average reported by the authors to be at 20%. Trinder & Kellett (2007) also ran a logistic regression analysis the likelihood of children scoring within the normal range on the SDQ ($n=73$), which showed that the best predictor of normal SDQ scores at the follow-up was a normal score at baseline ($p=0.000$) and that having contact, further litigation, and current adult wellbeing were not statistically significant predictors.

A more recent study examined the incidence of depression and anxiety in children involved in private law proceedings in Wales (Griffiths et al. 2022a, Griffiths et al. 2022b). It used linked population-level data across Wales from Cafcass Cymru and the Welsh Longitudinal General Practice (WLGP) data, resulting 17,041 records related to children in private law. The incidence of depression per 1,000 person-years at risk was 3.5 (95% CI 3.4–3.7), which was 60% higher in the private law group (IRR=1.6, 95% CI 1.4–1.7, adjusted for calendar year, gender, age, and deprivation) than in the general population comparison group. Children in private law proceedings were also more likely to develop depression than those in the comparison group (HR=1.9, 95% CI 1.7–2.1, adjusted for previous history of depression and deprivation). Similar results were observed in the data on anxiety: the incidence per 1,000 person-years at risk was 4.3 (95% CI 4.2–4.5), which was 30% higher in the private law group (IRR=1.3, 95% CI 1.2–1.4, adjusted for calendar year, gender, age and deprivation) than in the comparison group. Children in the private law group were also significantly more likely to have anxiety than the control group (HR=1.4, 95% CI 1.2–1.6, adjusted for previous history of anxiety and deprivation).

Finally, we identified five studies from Cafcass or Cafcass Cymru that reported quantitative data on children involved in private law proceedings. A case review conducted by the Cafcass Policy Team and National Improvement Service (2015) examined the prevalence and nature of mental health concerns raised in cases in England in which Cafcass was involved. They selected a random sample of reports ($n=20$) filed to a family court from across all Cafcass local service areas, of which half ($n=10$) featured mental health concerns. Of these, five were in private law and reported anxiety ($n=3$) and low resilience and high vulnerability ($n=1$).

Three Cafcass reports reviewing submissions to SCRs were identified (Green & Halliday 2017, Green et al. 2014, Green et al. 2016). SCRs are conducted in cases when a child dies and abuse or neglect is suspected or confirmed to be a factor, or in cases of serious harm to a child where there are concerns about multi-agency working. The Cafcass reports assigned risk ratings to reviewed cases against 13 risk factors, such as emotional abuse. The ratings were based on what had been known to Cafcass about the recency, frequency, and severity of each factor at the time of their involvement in the case. In the Green et al. (2014) report, emotional abuse was found to be a risk in 53.8% of the 13 cases concerning private law, of which 12 were private law-only and one case involved both private and public law. Of these 13 cases, 23.1% were high risk, 15.4% medium risk, and 15.4% low risk. Similarly, of the seven private law cases in Green et al. (2016), emotional abuse was a risk in 57.1% (14.3% high risk, 28.6% medium risk, 14.3% low risk). The same document also reported an instance of a child in a both private and public case having many suicide attempts. Green & Halliday (2017) reported aggregated risk for domestic and emotional abuse and of the three private law cases in that report, 66.7% were at high risk.

An internal Cafcass Cymru study provided for the purposes of this review featuring 112 children from 81 families involved in private law proceedings found that 32% at risk were at risk of emotional problems, as per the SDQ (Harold 2013). Regarding the overall SDQ score measuring multiple problems (emotional, conduct, and hyperactivity), a total of 48% of the children were considered at risk. The qualitative component of this study reported some of these children to “feel so hurt” and have “many bad dreams” as well as “feel sick” or be “really really unhappy” when they had to be with one of the parents. One of the children described their life as “a living hell”. These were complex private law cases where Rule 16.4 of the Family Procedure Rules 2010 was applied to make the children party to the proceedings.

Evidence from Australia, Canada, and New Zealand

Findings from the comparable countries show more variability. In an Australian study of cases of a residence or contact dispute involving child abuse allegations (n=200), 28% of children showed high levels of distress (Brown 2002, “The First Study”). However, in another study by the same authors, of cases with serious allegations of abuse (n=175), it was 4% (Brown 2002 “The Magellan study”). A study of cases involving child custody or access disputes (estimated n=15,582) from Canada found that emotional harm was evident in 22.8% of the cases (Black et al. 2021).

Some court file data from Australia is also available. In a study that reported a review of 300 court file samples and 147 published and unpublished judgements (Carson et al. 2022), court data showed that 41.8% of the children had psychological needs, 36.1% mental health special needs, and 15.5% trauma relating to the requirement for having to spend time with their non-primary parent or carer. Another Australian study of judgements made in family courts, which concerned 33 children aged 2–16 represented in 20 judgements, reported that the judgements described the children as anxious, depressed, frightened, stressed, upset, unsettled, traumatised and having suicidal ideation, problems with sleep, difficulties concentrating, and “deep psychological scars” (Shea Hart 2011).

Nelson (2022) spoke with seven adult survivors of domestic abuse from Australia whose parents were involved in court proceedings when they were children. One of the participants, a woman in her 30s, described the emotional harm caused by the court as “more traumatic” than the family violence she had experienced. Another participant, a man in his 20s, said that the court-ordered telephone calls to his father were traumatising: “even to this day, it’s still ... it still lingers. I would almost classify the whole scenario as like a type of PTSD, and looking back now, is ... constant anger, sadness, a lot of frustration” (Nelson 2022, p.7). Similarly, in a study reporting a survey parents and carers, 65% of those who identified issues relating to children (n=111) thought that the family law system harmed their children or failed to protect them from harm (Carson et al. 2022). Some parents and carers from New Zealand also spoke of the protracted proceedings and obstructive actions of the other parent causing stress to their children and making them go through “years of trauma” (Gollop et al. 2020). The parents and carers talked about children having anxiety attacks and self-harming. Some positive outcomes were also shared: some of the parents said that the arrangements provided their children with a routine, which reduced uncertainty and made them happier and less anxious.

Australian children (n=61) aged 10–17 years old interviewed by Carson et al. (2018) spoke about the court proceedings “detrimentally” impacting their sense of wellbeing and them having anxiety, trouble sleeping, and traumatic recurring dreams about the court. However, looking at the quantitative data from the same study, 16.4% reported being happy with life “all of the time”, 67.2% “most of the time”, 14.8% “sometimes”, and 1.6% “rarely”. Similarly, when asked about their overall mental and physical health, 26.7% of the participants said it was “excellent”, 28.3% “very good”, 31.7% “good”, 10.0% “fair”, and 3.3% “poor”.

2.1.3 Bottom line results for mental health and emotional wellbeing

Together, these findings show that children involved in private law proceedings suffer from a wide range of mental health and emotional wellbeing problems, with some evidence suggesting that it is more so than children in the general population. Accounts from both England and Wales and from Australia, Canada, and New Zealand showed many children subject to family law proceedings due to parental separation to have high levels of anxiety and depression and suffer from trauma and emotional distress. There is a mix of qualitative and quantitative evidence in the identified literature, with the former containing rich first-hand accounts by children, parents, and professionals and the latter providing numeric data regarding children's mental health and emotional wellbeing characteristics and outcomes.

The qualitative accounts are broadly similar both in the literature from England and Wales and from the comparable countries. They describe a wide range of mental health difficulties experienced by the children, such as anxiety, depression, anger, trauma and PTSD symptoms, eating disorders, self-harm, and suicide attempts. A few accounts by parents and carers from New Zealand described the positive effects of agreeing on child arrangements but such examples were not numerous. Due to the nature of the included studies, some of which included self-selecting samples and many focused on complex and particularly stressful cases, the available qualitative evidence is likely to be skewed towards accounts of negative experiences of contact with the family law system. This is not to dismiss such evidence: even without information on the prevalence of negative experiences, it illustrates the lived reality of children going through family court systems due to parental separation.

With regard to the quantitative evidence, most of the data from England and Wales was based on the SDQ and the majority of the included studies that used it did not report subscale-level data. However, across all the studies that used it and reported the overall SDQ score (Bream & Buchanan 2003, Trinder et al. 2006, Trinder & Kellett 2007, Harold 2013), around half the children had borderline or abnormal scores, so the evidence across the UK studies appears consistent. There is more variability in the results of the quantitative studies from the comparable countries, with some evidence showing much more positive outcomes. Fewer of these studies than those from England and Wales were limited to particularly complex cases and a wider range of instruments to measure children's outcomes was used.

It was not possible to ascertain if the poor mental health outcomes were attributable to parental separation, the court proceedings, court orders, or other factors (for example, domestic abuse prevalent in private law cases) – or a combination of these. Due to the designs of the included studies, making causal inferences from the data also was not possible. However, particularly in the cases of domestic violence, many participants spoke of the stress and anxiety caused or exacerbated by family law proceedings and by unwanted court orders. Such orders were often described as putting children in highly stressful and dangerous situations, such as mandating that they spend time with an abusive parent. Many mental health difficulties were attributed to that in the participants' accounts. This was the case in the qualitative evidence both from England and Wales and from the comparable countries. It appears that it is not the court proceedings per se but rather unwanted court orders that may underlie children's mental health and emotional wellbeing struggles. The stress that parents' experience from court proceedings may also be a factor in children's mental health and emotional wellbeing.

Within the limitations of this rapid review, only academic studies were formally critically appraised in terms of their quality. More information about how the quality of the studies was assessed is provided in Section 5.6. The Welsh cohort study by Griffiths et al. (2022b) had some methodological limitations in terms of how the loss to follow-up was handled and the lack of clarity regarding the timelines for the development of outcomes (see Section 6.3 for

detail), but overall it was performed well. The quality of most of the quantitative cross-sectional studies (Black et al. 2021, Bream & Buchanan 2003, Brown 2002 “The First Study”, “The Magellan Study”) was considered quite low. Participant inclusion criteria were not always clear, none of the studies provided detailed enough descriptions of the subjects and setting, and most did not identify or address confounding factors—that is, factors that may affect the relationship between the variables of interest. However, in all of these studies it was judged that children’s involvement in family law proceedings was measured in a valid and reliable way, and so were their outcomes. The Canadian study by Black et al. (2021) was considered to be the most reliably performed. With regard to the qualitative academic studies that informed this section of the report, one (Shea Hart 2011) was considered to be very well performed, with no serious methodological issues detected, and the other (Bailey et al. 2011) had some serious limitations, particularly with regard to how thoroughly it reported the participants’ views. It should be noted that the outcomes of interest in this review were not the main focus of the Bailey et al. (2011) study and our critical appraisal focused on what was relevant to the question of the review.

Regarding the certainty of the overall body of evidence, no formal assessment was performed within this rapid review, however, here we summarise some of the main factors. Section 5.8 provides more information on how these were identified. The studies included in this synthesis, both quantitative and qualitative, provided evidence that directly addressed the review question as they all include children involved in family law proceedings due to parental separation. The only exception is the Gollop et al. (2020) report from New Zealand which, in addition to parents and carers who had used family justice services, included those who had had limited or no service use.

The confidence in the findings from the overall body of quantitative evidence was assessed, where possible, in terms of methodological quality, consistency across study findings, precision, directness of the evidence, and the possibility of publication bias. As described above, the included academic studies had a number of methodological limitations, introducing a risk of bias; the methodological quality of the grey literature was not formally assessed. The findings of the studies from England and Wales related to mental health and emotional wellbeing were consistent with each other, but there was more variability in the evidence from the comparable countries, broadly showing less negative trends. In some but not all cases this may be because the samples were not limited to particularly complex and stressful family law cases. Most of the quantitative studies were descriptive and only provided the number or percentage of children in the sample experiencing an outcome. Only in the Griffiths et al. (2022b) and Trinder et al. (2006) studies were statistical analyses performed. In this type of review, a formal assessment of publication bias was not possible, but we included extensive grey literature searches to maximise the retrieval of evidence.

The confidence in the findings from the overall body of qualitative evidence was assessed in terms of methodological limitations, coherence, adequacy of data, and relevance to the research question. No formal quality assessment of the grey literature was conducted and the quality of the academic studies varied, as described earlier in this section. However, the included reports, together with the two academic studies that contributed to this section, were numerous and provided rich qualitative accounts by a large number of children, parents, and professionals. The evidence consistently showed the struggles that children face, with the same themes appearing across different studies.

2.2 Engagement with mental health services

2.2.1 Overview of the evidence base

Eight studies, four from England and Wales (Cafcass Policy Team and National Improvement Service 2015, Douglas et al. 2006, Hunter et al. 2020, Women’s Aid 2022) and

four from the comparable countries (Brown 2002 (two studies), Carson et al. 2018, Gollop et al. 2020) covered children's engagement with mental health services.

2.2.2 Findings

Evidence from England and Wales

Many of the submissions to the Harm Panel spoke of children being either referred to or in need of a referral to CAMHS, including a childhood victim of domestic abuse who described themselves as "lucky" for coming under CAMHS for their PTSD because it "saved [them] from further unwanted contact [with a parent]" (Hunter et al. 2020). A participant in the Douglas et al. (2006) study, 14 years old at the time, talked about having to see a "mind doctor" because of his father's actions. He recalled: "I think mum maybe knew that I was getting to the point where I would do something silly with the stress because I just couldn't cope and I think the court saw that as well" (Douglas et al. 2006, p.51).

All of the children in private law cases with identified mental health concerns (n=5) in the Cafcass Policy Team and National Improvement Service (2015) report were receiving some level of support, such as school-based support (n=2), professional services (n=1), or specialist multi-disciplinary team support (n=2). The specifics of the support were as follows: school "team around the child" (n=1), unspecified school support (n=1), school providing an external counsellor (n=1), CAMHS referral (n=1), receiving CAMHS support (n=1).

The Women's Aid (2022) report warned of children in private law proceedings being prevented from accessing mental health support. A representative of a support service for survivors of sexual violence and child sexual abuse responding to the call for evidence spoke of the lack of clear guidance on whether children in private law cases could access therapy for sexual abuse and that mothers bringing children to play therapy might be viewed as "corroborating a false narrative". Two children described by the respondent had been denied therapy which they would have had a right to had they been involved in a criminal investigation instead.

Evidence from Australia, Canada, and New Zealand

Australian children in at least 68% of the cases in the "First Study" (n=200) and in 63% of cases in the "Magellan Study" (n=175) were reported to use counselling services (Brown 2002). Similarly, another, much later, Australian study (n=61) reported that 62.3% of the children had engagement with mental health services (Carson et al. 2018). Some of the parents and carers from New Zealand interviewed by Gollop et al. (2020) raised the issue of the lack of support for post-separation issues from mental health or counselling services available to children. One mother recalled being turned away by a counselling agency and psychiatric services because her son's issues were caused by the parents' actions. She said: "Psych services assessed him and basically said, 'He's fine, there's nothing mentally wrong with him. It's you guys. You need to sort yourselves out.' Which, obviously I knew that, that's really helpful!" (Gollop et al. 2020, p.159). Other parents in the study spoke of their children attending counselling, including school counselling services.

2.2.3 Bottom line results for engagement with mental health services

Little information on the use of mental health services by children in private law proceedings in England and Wales has been identified. The available evidence shows variable levels of support accessed by the children, from school counselling to engagement with CAMHS, however, the prevalence of service use is not known, and neither is how many children in private law proceedings are in need of mental health services and how many of those are able to access them. More research on this subject would be helpful. Looking at the evidence from Australia, studies conducted almost two decades apart showed that over half

of the children involved in them were accessing mental health services. Only descriptive statistics were provided. No comparison with the general population was available.

2.3 Behaviour

2.3.1 Overview of the evidence base

Behavioural outcomes were described in five studies from England and Wales (Cafcass Policy Team and National Improvement Service 2015, Harold 2013, Hunter et al. 2020, Trinder et al. 2006, Trinder & Kellett 2007) and five studies from the comparable countries (Carson et al. 2018, Carson et al. 2022, Gollop et al. 2020, Nelson 2022, Shea Hart 2011).

2.3.2 Findings

Evidence from England and Wales

In a Cafcass Cymru study of 112 children from 81 families subject to Rule 16.4 of the Family Procedure Rules 2010, 33% were at risk of conduct problems according to the SDQ (Harold 2013). Behaviour problems were reported in one of the five private law cases in the Cafcass Policy Team and National Improvement Service (2015) study. Trinder et al. (2006) and Trinder & Kellett (2007) reported children's SDQ scores. The SDQ includes a conduct problems subscale. However, no subscale-level data was provided in either report, so it is not possible to untangle conduct problems from the overall SDQ score. The overall SDQ data from these two studies is provided in Section 2.1.2 of this report. Some qualitative data pertaining to children's behaviour was reported in Hunter et al. (2020). Respondents spoke of children becoming "frustrated" and "lashing out" at the mother, turning "violent" after an order for unsupervised contact with a parent, and copying the father's behaviour and becoming physically and verbally abusive to the mother and younger siblings.

Evidence from Australia, Canada, and New Zealand

The Australian children interviewed by Carson et al. (2018) were asked about losing their temper. None of them reported that it happened "all of the time", 4.9% said they did "most of the time", 39.3% "sometimes", 49.2% "rarely", and 6.6% never. A review of Australian court files in the Carson et al. (2022) showed that 11.9% of the children had behavioural problems. One of the Australian participants in the Nelson (2022) study whose parents went to family court when he was younger recalled "acting out, and throwing tantrums, as a child" because he did not know how to verbalise his struggles due to his age at the time. A study that reviewed Australian court judgements (n=20) found that many judgements recorded children's behavioural problems (Shea Hart 2011). The children were described as having "bad behaviour at school and home", having regular detentions at school, being "boisterous and disruptive" towards other children, showing "uncontrollable", "aggressive", and "antisocial" behaviour, having been "violent" towards a sister and other girls at school, showing "anger and hostility", acting out and "kicking, hitting, teasing and showing no remorse", "defecating in the house and smearing faeces over herself, the walls and the furniture in the house", and talking about the desire to "shoot" the father. In a study from New Zealand, a mother spoke of her son hiding under the bed, lashing out, beating an older sibling, and letting himself out at night (Gollop et al. 2020).

2.3.3 Bottom line results for behaviour

The evidence that addresses this question was scarce. Some reports suggest that a substantial number of children involved in family law proceedings experience conduct problems, but it is unclear whether there is causal relationship between them and parental separation, court proceedings, or court orders. Some accounts attributed behavioural problems to frustration with and hurt from the situation the children find themselves in and difficulty in verbalising their feelings.

2.4 Development

2.4.1 Overview of the evidence base

Developmental characteristics were only described in two studies from the UK (Hunter et al. 2020, Women's Aid 2022) and one from Australia (Shea Hart 2011).

2.4.2 Findings

Evidence from England and Wales

A divorce and domestic abuse professional responding to a call for evidence spoke of children in private law proceedings subjected to unwanted contact with a parent regressing "to a much younger age in behaviour" (Hunter et al. 2020). Similarly, a survivor of domestic abuse that responded to the call for evidence by Women's Aid (2022) recalled that her daughter that was forced to go to contact sessions had "gone back years" in her development and regressed in toileting and wanted to wear nappies and use a pushchair.

Evidence from Australia, Canada, and New Zealand

One of the Australian court judgements (n=20) reviewed by Shea Hart (2011) described children experiencing speech and developmental delay problems and another reported that a child needed ongoing therapy for speech and verbal reasoning.

2.4.3 Bottom line results for development

Little evidence is available on children's developmental characteristics, but the few accounts that included it spoke of children experiencing developmental delays and regressing to an earlier developmental stage. However, it is not clear how widespread this issue is.

2.5 Social relationships

2.5.1 Overview of the evidence base

Social relationships were covered in five studies from England and Wales (Harold 2013, Hunter et al. 2020, Trinder et al. 2006, Trinder & Kellett 2007, Women's Aid 2022) and six studies from the comparable countries (Carson et al. 2018, Carson et al. 2022, Darlington 2001, Gollop et al. 2020, Nelson 2022, Shea Hart 2011).

2.5.2 Findings

Evidence from England and Wales

Submissions to the Harm Panel described children's relationships being "distorted by the ongoing abuse they experienced through contact", children experiencing problems with friends or stopping socialising with peers altogether, having a damaged relationship with a parent due to blaming them for the situation they were put in, and becoming "hysterical" when in the same room with adult men (Hunter et al. 2020). The report also spoke of children growing up without appropriate role models and not being able to learn the differences between healthy and unhealthy relationships, which for some resulted in forming relationships with abusive partners in adulthood. Women's Aid (2022) also reported an account of parent whose daughter forced to have unwanted contact with the other parent started falling out with her friends.

The Cafcass Cymru study measured children's perceptions of parenting experiences (Harold 2013). Of the 112 children subject to Rule 16.4 of the Family Procedure Rules 2010, 26% were at risk of low acceptance by the mother and 31% by the father, 23% at risk of rejection by the mother and 25% by the father, and 38% at risk of hostile detachment by the mother

and 39% by the father, as perceived by the children themselves. The SDQ used in Trinder et al. (2006) Trinder & Kellett (2007) contains a subscale measuring peer problems but no subscale data was provided in these studies. The overall SDQ scores are provided in Section 2.1.2 of this report.

Evidence from Australia, Canada, and New Zealand

Of the Australian children (n=61) interviewed by Carson et al. (2018), 26.7% said they got along with peers “all of the time”, 60.0% “most of the time”, 10.0% “sometimes”, 3.3% “rarely”, and 0% “never”. In terms of closeness to their parents, 79.7% said they were “very close”, 15.3% “quite close”, 3.4% “not very close”, and 1.7% “not close at all” to their mother and 22.4% “very close”, 34.5% “quite close”, 19.0% “not very close”, and 24.1% “not close at all” to their father. In the Carson et al. (2022) study, Australian parents and carers (n=470) reported how well their children got along with other peers compared with children of the same age: 4.8% said their children did “much better”, 7.4% “somewhat better”, 41.1% “about the same”, 21.4% “somewhat worse”, 12.9% “much worse”, 0.9% preferred not to say, and 7.4% did not know or could not say; 4.1% chose “other” as their response.

Similarly to the account in Hunter et al. (2020), one of the participants from Australia in the Nelson (2022) study, a woman in her 30s who had been a domestic abuse victim as a child, said she and her younger sibling were “frightened of men” when they were younger. A stepmother from New Zealand shared that the length of time the court proceedings took was damaging for the children’s relationship with their father and with herself (Gollop et al. 2020). Two of the Australian court judgements reviewed in the Shea Hart (2010, 2011) study described children having difficulties in relating to peers and experiencing social isolation.

Finally, the Darlington (2001) study from Australia focused on the social relationships of adults who had been subject to family court proceedings as children (n=18). Specifically, it described children’s relationships with parents and romantic partners. Seven reported that they’d always had a good relationship with both parents, five that they came to accept the non-preferred parent more than previously, three said that the court proceedings exacerbated the difficulties they had in the relationship with the non-preferred parent, and five had little or no contact with one of the parents. In terms of romantic relationships, all 18 said they did not want to repeat the pattern of divorce. Seven said they did not want to “rush into a relationship”, three highlighted the “need for emotional independence and a strong sense of self in a relationship”, three that they needed personal financial security, five spoke of the importance of communication with partners, and four talked about how if divorce was inevitable, it should be done “cleanly”.

2.5.3 Bottom line results for social relationships

Some of the studies from England and Wales spoke of children’s difficulties in relationships with parents and peers. There were qualitative accounts of children who had problems with friends or stopped socialising with them altogether. What quantitative evidence was available came from a study with children involved in particularly complex private law cases and many of the children involved perceived their relationships with their parents as strained. The data from the comparable countries are more promising. In Australian studies, both the children themselves and their parents indicated that children had few problems with socialising with peers. Some qualitative evidence, however, also showed that there were children who struggled with social relationships. No data directly comparing such outcomes to those of children who did not go through family court proceedings was available.

2.6 Learning and education

2.6.1 Overview of the evidence base

Learning and education were described in only one study from England and Wales (Hunter et al. 2020) and four studies from the comparable countries (Brown 2002 “The Magellan Study”, Carson et al. 2022, Gollop et al. 2020, Shea Hart 2011).

2.6.2 Findings

Evidence from England and Wales

The Harm Panel received submissions describing children having their schooling affected by the proceedings, experiencing learning difficulties, and being excluded from school (Hunter et al. 2020). One mother responding to the call for evidence whose then-12-year-old son was forced to have contact with his father said: “His schooling went downhill, he was kicking off at school” (Hunter et al. 2020, p.154).

Evidence from Australia, Canada, and New Zealand

In an Australian study, 25% of the children (n=175) were reported to have learning problems (Brown 2002 “The Magellan Study”). In another study, also from Australia, court files showed that 34.5% of the children had learning difficulties (Carson et al. 2022). In addition, parents and carers (n=470) interviewed in this study reported their children’s learning or schoolwork outcomes compared with children of the same age: 6.7% said it was “much better”, 12.9% “somewhat better”, 29.4% “about the same”, 22.5% “somewhat worse”, 15.6% “much worse”, 0.5% preferred not to say, 4.6% did not know or could not say; and 7.8% chose “other”. Two of the court judgements from Australia (n=20) reviewed by Shea Hart (2011) described children struggling in school academically and having learning difficulties. Finally, in a report from New Zealand, a father described how his formerly “A-plus, amazing, doing well in school” son “went to Ds, Es” and was “kicked out of school” (Gollop et al. 2020).

2.6.3 Bottom line results for learning and education

Only a few qualitative accounts of children’s learning and education from England and Wales were available, talking about children’s schooling being negatively affected, supported by similar data from the comparable countries. In an Australian study, almost 40% of parents thought that their children’s learning and schoolwork were worse than their peers’ (Carson et al. 2022). No data directly comparing learning and educational outcomes of children involved and not involved in family law proceedings was available. Overall, the volume of evidence to address this question was low.

2.7 Physical health

2.7.1 Overview of the evidence base

Five studies from England and Wales (Green & Halliday 2017, Green et al. 2014, Green et al. 2016, Hunter et al. 2020, Women’s Aid 2022) and four from the comparable countries (Black et al. 2021, Carson et al. 2018, Carson et al. 2022, Shea Hart 2011) described children’s physical health outcomes.

2.7.2 Findings

Evidence from England and Wales

Data on fatal and non-fatal incidents involving abuse and neglect was provided in the Cafcass reports reviewing submissions to SCRs in England. Green et al. (2014) reported a total of 26 cases, of which 12 were private law cases and two more concerned both private

and public law. Of the 11 cases of fatal physical abuse, seven were in private law. There were two cases of spite or revenge killing, both in private law. Additionally, the report described an instance of non-fatal physical abuse in a private law case and two cases of non-fatal neglect. Of the 12 private law cases and one case that included both private and public law, physical abuse was a risk in 38.5% (15.4% high risk, 15.4% medium risk, 7.7% low risk).

In the Green et al. (2016) report that included seven private law and three private and public law cases, there was one instance of fatal physical abuse, one instance of fatal neglect, two instances of spite or revenge killing, and one suicide in the private law cases. In addition, there was one instance of non-fatal neglect in a private law case as well an instance of intrafamilial sexual abuse in a both private and public law case. Of the seven private law cases, 42.8% were at risk of physical abuse (28.6% high risk, 14.3% medium risk). The Green & Halliday (2017) report included three private law cases. Of those, in two cases children presented in hospital: one with multiple injuries and one at high risk of death from malnutrition due to neglect. Both cases were non-fatal. It was unclear what happened in the remaining case.

The Harm Panel was also told of children in private law proceedings experiencing multiple physical injuries and being sexually abused (Hunter et al. 2020). Both Hunter et al. (2020) and Women's Aid (2022) reported accounts of children experiencing stomach aches, likely due to anxiety.

Evidence from Australia, Canada, and New Zealand

A Canadian study of an estimated 15,582 children involved in custody or access disputes reported that physical harm was evident in 5.1% of the cases. Of the 61 Australian children in the Carson et al. (2018) study, 26.7% rated their overall mental and physical health as "excellent", 28.3% as "very good", 31.7% as "good", 10.0% as "fair", and 3.3% as "poor". In Carson et al. (2022), of the 470 Australian parents and carers, 12.9% said that their child's health was "excellent", 20.7% "very good", 19.8% "good", 15.2% "fair", 14.3% "poor", 0.5% preferred not to say, 5.1% did not know or could not say, and 11.5% selected "other". Finally, of the 20 Australian court judgements in the Shea Heart (2011) study, one described children having bowel distress and "difficulty with soiling".

2.7.3 Bottom line results for physical health

Regarding the evidence from England and Wales, accounts of children suffering from severe abuse and neglect, leading to death in some cases, including spite and revenge killings, were provided in the submissions to SCRs in England. These were some of the most complex and severe private law cases. No data on prevalence of such events in private law was available. Physical abuse experienced by children involved in private law was also highlighted in the Harm Panel report. A Canadian study estimated that about 5% of children involved in custody or access disputes experienced physical harm. Some more reassuring evidence came from Australian studies where the samples were not limited to complex cases: the majority of both children and of parents and carers thought that children's overall mental and physical health was good, very good, or excellent.

3. DISCUSSION

3.1 Summary of the findings

This review identified 22 studies, including 13 from England and Wales. These studies described a wide range of children's vulnerabilities, including those pertaining to mental

health and wellbeing, engagement with mental health services, behaviour, development, social relationships, learning and education, and physical health.

Most of the available data related to children's mental health and wellbeing and showed a wide range of issues experienced by these children, including anxiety, depression, and PTSD. Qualitative accounts from both England and Wales and from Australia, Canada, and New Zealand were in broad agreement, but while the quantitative studies from England and Wales were consistent with each other, there was more variability in the data from the comparable countries. Data comparing the incidence of anxiety and depression in children that had been involved in private law proceedings and those in the general population in Wales was available and revealed that children in private law fared worse than peers (Griffiths et al. 2022b). These findings are in line with wider research on children from separated families that does not focus on court involvement (Symonds et al. 2022). Apart from the Griffiths et al. (2022b) study, no other studies comparing children in private law to those in the general population were found.

Less data was available on other types of characteristics and outcomes than mental health and emotional wellbeing. However, the existing evidence points towards many of the children involved in family court proceedings experiencing poor outcomes in other domains. In particular, some of the children in private law proceedings suffered from severe abuse and neglect which in some cases led to death. In some cases, the deaths were classified as spite or revenge killings, demonstrating the extreme levels of violence that some children in private law experience and the need for better risk identification methods and protection mechanisms when it comes to child arrangement disputes. In addition, there were accounts of children having conduct problems, likely attributable to hurt and frustration that they could not find another outlet for. Some children's social relationships also suffered, with children becoming withdrawn and socially isolated and having difficulty in relating to peers. Little data was available for these types of outcomes.

Overall, the findings point towards the need for interventions to better support children in private law and ensure their safety and wellbeing. Symonds et al. (2022) suggest that at the policy level, a "safety net" needs to be provided to those families that do not have the resources to otherwise ensure that harm to their children is minimised. The authors argue that adequate support provided to children through the separation process can help them to cope better with separation and transition to a different living situation.

3.2 Strengths and limitations of the available evidence

The studies included in this review provided a wealth of evidence on the vulnerability and experiences of children involved in family law proceedings due to parental separation, particularly in relation to mental health and wellbeing. The identified qualitative evidence included rich accounts of children, parents, and professionals in the family law system. The available quantitative data was broadly in line with these accounts and with each other, both quantitative and qualitative research pointing towards many of the children experiencing a range of issues across the types of outcomes identified in this review.

Much of the evidence included in this report came from grey literature reports. Only eight relevant academic publications were identified. These academic papers were formally critically appraised and variable quality of the evidence was detected. When it came to quantitative evidence, in most studies, little detail about the children involved was provided, it was not clear how they were sampled, and factors that might be influencing the outcomes, such as existing mental health problems, levels of deprivation, and others, were not always identified and accounted for. Most, but not all, of the qualitative research was deemed to adequately represent participant's voices, however, in most studies the important topic of the researcher's own position and potential influence on the research was not addressed. The

details of the critical appraisal are available in Section 6.3. Had there been time to formally appraise the grey literature included in this report, we would have likely found the same issues. The level of detail in reporting was variable in the included studies, particularly in terms of reporting the outcomes related to the subscales of questionnaires that concern distinct constructs. Some valuable data was lost because of that.

Finally, the self-selecting samples, particularly in the studies that relied on calls for evidence, mean that families with particularly difficult experiences are likely to be overrepresented. However, their accounts are valuable to draw attention to the existing problems that children involved in family law proceedings due to parents' separation experience.

3.3 Strengths and limitations of this Rapid Review

The review question and the eligibility criteria for this review were developed in consultation with the stakeholders from Cafcass Cymru who requested this work, ensuring that it addresses policy needs, and with a HCRW Evidence Centre PPI member. The main strength of this review is the extensive search for both academic and grey literature: we searched seven bibliographic databases and over 80 websites, screened the studies included in nine existing reviews on similar topics, and searched for literature cited by and citing the relevant studies that we identified during the database searches. This helped us to maximise the amount of identified relevant literature. A limitation of this review is that only academic literature was critically appraised, so no formal judgment about the quality of the included grey literature reports was made. There was also no formal appraisal of the overall body of evidence.

3.4 Implications for policy and practice

Despite there being twice as many children in private law proceedings compared to public law, they receive little attention in policy. The findings of this review show that many children in private law cases experience issues with mental health and emotional wellbeing and that these issues are serious and wide-ranging. However, little support is available for this vulnerable group of children, especially while the proceedings are ongoing. Therefore, the implications of this review go beyond the Family Justice system. The findings indicate a need for a broad public health response to create a safety net around these children, which may include schools, GPs, and mental health services. A coordinated response can help to identify vulnerable children and provide appropriate and timely support. The availability of support during ongoing court proceedings is important because many children in private law cases are in acute distress, so having to wait until the cases is concluded, especially given the protracted nature of some cases, may mean that such distress is prolonged and exacerbated.

3.5 Implications for future research

While we identified a wealth of evidence that characterises children who are or have been involved in family law proceedings due to parental separation, most of it comes from grey literature, suggesting a disconnect between academic research and real-world policy needs. There is a need for more high-quality studies of the outcomes of such children, particularly long-term, in order to better inform policy decisions. Research comparing short- and long-term outcomes would also be helpful to understand how support needs may change.

Much of the identified research was informed by parents and professionals. While there was a general agreement between the accounts provided by children or adults who had been involved in family law proceedings as children and parents and professionals, it is important to make sure that children are provided with sufficient opportunities to have their views and accounts of their own experiences considered in matters that concern them.

Even within the broad themes identified in this review, there were significant gaps. The only direct comparison with children in the general population was made in data related to anxiety and depression (Griffiths et al. 2022b). While the available evidence indicates that children in private law experience a wide range of negative outcomes across different domains, it is unclear how their support needs differ from children in the general population. Therefore, there is a need for more high-quality comparative studies to better understand the specific support needs of children in private law. More robust data on the prevalence of poor outcomes in children in private law proceedings would also be helpful. Finally, research is needed on the outcomes of children in private law compared to children from separating or separated families whose parents do not go to court over child arrangement disputes to better understand whether and how private law proceedings exacerbate children's experiences, as currently suggested by qualitative accounts identified in this review.

3.6 Economic considerations*

Most private law cases in Wales concern Child Arrangement Orders (CAOs) for a single child aged between one and nine years old (Cusworth et al. 2020). A third (33%) of the mothers and 29% of the fathers making private family law applications in Wales are from the most deprived quintile (Cusworth et al. 2020). Since 2013, legal aid is not available for private law proceedings except some cases, particularly those involving domestic abuse (Hunter et al. 2020). In face of the lack of resource, children and parents in cases not entitled to legal aid are expected to accommodate themselves to contact and to bear direct and indirect costs (Hunter et al. 2020). Given the prevalence of socioeconomically deprived individuals in private family law cases, this acts as a compounding economic challenge further to the disruption of the case itself.

It is estimated that between 49% and 62% of child arrangement and contact cases involve allegations or findings of domestic abuse (Hunter et al. 2020). There is an acknowledgement that safeguarding measures to conduct risk-assessments and putting interventions in place to ensure child arrangements are safe are required, however a lack of financial resources in the private law system restricts their implementation (Hunter et al. 2020). Resource shortages affect the whole private law system, but familial domestic abuse cases may be the most at-risk given they are likely to be more resource-intensive to address than non-abuse cases (Hunter et al. 2020). The Ministry of Justice recommends an appropriate model of specialist domestic abuse advocacy and support services be evaluated in terms of its effectiveness and cost-effectiveness of supporting alleged victims and alleged perpetrators (Hunter et al. 2020). More broadly, domestic abuse cases incur economic costs of £66 billion per annum in the UK. However, these figures did not include the cost of harms to children or the costs of financial abuse or coercive and controlling behaviour (Oliver et al. 2019).

In terms of children's long-term outcomes, children who experience parental separation before the age of 15 can experience an associated 46% reduction in lifetime net wealth compared to those who do not experience it (Lersch & Baxter 2021). However, it is unclear whether there is a difference in lifetime net wealth of those children whose parents used courts and those whose parents did not.

**This section has been completed by the Centre for Health Economics & Medicines Evaluation (CHEME), Bangor University*

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5. RAPID REVIEW METHODS

The protocol for this review was registered on the OSF website and is available through the following link: <https://osf.io/7ngza/>. Some deviations from the protocol were made in describing the methodology of the review to clarify the inclusion of descriptive studies in addition to analytic studies. For the same reason, the review question was also modified to include the word “characteristics”.

5.1 Eligibility criteria

The eligibility criteria were developed in consultation with the stakeholders from Cafcass Cymru that requested this review and a HCRW Evidence Centre public involvement member. They are available in Table 2.

Table 2: Eligibility criteria

	Inclusion criteria	Exclusion criteria
Population	Children aged <18 at the time of court proceedings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adult family members • Professionals involved in court proceedings
Exposure	Private family law proceedings due to parental separation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Public family law proceedings due to parental separation • Other legal proceedings that are not due to parental separation • Family conflict without parental separation • Parental separation without court involvement
Outcomes	Description of the characteristics or short-and long-term outcomes in the following domains: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mental health and wellbeing, including but not limited to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Mental health conditions ○ Engagement with CAMHS ○ Stress ○ Emotional regulation ○ Social relationships ○ Behaviour • Education • Physical health 	
Context	Private family law proceedings	
Study design	Primary quantitative, qualitative, or mixed methods studies (analytic or descriptive), including but not limited to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Longitudinal studies • Cohort studies • Cross-sectional studies • Interviews • Focus groups 	Secondary research
Countries	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • England and Wales (countries of primary interest) • Australia, Canada, New Zealand (countries with comparable legal systems) 	
Language of publication	English	
Publication date	≥2001	

Publication type	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Published academic literature • Grey literature 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Letters • Commentaries • Editorials • Conference abstracts • Opinion pieces
Other factors	Literature that reports data obtained directly from children and/or from parents, guardians, or relevant professionals (e.g., teachers, social workers, family court advisors etc) is included.	

5.2 Literature search

A number of search strategies, including database searches, review unpicking, citation searching, and website searches, were used and are reported in detail in this section.

5.2.1 Database searches

The following databases were searched in July 2024 for literature published since 2001: PsycINFO via Ovid, MEDLINE via Ovid, Scopus, the Web of Science, Social Science Database via ProQuest, Sociology Collection via ProQuest, ERIC via ProQuest. A range of terms related to children and family law was used in different combinations to maximise the sensitivity of the searches. The searches were limited to the English language. Where possible, country limits were applied. The full search strategies for each database are available in Appendix 1.

5.2.2 Identifying literature from existing reviews

Nine reviews, published in ten documents (Allen 2014, Barnett 2020, Birnbaum & Saini 2012a, Birnbaum & Saini 2012b, Doughty et al. 2018, Giovannini 2011, Kelly & Emery 2003, Nuffield Family Justice Observatory 2021, Roe 2021, Sands et al. 2017), which had been identified during informal preliminary searches, during database and grey literature searches, and through other reviews, were unpicked. Only records warranting further investigation were exported, i.e. not those from ineligible countries, published before 2001, or excluded based on the title.

5.2.3 Citation searching

Citation searching was undertaken using a combination of the Web of Science and Scopus databases. Five seed articles that we included after being identified during the database searches were used. Both backward and forward citation searching was conducted, with the references found from each seed article uploaded to Endnote. The identified references were deduplicated against each other and against the existing library of references identified during the database searches.

5.2.4 Website searches

A list of websites of relevant UK-, Australia-, Canada-, and New Zealand-based government, research, and third sector organisations was identified through known literature, web searches, snowballing, and the review team's prior knowledge. The list is available in Appendix 2. The searches were conducted between June and August 2024. Each website was searched by at least one reviewer using keywords and/or by reviewing lists of publications where those were available on the websites. After deduplication, potentially relevant documents were downloaded for further review.

5.2.5 Other literature identification methods

An internal study (Harold 2013) was supplied by the stakeholders from Cafcass Cymru for the purposes of this review.

5.3 Study selection process

The flow of citations identified through each method through the review process is reported in the PRISMA flow diagram (Page et al. 2021) in Figure 1.

5.3.1 Identified database records

The records identified in Scopus and the Web of Science as originating in the US were screened by a single reviewer. The rest of the records were independently screened by two reviewers based on the information provided in the titles and abstracts, with disagreements resolved by a third reviewer where necessary. Records that appeared to meet the eligibility criteria and those where a decision could not be made based on the information provided in the title and abstracts alone progressed to full-text screening. A decision algorithm based on the eligibility criteria was developed and piloted on two of the studies. Full-text screening was performed by two reviewers independently using the decision algorithm, with any disagreements resolved by a third reviewer. The list of studies excluded during full-text screening with exclusion reasons is available in Appendix 3.

5.3.2 Literature identified from existing reviews

The identified references were deduplicated against those already found during the database searches and previous grey literature searches. The resulting additional references were a mix of academic and grey literature documents. These references were screened by a single reviewer based on the information provided in the titles and abstracts, and records that appeared to be eligible, or where a decision could not be made based on the titles and abstracts alone, progressed to full-text screening. The full texts were scanned by a single reviewer and excluded if the study was performed in an ineligible country. The rest of the full texts were screened independently by two reviewers, with a third reviewer arbitrating conflicts where necessary.

5.3.3 Literature identified through citation searching

The identified references were screened based on the information provided in the titles and abstracts by a single reviewer. References that appeared to be eligible, or where a decision could not be made based on the titles and abstracts alone, were independently screened at full text by two reviewers.

5.3.4 Literature identified through website searches

All of the downloaded documents were initially scanned by a single reviewer and irrelevant documents were excluded. Where a document appeared to be relevant or where a decision could not be made by brief scanning, it proceeded to the next stage of review and was independently screened by two reviewers.

5.4 Data extraction

Relevant data from the identified studies were extracted into a table which had been piloted on two studies of different designs first by a single reviewer in conversation with another reviewer. The following data were extracted from each study by a single reviewer and checked for accuracy and completeness by another reviewer: study aim, study design, dates of data collection, data collection methods, quality assessment tool and rating, who the informants were, sample size, participants' characteristics within family law, participants' demographics, outcomes of interest and outcome measures, relevant findings.

5.5 Study design: classification

This review included studies published in academic articles and grey literature reports, using quantitative methods, qualitative methods, or mixed methods. Where only quantitative or qualitative data were relevant to the review question and extracted from a mixed method

study, the study was recoded as quantitative or qualitative accordingly. Only studies published in academic articles were classified according to study design, which was done for the purposes of selecting an appropriate critical appraisal checklist. No formal study identification algorithm was used. Instead, two reviewers classified the articles in conversation with each other.

5.6 Quality appraisal

Due to the time limitations of this review, only academic articles were critically appraised. Critical appraisal was performed by one reviewer and checked by another, with any disagreements resolved through discussion. Cross-sectional studies were assessed using the JBI Critical Appraisal Checklist For Analytical Cross Sectional Studies (Moola et al. 2020). For qualitative studies, the JBI Critical Appraisal Checklist For Qualitative Research (Lockwood et al. 2015) was used. Finally, the cohort study was assessed using the JBI Critical Appraisal Checklist For Cohort Studies (Moola et al. 2020). The full record of the critical appraisal is provided in Section 6.3.

5.7 Synthesis

Data from the included studies were synthesised narratively using a series of thematic summaries. For readability, the data were grouped in seven sections, not three as anticipated at the protocol development stage.

5.8 Assessment of body of evidence

No formal assessment of the overall body of evidence was performed within the limitations of this rapid review, however, the dimensions included in the Grading of Recommendations, Assessment, Development and Evaluation (GRADE) approach (Schünemann et al. 2023) and the Confidence in the Evidence from Reviews of Qualitative research (GRADE-CERQual) approach (Lewin et al. 2018) were considered. As such, when narratively describing the overall body of quantitative evidence, where possible, we reflected on the risk of bias, imprecision, inconsistency, and indirectness of the evidence as well as possible publication bias; methodological limitations, coherence, adequacy of data, and relevance to the research question were considered in relation to the qualitative evidence.

6. EVIDENCE

6.1 Search results and study selection

A visual representation of the flow of study selection throughout the review can be found in Figure 1. A total of 22 studies (reported in 25 publications) were included in the review. If only a quantitative or qualitative part of a mixed methods study was relevant to the review question and therefore extracted, the study was classified as quantitative or qualitative accordingly. As a result, of the 22 included studies, ten were classified as quantitative methods, eight as qualitative, and four as mixed method. Out of the eight academic studies, four were classified as cross-sectional (Black et al. 2021, Bream & Buchanan 2003, Brown 2002 “The First Study”, “The Magellan Study”), three as qualitative (Bailey et al. 2011, Darlington 2001, Shea Hart 2011), and one as cohort (Griffiths et al. 2022b).

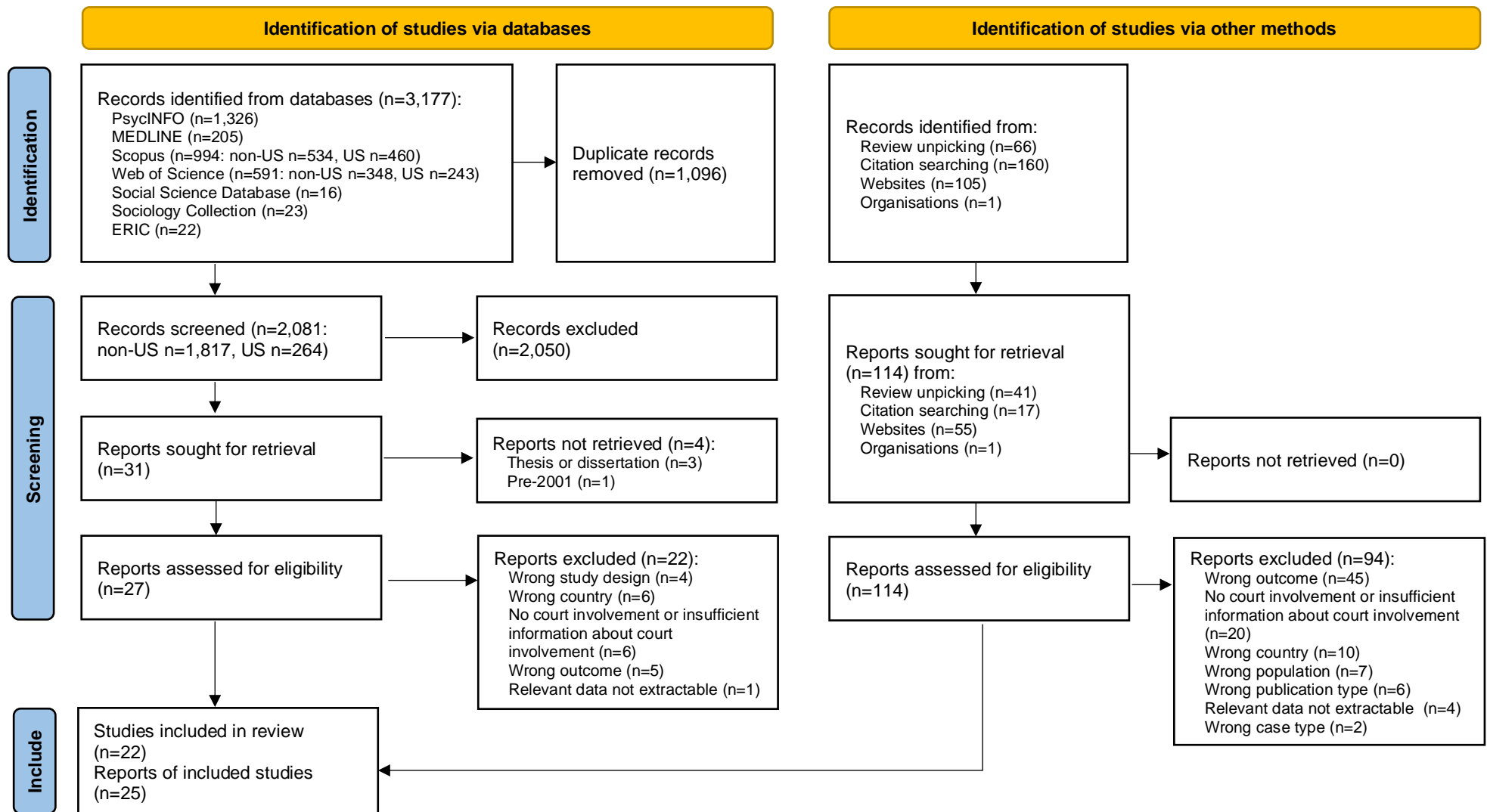


Figure 1: PRISMA flow diagram

6.2 Data extraction

Citation (Type) Country DOI or URL	Study details	Outcomes and relevant findings
<p>Bailey et al. (2011) (Academic)</p> <p>Timms et al. (2007) (Grey)</p> <p>England</p> <p>http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/09649069.2011.617070</p>	<p>Aim: To report the views and perceptions of children and young people about the decisions which had been made on their behalf by the courts and their parents</p> <p>Study design: Mixed methods (qualitative findings extracted)</p> <p>Dates of data collection: June – August 2006</p> <p>Data collection methods: Questionnaire with tick-box questions and free text boxes sent to parents to give their children to complete independently</p> <p>Quality assessment tool and rating: 6 out of 10 on the JBI Critical Appraisal Checklist For Qualitative Research</p> <p>Informants: Children</p> <p>Sample size: 141</p> <p>Participants' characteristics within family law: Children about whom a Section 7 report had been prepared from 1 April – 30 Sept 2005 or who had been made a party to the proceedings and been represented under rule 9.5 (FPR 1991) by a children's guardian over a 12-month period</p> <p>Participants' demographics: <i>Age (range):</i> 11–18 years <i>Age (mean):</i> 13 years and 1 month <i>Gender:</i> 66% girls, 34% boys <i>Ethnicity:</i> 95.7% white, 2.1% South Asian, 2.1% mixed heritage <i>Only children:</i> 9.2% <i>Time since parental separation (range):</i> <1–13 years <i>Time since parental separation (mode):</i> 1 or 2 years <i>Residence arrangement:</i> 61% with mother, 28.4% with father, 7.1% shared between mother and father, 3.5% with another person <i>Attended court:</i> 7.1%</p>	<p>Types of outcomes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mental health and emotional wellbeing <p>Specific outcomes of interest & outcome measures:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>Emotional wellbeing:</i> no tick-box questions on wellbeing, but some of the respondents gave information about their feelings and wellbeing using free-text boxes; self-report <p>Relevant findings: A “substantial minority” (number not reported) reported feelings of anger or anxiety towards or about parents or extended family members. Some other respondents (number not reported) gave “a general impression of sadness and even helplessness towards making a difference to things”</p> <p>Quotes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> “[I would like] to stop shouting and losing my temper with everyone” (girl, 14) “I would like to settle down within myself, because I feel very uncomfortable” (another girl, 14) (p.132)
<p>Black et al. (2021) (Academic)</p> <p>Canada</p> <p>https://doi.org/10.1080/1548732.2020.1751770</p>	<p>Aim: To understand child welfare investigations that involve child custody disputes in Ontario, Canada</p> <p>Study design: Quantitative (cross-sectional)</p> <p>Dates of data collection: October – December 2013</p> <p>Data collection methods: Data from the cyclical cross-sectional Ontario Incidence Study of Reported Child Abuse and Neglect</p> <p>Quality assessment tool and rating: 6 out of 8 items on the JBI Critical Appraisal Checklist For Analytical Cross Sectional Studies</p> <p>Informants: Professionals (child welfare investigation workers)</p> <p>Sample size: Estimated 15,582</p>	<p>Types of outcomes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mental health and emotional wellbeing Physical health <p>The variable “at least one child functioning issue” covers other categories but insufficient level of detail is provided</p> <p>Specific of interest & outcome measures:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>Physical harm evident:</i> Maltreatment Assessment Form, child welfare investigator-report. Types include bruises, cuts or scrapes, broken bones, burns and scalds, head trauma, fatal, and a free text box for health conditions

<p>Additional information on measures from Fallon et al. (2015)</p>	<p>Participants' characteristics within family law: Cases were considered to involve child custody or access disputes if a court application had been made or was pending</p> <p>Participants' demographics: <i>Age:</i> ≤15 <i>Gender:</i> Not reported <i>Ethnicity:</i> Not reported <i>Only children:</i> Not reported <i>Time since parental separation:</i> Not reported <i>Residence arrangement:</i> Not reported <i>Attended court:</i> Not reported</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Emotional harm evident:</i> Maltreatment Assessment Form, child welfare investigator-report. Yes/no question • <i>At least one child functioning issue:</i> Maltreatment Assessment Form, child welfare investigator-report. Functioning issues include: depression/anxiety/withdrawal, suicidal thoughts, self-harming behaviour, ADD/ADHD, attachment issues, aggression, running (multiple incidents), inappropriate sexual behaviour, <i>Youth Criminal Justice Act</i> involvement, intellectual/developmental disability, failure to meet developmental milestones, academic difficulties, FAS/FAE ("birth defects"), positive toxicology at birth, physical disability, alcohol abuse, drug/solvent abuse, other (free text) <p>Relevant findings:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Physical harm evident:</i> 5.1% • <i>Emotional harm evident:</i> 22.8% • <i>At least one child functioning issue:</i> 43.1%
<p>Bream & Buchanan (2003) (Academic)</p> <p>England and Wales</p> <p>https://doi.org/10.1093/bjsw/33.2.227</p>	<p>Aim: To find out how parents and children perceived the preparation of the welfare report and how they experienced the court's involvement in their parents' disputes; to assess any changes in the level of conflict within the family and the well-being of the children and parents; and to identify factors in the reporting and court process which may contribute to a reduction in conflict and promotion if the child's welfare</p> <p>Study design: Mixed methods—semi-structured interviews and two validated measures (quantitative data extracted)</p> <p>Dates of data collection: 6-month period from 1 April 2001</p> <p>Data collection methods: Time 1 shortly after conclusion of court proceedings: Semi-structured interview with parents and completion of measures. 1 year later semi-structured interviews with parents and completion of measures. Where the child was eight years old or over the children were also asked to complete the SDQ at second interview</p> <p>Quality assessment tool and rating: 3 out of 8 items on the JBI Critical Appraisal Checklist For Analytical Cross Sectional Studies</p> <p>Informants: Parents (not specified), children</p> <p>Sample size: 100 adults and 30 children total. First interview: 56 parent-reports of SDQ, 94 parent-reports of GHQ, Second interview: 47 parent-reports of SDQ, 28 child-reports of SDQ, 77 parent-reports of GHQ</p> <p>Participants' characteristics within family law: families on whom a welfare report was completed who were contacted through family court welfare services.</p> <p>Participants' demographics: <i>Age:</i> ≥8 years <i>Gender:</i> Not reported <i>Ethnicity:</i> Not reported <i>Only children:</i> Not reported</p>	<p>Types of outcomes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mental health and emotional wellbeing <p>Specific outcomes of interest & outcome measures:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Emotional wellbeing:</i> Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire (SDQ), parent-report (resident parent), self-report (child); The General Health Questionnaire (GHQ), parent-report (not specified) <p>Relevant findings:</p> <p><i>Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire (SDQ) (parent-report):</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Boys—abnormal/borderline 52% at first interview, 62% at second interview • Girls—abnormal/borderline 48% at first interview, 32% at second interview <p><i>Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire (SDQ) (child-report):</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 36% abnormal/borderline at second interview <p><i>The General Health Questionnaire (GHQ):</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "There was a strong relationship between parental and child distress particularly at the second interview, with above threshold scores on the GHQ strongly associated with distress in their children" (p.231) • Children aged 7–9—highest scores at both interviews (unspecified) • Children under 7—around half (unspecified) distressed at first interview, 80% at second interview

	<p><i>Time since parental separation:</i> Not reported <i>Residence arrangement:</i> Not reported <i>Attended court:</i> Not reported</p>	
<p>Brown et al. (2001) (Grey)</p> <p>Brown (2002) (Academic)</p> <p>Additional information from Brown et al. (1998)</p> <p>Australia</p> <p>“The First Study”</p>	<p>Aim: To investigate the way the Family Court of Australia managed child abuse cases Study design: Quantitative (cross-sectional) Dates of data collection: January 1994 – June 1995 until July 1996 Data collection methods: Cases of child abuse were identified in two registries—Melbourne one third of cases were randomly selected, Canberra all cases were included Quality assessment tool and rating: 2 out of 8 items on the JBI Critical Appraisal Checklist For Analytical Cross Sectional Studies Informants: Professionals (medical practitioners, psychologists, social workers, psychiatrists and teachers) Sample size: 200 Participants’ characteristics within family law: All cases where there was a residence and/or contact dispute involving child abuse allegations active in 1994–95 Participants’ demographics: <i>Age (mean):</i> 5 years <i>Gender:</i> Not reported <i>Ethnicity:</i> No Aboriginal parents were identified. No further information. <i>Only children:</i> Not reported <i>Time since parental separation:</i> Not reported <i>Residence arrangement:</i> Not reported <i>Attended court:</i> Not reported</p>	<p>Types of outcomes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mental health and emotional wellbeing • Engagement with mental health services <p>Specific outcomes of interest & outcome measures:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Frequency of emotional or psychiatric problems/high level of distress:</i> documentation from experts such as psychologists, psychiatrists, doctors, and social workers • <i>Children’s use of counselling services</i> <p>Relevant findings:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Frequency of emotional or psychiatric problems/high level of distress:</i> 28% • <i>Children’s use of counselling services:</i> at least 68%
<p>Brown et al. (2001) (Grey)</p> <p>Brown (2002) (Academic)</p> <p>Australia</p> <p>“The Magellan Study”</p>	<p>Aim: To describe the program and its component processes and to document the outcomes of the program, as well as how the outcomes were obtained Study design: Quantitative (cross-sectional/service evaluation) Dates of data collection: 5 June 1998 to end of 2000 Data collection methods: Cases selected for the Magellan program from two registries Melbourne and Dandenong Quality assessment tool and rating: 2 out of 8 items on the JBI Critical Appraisal Checklist For Analytical Cross Sectional Studies Informants: Professionals (medical practitioners, psychologists, social workers, psychiatrists and teachers) Sample size: 175 Participants’ characteristics within family law: Cases with serious allegations of abuse as assessed on the basis of the court file Participants’ demographics: <i>Age (mean):</i> 8.64 years <i>Age (range):</i> <1–17 years <i>Gender:</i> Not reported</p>	<p>Types of outcomes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mental health and emotional wellbeing • Engagement with mental health services • Learning and educational <p>Specific outcomes of interest & outcome measures:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Frequency of emotional or psychiatric problems/high level of distress:</i> documentation from experts such as psychologists, psychiatrists, doctors, and social workers • <i>Children’s use of counselling services</i> • <i>Learning problems:</i> documentation from psychologists, psychiatrists and teachers <p>Relevant findings:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Frequency of emotional or psychiatric problems/high level of distress:</i> 4% • <i>Children’s use of counselling services:</i> 63% • <i>Learning problems:</i> 25%

	<p><i>Ethnicity:</i> Mothers: 1% Aboriginal, 1% Torres Strait Islander; fathers: 4% Aboriginal. No further information <i>Only children:</i> Not reported <i>Time since parental separation:</i> Not reported <i>Residence arrangement:</i> 69% living with mother, 17% living with father, 1% living with grandparents, 10% living with grandparents and a parent, 3% living with both parents <i>Attended court:</i> Not reported</p>	
<p>Cafcass Policy Team and National Improvement Service (2015) (Grey)</p> <p>England</p>	<p>Aim: To identify the prevalence and nature of child mental health concerns raised in Cafcass cases; to identify the services received by the children and young people; to consider the policy implications Study design: Quantitative (case review) Dates of data collection: Not reported Data collection methods: Data from reports filed to a family court selected at random from across all 17 Cafcass local service areas. Only one case from any individual practitioner was considered and cases where the eldest child was aged 3 or under were excluded Quality assessment tool and rating: N/A Informants: Professionals (family court advisers, schools, mental health professionals) Sample size: 20 reports (10 in private law) in total, of which 10 reports (5 in private law) regarding 12 children featured concerns about mental health and were further considered Participants' characteristics within family law: Children in private and public law for whom Cafcass filed a report to family court Participants' demographics (all 10 reports): <i>Age (range):</i> 4–16 years <i>Gender:</i> 33.3% female, 66.7% male <i>Ethnicity:</i> Not reported <i>Only children:</i> Not reported <i>Time since parental separation:</i> Not reported <i>Residence arrangement:</i> Not reported <i>Attended court:</i> Not reported</p>	<p>Types of outcomes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mental health and emotional wellbeing • Engagement with mental health services • Behavioural <p>Specific outcomes of interest & outcome measures:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Mental health</i>, including anxieties, behavioural problems, and formal diagnoses • <i>Support services received</i>, according to the CAMHS four-tier strategic framework (the highest tier of service recorded). Tier 1: school-based; Tier 2: professional services; Tier 3: specialist multi-disciplinary teams (including for Autistic children); Tier 4: hospitalisation for mental health <p>Relevant findings (5 private law reports): <i>Mental health:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Anxiety (n=3) / Behaviour problems (n=1) • Low resilience, high vulnerability (n=1) <p><i>Tier of service received:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tier 1 (n=2) / Tier 2 (n=1) / Tier 3 (n=2) <p><i>Details of service:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • School 'team around the child' (n=1) • School support, unspecified (n=1) • School providing an external counsellor (n=1) • CAMHS referral (n=1) • Receiving CAMHS support (n=1)
<p>Carson et al. (2018) (Grey)</p> <p>Australia</p>	<p>Aim: To investigate the experiences and needs of children whose parents had separated and had accessed the family law system Study design: Mixed methods (qualitative data collection but some results presented quantitatively) Dates of data collection: May 2017 – April 2018 Data collection methods: In-depth semi-structured interviews Quality assessment tool and rating: N/A Informants: Children Sample size: 61 children, 47 parents Participants' characteristics within family law:</p>	<p>Types of outcomes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mental health and emotional wellbeing • Engagement with mental health services • Behavioural • Social relationships • Physical health <p>Specific outcomes of interest & outcome measures:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Overall health (mental and physical):</i> quantitative categorical data and quotes, interview self-reports

	<p>Parents had finalised (or re-negotiated) their matters and had engaged with Australian family law system services no earlier than 2013</p> <p>Participants' demographics: <i>Age (range):</i> 10–17 years <i>Age (mean):</i> 13 years <i>Gender:</i> 44.3% female, 55.7% male <i>Ethnicity:</i> 6.6% Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander. No more detail reported. <i>Only children:</i> 8.2% <i>Time since parental separation (range):</i> <1–16 <i>Time since parental separation (mean):</i> 7 <i>Residence arrangement:</i> 75.4% mostly with mother, 11.5% mostly with father, 13.1% about the same with both <i>Attended court:</i> 10.3%</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Happy with life:</i> quantitative categorical data and quotes, interview self-reports • <i>Losing temper:</i> quantitative categorical data, interview self-reports • <i>Getting along with people same age:</i> quantitative categorical data, interview self-reports • <i>Closeness to parents:</i> quantitative categorical data and quotes, interview self-reports • <i>Engagement with mental health services:</i> quantitative categorical data and quotes, interview self-reports <p>Relevant findings:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Overall health (mental and physical):</i> 26.7% excellent, 28.3% very good, 31.7% good, 10.0% fair, 3.3% poor • <i>Happy with life:</i> 16.4% all of the time, 67.2% most of the time, 14.8% sometimes, 1.6% rarely, 0% never • <i>Losing temper:</i> 0% all of the time, 4.9% most of the time, 39.3% sometimes, 49.2% rarely, 6.6% never • <i>Getting along with people same age:</i> 26.7% all of the time, 60.0% most of the time, 10.0% sometimes, 3.3% rarely, 0% never • <i>Closeness to mother:</i> 79.7% very close, 15.3% quite close, 3.4% not very close, 1.7% not close at all • <i>Closeness to father:</i> 22.4% very close, 34.5% quite close, 19.0% not very close, 24.1% not close at all • <i>Engagement with mental health services (psychologists, psychiatrists, other):</i> 62.3% • One participant reported that “the court proceedings had detrimentally impacted on her sense of wellbeing” and described a traumatic recurring dream about the court • “The uncertainty about the nature of their engagement in the family law process compounded the stress and distress that some children and young people experienced when interacting with family law professionals more generally, with this stress and distress palpable at the time that these interactions were recounted during the project interviews” (p.57) • “Distress was also experienced by children and young people in circumstances where the challenged parent became aware of the views that had been expressed to the family report writer” (p.58) • Some participants reflected “on the stressful nature of their experience with the family law process. Perceived inaction on the part of family law system professionals, particularly in response to safety concerns raised by children
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		<p>and young people, was also identified by a number of participants as causing distress” (p.59)</p> <p><u>Quotes:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “[M]y mental health is really bad at the moment. It’s always really been bad and there’s not really much I can do to help fix it really.” (Claire, F, 12–14 years) (p.16) • “I do have a lot of trouble sleeping, like ... almost every night.” (Hayden, M, 15+ years) (p.16) • “My dad and I, we clash sometimes because we’re both very argumentative people. So often we get into arguments and/or he does things to really upset me and I come to my mum’s house because I can’t deal with it with my— because I have an anxiety disorder. So dealing with that sort of thing is really stressful. So, with my dad I’m a lot less close, I feel like I can’t tell him things because he’s extremely judgemental of the things that I do tell him.” (Claire, F, 12–14 years) (p.18) • “I think the whole—the whole kind of situation was a bit stressful for me ... So kind of bringing that up maybe brought back like memories and just like, yeah, just the whole kind of uncomfortable like kind of feelings that were associated with the situation.” (Oscar, M, 15+ years) (p.57)
<p>Carson et al. (2022) (Grey)</p> <p>Australia</p> <p>https://anrow.s-2019.s3.amazonaws.com/wp-content/uploads/2022/10/23163803/4-AP.2-Kaspiew-RR2-Family-Law-Parenting-Orders.pdf</p>	<p>Aim: To examine the operation of the parenting order contravention and enforcement regime in Australia and to support greater understanding of key issues related to compliance and non-compliance</p> <p>Study design: Mixed methods (survey and case review)</p> <p>Dates of data collection: Survey: June 2021 – October 2021; Case review: April 2021 – February 2022 (Court files from July 2017 – March 2021; published judgements from June 2016 – 11 September 2021; unpublished judgements from July 2017 – September 2021)</p> <p>Data collection methods: Survey, case review</p> <p>Quality assessment tool and rating: N/A</p> <p>Informants: Survey: parents (98%) and carers (2%); Case review: professionals</p> <p>Sample size: Survey: 470 parents and carers; Case review: 300 court file samples, 147 published and unpublished judgements</p> <p>Participants’ characteristics within family law: Survey: 57% consent with litigation, 33% judicial determination; 4% dispute resolution, 5% negotiations with the other parent; case review (court files): 97% contravention applications, 94% affidavit by the applicant in the contravention matter</p> <p>Participants’ demographics:</p> <p><u>Survey of parents and caregivers:</u></p> <p><i>Age (years):</i> 18.7% 25–34, 49.1% 35–44, 28.1% 45–54, 3.2% 55+</p> <p><i>Gender:</i> 65.3% female, 33.8% male</p> <p><i>Ethnicity:</i> 6.2% Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander</p>	<p>Types of outcomes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mental health and emotional wellbeing • Behavioural • Social relationships • Learning and educational • Physical health <p>Specific outcomes of interest & outcome measures:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Child health;</i> survey, parent-report • <i>Learning/schoolwork compared with children of the same age;</i> survey, parent-report • <i>Getting along with other children compared with children of the same age;</i> survey, parent-report • <i>Rating of most areas of children’s life compared with children of the same age;</i> survey, parent-report • <i>Special needs;</i> court files <p>Relevant findings:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Child health:</i> 12.9% excellent, 20.7% very good, 19.8% good, 15.2% fair, 14.3% poor, 0.5% prefer not to say, 5.1% do not know/cannot say, 11.5% other

	<p><i>Only children:</i> 43% had one child <i>Time since parental separation:</i> Not reported <i>Residence arrangement:</i> 18% most time with the participant (usually the mother) and less than three nights a fortnight with the other parent; 13% most time with the participant (usually the mother) and between four and five nights a fortnight with the other parent; 14% near equal time between both parents; 14% most time with the other parent and less than three nights a fortnight with the participant <i>Attended court:</i> Not reported <u>Case review (court files) children’s characteristics:</u> <i>Age (mean (SD)):</i> 6.72 years (3.93) <i>Age (range):</i> 0–17 years <i>Gender:</i> 49% female, 51% male <i>Ethnicity:</i> 4.6% Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander <i>Only children:</i> Not reported <i>Time since parental separation:</i> Not reported <i>Residence arrangement:</i> 62.1% living with mother, 21.3% shared time, 14.0% living with father <i>Attended court:</i> Not reported</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Learning/schoolwork compared with children of the same age:</i> 6.7% much better, 12.9% somewhat better, 29.4% about the same, 22.5% somewhat worse, 15.6% much worse, 0.5% prefer not to say, 4.6% do not know/cannot say, 7.8% other • <i>Getting along with other children compared with children of the same age:</i> 4.8% much better, 7.4% somewhat better, 41.1% about the same, 21.4% somewhat worse, 12.9% much worse, 0.9% prefer not to say, 7.4% do not know/cannot say, 4.1% other • <i>Rating of most areas of children’s life compared with children of the same age:</i> 4.8% much better, 9.4% somewhat better, 28.3% about the same, 26.5% somewhat worse, 18.9% much worse, 0.9% prefer not to say, 5.3% do not know/cannot say, 5.8% other • <i>Special needs:</i> 24.2% physical, 41.8% psychological, 36.1% mental health, 34.5% learning difficulty, 15.5% trauma relating to requirement for time with non-primary parent/carer, 7.2% cultural, 11.9% behavioural problems, 1.5% other, 57% no special needs • 65% (n=72/111) of parents and carers “who identified issues relating to children and young people in responses about improvements to non-compliance indicated that engagement with the family law system had harmed their children, or that the system had failed to protect their children from harm” (p.61) • “Many” (unspecified) participants thought that “harms to children and young people from the family law system generally and the contravention regime in particular arose in the context of their experiences of family violence, including coercive control” (p.62) <p><u>Quotes</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “Even with the very limited contact arrangement, and the various restrictions my son’s father is subject to, he has chosen to disregard his responsibilities under the orders and as a parent. This has resulted in our son and me experiencing a range of adverse outcomes in terms of mental health and re-traumatisation in relation to the contact” (Female, 35 to 44 years) (p.62) • “My youngest daughter in the orders has mental health issues and is struggling because of [father’s] behaviour towards us.” (Female, 45 to 54 years)” (p.62)
<p>Darlington (2001) (Academic) Australia</p>	<p>Aim: To explore current relationships with parents and approaches to adult relationships in young adults who had been subject to contested custody proceedings as children Study design: Qualitative (interviews) Dates of data collection: Not reported</p>	<p>Types of outcomes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Social relationships <p>Specific outcomes of interest & outcome measures:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Relationship with parents:</i> interviews, self-report • <i>Relationships with partners:</i> interviews, self-report

<p>https://doi.org/10.1300/J087v35n03_02</p>	<p>Data collection methods: In-depth individual interviews using an interview guide, with data thematically analysed; cases were initially identified from counselling files of the Family Court of Australia, current addresses sought through parents, and adult children sent letters with an invitation to participate</p> <p>Quality assessment tool and rating: 6 out of 10 items on the JBI Critical Appraisal Checklist For Qualitative Research</p> <p>Informants: Adult children</p> <p>Sample size: 18 (from 11 families)</p> <p>Participants' characteristics within family law: Subject children in proceedings in The Family Court of Australia in relation to custody and access</p> <p>Participants' demographics: <i>Age (mean):</i> Not reported at the time of the study, 11.3 years at the time of court proceedings <i>Age (range years):</i> 18–26 at the time of study, 9–16 at the time of court proceedings <i>Gender:</i> 55.6% female, 44.4% male <i>Ethnicity:</i> Not reported <i>Only children:</i> Not reported <i>Time since parental separation:</i> Not reported <i>Residence arrangement:</i> Not reported <i>Attended court:</i> Not reported</p>	<p>Relevant findings: <i>Relationship with parents, patterns:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Always had a good relationship with both parents (n=7). None of the participants reported that they had been concerned about risks to the relationship with the non-resident parent • Increasing acceptance of the non-preferred parent (n=5) • Exacerbated difficulties in relationship with the non-preferred parent due to the proceedings (n=3). The participants described “overwhelming feelings of anger and frustration at not being listened to, and having to adhere to arrangements that were not of their own making” (p.31). All three strengthened the relationship with the preferred parent even when required to live with the non-preferred parent • Little or no contact with one parent (n=5) <p><i>Relationships with partners, major themes:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Not wanting to rush into a relationship (n=7) • The need for emotional independence and a strong sense of self in a relationship (n=3) • The need for personal financial security (n=3) • Not wanting to repeat the pattern of parental divorce (n=18) • If divorce is inevitable, do it cleanly (n=4) • The importance of communication in relationships (n=5)
<p>Douglas et al. (2006) (Grey)</p> <p>England</p> <p>https://www.familieslink.co.uk/download/jan07/familyprocrules_research.pdf</p>	<p>Aim: To investigate children’s experiences of being separately represented by order of a judge in private family law proceedings under the provisions of Rule 9.5 of the Family Proceedings Rules 1991; to investigate the views and experience of parents whose children had been separately represented; to examine court records in such cases with a view to finding out why the court had asked for the children to be represented; to conduct a more wide-ranging national postal survey of solicitors in order to canvas their views and experience</p> <p>Study design: Mixed methods (qualitative interviews with children extracted)</p> <p>Dates of data collection: April 2004 – October 2005</p> <p>Data collection methods: Interviews with children, parents, and survey with professionals</p> <p>Quality assessment tool and rating: N/A</p> <p>Informants: Children</p> <p>Sample size: 15</p> <p>Participants' characteristics within family law: Children were separately represented by order of a judge in private family law proceedings under the provisions of Rule 9.5 of the Family Proceedings Rules 1991</p> <p>Participants' demographics: <i>Age (range):</i> 8–17 years <i>Gender:</i> 46.7% female, 53.3% male</p>	<p>Types of outcomes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mental health and emotional wellbeing • Engagement with mental health services <p>Specific outcomes of interest & outcome measures:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Emotional wellbeing;</i> interview self-reports <p>Relevant findings:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “Most of the children liked the idea of someone appointed by the court to help them have their say in proceedings. ... But there were other children who did not appear to have found anyone they could trust and relate to. They appeared ‘lost’, withdrawn, depressed and sometimes angered and intimidated, by their contact with the family justice system” (p.112) • “A number of children were clearly ignorant, confused and made anxious knowing that their parents were going to court to contest residence or contact. They imagined the courts to be “scary places” with judges who have the capacity to ‘punish’ their parents. Some children worried that one or other of their parents could be sent to prison for behaviour for which they themselves felt responsible, such as refusing to go on contact visits” (p.112) <p><u>Quotes:</u></p>

	<p><i>Ethnicity:</i> Not reported <i>Only children:</i> 20% <i>Time since parental separation:</i> Not reported <i>Residence arrangement:</i> non-resident parent indirect contact only (n=6, inc. 3 children from the same family); residence order in favour of the mother and reasonable contact with the father (n=2 from the same family), residence order in favour of the mother and father granted parental responsibility and six supervised contact sessions (n=1); residence order in favour of the mother with contact from the father (n=2 from the same family); residence order in favour of the father structured contact with mother (n=2); residence order in favour of the father and contact supported with sister who resides with mother (n=1); non-resident parent indirect contact only, while sibling has shared residence between parents (n=1) <i>Attended court:</i> No, guardian represented views</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “The reason why I had to see a mind doctor, mental person or whatever the name is, was because of dad. I think mum maybe knew that I was getting to the point where I would do something silly with the stress because I just couldn’t cope and I think the court saw that as well.” (Adam, 14) (p. 51) • “It annoyed me so much ‘cos when I was little I used to look in mirror and hate myself and I’m not lying but I hated myself so much that I punched a mirror one day. I used to think, if I was never born then possibly mum and dad would still be together” (Adam, 14) (p. 52) • “I was scared...well worried and scared possibly ‘cos I was just worried about if my dad got rights of seeing me, ‘cos to be honest, I never wanted to see him again” (Brian, 11) (p.56)
<p>Gollop et al. (2020) (Grey)</p> <p>New Zealand</p> <p>https://www.lawfoundation.org.nz/wp-content/uploads/2020/06/2.-PASS_Perspectives_of_Parents_and_Caregivers_-_Part_2_Report_FINAL_18.6.2020_RE-Parenting-Arrangements.pdf</p>	<p>Aim: To evaluate the 2014 family law reforms in New Zealand Study design: Mixed methods (Qualitative data extracted) Dates of data collection: August 2016 – January 2020 Data collection methods: Qualitative (semi-structured interviews: telephone, face-to-face, Zoom teleconferencing) Quality assessment tool and rating: N/A Informants: Parents and carers Sample size: 180 parents and carers. Number of children not reported Participants’ characteristics within family law: Separated parents and carers who had made or changed parenting arrangements in New Zealand since the reforms took effect and had used family justice services as well as those who had had limited or no service use; 39.5% made or changed parenting arrangements through the Family Court Participants’ demographics:(parents and carers): <i>Age (range years):</i> 20–69 (79.1% aged 30–49) <i>Gender:</i> 76.8% female, 22.0% male, 0.6% other, 0.6% not reported <i>Ethnicity:</i> 83.6% New Zealand European, 11.3% Māori, 1.1% Chinese, 0.6% Indian, 11.3% other, 1.1% not reported (multiple categories could be selected) <i>Only children:</i> Not reported <i>Time since parental separation:</i> Not reported <i>Residence arrangement:</i> Not reported <i>Attended court:</i> Not reported</p>	<p>Types of outcomes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mental health and emotional wellbeing • Engagement with mental health services • Behavioural • Social relationships • Learning and educational <p>Specific outcomes of interest & outcome measures: Quotes from interviews. No standardised outcome measures.</p> <p>Relevant findings:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Positive outcomes of separation:</i> “For some parents, making parenting arrangements had had a positive impact on, and benefitted, their children. The arrangements enabled children to have a routine to follow, reduced uncertainty, lowered anxiety, increased their happiness, and made them more relaxed” (p.161) • <i>Negative outcomes of separation:</i> “However, participants more commonly expressed concern about the negative impact the separation, and the events that followed, had had on their children. The protracted nature of some proceedings, as well as obstructive actions by the other party, made resolution difficult and kept children in uncertain and stressful situations for prolonged periods of time. When children were caught in the middle between their disagreeing or conflictual parents this could place them in a particularly challenging and stressful position. Serious concern about children’s emotional and mental health was at the forefront of some parents’ minds, particularly when their children were feeling confused or traumatised, had to change schools, had things ticking over in their minds, experienced difficulty in processing their emotions, refused contact, or were profoundly affected by the separation and ensuing interparental behaviour. Some also feared the

		<p>long-term impact on their children. Parents and caregivers raised the lack of support available for children affected by post-separation issues, from either mental health or counselling services or from family justice professionals and services” (p.161) “The most frequently mentioned detrimental consequences related to the length of the process putting stress on children and their families; children being caught in the middle between their parents; children’s emotional and mental health; and insufficient support being provided to children” (p.154)</p> <p><u>Quotes:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “I am surprised by some of the good things that have happened as a result of this. It is not all negative. His conflict resolution is good and his awareness of what is happening around him, he is not anxious about stuff when things aren’t quite right. So, there’s stuff that I will attribute to that, in my limited knowledge of psychology” (Father) (p.154) • “For the kids, having it in place was a better situation for them. Living-wise, it’s a much more happier family for them” (Mother) (p.154) • “Yeah, definitely more positive. More positive. I think my kids are better off for it because we’re able to sort things out without it having too much of an effect on them” (Mother) (p.154) • “I noticed the kids’ behaviour as soon as they knew. I can write on the calendar, “Hey, you’re off to Dad’s this weekend and this weekend” and they can see it. They’re so much more relaxed because they can plan their whole thing. So, it has been beneficial” (Mother) (p.154) • “We have been hammered by it and brutalised, as have our children” (Mother) (p.154) • “There would be very few people going through the Family Court, even separating parents, whose children have not suffered some sort of trauma, even amicably separating parents. There are some; I know there are some. But the high percentage of the families in Family Court, I believe the children have experienced trauma and abuse” (Grandmother) (p.154) • “I think the whole process, the stress that’s put onto the children, the stress that’s put onto me, it could have been avoidable. I don’t agree with the system at all, for separation, especially going through the court system. It drags on and the unknown of never knowing when you’re going to be finished. The kids pick up on that. It doesn’t need to be this way” (Mother) (p.155) • “[The length of time it took] was really damaging for the children in terms of their relationship with [my partner]–their father–and me. It put them under enormous pressure. ... They were under prolonged stress for years because
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		<p>[their mother] was so terrified of losing custody of them” (Stepmother) (p.155)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “The Family Court took a year and a half to get to its outcome. Now, that put my children, like my son was A-plus, amazing, doing well in school and everything, he went to Ds, Es and getting kicked out of school. It affected all the children horrendously, and they were put through the mill over it. I blame that on the Family Court’s contribution of why on earth did they allow this to go on and leave it all up in the air?” (Father) (p.155) • “It’s abuse, it’s the most hideous thing in my life. I haven’t slept in a bed since it began because of the trauma of being told I would lose my child constantly enforced on me and seeing my child go through years of trauma, trying to shelter him from that” (Mother) (p.156) • “I know that [Child] has got some issues through that process as well. She’s got some underlying anger about the situation and having her life turned upside down going between two houses and having two parents that couldn’t talk to each other at all unless they were yelling at each other. Being in one place where her dad was belittled and talked about with profanity and stuff, that hit her reasonably hard. So yes, she’s had stuff to go through” (Father) (p.156) • “It’s very re-victimising. It’s very damaging to children” (Mother) (p.156) • “There’s a mental health element for the children. I’m concerned about that actually because I see the impact on the kids” (Mother) (p.157) • “The children are hugely, hugely damaged by the situation, and all I can do as a parent is look after them.” (Mother) (p.157) • [Not understanding what is going on and having parenting arrangements continually changed] “could screw with a kid psychologically. I do a lot of voluntary work in mental health and suicide and stuff. A lot of the statistics you see of adolescent suicide, a lot of it has come from separated homes. Yeah, they have an issue when it comes to processing those emotions because they’re so used to everything being a shambles” (Father) (p.157–158) • “At that point, I had one of my daughters cutting herself again because she was all upset about the fact he wanted them every second week and she didn’t want to go and everybody was in tears and it was just a real shambles. Then he put the court application in and, of course, they knew—I mean, you have to tell them what’s in it. They’re not little people” (Mother) (p.158) • “It wasn’t what I wanted, but I could see my children were being destroyed through the process and I didn’t want to put them through further
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		<p>psychological reports, which had ostracised my son. He became suicidal. It is hard to think of a worse process, quite frankly” (Father) (p.158)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “Yeah, my poor children are in a hell of a state now. But they’re coming right, they’re sort of healing slowly. But it’s a slow process” (Father) (p.158) • “At this point right now, I am trying to re-establish our lives. I have got a lot of psychological issues going on with the children and myself.” (Mother) (p.158) • “I can tell you that for the children it hasn’t been good and I am quite concerned about them in terms of their long-term outcomes out of this whole thing. The research is not very good about long-term outcomes for children who reject contact with one parent” (Mother) (p.158) • “There’s no support there really for children. They were exposed to so much in the early days. You know, my girl, she needs counselling hard out, but she’s so anti it now. ... You’re six years old and you’re meeting all these people and it went on for two-and-a-half years. They’re too little to cope with that” (Mother) (p.159) • “I really struggled with not being able to get help for the kids. I was forever grateful that the schools had counselling services” (Mother) (p.159) • “Things with the kids just kind of carried on and on. I would say to them, ‘You have to go because of your age’ because legally I thought they had to. And then [Child] started getting anxiety attacks. ... So, then we tried, my lawyer wrote and said, ‘[Child] has been to the doctor, he has recommended counselling so we are going to go down that path.’” (Mother) (p.159) • “When we say it is about the kids they wear the consequences, they’re the ones that emotionally are really damaged by it, and there wasn’t a lot of places I could go. So, the kids just had to get older and you just had to try to be the rock. That was a tough one” (Mother) (p.159) • “I could see very clearly, even though the kids were attending school counsellors, referred there by the teacher and a friend’s mother, that they weren’t coping. The younger one in particular, the counsellor there was really concerned about him. He was hiding under the bed. He would lash out. He was beating [his older sibling] up. It was obviously anger issues, it was anxiety issues. He was letting himself out at night and walking up the road. I tried to get him some more help because I could see that, if your parents aren’t going to behave well, his problem was us. And, if I couldn’t get us to behave well, how do I get him support to deal with that. I went to [counselling agency] and they assessed him and said they couldn’t help him, because they only help children that have issues, not children that have issues that are caused by people like us. They referred me onto psych services, and psych services had a look. Psych services assessed him and
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<p>Green et al. (2014) (Grey)</p> <p>England</p> <p>https://www.cafcass.gov.uk/sites/default/files/migrated/Learning-from-Cafcass%E2%80%99-submissions-to-IMRs-2014.pdf</p>	<p>Aim: This study seeks to present data on children and families, index incidents and risk, and Cafcass' involvement in the Serious Case Reviews (SCRs) as well as inquire into cases of child sexual exploitation</p> <p>Study design: Quantitative (case review)</p> <p>Dates of data collection: August 2013 – September 2014</p> <p>Data collection methods: Case review</p> <p>Quality assessment tool and rating: N/A</p> <p>Informants: Professionals (Cafcass)</p> <p>Sample size: 30 children (14 in private law) from 26 cases (12 in private law, 2 in both public and private law)</p> <p>Participants' characteristics within family law: Cafcass was involved currently or previously (92.3%) or Cafcass' contribution to the SCR was on the basis of knowledge of another family member</p> <p>Participants' demographics: <i>Age (range):</i> 0–17 years (76.7% ≤10 years) <i>Gender:</i> 53.3% female, 46.7% male <i>Ethnicity:</i> Not reported <i>Only children:</i> Not reported <i>Time since parental separation:</i> Not reported <i>Residence arrangement:</i> Not reported <i>Attended court:</i> Not reported</p>	<p>basically said, "He's fine, there's nothing mentally wrong with him. It's you guys. You need to sort yourselves out." Which, obviously I knew that, that's really helpful!" (Mother) (p.159)</p> <p>Types of outcomes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mental health and emotional wellbeing • Physical health <p>Specific outcomes of interest & outcome measures:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Index incidents:</i> number of cases where a fatal or non-fatal incident happened • <i>Risk ratings:</i> subjective ratings of "high" (3), "medium" (2) or "low" (1) based on how recent the concern was as well the frequency and severity against 13 risk factors: Child subject to Child Protection Plan; Physical Abuse; Emotional Abuse; Sexual Abuse; Neglect; Child putting self at risk; Domestic violence; Parental mental health; Drug/alcohol abuse; Parental self-harm, suicide threats etc; Antagonism to/ non-engagement with services; Parental experience of abuse; Other <p>Relevant findings:</p> <p><u>Index incident type (for total 26 cases):</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Fatal:</i> 42.3% physical abuse (7 of 11 cases in private law), 3.8% neglect, 7.7% spite/revenge killing (both in private law cases), 3.8% suicide, 7.7% fatal drug overdose • <i>Non-fatal:</i> 3.8% physical abuse (private law case), 15.4% neglect (half in private law cases), 15.4% sexual abuse <p><u>Risk rating (for private law cases (n=12) and/or cases in both public and private law (n=2)):</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Average risk score:</i> 7.6 out of 39 (range: 0–17) in private law, 17 in public and private law • "Fatal/serious maltreatment occurs in the context of low, as well as high, risk cases. ... risk factors might be a crucial practice tool in identifying that significant harm has occurred, or is likely to occur, and thus guiding professional practice; but that they are of little or no value in predicting which children will die as a consequence of maltreatment" (p.20) <p><u>Risk types (for private law and private and public law cases (n=13)):</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Child subject to Child Protection Plan: 23.1% (7.7% high risk, 15.4% medium risk) • Physical Abuse: 38.5% (15.4% high risk, 15.4% medium risk, 7.7% low risk) • Emotional Abuse: 53.8% (23.1% high risk, 15.4% medium risk, 15.4% low risk) • Sexual Abuse: 23.1% (7.7% high risk, 7.7% medium risk, 7.7% low risk) • Neglect: 46.2% (15.4% medium risk, 30.8% low risk)
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<p>Green et al. (2016) (Grey)</p> <p>England</p> <p>https://www.cafcass.gov.uk/sites/default/files/migrated/Learnin-g-from-Cafcass-Submissions-to-Serious-Case-Reviews-2015.pdf</p>	<p>Aim: To present data gathered primarily from Cafcass' submissions to Serious Case Reviews (SCRs) around children and families; index incidents and risk; and practice</p> <p>Study design: Quantitative (case review)</p> <p>Dates of data collection: October 2014 – November 2015</p> <p>Data collection methods: Case review</p> <p>Quality assessment tool and rating: N/A</p> <p>Informants: Professionals (Cafcass)</p> <p>Sample size: 37 children from 23 cases (7 in private law, 3 both public and private)</p> <p>Participants' characteristics within family law: Child or children known to Cafcass at the time or before the incident (82.6%); not known to Cafcass but Cafcass had had previous involvement with other family members; Cafcass did not know the child at the time of the incident but was asked to contribute to the SCR on the basis of involvement following the incident</p> <p>Participants' demographics:</p> <p><i>Age (range):</i> 0–17 years (54% aged 6–15)</p> <p><i>Gender:</i> 67.6% female, 32.4% male</p> <p><i>Ethnicity:</i> Not reported</p> <p><i>Only children:</i> Not reported</p> <p><i>Time since parental separation:</i> Not reported</p> <p><i>Residence arrangement:</i> Not reported</p> <p><i>Attended court:</i> Not reported</p>	<p>Types of outcomes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mental health and emotional wellbeing • Physical health <p>Specific outcomes of interest & outcome measures:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Index incidents:</i> number of cases where a fatal or non-fatal incident happened • <i>Risk ratings:</i> subjective ratings of "high" (3), "medium" (2) or "low" (1) based on how recent the concern was as well the frequency and severity against 13 risk factors: Child subject to Child Protection Plan; Physical Abuse; Emotional Abuse; Sexual Abuse; Neglect; Child putting self at risk; Domestic violence; Parental mental health; Drug/alcohol abuse; Parental self-harm, suicide threats etc; Antagonism to/ non-engagement with services; Parental experience of abuse; Other <p>Relevant findings:</p> <p><u>Index incident type (for total 23 cases):</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Fatal:</i> 8.7% physical abuse (1 of 2 cases in private law), 17.4% neglect (1 of 4 cases in private law), 8.7% spite/vengeance killing (both cases in private law), 4.3% suicide (in a private law case), 0 fatal drug overdose • <i>Non-fatal:</i> 13.0% physical abuse, 8.7% neglect (1 of 2 cases in private law), 34.8% sexual abuse (1 intrafamilial case in public and private law), 4.3% many suicide attempts (both private and public case) <p><u>Risk rating (for private law cases (n=7) and public and private law cases (n=3)):</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Average risk score:</i> 12.6 out of 39 (range: 5–19) in private law, 17 in public and private law <p><u>Risk types (for private law cases (n=7)):</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Child subject to Child Protection Plan: 42.8% (14.3% high risk, 28.6% medium risk) • Physical Abuse: 42.8% (28.6% high risk, 14.3% medium risk)

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Emotional Abuse: 57.1% (14.3% high risk, 28.6% medium risk, 14.3% low risk) • Sexual Abuse: 28.6% (14.3% high risk, 14.3% low risk) • Neglect: 42.8% (14.3% high risk, 14.3% medium risk, 14.3% low risk) • Child putting self at risk: 14.3% low risk • Domestic violence: 71.4% (28.6% high risk, 28.6% medium risk, 14.3% low risk) • Parental mental health: 85.7% (28.6% high risk, 42.8% medium risk, 14.3% low risk) • Drug/alcohol abuse: 28.6% (14.3% high risk, 14.3% medium risk) • Parental self-harm, suicide threats etc: 14.3% high risk • Antagonism to/non-engagement with services: 28.6% (14.3% high risk, 14.3% low risk) • Parental experience of abuse: 14.3% low risk • Other (unspecified): 100% (57.1% high risk, 28.6% medium risk, 14.3% low risk)
<p>Green & Halliday (2017) (Grey)</p> <p>England</p> <p>https://www.cafcass.gov.uk/sites/default/files/migrated/cafcass_learning_from_scr_submissions_-_2017_-_external_version.pdf</p>	<p>Aim: This study seeks to present data on three areas: children and families; index incidents and risk; and Cafcass' involvement in the Serious Case Review and inquires separately into cases where child sexual exploitation was a feature</p> <p>Study design: Quantitative (case review)</p> <p>Dates of data collection: December 2015 – December 2016</p> <p>Data collection methods: Case review</p> <p>Quality assessment tool and rating: N/A</p> <p>Informants: Professionals (Cafcass)</p> <p>Sample size: 21 children from 15 cases (3 in private law)</p> <p>Participants' characteristics within family law: Child or children known to Cafcass at the time or before the incident (83.3%); Cafcass did not know the child at the time of the incident but was asked to contribute to the SCR on the basis of involvement following the incident</p> <p>Participants' demographics:</p> <p><i>Age (range):</i> 0–17 years (76.2% aged <6 years)</p> <p><i>Gender:</i> 57.1% female, 42.9% male</p> <p><i>Ethnicity:</i> Not reported</p> <p><i>Only children:</i> Not reported</p> <p><i>Time since parental separation:</i> Not reported</p> <p><i>Residence arrangement:</i> Not reported</p> <p><i>Attended court:</i> Not reported</p>	<p>Types of outcomes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mental health and emotional wellbeing • Physical health <p>Specific outcomes of interest & outcome measures:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Index incidents:</i> number of cases where a fatal or non-fatal incident happened • <i>Risk ratings:</i> subjective ratings of “high” (3), “medium” (2) or “low” (1) based on how recent the concern was as well the frequency and severity against 13 risk factors: Child subject to Child Protection Plan; Physical Abuse; Emotional Abuse; Sexual Abuse; Neglect; Child putting self at risk; Domestic violence; Parental mental health; Drug/alcohol abuse; Parental self-harm, suicide threats etc; Antagonism to/ non-engagement with services; Parental experience of abuse; Other <p>Relevant findings:</p> <p><u>Index incident type (for private law cases (n=3)):</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Non-fatal:</i> 66.7% children presented at hospital (33.3% multiple injuries, 33.3% at high risk of death from malnutrition from neglect) • Unclear what happened in the remaining case <p><u>Risk rating (for private law cases (n=3)):</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Average risk score:</i> 11.3 out of 39 (range: 9–15) • “Although the level of known risk in private law cases is generally lower, this may not indicate such cases are intrinsically safer: less may be known about

		<p>these cases, and there may be fewer protective factors as Cafcass is often the only safeguarding agency involved” (p.15)</p> <p><u>Risk types (for private law cases (n=3)):</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 66.7% high risk of domestic and emotional abuse
<p>Griffiths et al. (2022b) (Academic)</p> <p>Griffiths et al. (2022a) (Grey)</p> <p>Wales</p> <p>https://doi.org/10.1192/bjpo.2022.6</p>	<p>Aim: This study examined records of depression and anxiety in children involved in public and private law proceedings using linked population-level data across Wales</p> <p>Study design: Quantitative (retrospective e-cohort study and a matched cohort design)</p> <p>Dates of data collection: January 2011 – December 2018</p> <p>Data collection methods: Cafcass Cymru and The Welsh Longitudinal General Practice (WLGP) via the SAIL Databank, Welsh Demographic Service</p> <p>Quality assessment tool and rating: 7 out of 11 items on the JBI Critical Appraisal Checklist for Cohort Studies</p> <p>Informants: Professionals (General Practitioners)</p> <p>Sample size: 17,041 in private law</p> <p>Participants’ characteristics within family law: Children involved with Cafcass Cymru aged <18 years at first recorded court application date</p> <p>Participants’ demographics: <i>Age:</i> 92.1% <10 years, 7.6% 10–14 years, 0.2% 15–17 years <i>Gender:</i> 48.7% girls, 51.3% boys <i>Ethnicity:</i> Not reported <i>Only children:</i> Not reported <i>Time since parental separation:</i> Not reported <i>Residence arrangement:</i> Not reported <i>Attended court:</i> Not reported</p>	<p>Types of outcomes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mental health and emotional wellbeing <p>Specific outcomes of interest & outcome measures:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Depression:</i> WLGP records of Read Codes indicating diagnoses or symptoms of depression and anxiety based on validated code list • <i>Anxiety:</i> WLGP records of Read Codes indicating diagnoses or symptoms of depression and anxiety based on validated code list <p>Relevant findings:</p> <p><u>Depression (recorded diagnoses or symptoms)</u></p> <p>Overall</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of events: 384 • Incidence per 1000 person years at risk: 3.5 (95% CI 3.4–3.7) <p>Female/Male comparison</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of events: females 249, males 135 • Incidence per 1000 person years at risk: Females 4.7 (95% CI 4.5–4.9), Males 2.4 (95% CI 2.3–2.6) • Adjusted incident rate ratios (Adjusted for calendar year, gender, age and deprivation): 1.9 (95% CI 1.6–2.4) P=<0.001 <p>Age comparison</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of events: <10 years 34, 10–14 years 195, 15–17 years 155 • Incidence per 1000 person years at risk: <10 years 0.4 (95% CI 0.4–0.5), 10–14 years 8.6 (95% CI 8.2–9.0), 15–17 years 37.3 (95% CI 35.3–39.4) • Adjusted incident rate ratios (Adjusted for calendar year, gender, age and deprivation): 10–14 years compared to <10 years 19.1 (95% CI 13.1–27.7) P=<0.001, 15–17 years compared <10 years 75.6 (95% CI 51.3–111.4) P=<0.001 <p>Private law compared to general comparison group</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 60% higher in the private law group (IRR = 1.6 (95% CI 1.4–1.7)), compared with the comparison group. • Time to event analyses: CYP involved in private law proceedings were significantly more likely to develop depression than the control group (HR = 1.9 (95% CI 1.7–2.1)) and this was also evident in boys and girls separately <p><u>Anxiety (recorded diagnoses or symptoms)</u></p> <p>Overall</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of events: 470 • Incidence per 1000 person years at risk: 4.3 (95% CI 4.2–4.5)

		<p>Female Male comparison</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of events: Females 285, males 185 • Incidence per 1000 person years at risk: Females 5.4 (95% CI 5.2–5.6), Males 3.3 (95% CI 3.1–3.5) • Adjusted incident rate ratios (Adjusted for calendar year, gender, age and deprivation): 1.6 (95% CI 1.3–1.9) $p < 0.001$ <p>Age comparison</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of events: <10 years 141, 10–14 years 238, 15–17 years 91 • Incidence per 1000 person years at risk: <10 years 1.7 (95% CI 1.6–1.8), 10–14 years 10.4 (95% CI 10–10.9), 15–17 years 21.9 (95% CI 20.4–23.5) • Adjusted incident rate ratios (Adjusted for calendar year, gender, age and deprivation): 10–14 years compared to <10 years 4.8 (95% CI 3.9–6) $p < 0.001$, 15–17 years compared <10 years 8.6 (95% CI 6.5–11.4) $p < 0.001$ <p>Private law compared to general comparison group</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 30% higher in the private law group (IRR = 1.3 (95% CI 1.2–1.4), compared with the comparison group. • Time to event analyses: CYP involved in private law proceedings were significantly more likely to develop anxiety than the control group (HR = 1.4 (95% CI 1.2–1.6)) <p><u>Other</u> Regarding trends over time from 2011 to 2018, rates of depression and anxiety increased for those involved in private cases, mirroring trends in the comparison group, but they remained stable for those involved in public cases, perhaps reflecting differences in help-seeking behaviours</p>
<p>Harold (2013) (Grey)</p> <p>Wales</p>	<p>Aim: To examine the efficacy of the CAF/CASS Cymru Child and Adolescent Welfare Assessment Checklist (CC-CAWAC) in identifying levels of psychological problems among children who experience parental separation marked by high levels of inter-parental conflict and/or violence</p> <p>Study design: Mixed methods (survey)</p> <p>Dates of data collection: From August 2009</p> <p>Data collection methods: Survey with checkboxes and free-text responses (CC-CAWAC checklist)</p> <p>Quality assessment tool and rating: N/A</p> <p>Informants: Children</p> <p>Sample size: 112 children from 81 families</p> <p>Participants' characteristics within family law: Private law cases where Rule 16.4 of the Family Procedure Rules 2010 was applied to make the children party to the proceedings.</p> <p>Participants' demographics: <i>Age (range):</i> 5–15 years</p>	<p>Types of outcomes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mental health and emotional wellbeing • Behavioural • Social relationships <p>Specific outcomes of interest & outcome measures:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Psychological symptoms:</i> Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire (SDQ), child-report (within the CC-CAWAC checklist) • <i>Perceptions of parenting experiences:</i> Parent Behaviour Inventory, child-report (within the CC-CAWAC checklist) • The CC-CAWAC checklist has two versions: for ages 6–11 years and for ages 11–16 years; it allows the practitioner to derive an individual risk index for a child <p>Relevant findings: <u>Psychological Symptoms:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Emotional problems:</i> 32% at risk

	<p><i>Gender:</i> 54% female, 46% male <i>Ethnicity:</i> Not reported <i>Only children:</i> Not reported <i>Time since parental separation:</i> Not reported <i>Residence arrangement:</i> Not reported <i>Attended court:</i> Not reported</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Conduct problems:</i> 33% at risk • <i>Hyperactivity:</i> 37% at risk • <i>Multiple problems:</i> 48% at risk <p>General Population: 10–20% at risk <u>Perceptions of Parenting Experiences:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Parental acceptance of child:</i> 26% at risk re: mother, 31% at risk re: father • <i>Parental involvement:</i> 18% at risk re: mother, 27% at risk re: father • <i>Parental rejection of child:</i> 23% at risk re: mother, 25% at risk re: father • <i>Hostility and detachment from parent:</i> 38% at risk re: mother, 39% at risk re: father <p><u>Quotes (no details about the children provided):</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “I am really really unhappy with mum” (p.12) • “Since what’s happened, my life has become a living hell and I think sometimes why in the world would he do that” (p.12) • “I feel so hurt, I can’t do it. So many bad dreams, I cry myself to sleep” (p.13) • “Every time I go to Dads I feel sick” (p.13)
<p>Hunter et al. (2020) (Grey)</p> <p>England and Wales</p> <p>https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/5ef3dcade90e075c4e144bfd/assessing-risk-harm-children-parents-pl-childrens-cases-report .pdf</p>	<p>Aim: To understand the experiences of how the family court protects children and parents in private law children cases involving domestic abuse and other serious offences; to identify any systemic issues and build a more robust evidence base to inform improvements</p> <p>Study design: Qualitative (call for evidence, roundtables, focus groups)</p> <p>Dates of data collection: July – August 2019 (call for evidence)</p> <p>Data collection methods: A call for written evidence from individuals and organisations; three roundtable discussions with judiciary members, professionals, and practitioners; and ten focus groups with mothers, fathers, and children</p> <p>Quality assessment tool and rating: N/A</p> <p>Informants: Parents, professionals, adult children</p> <p>Sample size: 1,115 responses to the call for evidence: 87% from individuals with personal experience of private law children proceedings (69% mothers or mothers’ families, 18% fathers or fathers’ families, 0.4% former children); 10% from individuals with professional or practical experience in family courts; 3% from organisations</p> <p>Participants’ characteristics within family law: Individuals and organisations with experience of relevant private law cases (no further restrictions)</p> <p>Participants’ demographics: <i>Age:</i> Not reported. The call for evidence included adult children and the focus groups included children <i>Gender:</i> Not reported <i>Ethnicity:</i> Not reported but one of the focus groups was specifically for women from BAME backgrounds</p>	<p>Types of outcomes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mental health and emotional wellbeing • Engagement with mental health services • Behavioural • Developmental • Social relationships • Learning and educational • Physical health <p>Specific outcomes of interest & outcome measures: Quotes from responses to a call for evidence to individuals and organisations, focus groups, and roundtable discussions. No standardised measures</p> <p>Relevant findings: “The submissions provided many detailed and disturbing accounts of harm suffered by children which respondents attributed to their court-ordered contact with abusive parents. The panel acknowledges that it is difficult to do justice to the scale and severity of damage described by respondents. We were told of children experiencing multiple physical injuries, being sexually abused and emotionally devastated; of children developing eating disorders, sleeping problems, night terrors, bedwetting, stomach pains, anxiety, insecurity, hypervigilance, anger, behavioural issues, low self-esteem, ADHD, OCD, PTSD, complex PTSD and depression. In addition, submissions described children’s schooling being affected, children experiencing learning difficulties and being excluded from school. There were many accounts of children self-harming, some of children attempting suicide and, in a few awful cases, of children committing</p>

	<p><i>Only children:</i> Not reported <i>Time since parental separation:</i> Not reported <i>Residence arrangement:</i> Not reported <i>Attended court:</i> Not reported</p>	<p>suicide. ... Many submissions spoke of children being referred to or needing to access Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS). ... In addition to the impacts on children’s physical and mental health, submissions observed that children’s relationships were also distorted by the ongoing abuse they experienced through contact—for example, they were alienated from their mothers by abusive fathers, exposed to an inappropriate role model and grew up not understanding the difference between healthy and unhealthy relationships. Some children were described as mirroring their father’s behaviour, becoming controlling, abusive and continuing the cycle of violence, or they formed relationships as adults with abusive men” p.162–163</p> <p><u>Quotes:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “Initially, as an interim measure before the final hearing, the court allowed him to write to my children from jail once a month. These letters caused my children anxiety—they were very young but they knew enough to know that he was a paedophile and they felt physically sick at having to read his letters. My daughter self-harmed and ended up under CAMHS, my sons were deeply upset by the letters and had severe reactions every time the letters arrived—causing them emotional problems that led to them having to have counselling, as well as causing them to have problems at school and with friendship.” (Mother, call for evidence) (p.141) • “I recall becoming very distressed when told I had to go there and my mother explaining to me that if I did not go, she would be sent to jail. ... I also very clearly recall standing in the doorway of the centre screaming and refusing to go in” (Childhood victim of domestic abuse, call for evidence) (p.142) • “Due to child not being physically assaulted couldn’t get legal aid to get matter returned to court so stuck. Stuck for 7 years. 7 years of repeated actions by dad that worsened [child’s] PTS.” (Mother, call for evidence) (p.142) • “Cafcass said a prolonged period of therapy for my son before any supervised contact even allowed, judge ordered contact within 2 weeks, my son became suicidal at this point and was referred to CAMHS” (Mother, call for evidence) (p.145) • “I was a child who was put in harm’s way during contact. The final time I had contact was when my father threw a punch at me, he is a violent man and this was know right from the start yet he was given contact to me for 7 years and my brother longer. During the 7 years I saw a girlfriend of his beaten and various marks over his now wife on visits, the threats about wanting to kill my mum or how he’d take every penny from her. This is all abuse. I was a very scared child having to see him every other weekend and during school holidays” (Childhood victim of abuse, call for evidence) (p.149)
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		<p>to go. My child became scared of the contact area as she related it to having to see her dad.” (SafeLives survey respondent) (p.155)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “So mum arrives with children who are absolutely heaving and screaming so she takes them home again—the older child is absolutely traumatised by the whole thing and now blames mother for all the things that have gone wrong” (Lawyer, practitioner roundtable) (p.155) • “My child was told by Children’s Services that she would be put in foster care, moved to live with her father and never see her mother again unless she stopped refusing to go to unsupervised contact and overnight stays. She was a bright 10 year old at the time. We both suffer mentally from the trauma and my child has sleeping problems. My child continues to be emotionally abused” (Mother, call for evidence) (p.156) • “Surely it can’t be healthy to be forced against your will for 6 years to go to someone that you don’t trust, that says and does things to you that hurt you, make you feel small, insignificant, anxious, not listened to, excluded, neglected, ignored, not fed, scared, isolated and depressed, even if that is your parent” (Mother, call for evidence) (p.156) • “[After the order for unsupervised contact was made] The child quickly became violent and started bedwetting, refusing food and developed night terrors. ... My child is seriously damaged because the family Court refused to follow 12J and refused to protect the child” (Mother, call for evidence) (p.162) • “My eldest child developed chronic stomach aches and would vomit during the week leading to contact she was so afraid. My youngest child gave up completely and wouldn’t ever complain when she was abused as both children told me over and over again, that it didn’t matter, nobody cared and nobody listens.... My eldest child was terrified of being in the same room as grown men for a long time. Her school was very worried at the reaction she had when she had to have a lesson in class with a male teacher. As she would become hysterical” (Mother, call for evidence) (p.162) • “I developed PTSD, it was so stressful.... My sister’s anxiety became so bad she left school” (Childhood victim of domestic abuse, call for evidence) (p.163) • “My son is grown up and through court ordered contact has learnt to be like his father. He started to be abusive (physically and verbally) to myself and younger siblings and could no longer live at home. The court let him live with his father!!! I had asked for foster care to be considered until he got help. Anyway I now expect he will engage in DV against future partners and children. He is manipulative, exploitative and abusive. Court ordered contact
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		<p>with DV offender father destroyed my child” (Mother, call for evidence) (p.163)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “I think certainly growing up in an environment which was abusive, when I then got in a relationship that was abusive I didn’t notice it as early as someone else maybe would do because it was kind of normal... so it was kind of that’s alright. And then when I eventually broke up I was like oh my God, I can’t believe I let that happen to me again” (Family Justice Young People’s Board focus group participant) (p.163) • “As a child I suffered acute problems with eating, sleeping, toileting and anxiety. As a teenager and adult I had a profound fear of authority figures because I saw them as people who could force me, against my will, to do things I absolutely did not want to do. Secondly, I saw them as people who had the power to punish me. I also had ongoing adrenal and anxiety problems. I have absolutely no faith in social systems or the legal system” (Childhood victim of domestic abuse, call for evidence) (p.164)
<p>Nelson (2022) (Grey)</p> <p>Australia</p>	<p>Aim: No specific aim reported. The report makes policy recommendations designed to enhance children’s safety by bringing the family law system into alignment with children’s rights</p> <p>Study design: Qualitative (multiple case study design)</p> <p>Dates of data collection: Not reported. The included family encounters date from 1990’s to 2010 (n=6) or prior to the passage of the Family Law act of 1975 (n=1)</p> <p>Data collection methods: In-depth interviews (ethics restricted the call for participants to established networks of legal and family support services but permitted snowball sampling)</p> <p>Quality assessment tool and rating: N/A</p> <p>Informants: Adult children</p> <p>Sample size: 7</p> <p>Participants’ characteristics within family law: Adult survivors of domestic abuse and family violence whose parents went to court when they were children</p> <p>Participants’ demographics: <i>Age:</i> 18+ <i>Gender:</i> 71.4% female, 28.6% male <i>Ethnicity:</i> 42.8% identified as culturally diverse <i>Only children:</i> Not reported <i>Time since parental separation:</i> Not reported <i>Residence arrangement:</i> Not reported <i>Attended court:</i> Not reported</p>	<p>Types of outcomes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mental health and emotional wellbeing • Behavioural • Social relationships <p>Specific outcomes of interest & outcome measures: Quotes from interviews. No standardised outcome measures</p> <p>Relevant findings:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • One participant (female, 30s) said “that the court’s disregard for her needs and those of her sibling generated an emotional harm that Donna describes as “more traumatic” than the experience of serious family violence leading up to the court events.” She reported that “emotional harm stemming from court ordered contact arrangements resurfaced in her early adult life” (p.6) The same participant said that the appointment of a male Independent Children’s Lawyer added a communication barrier because of severe violence from her father and that she and her younger sibling were “frightened of men” at that stage in their lives (p.11) • One participant (male, 20s) reported “experiencing serious trauma that he relates to serial family court events. [He] believes that both his parents were responsible for the abusive dynamics but alleges that the family courts facilitated and enabled the parents’ conduct, by providing a mechanism through which conflict could be escalated.” (p.6) The same participant said that due to his age, he “didn’t quite know how to vocalise a lot of it” and it resulted in “acting out, and throwing tantrums, as a child”. He said that if the court had listened to him and had been given the opportunity to meet with a

		<p>helpful adult, that the situation and its aftermaths might have been less “traumatic” (p.7)</p> <p><u>Quotes:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “[S]o, they thought it was safe, but it wasn’t—it wasn’t safe ... we were just terrified of him. Really, really scared ... when you come from a situation of family violence as a child, your mother is your place of safety—generally—and when mum [is] removed, and you’re faced with the perpetrator and his violence, you know, those times I was made to spend time with him without her was terrifying. And that was probably more traumatic than the years and years of trauma leading up to that. ... when I was 20, 21, I think, I had flashbacks. I started to have flashbacks, and that’s when I realised that I needed to get some help because I couldn’t sleep because I just kept having flashbacks” (Female, 30s) (p.6) • “[T]he whole scenario [of court-ordered telephone calls to the father] was ... traumatising to go through, and even to this day, it’s still ... it still lingers. I would almost classify the whole scenario as like a type of PTSD, and looking back now, is ... constant anger, sadness, a lot of frustration, I guess, can be thrown in there” (Male, 20s) (p.7)
<p>Shea Hart (2010) (Academic)</p> <p>Shea Hart (2011) (Academic)</p> <p>Australia</p>	<p>Aim: To identify the dominant socio-legal discourses that judges relied on under the Family Law Reform Act 1995 (Reform Act) to construct the best interests of the child; to identify the influential role of social scientists in the provision of family reports and the apparent failure to centralise children’s exposure to domestic violence as a key issue in the assessments</p> <p>Study design: Qualitative (discourse analysis of unpublished written judgments)</p> <p>Dates of data collection: First Instance judgments made in 1996 – 2001</p> <p>Data collection methods: 785 First Instance judgments made by judges of the Family Court of Australia in were identified, 66 were purposefully selected, and 20 judgments were selected using stratified random sampling</p> <p>Quality assessment tool and rating: 10 out of 10 items on the JBI Critical Appraisal Checklist for Qualitative Research</p> <p>Informants: Professionals (judges)</p> <p>Sample size: 33 children represented in 20 judgements</p> <p>Participants’ characteristics within family law: Judgments that reached a stage of final hearing where contact was disputed, both natural parents were parties to the dispute, and domestic violence was acknowledged as an issue by the judges</p> <p>Participants’ demographics: <i>Age (range):</i> 2–16 years <i>Gender:</i> Not reported <i>Ethnicity:</i> Not reported Only children: Not reported</p>	<p>Types of outcomes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mental health and emotional wellbeing • Behavioural • Developmental • Social relationships • Learning and educational • Physical health <p>Specific outcomes of interest & outcome measures: The above outcomes recorded in court judgements</p> <p>Relevant findings: Family report assessments made in 18 judgments “revealed an extensive range of children’s non-age related behavioural, emotional, psychological and relational problems” (p.199)</p> <p>In eight judgments the child protection authorities were involved.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A case involving children aged 3 and 5 reported them feeling frightened, extremely upset, and unsettled • A case involving children aged 7, 10, and 12 reported them to have fear and bad behaviour at school and home, and to have made a threat to shoot an adult • A case involving a child aged 11 reported them to have fear, apprehension, problems at school, boisterous and disruptive behaviour towards other

	<p><i>Time since parental separation:</i> Not reported <i>Residence arrangement:</i> Not reported <i>Attended court:</i> Not reported</p>	<p>children, deep psychological scares, and to stare blankly into space and cower</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A case involving children aged 2 and 4 reported them to have fear, disturbed behaviour, disturbed sleep, uncontrollable behaviour, difficulties concentrating, aggressive behaviour, to have “commenced the habit of defecating in the house and smearing faeces over herself, the walls and the furniture in the house”, to be “obsessed (masturbation)”, and to howl. • A case involving a child aged 3 reported that the child “would not separate” from the mother • A case involving children aged 7 and 9 reported them to have fear, anxiety, stress, nightmares, “an adjustment reaction with impulsive moods”, insecurity, sexualised behaviour, difficulty with behaviour at home, regular detentions at school, to require continuation of antidepressant medication, and to be sad • A case involving children aged 5 and 7 reported that one of the children “had been violent to his sister and to other girls at his school” as well as confusion and uncertainty • A case involving children aged 7 and 11 reported them being withdrawn, hating life and wishing to die, and being unhappy and aggressive. • A case involving a child aged 4 provided no information on the child’s problems, behaviours and reactions • A case involving a child aged 4 reported them to have emotional problems, anxiety, anger and being “hysterical crying at times when the father changed her nappy” and saying, “I (the child) want to shoot him (father)” and “smash him up” • A case involving a child aged 7 reported them to have had difficulties in school, academically and in relating to other children • A case involving a child aged 7 reported that he feared to go willingly to his father and had high levels of distress, anger and hostility, and emotional tension. • A case involving twins aged 8 reported them to have bowel distress, “difficulty with soiling”, difficulties at school, distress, and to be acting out and “kicking, hitting, teasing and showing no remorse” • A case involving children aged 5, 6 and 7 reported them to have fear, distress, speech and developmental delay problems, poor concentration, behaviour difficulties, learning difficulties, and to be “emotionally fragile” • A case involving children aged 8, 14, and 16 reported them to have depression, anxiety, and to experience social isolation
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		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A case involving a child aged 6 reported them to requiring ongoing therapy for “speech and verbal reasoning”, difficulties in problem solving, antisocial behaviour, and to have asthma • A case involving a child aged 11 reported that they could not sleep, repressed emotions, were in need of medication and counselling, and were terrified • A case involving a child aged 8 reported them to experience distress, anxiety, to withdraw “from unpleasant feelings”, and to be uncomfortable • A case involving a child aged 2 reported them to be biting and pulling mother’s and sibling’s hair, to be difficult to get to eat and sleep, to not play well, and to be unsettled and withdrawn • A case involving children aged 11 and 13 reported them to have fear, “great trauma and distress” and to be angry and tearful and have “unhappy memories”
<p>Trinder et al. (2006) (Grey)</p> <p>England</p>	<p>Aim: To identify the overall effectiveness of in-court conciliation in contact cases (facilitating contact) as well as the relative effectiveness of three contrasting models of conciliation (Essex, Principal Registry of the Family Division (PRFD), Suffolk/Cambridgeshire models)</p> <p>Study design: Mixed methods (longitudinal quantitative survey and qualitative interviews (parent study); qualitative interviews with district judge’s, lawyers and CAFCASS officers (only parent study extracted))</p> <p>Dates of data collection: Not reported</p> <p>Data collection methods: Telephone interviews (or face-to-face if preferred): baseline (within a few days of the conciliation appointment) and follow-up (6–9 months later); separate interviews were used if both parents had agreed to participate, interviews were mostly fixed choice and some open-ended</p> <p>Quality assessment tool and rating: N/A</p> <p>Informants: Parents</p> <p>Sample size: Parent study: Baseline sample: 250 parents (125 mothers and 125 fathers), follow-up: 70% of the baseline sample (n=175); Family justice professionals: Lawyers (n=21), district judges (n=11) CAFCASS officers (n=16)</p> <p>Participants’ characteristics within family law: Parents were sampled from cases which had children named on the application, children are involved at different levels dependent on the model</p> <p>Participants’ demographics: <i>Mean age:</i> Parents: 36.6 years (SD=7.5); children: 11 years <i>Gender:</i> Parents: 50% female, 50% male <i>Ethnicity:</i> Parents: 85.6% white <i>Only children:</i> Not reported other than saying family sizes were small overall with a sample median of one child named on the application <i>Time since parental separation (median):</i> 2 years (at first interview)</p>	<p>Types of outcomes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mental health and emotional wellbeing • Behavioural • Social relationships <p>Specific outcomes of interest & outcome measures:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Child wellbeing:</i> Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire (SDQ), parent-report (n=156, including 26 pairs where both parents reported on the same child) <p>Relevant findings:</p> <p><i>Contact problems occurring in the three months prior to the court application:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “The sample as a whole ... expressed high levels of concern about children’s reaction to contact and about the parenting quality of the other parent. More than half of parents reported that children had been upset by transitions, or had not wanted to make a transition” (p.34) • <i>Children upset, unsettled or difficult when coming or going:</i> overall 64.1% (73.9% reported by resident parent, 51.6% by non-resident) • <i>Children not wanting to go for contact or return home:</i> overall 56.7% (60.3% reported by resident parent, 52.2% by non-resident) <p><i>Child wellbeing:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “[T]he number of children with borderline or abnormal scores was double the national average ... resident parents were twice as likely to give borderline or abnormal scores as non-resident parents.” (p.38) • <i>Borderline/abnormal score:</i> 42.9% (n=156); 51% reported by resident parent (n=100), 28.6% by non-resident (n=56), $p=0.011$

	<p><i>Residence arrangement:</i> Not reported <i>Attended court:</i> PRFD is the only model included where children are required to attend court (21 children from 15 cases were directly involved in conciliation at court (out of a total of 172 cases)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • At follow-up, “there was a significant decrease in SDQ scores, however this was not matched by a significant increase in the number of children with scores falling in the normal range. Even with the decrease in scores, the overall level of distress is still high compared to UK population norms where the mean score is 8.4 and 80% of children fall within the normal range” (p.84) • <i>SDQ Score</i> (n=106) at baseline: 13.14 (SD=7.02), at follow-up: 11.48 (SD=6.94) ($p=0.002$) • <i>SDQ normal band</i> (n=106) at baseline: 57.5%, at follow-up 66.0% ($p=0.078$). <p><u>Quotes:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “She was upset when he used to drop her off to me, you know, I’d go to pick her up and she’d got upset. But then when I got her home she was fine, but when she did want to leave, when she did go she got quite upset and quite tearful and she begged me like not to let her go back” (Non-resident mother) (p.34) • “The nine year old would be very quiet or subdued sometimes, but that would be when she’d been given a message to give to me from mum, or whatever” (Non-resident father) (p.34) • “I mean we do have a problem actually when she comes back. It’s adjusting to the different house and we do have problems on occasion with bedwetting” (Resident mother) (p.34)
<p>Trinder & Kellett (2007) (Grey) England</p>	<p>Aim: To follow-up to the Trinder et al. (2006) study, to examine the longer-term impact of conciliation on re-litigation, contact patterns, co-parenting, contact problems and adult and child wellbeing Study design: Mixed methods (quantitative data extracted) Dates of data collection: Not reported Data collection methods: Follow-up telephone interviews using a 30-minute standardised interview schedule with mostly fixed choice responses and some open-ended questions, on average 27 months after the first baseline interview; a randomly selected sample of these interviews were transcribed and analysed Quality assessment tool and rating: N/A Informants: Parents Sample size: 117 of the original baseline study parents (67% of parents that took part in the first follow-up, 47% of the original sample) Participants’ characteristics within family law: Parents who had attended in-court conciliation approximately two years previously and who had been interviewed in both the baseline and the first follow-up studies (Trinder et al. 2006) Participants’ demographics: <i>Age:</i> Not reported <i>Gender:</i> 51.4% female, 49.6% male</p>	<p>Types of outcomes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mental health and emotional wellbeing • Behavioural • Social relationships <p>Specific outcomes of interest & outcome measures:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Child wellbeing:</i> Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire (SDQ), parent-report <p>Relevant findings:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “At the two-year follow-up 43% of children had borderline or abnormal scores based on resident parents reports, 35% based on all parent reports. Either figure far exceeds the national average in the UK where approximately 20% of children’s general population scores fall into the abnormal or borderline range” (p.31) • The logistic regression highlighted some of the continuity in the level of children’s wellbeing over time. Having contact, further litigation and current adult wellbeing did not predict child wellbeing at the two-year follow-up. Instead the best predictor of a normal SDQ at the two-year follow-up was a normal score at baseline ($p= 0.000$)” (p.32)

	<p><i>Ethnicity:</i> Not reported <i>Only children:</i> Not reported <i>Time since parental separation:</i> Not reported <i>Residence arrangement:</i> Not reported <i>Attended court:</i> Not reported</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Logistic regression (n= 73): Coef.= 2.5, Robust Std. Err. = .65, $p > z = 0$. Candidate independent variables: Non-resident parent (at F2) report, Normal SDQ score at baseline, Direct contact currently taking place, No s8 applications since baseline conciliation, Parent currently scored above GHQ threshold
<p>Women’s Aid (2022) (Grey) England</p>	<p>Aim: To gather information on the experiences of survivors of domestic abuse who have been involved in private law children proceeding since June 2020 Study design: Qualitative (exploratory study) Dates of data collection: Not reported Data collection methods: A self-selecting sample responding to a call for evidence Quality assessment tool and rating: N/A Informants: Parents and professionals (specialist support services) Sample size: 21 survivors of domestic abuse, representatives from 10 specialist support services, details about the children are not provided Participants’ characteristics within family law: survivors needed to have been engaged in private law children’s proceedings since June 2020, and their case needed to be now closed Participants’ demographics: <i>Age:</i> Not reported <i>Gender:</i> Not reported <i>Ethnicity:</i> Not reported <i>Only children:</i> Not reported <i>Time since parental separation:</i> Not reported <i>Residence arrangement:</i> Not reported <i>Attended court:</i> Not reported</p>	<p>Types of outcomes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mental health and emotional wellbeing Engagement with mental health services Developmental Social relationships Physical health <p>Specific outcomes of interest & outcome measures: Quotes from testimonies of survivors and services supporting them. No standardised outcome measures</p> <p>Relevant findings:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The authors reported hearing about “younger children exhibiting non-verbal symptoms of trauma that were not taken seriously by family court professionals, and older children who were able to speak about their wishes and feelings, but were ignored” (p.9) Both survivors and professionals said that “two years on, private law children proceedings continue to be a source of re-traumatisation and distress for survivors of domestic abuse, and the decisions that are being made continue to traumatise children, ignoring their wishes and feelings and placing them in situations of danger” (p.11) The authors state that “during the last two years, survivors of domestic abuse have continued to be disbelieved, children have continued to be forced into unsafe contact arrangements with abusive parents, perpetrators have continued to use child arrangement proceedings as a form of post-separation abuse, and family court professionals have not been held accountable for their poor decision making and the trauma it has caused” (p.11) The authors warn of “how traumatised children involved in private law children proceedings are prevented from accessing therapy to address this trauma” (p.36) <p>Quotes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> “[M]y son wakes up multiple times in the night due to the trauma he’s experienced” (Survivor of domestic abuse in court 2020–21) (p.30) “My barrister told the judge my daughter was having nightmares, panic attacks and stress symptoms.” (Survivor of domestic abuse in court 2020–22) (p.33)

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “One of the children in that case suffers from quite severe anxiety, to the point where she’ll be very tearful” (Family court support worker and children’s worker, Women’s Aid member service) (p.34) • “My son had had play therapy that showed he had ongoing trauma, he was wetting the bed and showing symptoms of regression and anxiety, and the health visitor had recommended stopping even the supervised contact.” (Survivor of domestic abuse in court 2020–21) (p.35) • “I had to start preparing my daughter for contact and she was furious with me. I had to start forcing her to go to these contact sessions. I called social services and told them how scared I was about how she was reacting. There were tummy aches and night panics about people coming to take her. There’s no way to comfort her. She’s started falling out with her friends, pushing them. She’s regressed in toileting, wanting to wear nappies and go into the pushchair. Her sleeping has been affected, her development has gone back years” (Survivor of domestic abuse in court 2020–22) (p.35) • “As there remains no clear guidance on whether children can access therapy while there is a family court case involving disputed sexual abuse, both mothers were given strong messages from their solicitors that they should not bring their children for play therapy while the case was ongoing—in case this was viewed as corroborating a false narrative. Both children have been denied therapy that they would have had a right to access during a criminal investigation. Understandably, the mothers are deeply concerned about their children’s emotional wellbeing and are desperate for them to have therapy.” (Representative of a support service for survivors of sexual violence and child sexual abuse) (p.37) <p>“The person who’s been walking around abusing people got patted on the back, and got to see our child taken from me. Since the transfer she has changed, I can see she’s traumatised, I can tell she’s not ok. She’s been in an autopilot, trauma state. Eventually she’ll need therapy, there’s absolutely no doubt about that” (Survivor of domestic abuse in court 2020–21) (p.41)</p>
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6.3 Quality appraisal

6.3.1 Summary of the critical appraisal of the cross-sectional studies

JBICritical Appraisal Checklist For Analytical Cross Sectional Studies (Moola et al. 2020)	Black 2021 (Canada)	Bream 2003 (England & Wales)	Brown 2002 (1)^ (Australia)	Brown 2002 (2)^ (Australia)
1. Were the criteria for inclusion in the sample clearly defined?	Yes	No	No	No
2. Were the study subjects and the setting described in detail?	No	No	No	No
3. Was the exposure measured in a valid and reliable way?	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
4. Were objective, standard criteria used for measurement of the condition?	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
5. Were confounding factors identified?	Yes	No	No	No
6. Were strategies to deal with confounding factors stated?	Yes	No	No	No
7. Were the outcomes measured in a valid and reliable way?	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
8. Was appropriate statistical analysis used?	Yes	Unclear	N/A	N/A

^The First Study", ^^The Magellan Study"

6.3.2 Summary of the critical appraisal of the qualitative studies

JBICritical Appraisal Checklist For Qualitative Research (Lockwood et al. 2015)	Bailey 2011 (England)	Darlington 2001 (Australia)	Shea Hart 2010/2011 (Australia)
1. Is there congruity between the stated philosophical perspective and the research methodology?	Unclear	Unclear	Yes
2. Is there congruity between the research methodology and the research question or objectives?	Yes	Yes	Yes
3. Is there congruity between the research methodology and the methods used to collect data?	Yes	Yes	Yes
4. Is there congruity between the research methodology and the representation and analysis of data?	Yes	Yes	Yes
5. Is there congruity between the research methodology and the interpretation of results?	Yes	Yes	Yes
6. Is there a statement locating the researcher culturally or theoretically?	No	No	Yes
7. Is the influence of the researcher on the research, and vice-versa, addressed?	No	No	Yes
8. Are participants, and their voices, adequately represented?	No	Yes	Yes
9. Is the research ethical according to current criteria or, for recent studies, and is there evidence of ethical approval by an appropriate body?	Yes	Unclear	Yes
10. Do the conclusions drawn in the research report flow from the analysis, or interpretation, of the data?	Yes	Yes	Yes

6.3.3 Summary of the critical appraisal of the cohort study

JBICritical Appraisal Checklist For Cohort Studies (Moola et al. 2020)	Griffiths 2022 (Wales)
1. Were the two groups similar and recruited from the same population?	Yes
2. Were the exposures measured similarly to assign people to both exposed and unexposed groups?	Yes
3. Was the exposure measured in a valid and reliable way?	Yes
4. Were confounding factors identified?	Yes
5. Were strategies to deal with confounding factors stated?	Yes
6. Were the groups/participants free of the outcome at the start of the study (or at the moment of exposure)?	Unclear
7. Were the outcomes measured in a valid and reliable way?	Yes
8. Was the follow up time reported and sufficient to be long enough for outcomes to occur?	Unclear
9. Was follow up complete, and if not, were the reasons to loss to follow up described and explored?	No
10. Were strategies to address incomplete follow up utilized?	No
11. Was appropriate statistical analysis used?	Yes

7. ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

7.1 Conflicts of interest

The authors declare they have no conflicts of interest to report.

7.2 Acknowledgements

The authors would like to thank Matthew Pinnell and Anna Sinclair (Cafcass Cymru) and Olivia Gallen (HCRW Evidence Centre public involvement member) for their time, expertise, and contributions during stakeholder meetings in guiding the focus of the review and interpretation of findings. We would also like to thank Hannah Furness and Asha Mahamed for their contribution during the early stages of this review.

APPENDIX 1: Database search strategies

APA PsycInfo <1806 to June Week 3 2024>

1	exp Divorce/ or divorce*.mp.	21688
2	marital separation.mp. or exp Marital Separation/	10772
3	(parent* adj2 Separat*).tw.	3004
4	"marriage separat".tw.	46
5	family separat*.tw.	503
6	family dissol*.tw.	132
7	marriage dissoc*.tw.	0
8	exp Family Conflict/	6971
9	family conflict*.tw.	6445
10	(conflict adj3 family).tw.	7294
11	relationship termination.tw.	157
12	marriage break up.tw.	4
13	1 or 2 or 3 or 4 or 5 or 6 or 7 or 8 or 9 or 10 or 11 or 12	36186
14	child arrangement*.tw.	5
15	(child* adj3 custody).tw.	3183
16	(family adj2 law).tw.	1304
17	exp child custody/	3414
18	(family adj2 court).tw.	1292
19	Child support.tw.	852
20	child maintenance.tw.	15
21	parental alienation.tw.	524
22	implacable hostility.tw.	5
23	presumption of parental involvement.tw.	1
24	family justice.tw.	126
25	private law.tw.	73
26	14 or 15 or 16 or 17 or 18 or 19 or 20 or 21 or 22 or 23 or 24 or 25	7377
27	child*.tw.	826945
28	kid*.tw.	14407
29	Adolescen*.tw.	309820
30	preadolesc*.tw.	4481
31	pre adolesc*.tw.	1510
32	teen*.tw.	26760
33	pre teen*.tw.	213
34	preteen*.tw.	375
35	young person*.tw.	3313
36	young people.tw.	37952
37	youth.tw.	119431
38	boy*.tw.	87253
39	girl*.tw.	85706
40	juvenil*.tw.	30882
41	school child*.tw.	19530
42	schoolchild*.tw.	4373
43	pupil.tw.	11123
44	preschooler*.tw.	17710
45	pre schooler*.tw.	534
46	babies.tw.	7211
47	toddler*.tw.	11993
48	baby.tw.	13836
49	(neonatal birth 1 mo or infancy 2 23 mo or preschool age 2 5 yrs or school age 6 12 yrs or adolescence 13 17 yrs).ag.	809729
50	27 or 28 or 29 or 30 or 31 or 32 or 33 or 34 or 35 or 36 or 37 or 38 or 39 or 40 or 41 or 42 or 43 or 44 or 45 or 46 or 47 or 48 or 49	1380685
51	"Rule 16.4".tw.	1
52	"section 25".tw.	30
53	"section 37".tw.	23
54	Family Court Advisor*.tw.	11

55	Family Court social worker*.tw.	0
56	"Children and Family Court Advisory".tw.	10
57	CAFCASS.tw.	13
58	Child Impact Report*.tw.	0
59	Child Impact Assessment Framework.tw.	0
60	Safeguarding Enquiries Report*.tw.	0
61	First Hearing Dispute Resolution Appointment*.tw.	0
62	FHDRA.tw.	0
63	51 or 52 or 53 or 54 or 55 or 56 or 57 or 58 or 59 or 60 or 61 or 62	65
64	26 or 63	7429
65	13 and 50 and 64	2400
66	limit 65 to (english language and yr="2001-Current")	1326

Ovid MEDLINE(R) ALL <1946 to June 28, 2024>

1	exp Divorce/ or divorce*.mp.	13684
2	marital separation.mp.	165
3	(parent* adj2 Separat*).tw.	1997
4	"marriage separat".tw.	15
5	family separat*.tw.	320
6	family dissol*.tw.	39
7	marriage dissoc*.tw.	0
8	exp Family Conflict/	2560
9	family conflict*.tw.	3219
10	(conflict adj3 family).tw.	3338
11	relationship termination.tw.	30
12	marriage break up.tw.	6
13	1 or 2 or 3 or 4 or 5 or 6 or 7 or 8 or 9 or 10 or 11 or 12	21084
14	child arrangement*.tw.	4
15	(child* adj3 custody).tw.	707
16	(family adj2 law).tw.	372
17	exp child custody/	1172
18	(family adj2 court).tw.	280
19	Child support.tw.	350
20	child maintenance.tw.	6
21	parental alienation.tw.	70
22	implacable hostility.tw.	0
23	presumption of parental involvement.tw.	0
24	family justice.tw.	36
25	private law.tw.	53
26	14 or 15 or 16 or 17 or 18 or 19 or 20 or 21 or 22 or 23 or 24 or 25	2587
27	child*.tw.	1701441
28	kid*.tw.	591391
29	Adolescen*.tw.	369659
30	preadolesc*.tw.	3853
31	pre adolesc*.tw.	1502
32	teen*.tw.	36607
33	pre teen*.tw.	223
34	preteen*.tw.	393
35	young person*.tw.	4207
36	young people.tw.	39213
37	youth.tw.	93310
38	boy*.tw.	182393
39	girl*.tw.	179583
40	juvenil*.tw.	97928
41	school child*.tw.	26876
42	schoolchild*.tw.	16167
43	pupil.tw.	17461
44	preschooler*.tw.	9277
45	pre schooler*.tw.	558

46	babies.tw.	43469
47	toddler*.tw.	15305
48	baby.tw.	46053
49	exp Infant, Newborn/ or exp Child/ or exp Adolescent/ or exp Infant/ or exp Child, Preschool/	4063152
50	27 or 28 or 29 or 30 or 31 or 32 or 33 or 34 or 35 or 36 or 37 or 38 or 39 or 40 or 41 or 42 or 43 or 44 or 45 or 46 or 47 or 48 or 49	5213205
51	"Rule 16.4".tw.	0
52	"section 25".tw.	52
53	"section 37".tw.	29
54	Family Court Advisor*.tw.	4
55	Family Court social worker*.tw.	0
56	"Children and Family Court Advisory".tw.	4
57	CAFCASS.tw.	7
58	Child Impact Report*.tw.	0
59	Child Impact Assessment Framework.tw.	0
60	Safeguarding Enquiries Report*.tw.	0
61	First Hearing Dispute Resolution Appointment*.tw.	0
62	FHDRA.tw.	0
63	51 or 52 or 53 or 54 or 55 or 56 or 57 or 58 or 59 or 60 or 61 or 62 or 62	89
64	26 or 63	2668
65	13 and 50 and 64	509
66	limit 65 to (english language and yr="2001-Current")	205

Scopus 01/07/2024

1	(((TITLE-ABS-KEY (divorce)) OR (TITLE-ABS-KEY ("marital separation")) OR (TITLE-ABS-KEY ("marriage breakup")) OR (TITLE-ABS-KEY ("marriage break up")) OR (TITLE-ABS-KEY ("relationship termination")) OR (TITLE-ABS-KEY (conflict W/3 family)) OR (TITLE-ABS-KEY ("family conflict")) OR (TITLE-ABS-KEY ("family dissol*")) OR (TITLE-ABS-KEY ("family separat*")) OR (TITLE-ABS-KEY ("marriage separat*")) OR (TITLE-ABS-KEY ((parent W/2 separat*))))))	7,935,144
2	(((TITLE-ABS-KEY (fhdra)) OR (TITLE-ABS-KEY ("first hearing dispute resolution appointment*")) OR (TITLE-ABS-KEY ("safeguarding enquiries report*")) OR (TITLE-ABS-KEY ("child impact assessment framework")) OR (TITLE-ABS-KEY ("child impact report*")) OR (TITLE-ABS-KEY (cafcass)) OR (TITLE-ABS-KEY ("children and family court advisory")) OR (TITLE-ABS-KEY ("family court social worker*")) OR (TITLE-ABS-KEY ("family court advisor*")) OR (TITLE-ABS-KEY ("section 37")) OR (TITLE-ABS-KEY ("section 25")) OR (TITLE-ABS-KEY ("rule 16.4")) OR (TITLE-ABS-KEY ("private law")) OR (TITLE-ABS-KEY ("family justice")) OR (TITLE-ABS-KEY ("presumption of parental involvement")) OR (TITLE-ABS-KEY ("implacable hostility")) OR (TITLE-ABS-KEY ("parental alienation")) OR (TITLE-ABS-KEY ("child maintenance")) OR (TITLE-ABS-KEY ("child support")) OR (TITLE-ABS-KEY (family W/2 court*)) OR (TITLE-ABS-KEY (family W/2 law)) OR (TITLE-ABS-KEY (child W/3 custody)) OR (TITLE-ABS-KEY ("child w/3 custody")) OR (TITLE-ABS-KEY ("child arrangement*")))))	18,331
3	(((TITLE-ABS-KEY ("school age")) OR (TITLE-ABS-KEY (infanc*)) OR (TITLE-ABS-KEY (infant*)) OR (TITLE-ABS-KEY (neonat*)) OR (TITLE-ABS-KEY (baby)) OR (TITLE-ABS-KEY (toddler*)) OR (TITLE-ABS-KEY (babies)) OR (TITLE-ABS-KEY ("pre schooler*")) OR (TITLE-ABS-KEY (preschooler*)) OR (TITLE-ABS-KEY (pupil*)) OR (TITLE-ABS-KEY ("school child*")) OR (TITLE-ABS-KEY (schoolchild*)) OR (TITLE-ABS-KEY (juvenil*)) OR (TITLE-ABS-KEY (girl*)) OR (TITLE-ABS-KEY (boy*)) OR (TITLE-ABS-KEY ("young people")) OR (TITLE-ABS-KEY (youth)) OR (TITLE-ABS-KEY ("young person*")) OR (TITLE-ABS-KEY ("pre teen*")) OR (TITLE-ABS-KEY (preteen*)) OR (TITLE-ABS-KEY (teen*)) OR (TITLE-ABS-KEY ("pre adolescen*")) OR (TITLE-ABS-KEY (preadolescenc*)) OR (TITLE-ABS-KEY (adolescen*)) OR (TITLE-ABS-KEY (kid*)) OR (TITLE-ABS-KEY (child*)))))	45,750
	Combined	2088
	AND PUBYEAR > 2000 AND PUBYEAR < 2025	1567
	AND (LIMIT-TO (LANGUAGE , "English"))	1401
	AND (LIMIT-TO (DOCTYPE , "ar"))	994
	Exclude US	534
	Limit to US	460

Web of Science

WOS.SCI: 1900 to 2024, WOS.AHCI: 1975 to 2024, WOS.ESCI: 2015 to 2024, WOS.ISTP: 1990 to 2024, WOS.SSCI: 1956 to 2024, WOS.ISSHP: 1990 to 2024. Mon Jul 01 2024

1	(TI=(child* OR kid* OR Adolescen* OR preadolesc* OR "pre adolesc*" OR teen* OR "pre teen*" OR preteen* OR "young person*" OR "young people" OR youth OR boy* OR girl* OR juvenil* OR "school child*" OR schoolchild* OR pupil OR preschooler* OR "pre schooler*" OR babies OR toddler* OR baby)) OR AB=(child* OR kid* OR Adolescen* OR preadolesc* OR "pre adolesc*" OR teen* OR "pre teen*" OR preteen* OR "young person*" OR "young people" OR youth OR boy* OR girl* OR juvenil* OR "school child*" OR schoolchild* OR pupil OR preschooler* OR "pre schooler*" OR babies OR toddler* OR baby)	3521295
2	(TI=("child arrangement*" OR (child* NEAR/3 custody) OR (family NEAR/2 law) OR (family NEAR/2 court) OR "Child support" OR "child maintenance" OR "parental alienation" OR "implacable hostility" OR "presumption of parental involvement" OR "family justice" OR "private law" OR "Rule 16.4" OR "section 25" OR "section 37" OR "Family Court Advisor*" OR "Family Court social worker*" OR "Children and Family Court Advisory" OR CAFCASS OR "Child Impact Report*" OR "Child Impact Assessment Framework" OR "Safeguarding Enquiries Report*" OR "First Hearing Dispute" "Resolution Appointment*" OR FHDRA)) OR AB=("child arrangement*" OR (child* NEAR/3 custody) OR (family NEAR/2 law) OR (family NEAR/2 court) OR "Child support" OR "child maintenance" OR "parental alienation" OR "implacable hostility" OR "presumption of parental involvement" OR "family justice" OR "private law" OR "Rule 16.4" OR "section 25" OR "section 37" OR "Family Court Advisor*" OR "Family Court social worker*" OR "Children and Family Court Advisory" OR CAFCASS OR "Child Impact Report*" OR "Child Impact Assessment Framework" OR "Safeguarding Enquiries Report*" OR "First Hearing Dispute" "Resolution Appointment*" OR FHDRA)	10767
3	(TI=(divorce* OR "marital separat*" OR (parent* near/2 Separat*) OR "marriage separat*" OR "family separat*" OR "family dissol*" OR "marriage dissoc*" OR "family conflict*" OR (conflict NEAR/3 family) OR "relationship termination" OR "marriage break up" OR "marriage breakup")) OR AB=(divorce* OR "marital separat*" OR (parent* near/2 Separat*) OR "marriage separat*" OR "family separat*" OR "family dissol*" OR "marriage dissoc*" OR "family conflict*" OR (conflict NEAR/3 family) OR "relationship termination" OR "marriage break up" OR "marriage breakup")	36533
4	#3 AND #2 AND #1	906
5	#3 AND #2 AND #1 and 2024 or 2023 or 2022 or 2021 or 2020 or 2019 or 2018 or 2017 or 2016 or 2015 or 2014 or 2013 or 2012 or 2011 or 2010 or 2009 or 2008 or 2007 or 2006 or 2005 or 2004 or 2003 or 2002 or 2001 (Publication Years)	704
6	#3 AND #2 AND #1 and 2024 or 2023 or 2022 or 2021 or 2020 or 2019 or 2018 or 2017 or 2016 or 2015 or 2014 or 2013 or 2012 or 2011 or 2010 or 2009 or 2008 or 2007 or 2006 or 2005 or 2004 or 2003 or 2002 or 2001 (Publication Years) and Article or Review Article (Document Types)	672
7	#3 AND #2 AND #1 and 2024 or 2023 or 2022 or 2021 or 2020 or 2019 or 2018 or 2017 or 2016 or 2015 or 2014 or 2013 or 2012 or 2011 or 2010 or 2009 or 2008 or 2007 or 2006 or 2005 or 2004 or 2003 or 2002 or 2001 (Publication Years) and Article (Document Types) and English (Languages)	591
9	#3 AND #2 AND #1 and 2024 or 2023 or 2022 or 2021 or 2020 or 2019 or 2018 or 2017 or 2016 or 2015 or 2014 or 2013 or 2012 or 2011 or 2010 or 2009 or 2008 or 2007 or 2006 or 2005 or 2004 or 2003 or 2002 or 2001 (Publication Years) and Article (Document Types) and English (Languages) and USA (Exclude-Countries/Regions)	348
10	#3 AND #2 AND #1 and 2024 or 2023 or 2022 or 2021 or 2020 or 2019 or 2018 or 2017 or 2016 or 2015 or 2014 or 2013 or 2012 or 2011 or 2010 or 2009 or 2008 or 2007 or 2006 or 2005 or 2004 or 2003 or 2002 or 2001 (Publication Years) and Article (Document Types) and English (Languages) and USA (Countries/Regions)	243

Social Science Database via Proquest

Search 1:

Applied filters:

- 2001-01-01-2024-07-01
- INCLUDE-United Kingdom--UK OR Australia OR Canada OR England OR Wales

title(child* OR kid* OR Adolescen* OR preadolesc* OR ("pre adolescence" OR "pre adolescent" OR "pre adolescents") OR teen* OR ("pre teen" OR "pre teenage" OR "pre teenager" OR "pre teens") OR preteen* OR ("young person" OR "young persons") OR "young people" OR youth OR boy* OR girl* OR juvenil* OR ("school

child" OR "school childcare" OR "school children") OR schoolchild* OR pupil OR preschooler* OR ("pre schooler" OR "pre schoolers") OR babies OR toddler* OR baby OR child* OR kid* OR Adolescen* OR preadolesc* OR ("pre adolescence" OR "pre adolescent" OR "pre adolescents") OR teen* OR ("pre teen" OR "pre teenage" OR "pre teenager" OR "pre teens") OR preteen* OR ("young person" OR "young persons") OR "young people" OR youth OR boy* OR girl* OR juvenil* OR ("school child" OR "school childcare" OR "school children") OR schoolchild* OR pupil OR preschooler* OR ("pre schooler" OR "pre schoolers") OR babies OR toddler* OR baby) AND abstract(divorce OR "marital separation" OR "marriage breakup" OR "marriage break up" OR "relationship termination" OR "family conflict" OR "family dissol*" OR ("family separated" OR "family separation") OR "marriage separat*" OR "parent separat*") AND abstract("first hearing dispute resolution appointment*" OR "safeguarding enquiries report*" OR "child impact assessment framework" OR "child impact report*" OR cafcass OR "children and family court advisory" OR "family court social worker*" OR "family court advisor*" OR "section 37" OR "section 25" OR "rule 16.4" OR "private law" OR "family justice" OR "presumption of parental involvement" OR "inplacable hostility" OR "parental alienation" OR "child maintenance" OR "child support" OR "child arrangement*" OR "child custody" OR ("family court" OR "family courts") OR "family law"). 10 hits

Search 2:

Applied filters:

- 2001-01-01 - 2024-07-01
- INCLUDE Canada OR United Kingdom--UK OR Australia OR England OR Wales
- English

Title(child* OR kid* OR Adolescen* OR preadolesc* OR ("pre adolescence" OR "pre adolescent" OR "pre adolescents") OR teen* OR ("pre teen" OR "pre teenage" OR "pre teenager" OR "pre teens") OR preteen* OR ("young person" OR "young persons") OR "young people" OR youth OR boy* OR girl* OR juvenil* OR ("school child" OR "school childcare" OR "school children") OR schoolchild* OR pupil OR preschooler* OR ("pre schooler" OR "pre schoolers") OR babies OR toddler* OR baby OR child* OR kid* OR Adolescen* OR preadolesc* OR ("pre adolescence" OR "pre adolescent" OR "pre adolescents") OR teen* OR ("pre teen" OR "pre teenage" OR "pre teenager" OR "pre teens") OR preteen* OR ("young person" OR "young persons") OR "young people" OR youth OR boy* OR girl* OR juvenil* OR ("school child" OR "school childcare" OR "school children") OR schoolchild* OR pupil OR preschooler* OR ("pre schooler" OR "pre schoolers") OR babies OR toddler* OR baby) AND title(divorce OR "marital separation" OR "marriage breakup" OR "marriage break up" OR "relationship termination" OR "family conflict" OR "family dissol*" OR ("family separated" OR "family separation") OR "marriage separat*" OR "parent separat*") AND title("first hearing dispute resolution appointment*" OR "safeguarding enquiries report*" OR "child impact assessment framework" OR "child impact report*" OR cafcass OR "children and family court advisory" OR "family court social worker*" OR "family court advisor*" OR "section 37" OR "section 25" OR "rule 16.4" OR "private law" OR "family justice" OR "presumption of parental involvement" OR "inplacable hostility" OR "parental alienation" OR "child maintenance" OR "child support" OR "child arrangement*" OR "child custody" OR ("family court" OR "family courts") OR "family law")

OR

Abstract(child* OR kid* OR Adolescen* OR preadolesc* OR ("pre adolescence" OR "pre adolescent" OR "pre adolescents") OR teen* OR ("pre teen" OR "pre teenage" OR "pre teenager" OR "pre teens") OR preteen* OR ("young person" OR "young persons") OR "young people" OR youth OR boy* OR girl* OR juvenil* OR ("school child" OR "school childcare" OR "school children") OR schoolchild* OR pupil OR preschooler* OR ("pre schooler" OR "pre schoolers") OR babies OR toddler* OR baby OR child* OR kid* OR Adolescen* OR preadolesc* OR ("pre adolescence" OR "pre adolescent" OR "pre adolescents") OR teen* OR ("pre teen" OR "pre teenage" OR "pre teenager" OR "pre teens") OR preteen* OR ("young person" OR "young persons") OR "young people" OR youth OR boy* OR girl* OR juvenil* OR ("school child" OR "school childcare" OR "school children") OR schoolchild* OR pupil OR preschooler* OR ("pre schooler" OR "pre schoolers") OR babies OR toddler* OR baby) AND abstract(divorce OR "marital separation" OR "marriage breakup" OR "marriage break up" OR "relationship termination" OR "family conflict" OR "family dissol*" OR ("family separated" OR "family separation") OR "marriage separat*" OR "parent separat*") AND abstract("first hearing dispute resolution appointment*" OR "safeguarding enquiries report*" OR "child impact assessment framework" OR "child impact report*" OR cafcass OR "children and family court advisory" OR "family court social worker*" OR "family court advisor*" OR "section 37" OR "section 25" OR "rule 16.4" OR "private law" OR "family justice" OR "presumption of parental involvement" OR "inplacable hostility" OR "parental alienation" OR "child maintenance" OR "child support" OR "child arrangement*" OR "child custody" OR ("family court" OR "family courts") OR "family law") 12 hits

Sociology Collection via Proquest

Search 1:

Applied filters:

- 2001-01-01-2024-07-01
- INCLUDE-United Kingdom--UK OR Canada OR Australia OR England OR UK OR United Kingdom OR Wales

- English

title(child* OR kid* OR Adolescen* OR preadolesc* OR ("pre adolescence" OR "pre adolescent" OR "pre adolescents") OR teen* OR ("pre teen" OR "pre teenage" OR "pre teenager" OR "pre teens") OR preteen* OR ("young person" OR "young persons") OR "young people" OR youth OR boy* OR girl* OR juvenil* OR ("school child" OR "school childcare" OR "school children") OR schoolchild* OR pupil OR preschooler* OR ("pre schooler" OR "pre schoolers") OR babies OR toddler* OR baby OR child* OR kid* OR Adolescen* OR preadolesc* OR ("pre adolescence" OR "pre adolescent" OR "pre adolescents") OR teen* OR ("pre teen" OR "pre teenage" OR "pre teenager" OR "pre teens") OR preteen* OR ("young person" OR "young persons") OR "young people" OR youth OR boy* OR girl* OR juvenil* OR ("school child" OR "school childcare" OR "school children") OR schoolchild* OR pupil OR preschooler* OR ("pre schooler" OR "pre schoolers") OR babies OR toddler* OR baby) AND abstract(divorce OR "marital separation" OR "marriage breakup" OR "marriage break up" OR "relationship termination" OR "family conflict" OR "family dissol*" OR ("family separated" OR "family separation") OR "marriage separat*" OR "parent separat*") AND abstract("first hearing dispute resolution appointment*" OR "safeguarding enquiries report*" OR "child impact assessment framework" OR "child impact report*" OR cafcass OR "children and family court advisory" OR "family court social worker*" OR "family court advisor*" OR "section 37" OR "section 25" OR "rule 16.4" OR "private law" OR "family justice" OR "presumption of parental involvement" OR "in placable hostility" OR "parental alienation" OR "child maintenance" OR "child support" OR "child arrangement*" OR "child custody" OR ("family court" OR "family courts") OR "family law"). 12 hits

Search 2:

Applied filters:

- 2001-01-01 - 2024-07-01
- INCLUDE Canada OR United Kingdom--UK OR Australia OR England OR Wales
- English

Title(child* OR kid* OR Adolescen* OR preadolesc* OR ("pre adolescence" OR "pre adolescent" OR "pre adolescents") OR teen* OR ("pre teen" OR "pre teenage" OR "pre teenager" OR "pre teens") OR preteen* OR ("young person" OR "young persons") OR "young people" OR youth OR boy* OR girl* OR juvenil* OR ("school child" OR "school childcare" OR "school children") OR schoolchild* OR pupil OR preschooler* OR ("pre schooler" OR "pre schoolers") OR babies OR toddler* OR baby) AND title(divorce OR "marital separation" OR "marriage breakup" OR "marriage break up" OR "relationship termination" OR "family conflict" OR "family dissol*" OR ("family separated" OR "family separation") OR "marriage separat*" OR "parent separat*") AND title("first hearing dispute resolution appointment*" OR "safeguarding enquiries report*" OR "child impact assessment framework" OR "child impact report*" OR cafcass OR "children and family court advisory" OR "family court social worker*" OR "family court advisor*" OR "section 37" OR "section 25" OR "rule 16.4" OR "private law" OR "family justice" OR "presumption of parental involvement" OR "in placable hostility" OR "parental alienation" OR "child maintenance" OR "child support" OR "child arrangement*" OR "child custody" OR ("family court" OR "family courts") OR "family law")

OR

Abstract(child* OR kid* OR Adolescen* OR preadolesc* OR ("pre adolescence" OR "pre adolescent" OR "pre adolescents") OR teen* OR ("pre teen" OR "pre teenage" OR "pre teenager" OR "pre teens") OR preteen* OR ("young person" OR "young persons") OR "young people" OR youth OR boy* OR girl* OR juvenil* OR ("school child" OR "school childcare" OR "school children") OR schoolchild* OR pupil OR preschooler* OR ("pre schooler" OR "pre schoolers") OR babies OR toddler* OR baby OR child* OR kid* OR Adolescen* OR preadolesc* OR ("pre adolescence" OR "pre adolescent" OR "pre adolescents") OR teen* OR ("pre teen" OR "pre teenage" OR "pre teenager" OR "pre teens") OR preteen* OR ("young person" OR "young persons") OR "young people" OR youth OR boy* OR girl* OR juvenil* OR ("school child" OR "school childcare" OR "school children") OR schoolchild* OR pupil OR preschooler* OR ("pre schooler" OR "pre schoolers") OR babies OR toddler* OR baby) AND abstract(divorce OR "marital separation" OR "marriage breakup" OR "marriage break up" OR "relationship termination" OR "family conflict" OR "family dissol*" OR ("family separated" OR "family separation") OR "marriage separat*" OR "parent separat*") AND abstract("first hearing dispute resolution appointment*" OR "safeguarding enquiries report*" OR "child impact assessment framework" OR "child impact report*" OR cafcass OR "children and family court advisory" OR "family court social worker*" OR "family court advisor*" OR "section 37" OR "section 25" OR "rule 16.4" OR "private law" OR "family justice" OR "presumption of parental involvement" OR "in placable hostility" OR "parental alienation" OR "child maintenance" OR "child support" OR "child arrangement*" OR "child custody" OR ("family court" OR "family courts") OR "family law") 23 hits

ERIC via Proquest

Search 1:

Applied filters:

- 2001–01–01–2024–07–01
- INCLUDE-Articles, Reports, Reviews
- English

title(child* OR kid* OR Adolescen* OR preadolesc* OR "pre adolesc*" OR teen* OR "pre teen*" OR preteen* OR "young person*" OR "young people" OR youth OR boy* OR girl* OR juvenil* OR "school child*" OR schoolchild* OR pupil OR preschooler* OR "pre schooler*" OR babies OR toddler* OR baby OR child* OR kid* OR Adolescen* OR preadolesc* OR "pre adolesc*" OR teen* OR "pre teen*" OR preteen* OR "young person*" OR "young people" OR youth OR boy* OR girl* OR juvenil* OR "school child*" OR schoolchild* OR pupil OR preschooler* OR "pre schooler*" OR babies OR toddler* OR baby) AND subject(Divorce OR "marital separation" OR "marriage breakup" OR "marriage break up" OR "relationship termination" OR "family conflict" OR "family dissol*" OR "family separat*" OR "marriage separat*" OR parent separat*) AND abstract("first hearing dispute resolution appointment*" OR "safeguarding enquiries report*" OR "child impact assessment framework" OR "child impact report*" OR cafcass OR "children and family court advisory" OR "family court social worker*" OR "family court advisor*" OR "section 37" OR "section 25" OR "rule 16.4" OR "private law" OR "family justice" OR "presumption of parental involvement" OR "implacable hostility" OR "parental alienation" OR "child maintenance" OR "child support" OR "child arrangement*" OR "child custody" OR "family court*" OR "family law"). 9 hits

Search 2:

Applied filters:

- 2001-01-01 - 2024-07-01
- INCLUDE Canada OR United Kingdom--UK OR Australia OR England OR Wales
- English

Title(child* OR kid* OR Adolescen* OR preadolesc* OR ("pre adolescence" OR "pre adolescent" OR "pre adolescents") OR teen* OR ("pre teen" OR "pre teenage" OR "pre teenager" OR "pre teens") OR preteen* OR ("young person" OR "young persons") OR "young people" OR youth OR boy* OR girl* OR juvenil* OR ("school child" OR "school childcare" OR "school children") OR schoolchild* OR pupil OR preschooler* OR ("pre schooler" OR "pre schoolers") OR babies OR toddler* OR baby OR child* OR kid* OR Adolescen* OR preadolesc* OR ("pre adolescence" OR "pre adolescent" OR "pre adolescents") OR teen* OR ("pre teen" OR "pre teenage" OR "pre teenager" OR "pre teens") OR preteen* OR ("young person" OR "young persons") OR "young people" OR youth OR boy* OR girl* OR juvenil* OR ("school child" OR "school childcare" OR "school children") OR schoolchild* OR pupil OR preschooler* OR ("pre schooler" OR "pre schoolers") OR babies OR toddler* OR baby) AND title(divorce OR "marital separation" OR "marriage breakup" OR "marriage break up" OR "relationship termination" OR "family conflict" OR "family dissol*" OR ("family separated" OR "family separation") OR "marriage separat*" OR "parent separat*") AND title("first hearing dispute resolution appointment*" OR "safeguarding enquiries report*" OR "child impact assessment framework" OR "child impact report*" OR cafcass OR "children and family court advisory" OR "family court social worker*" OR "family court advisor*" OR "section 37" OR "section 25" OR "rule 16.4" OR "private law" OR "family justice" OR "presumption of parental involvement" OR "implacable hostility" OR "parental alienation" OR "child maintenance" OR "child support" OR "child arrangement*" OR "child custody" OR ("family court" OR "family courts") OR "family law")

OR

Abstract(child* OR kid* OR Adolescen* OR preadolesc* OR ("pre adolescence" OR "pre adolescent" OR "pre adolescents") OR teen* OR ("pre teen" OR "pre teenage" OR "pre teenager" OR "pre teens") OR preteen* OR ("young person" OR "young persons") OR "young people" OR youth OR boy* OR girl* OR juvenil* OR ("school child" OR "school childcare" OR "school children") OR schoolchild* OR pupil OR preschooler* OR ("pre schooler" OR "pre schoolers") OR babies OR toddler* OR baby) AND abstract(divorce OR "marital separation" OR "marriage breakup" OR "marriage break up" OR "relationship termination" OR "family conflict" OR "family dissol*" OR ("family separated" OR "family separation") OR "marriage separat*" OR "parent separat*") AND abstract("first hearing dispute resolution appointment*" OR "safeguarding enquiries report*" OR "child impact assessment framework" OR "child impact report*" OR cafcass OR "children and family court advisory" OR "family court social worker*" OR "family court advisor*" OR "section 37" OR "section 25" OR "rule 16.4" OR "private law" OR "family justice" OR "presumption of parental involvement" OR "implacable hostility" OR "parental alienation" OR "child maintenance" OR "child support" OR "child arrangement*" OR "child custody" OR ("family court" OR "family courts") OR "family law") 19 hits

APPENDIX 2: Searched websites

Country	Source	Number of downloaded results
UK websites		
UK	https://cwrif.co.uk/	0
UK	https://educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk/	0
UK	https://foundations.org.uk/	0
UK	https://gov.wales/cafcass-cymru/	2
UK	https://kidsinthemiddle.org/	0
UK	https://naccc.org.uk/	0
UK	https://natcen.ac.uk/	0
UK	https://ourkidsfirst.co.uk/	0
UK	https://righttosucceed.org.uk/	0
UK	https://saildatabank.com/data/publications/	2
UK	https://www.actionforchildren.org.uk/	0
UK	https://www.barnardos.org.uk/	0
UK	https://www.cafcass.gov.uk/	25
UK	https://www.cfj-lancaster.org.uk/	6
UK	https://www.childcomwales.org.uk/	0
UK	https://www.childline.org.uk/	0
UK	https://www.childrenslegalcentre.com/	0
UK	https://www.childrenssociety.org.uk/	0
UK	https://www.crfr.ac.uk/	4
UK	https://www.dartington.org.uk/	0
UK	https://www.eif.org.uk/	2
UK	https://www.gov.uk/search/guidance-and-regulation?parent=%2Fchildcare-parenting&topic=206b7f3a-49b5-476f-af0f-fd27e2a68473	0
UK	https://www.gov.uk/search/policy-papers-and-consultations?parent=%2Fchildcare-parenting&topic=206b7f3a-49b5-476f-af0f-fd27e2a68473	0
UK	https://www.gov.uk/search/research-and-statistics?parent=%2Fchildcare-parenting&topic=206b7f3a-49b5-476f-af0f-fd27e2a68473	0
UK	https://www.gov.uk/search/services?parent=%2Fchildcare-parenting&topic=206b7f3a-49b5-476f-af0f-fd27e2a68473	0
UK	https://www.gov.wales/	6
UK	https://www.littlelives.org.uk/	0
UK	https://www.meiccymru.org/	0
UK	https://www.ncb.org.uk/	0
UK	https://www.nspcc.org.uk/	0
UK	https://www.nuffieldfjo.org.uk/	11
UK	https://www.nyas.net/get-support/support-in-wales/	0
UK	https://www.onlydads.org/	2
UK	https://www.onlymums.org/	2
UK	https://www.place2be.org.uk/	0
UK	https://www.tqpcymru.org.uk/	0
UK	https://www.voicesinthemiddle.com/	0
UK	https://www.youngminds.org.uk/parent	0
UK	https://youthendowmentfund.org.uk/	0
UK	Other (ad-hoc Google searches, snowballing etc)	5
UK	Supplied by the stakeholders (publicly available)	5
UK website totals		
UK	Total before deduplication	72
UK	Total after deduplication against each other	60
UK	Total after deduplication against already identified literature	57
UK	Included after scanning by a single reviewer	29

UK	Included at full-text screening	7
Aus, Can, NZ websites		
Australia	https://acms.au/resources/publications/	0
Australia	https://ag.gov.au/families-and-marriage/publications	1
Australia	https://aifs.gov.au/research	5
Australia	https://aihw.gov.au/	0
Australia	https://apo.org.au/	18
Australia	https://aracy.org.au/publication-resources/categories?id=6	0
Australia	https://childhood.org.au/	0
Australia	https://childhoodadversity.org.au/	0
Australia	https://childrenbeyonddispute.com/publications/	6
Australia	https://childrenspolicycentre.org/	0
Australia	https://crf.org.au/research-grants/	0
Australia	https://csm.cass.anu.edu.au/research/publications	2
Australia	https://emergingminds.com.au/	2
Australia	https://familyrelationships.gov.au/documents	0
Australia	https://fcfcoa.gov.au/resources	0
Australia	https://growingupinaustralia.gov.au/research-findings	2
Australia	https://legaid.nsw.gov.au/	0
Australia	https://missionaustralia.com.au/publications/research/children-and-families	0
Australia	https://raisingchildren.net.au/	0
Australia	https://srcentre.com.au/	0
Australia	https://telethonkids.org.au/our-research/reports-and-findings/	0
Canada	https://childrenfirstcanada.org/resources/	0
Canada	https://cwrp.ca/	0
Canada	https://irpp.org/	0
Canada	https://justice.gc.ca/eng/rp-pr/fl-lf/index.html	5
Canada	https://lsnl.ca/family-law-related-research-justice-canada/	0
Canada	https://prism.ucalgary.ca/collections/3fe9f51b-b040-4f29-b7f1-6559338acf17	2
Canada	https://rsc-src.ca/en/research-and-reports	0
Canada	https://sparc.bc.ca/	0
Canada	https://srdc.org/project-library/	0
Canada	https://yorku.ca/research/isr/current-past-research/	0
New Zealand	https://communityresearch.org.nz/	0
New Zealand	https://cresa.co.nz/projects-and-publications/	0
New Zealand	https://csda.aut.ac.nz/research/our-publications	3
New Zealand	https://familycentre.org.nz/publications/	0
New Zealand	https://msd.govt.nz/	2
New Zealand	https://nzpri.aut.ac.nz/	0
New Zealand	https://otago.ac.nz/cic/research-activities	5
New Zealand	https://skylight.org.nz/topics	0
New Zealand	https://thehub.sia.govt.nz/	2
Aus, Can, NZ website totals		
Aus, Can, NZ	Total before deduplication	55
Aus, Can, NZ	Total after deduplication against each other	48
Aus, Can, NZ	Total after deduplication against already identified literature	48
Aus, Can, NZ	Included after scanning by a single reviewer	26
Aus, Can, NZ	Included at full-text screening	4
All country totals		
All	Total after full deduplication	105
All	Included after scanning by a single reviewer	55
All	Included at full-text screening	11

APPENDIX 3: Studies excluded at full-text screening

Full citation	Type	Source	Reason for exclusion
Afifi TD, McManus T, Hutchinson S, et al. (2007). Inappropriate parental divorce disclosures, the factors that prompt them, and their impact on parents' and adolescents' well-being. <i>Communication Monographs</i> . 74(1): 78-102. doi: https://dx.doi.org/10.1080/03637750701196870	Academic	Database searches	Wrong country
Allen H. (2014). Unpacking court divorce decrees, children's outcomes, and three unconfounded determinants: An evidence-based look. <i>Journal of Divorce & Remarriage</i> . 55(3): 179-205. doi: https://dx.doi.org/10.1080/10502556.2014.887376	Academic	Database searches	Wrong study design
Bagshaw D. (2007). Reshaping Responses to Children When Parents are Separating: Hearing Children's Voices in the Transition. <i>Australian Social Work</i> . 60(4): 450-65. doi: 10.1080/03124070701671164	Academic	Review unpicking	No court involvement or insufficient information about court involvement
Baker AJL, Eichler A. (2016). The linkage between parental alienation behaviors and child alienation. <i>Journal of Divorce & Remarriage</i> . 57(7): 475-84.	Academic	Review unpicking	Wrong country
Bala N, Bertrands L, Wheeler A, et al. (2012). A Study of Post-Separation/Divorce Parental Relocation. https://www.justice.gc.ca/eng/rp-pr/fl-lf/divorce/spsdpr-edpads/index.html	Grey	Website searches	No court involvement or insufficient information about court involvement
Barlow A, Ewing J, Hunter R, et al. (2017). Creating paths to family justice: Briefing Paper & Report on Key Findings, University of Exeter. https://www.exeter.ac.uk/v8media/universityofexeter/collegeofsocialsciencesandinternationalstudies/lawimages/familyregulationandsociety/Creating_Paths_briefing_paper_final_for_website_02.10.17_isbn_(003)_05-03-18.pdf	Grey	Website searches	Wrong outcome
Barnett A. (2015). 'Like Gold Dust These Days': Domestic Violence Fact-Finding Hearings in Child Contact Cases. <i>FEMINIST LEGAL STUDIES</i> . 23(1): 47-78. doi: 10.1007/s10691-015-9278-4	Academic	Review unpicking	Wrong outcome
Barnett A. (2017). 'Greater than the mere sum of its parts': coercive control and the question of proof.	Grey	Review unpicking	Wrong outcome
Barnett A. (2020). A genealogy of hostility: parental alienation in England and Wales. <i>JOURNAL OF SOCIAL WELFARE AND FAMILY LAW</i> . 42(1): 18-29. doi: 10.1080/09649069.2019.1701921	Academic	Review unpicking	Wrong outcome
Birchall J, Choudhry S. (2018). What about my right not to be abused? Domestic abuse, human rights and the family courts. <i>Women's Aid</i> .	Grey	Review unpicking	Wrong outcome
Birnbaum R, Saini M. (2013). A scoping review of qualitative studies about children experiencing parental separation. <i>Childhood: A Global Journal of Child Research</i> . 20(2): 260-82. doi: https://dx.doi.org/10.1177/0907568212454148	Academic	Database searches	Wrong outcome
Birnbaum R. (2017). Views of the child reports: Hearing directly from children involved in post-separation disputes. <i>Social Inclusion</i> . 5(3): 148-54. doi:10.17645/si.v5i3.922	Academic	Database searches	Wrong study design
Bow JN, Gould JW, Flens JR. (2009). Examining parental alienation in child custody cases: A survey of mental health and legal professionals. <i>The American Journal of Family Therapy</i> . 37(2): 127-45.	Academic	Review unpicking	Wrong country
Bush JE, Ehrenberg MF. (2003). Young persons' perspectives on the influence of family transitions on sibling relationships: A qualitative exploration. <i>Journal of Divorce & Remarriage</i> . 39(3): 1-35. doi: https://dx.doi.org/10.1300/J087v39n03_01	Academic	Database searches	No court involvement or insufficient information about court involvement

Butler I, Scanlan L, Robinson M, et al. (2002). Children's involvement in their parents' divorce: implications for practice. <i>Children & Society</i> . 16(2): 89-102. doi: https://doi.org/10.1002/chi.702	Academic	Review unpicking	No court involvement or insufficient information about court involvement
CAFCASS and Woman's Aid. (2017). Allegations of domestic abuse in child contact cases. https://www.cafcass.gov.uk/sites/default/files/migrated/Allegations-of-domestic-abuse-in-child-contact-cases-2017.pdf	Grey	Website searches	Data not extractable
CAFCASS Cymru. (2019a). Children's Resistance or Refusal To Spend Time With A Parent: Practice Guidance. https://www.gov.wales/sites/default/files/publications/2019-08/cafcass-cymru-childrens-resistance-or-refusal-to-spending-time-with-a-parent-practice-guidance.pdf	Grey	Website searches	Wrong publication type
CAFCASS Cymru. (2019b). Impact On Children of Experiencing Domestic Abuse. https://www.gov.wales/sites/default/files/publications/2019-08/cafcass-cymru-impact-on%20children-experiencing-domestic-abuse.pdf	Grey	Website searches	No court involvement or insufficient information about court involvement
CAFCASS. (2014). Report of an analysis of rule 16.4 appointments considered by the courts in September 2014. https://www.cafcass.gov.uk/sites/default/files/migrated/Report-of-an-analysis-of-rule-16.4-appointments-considered-by-the-courts-in-September-2014.pdf	Grey	Website searches	Wrong outcome
CAFCASS. (2016a). Study into Cafcass' role at First Hearing Dispute Resolution Appointments. https://www.cafcass.gov.uk/sites/default/files/migrated/Study-into-Cafcass%E2%80%99-role-at-First-Hearing-Dispute-Resolution-Appointments-2016.pdf	Grey	Website searches	Wrong outcome
CAFCASS. (2016b). Study of data held by Cafcass in cases featuring radicalisation concerns. https://www.cafcass.gov.uk/sites/default/files/migrated/Study-of-data-held-by-Cafcass-in-cases-featuring-radicalisation-concerns-2016.pdf	Grey	Website searches	Wrong outcome
CAFCASS. (2016c). What happened next? A study of interim outcomes following private law proceedings as reported by parents six to nine months on. https://www.cafcass.gov.uk/sites/default/files/migrated/What-happened-next-A-study-of-interim-outcomes-following-private-law-proceedings-2016.pdf	Grey	Website searches	Wrong outcome
CAFCASS. (2017). Cases featuring trafficking as a 'child need'. https://www.cafcass.gov.uk/sites/default/files/migrated/Study-of-data-held-by-Cafcass-in-cases-featuring-trafficking-as-a-child-need-2017.pdf	Grey	Website searches	Wrong outcome
Caffrey L. (2013). Hearing the Voice of the Child: The Role of Child Contact Centres in the Family Justice System. <i>Child & Fam. LQ</i> . 25: 357.	Academic	Review unpicking	Wrong outcome
Campbell A. (2008). The right to be heard: Australian children's views about their involvement in decision-making following parental separation. <i>Child Care in Practice</i> . 14(3): 237-55. doi: 10.1080/13575270802042496	Academic	Review unpicking	No court involvement or insufficient information about court involvement
Carlson MJ. (2006). Family structure, father involvement, and adolescent behavioral outcomes. <i>Journal of marriage and family</i> . 68(1): 137-54. doi: 10.1111/j.1741-3737.2006.00239.x	Academic	Review unpicking	Wrong country
Carson R, Dunstan E, Dunstan J, et al. (2018). Children and young people in separated families: Family law system experiences and needs. Melbourne: Australian Institute of Family Studies. 1-111.	Grey	Review unpicking	Wrong outcome
Cashmore J, Parkinson P. (2009). What responsibility do courts have to hear children's voices? <i>Children's Rights</i> . Routledge.	Grey	Review unpicking	Wrong outcome
ChildLine. (2010). Casenote Family Relationship Problems. https://www.slideshare.net/slideshow/casenote-family-relationship-problems/5450558	Grey	Website searches	No court involvement or insufficient information about court involvement

Coley RL, Medeiros BL. (2007). Reciprocal longitudinal relations between nonresident father involvement and adolescent delinquency. <i>Child development</i> . 78(1): 132-47. doi: DOI 10.1111/j.1467-8624.2007.00989.x	Academic	Review unpicking	No court involvement or insufficient information about court involvement
Connolly H. (2018). What children and young people think should happen when families separate. Commissioner for Children and Young People, South Australia. https://apo.org.au/sites/default/files/resource-files/2018-08/apo-nid323628.pdf	Grey	Website searches	Wrong population
Cusworth L, Hargreaves C, Alrouh B, et al. (2021). Uncovering private family law: Adult characteristics and vulnerabilities (Wales), London, Nuffield Family Justice Observatory. https://popdatasci.swan.ac.uk/wp-content/uploads/2021/11/Eng.-report.-nfjo_private-law_adults_final_20211110.pdf	Grey	Website searches	Wrong population
Cusworth L, Hargreaves C, Alrouh B, et al. (2022). Adults in private family law proceedings in Wales: characteristics and vulnerabilities. <i>International Journal of Population Data Science</i> . 7(3). doi: 10.23889/ijpds.v7i3.1910	Academic	Website searches	Wrong population
Cyr F, Di Stefano G, Desjardins B. (2013). Family life, parental separation, and child custody in Canada: A focus on Quebec. <i>Special Issue: Global family law</i> . 51(4): 522-41. doi: doi:https://dx.doi.org/10.1111/fcre.12050	Academic	Database searches	No court involvement or insufficient information about court involvement
Dare H, Goodman C, John R, et al. (2019). Toward better outcomes for families through innovative dispute resolution programs in England. <i>Family Court Review</i> . 57(3): 368-74. doi: doi:https://dx.doi.org/10.1111/fcre.12421	Academic	Database searches	Wrong study design
Death J, Ferguson C, Burgess K. (2019). Parental alienation, coaching and the best interests of the child: Allegations of child sexual abuse in the Family Court of Australia. <i>Child Abuse & Neglect</i> . 94. doi: 10.1016/j.chiabu.2019.104045	Academic	Citation searching	Wrong outcome
Dreman S, Shemi R. (2004). Perception of family structure, state-anger, and parent-child communication and adjustment of children of divorced parents. <i>Journal of Divorce & Remarriage</i> . 41(1): 47-68. doi: doi:https://dx.doi.org/10.1300/J087v41n01_04	Academic	Database searches	Wrong country
Dunn J, Cheng H, O'Connor TG, et al. (2004). Children's perspectives on their relationships with their nonresident fathers: influences, outcomes and implications. <i>Journal of child psychology and psychiatry</i> . 45(3): 553-66. doi: DOI 10.1111/j.1469-7610.2004.00245.x	Academic	Review unpicking	No court involvement or insufficient information about court involvement
Fabricius WV, Luecken LJ. (2007). Postdivorce living arrangements, parent conflict, and long-term physical health correlates for children of divorce. <i>Journal of Family Psychology</i> . 21(2): 195-205. doi: doi:https://dx.doi.org/10.1037/0893-3200.21.2.195	Academic	Database searches	Wrong country
Family Law Council. (2016). Report on Families with Complex Needs and the Intersection of Family Law and Child Protection, Commonwealth of Australia. https://www.ag.gov.au/sites/default/files/2020-03/Family-with-Complex-Needs-Intersection-of-Family-Law-and-Child-Protection-Systems-Final-Report-Terms-3-4-5.PDF	Grey	Website searches	Wrong publication type
Finley GE, Schwartz SJ. (2007). Father involvement and long-term young adult outcomes: The differential contributions of divorce and gender. <i>Family Court Review</i> . 45(4): 573-87. doi: doi:https://dx.doi.org/10.1111/j.1744-1617.2007.00172.x	Academic	Database searches	Wrong country
Finley GE, Schwartz SJ. (2010). The divided world of the child: Divorce and long-term psychosocial adjustment. <i>Family Court Review</i> . 48(3): 516-27. doi: doi:https://dx.doi.org/10.1111/j.1744-1617.2010.01326.x	Academic	Database searches	Wrong country
Fortin J, Hunt J, Scanlan L. (2012). Taking a longer view of contact: the perspectives of young adults who experience parental separation in their youth.	Grey	Review unpicking	Data not extractable
Fowler E, Stewart S. (2005). A review of cases involving 95 children in which the National Youth Advocacy Service represented children in family proceedings pursuant to rule 9.5 of the Family Proceedings Rules 1991. <i>Family Law</i> . January(35): 49-52.	Academic	Citation searching	Wrong outcome

Francia L, Milliar P. (2015). Mastery or misery: Conflict between separated parents a psychological burden for children. <i>Journal of Divorce & Remarriage</i> . 56(7): 551-68. doi: https://dx.doi.org/10.1080/10502556.2015.1080090	Academic	Database searches	Data not extractable
Friesen MD, Horwood LJ, Fergusson DM, Woodward LJ. (2017) Exposure to parental separation in childhood and later parenting quality as an adult: evidence from a 30-year longitudinal study. <i>Journal of Child Psychology and Psychiatry</i> 58(1), 30–37. doi: 10.1111/jcpp.12610	Academic	Website searches	No court involvement or insufficient information about court involvement
Giancarlo C, Rottmann K. (2014). Kids come last: The effect of family law involvement in parental alienation. <i>International Journal of Interdisciplinary Social Sciences</i> . 9(1): 27-42. doi: doi:10.18848/1833-1882/CGP/v09/53552	Academic	Database searches	Wrong outcome
Gollop M, Taylor N, Cameron C, et al. (2019). Parenting Arrangements after Separation Study: Evaluating the 2014 Family Law Reforms – Parents’ and caregivers’ perspectives – Part 1 Research Report for the New Zealand Law Foundation., Dunedin, New Zealand, Children’s Issues Centre, University of Otago. https://www.otago.ac.nz/_data/assets/pdf_file/0022/328090/read-the-phase-two-parents-and-caregivers-perspectives-part-1-report-739545.pdf	Grey	Website searches	Wrong population
Graham A, Fitzgerald R. (2006). Taking account of the ‘to and fro’ of children’s experiences in family law. <i>Children Australia</i> . 31(2): 30-6. doi: 10.1017/S103507720001110X	Academic	Review unpicking	Wrong outcome
Grey R. (2023). “Catastrophic”: A qualitative exploration of survivors experiences of expert instruction in private law child arrangements proceedings. <i>Journal of Social Welfare and Family Law</i> . 45(4): 344-62. doi: 10.1080/09649069.2023.2281832	Academic	Website searches	Wrong population
Hale B. (2010). The children act 1989 in the highest courts. <i>Journal of Children's Services</i> . 5(2): 17-28. doi: 10.5042/jcs.2010.0298	Academic	Citation searching	Wrong case type
Halliday E, Green R, Marsh B. (2017). Private law cases that return to court: a Cafcass study. https://www.cafcass.gov.uk/sites/default/files/migrated/private_law_cases_that_return_to_court_-_cafcass_research_november_2017.pdf	Grey	Website searches	Wrong outcome
Harding M. (2015). How do county courts share the care of children between parents? https://www.nuffieldfoundation.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/11/Full20report.pdf	Grey	Website searches	Wrong outcome
Hargreaves C, Cusworth L, Alrouh B, et al. (2022). Uncovering private family law: What can the data tell us about children’s participation?, Nuffield Family Justice Observatory. https://www.nuffieldfjo.org.uk/resource/uncovering-private-family-law-what-can-the-data-tell-us-about-childrens-participation	Grey	Website searches	Wrong outcome
Hargreaves C, Cusworth L, Alrouh B, et al. (2024). Uncovering private family law: how often do we hear the voice of the child?, Nuffield Family Justice Observatory. https://www.nuffieldfjo.org.uk/resource/uncovering-private-family-law-how-often-do-we-hear-the-voice-of-the-child	Grey	Website searches	Wrong outcome
Higgins D, J. (2007). Cooperation and Coordination: An evaluation of the Family Court of Australia’s Magellan case-management model, Canberra, Australia, Family Court of Australia. https://apo.org.au/sites/default/files/resource-files/2007-10/apo-nid8337.pdf	Grey	Website searches	Wrong outcome
Highet G, Jamieson L. (2007). Cool with change: Young people and family change.	Grey	Review unpicking	Wrong outcome
Hughes R, Rose W. (2010). Coming of age: has the Children Act 1989 lived up to its promise? <i>Journal of Children's Services</i> . 5(2): 2-6. doi: 10.5042/jcs.2010.0296	Academic	Citation searching	Wrong publication type
Hunt J, Macleod A. (2008). Outcomes of applications to court for contact orders after parental separation or divorce, Family Law and Justice Division, Ministry of Justice.	Grey	Review unpicking	Wrong outcome

Jennings M, Howe N. (2001). Siblings' perceptions of their parents' divorce. <i>Journal of Divorce & Remarriage</i> . 35(1): 91-106. doi: doi:https://dx.doi.org/10.1300/J087v35n01_05	Academic	Database searches	No court involvement or insufficient information about court involvement
Johnson RD, Ford DV, Broadhurst K, et al. (2020). Data Resource: Population level family justice administrative data with opportunities for data linkage. <i>International Journal of Population Data Science</i> . 5(1). doi: 10.23889/ijpds.v5i1.1339	Academic	Citation searching	Data not extractable
Johnston JR, Goldman JR. (2010). Outcomes of family counseling interventions with children who resist visitation: An addendum to Friedlander and Walters (2010). <i>Family Court Review</i> . 48(1): 112-5.	Academic	Review unpicking	Wrong country
Johnston JR, Walters MG, Olesen NW. (2005). Is it alienating parenting, role reversal or child abuse? A study of children's rejection of a parent in child custody disputes. <i>Journal of Emotional Abuse</i> . 5(4): 191-218.	Academic	Review unpicking	Wrong country
Jones R. (2023). Children and young people's experiences of participation in private proceedings in the family courts, Crown Copyright. https://www.gov.wales/sites/default/files/statistics-and-research/2023-12/children-and-young-peoples-experiences-of-participation-in-private-proceedings-in-the-family-courts-report.pdf	Grey	Website searches	Wrong outcome
Kaspiew R, Carson R, Dunstan J, et al. (2015). Experiences of Separated Parents Study (Evaluation of the 2012 Family Violence Amendments), Melbourne, Australian Institute of Family Studies. https://aifs.gov.au/sites/default/files/efva-esps_0_0.pdf	Grey	Website searches	Wrong outcome
Kaspiew R, Carson R, Moore S, et al. (2014). Independent Children's Lawyers Study: Final report (2nd ed.), Canberra, Attorney-General's Department. https://aifs.gov.au/sites/default/files/2022-06/IndependentChildrensLawyerStudyFinalReport.pdf	Grey	Website searches	Wrong outcome
Kaspiew R. (2007). Empirical insights into parental attitudes and children's interests in family court litigation. <i>Sydney Law Review</i> . 29(1): 131-61.	Academic	Citation searching	Wrong outcome
Kaye M, Stubbs J, Tolmie J. (2003). Negotiating Child Residence and Contact Arrangements Against a Background of Domestic Violence, Families, Law and Social Policy Research Unit, Socio-Legal Research, Centre School of Law.	Academic	Citation searching	Wrong outcome
Kuruppu J, Novy K, Fetter L, et al. (2023). 'Family court...sucks out your soul': Australian general practitioners' experiences supporting domestic violence survivors through family court. <i>BMC Primary Care</i> . 24(1). doi: 10.1186/s12875-023-02044-2	Academic	Citation searching	Wrong population
Lehtme R. (2024). Child-centred approach to shared parenting: Children's experiences of bird's nest parenting arrangements. <i>Children and Youth Services Review</i> . 160. doi: doi:10.1016/j.chilyouth.2024.107584	Academic	Database searches	Wrong country
Luecken LJ, Fabricius WV. (2003). Physical health vulnerability in adult children from divorced and intact families. <i>J Psychosom Res</i> . 55(3): 221-8. doi: 10.1016/s0022-3999(02)00552-4	Academic	Review unpicking	Wrong country
Macdonald GS. (2017). Hearing children's voices? Including children's perspectives on their experiences of domestic violence in welfare reports prepared for the English courts in private family law proceedings. <i>CHILD ABUSE & NEGLECT</i> . 65: 1-13. doi: 10.1016/j.chiabu.2016.12.013	Academic	Review unpicking	Wrong outcome
Mantle G, Leslie J, Parsons S, et al. (2006). Establishing children's wishes and feelings for family court reports: The significance attached to the age of the child. <i>Childhood</i> . 13(4): 499-518. doi: doi:10.1177/0907568206068560	Academic	Database searches	Wrong outcome
Mantle G, Moules T, Johnson K, et al. (2007). Whose wishes and feelings? Children's autonomy and parental influence in family court enquiries. <i>British Journal of Social Work</i> . 37(5): 785-805. doi: doi:https://dx.doi.org/10.1093/bjsw/bcl035	Academic	Database searches	Wrong outcome
Masson J. (2010). Judging the children act 1989: Courts and the administration of family justice. <i>Journal of Children's Services</i> . 5(2): 52-9. doi: 10.5042/jcs.2010.0301	Academic	Citation searching	Wrong publication type

McIntosh J, Long C. (2005). Current Findings on Australian Children in Postseparation Disputes: Outer Conflict, Inner Discord. <i>Journal of Family Studies</i> . 11(1): 99-109. doi: doi:https://dx.doi.org/10.5172/jfs.327.11.1.99	Academic	Database searches	No court involvement or insufficient information about court involvement
McIntosh J, Long C. (2006). Children Beyond Dispute: A Prospective Study of Outcomes from Child Focused and Child Inclusive Post-Separation Family Dispute Resolution, Family Transitions Pty Ltd / LaTrobe University 2006	Grey	Website searches	Data not extractable
McIntosh J, Smyth B, Kelaher M, et al. (2011). Post-separation parenting arrangements: Patterns and developmental outcomes. Studies of two risk groups. <i>Family Matters</i> . 86: 40-8.	Grey	Review unpicking	No court involvement or insufficient information about court involvement
McIntosh JE, Bryant HD, Murray K. (2008). EVIDENCE OF A DIFFERENT NATURE: THE CHILD- RESPONSIVE AND LESS ADVERSARIAL INITIATIVES OF THE FAMILY COURT OF AUSTRALIA. <i>Family Court Review</i> . 46(1): 125-36. doi: 10.1111/j.1744-1617.2007.00187.x	Academic	Citation searching	Wrong outcome
McIntosh JE, Long CM, Wells YD. (2009). Children beyond dispute: A four year follow up study of outcomes from child focused and child inclusive post-separation family dispute resolution, Australian Government, Attorney-General's Department.	Academic	Citation searching	No court involvement or insufficient information about court involvement
McIntosh JE, Wells YD, Long CM. (2007). Child-focused and child-inclusive Family Law dispute resolution: One year findings from a prospective study of outcomes. <i>Journal of Family Studies</i> . 13(1): 8-25. doi: doi:https://dx.doi.org/10.5172/jfs.327.13.1.8	Academic	Database searches	No court involvement or insufficient information about court involvement
McIntosh JE, Wells YD, Smyth BM, et al. (2008). Child-focused and child-inclusive divorce mediation: Comparative outcomes from a prospective study of postseparation adjustment. Special issue: Including children in family law proceedings--International perspectives. 46(1): 105-24. doi: doi:https://dx.doi.org/10.1111/j.1744-1617.2007.00186.x	Academic	Database searches	No court involvement or insufficient information about court involvement
McIntosh JE. (2009). Four young people speak about children's involvement in family court matters. <i>Journal of Family Studies</i> . 15(1): 98-103. doi: doi:https://dx.doi.org/10.5172/jfs.327.15.1.98	Academic	Database searches	Wrong study design
Mitchell D, Chapman P. (2009). Pathways through parental separation: the experiences of a group of non-resident fathers, Wellington, New Zealand, Families Commission. https://thehub.sia.govt.nz/assets/documents/IP-pathways-parental-separation_FC_09.pdf	Grey	Website searches	Wrong Population
Moloney L, Smyth B, Richardson N, et al. (2016). Understanding parenting disputes after separation (Research Report No. 36), Melbourne, Australian Institute of Family Studies. https://apo.org.au/sites/default/files/resource-files/2016-08/apo-nid261951.pdf	Grey	Website searches	Wrong outcome
Moloney L, Smyth B, Weston R, et al. (2007). Allegations of Family Violence and Child Abuse in Family Law Children's Proceedings. A Pre-reform Exploratory Study. Allegations of Family Violence and Child Abuse in Family Law Children's Proceedings: A Pre-reform Exploratory Study.	Academic	Citation searching	Wrong outcome
Monk D, Macvarish J. (2018). Siblings, Contact and the Law: An Overlooked Relationship, London, Birbeck. https://www.nuffieldfoundation.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/11/Siblings20Full20Report202018.pdf	Grey	Website searches	Wrong case type
Morrison F. (2009). After domestic abuse: Children's Perspectives on contact with fathers.	Grey	Review unpicking	Wrong country
Morrison F. (2016). Children's views on contact with non-resident fathers in the context of domestic abuse.	Grey	Review unpicking	Wrong country
North L, Akbari A, Cowley L, et al. (2022). What do we know about ethnic diversity in the family justice system in Wales?, Nuffield Family Justice Observatory	Grey	Website searches	Wrong outcome

Parkinson P, Cashmore J, Single J. (2005). ADOLESCENTS' VIEWS ON THE FAIRNESS OF PARENTING AND FINANCIAL ARRANGEMENTS AFTER SEPARATION. <i>Family Court Review</i> . 43(3): 429-44. doi: 10.1111/j.1744-1617.2005.00044.x	Academic	Review unpicking	Wrong outcome
Parkinson P, Cashmore J, Single J. (2007). Parents' and children's views on talking to judges in parenting disputes in Australia. <i>International Journal of Law, Policy and the Family</i> . 21(1): 84-107. doi: 10.1093/lawfam/ebi022	Academic	Review unpicking	Wrong outcome
Pauls M, Bertrand L. (2007). A study of perceptions and experiences of Albertans involved with child custody and access, Canadian Research Institute for Law and the Family. Alberta Law Foundation. https://prism.ucalgary.ca/bitstreams/04eb63f7-a2dd-4095-8d13-825d9845ab9b/download	Grey	Website searches	Wrong outcome
Peacey V, Hunt J. (2008). Problematic contact after separation and divorce. A national survey of parents. 1-146.	Grey	Review unpicking	Wrong outcome
Peacey V, Hunt J. (2009). I'm not saying it was easy... Contact problems in separated families. Contact problems in separated families, London, Gingerbread.	Grey	Review unpicking	No court involvement or insufficient information about court involvement
Private Law Working Group. (2020). Private law: family disputes the time for change the need for change the case for change. https://www.judiciary.uk/wp-content/uploads/2020/04/PRIVATE-LAW-WORKING-GROUP-REPORT.pdf	Grey	Website searches	Wrong publication type
Pruett MK, Williams TY, Insabella G, et al. (2003). Family and legal indicators of child adjustment to divorce among families with young children. <i>Journal of Family Psychology</i> . 17(2): 169. doi: 10.1037/0893-3200.17.2.169	Academic	Review unpicking	Wrong country
Reeves C. (2008). Youth included!, SPARC: Social Planning and Research Council of British Columbia.	Grey	Review unpicking	Wrong outcome
Richardson S, McCabe MP. (2001). Parental divorce during adolescence and adjustment in early adulthood. <i>Adolescence</i> . 36(143): 467-89.	Academic	Review unpicking	No court involvement or insufficient information about court involvement
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