

BEYOND THE SILENCE: EMOTIONAL EXPERIENCES OF ADOLESCENTS IN FOSTER CARE

Mmathebe Mampane

Department of Social Work, University of the Witwatersrand
mampanem@gmail.com

Eleanor Ross

<http://orcid.org/0000-0003-4325-1283>

Visiting Professor of Social Work,
Centre for Social Development in Africa,
University of Johannesburg
eross@uj.ac.za

ABSTRACT

Heavy workloads and the crisis in South African foster care compel many social workers to focus on the physical needs of foster children and neglect their psychosocial needs. This qualitative study employed individual interviews to explore the emotional experiences of 15 adolescents placed in foster care. While they were aware of the reasons for being fostered, their situation evoked feelings of sadness, stigmatisation and exclusion. Feelings towards their biological parents included emotional blunting, resentment towards fathers who did not care, and love for parents despite their absence. Emotions regarding their foster homes ranged from happiness and appreciation for being fostered, to feeling unhappy, neglected and scapegoated. Few of the adolescents knew their social workers and had minimal contact with them. Findings highlight the need for kinship grants (in addition to the provisions of section 186 of the Children's Second Amendment Act of 2015) to relieve social workers from the burden of excessive reviews of foster care grants and to allow them to focus more on the emotional needs of foster children.

Keywords: foster care; foster children; adolescence; attachment theory; social work



Southern African Journal of Social Work and Social Development
Volume 29 | Number 1 | 2017 | pp. 107– 121
<https://upjournals.co.za/index.php/SWPR>

<https://doi.org/10.25159/2415-5829/2140>
ISSN 2415-5829 (Online) | ISSN 1011-2324 (Print)
© Unisa Press 2017

INTRODUCTION

Although foster care may be one of the most relied-upon forms of alternative care in South Africa, Breen (2015), in a policy brief of the Johannesburg Child Welfare, argues that foster care placement has been subjected to much debate and controversy. For example, Chuong and Operario (2012) state that various research studies have found that elderly grandparents who are expected to assume responsibility for fostering children in South Africa raise concerns regarding increasing financial pressure as well as poor health and functioning in general, which can have an impact on their ability to provide for the physical and emotional needs of foster children in need of care and protection, particularly those presenting with behavioural problems. While there has been debate regarding the suitability of some foster care placements, the demand for foster care in the country has increased due to the increasing number of children who are in need of care and protection. Therefore foster care remains one of the preferred modes of placement.

The care and protection of children in foster care is the responsibility of the state which entrusts this responsibility to the Children's Courts to monitor, which in turn rely on social workers employed by national and provincial departments of social development and also non-governmental welfare organisations. Foster parents are entitled to social work intervention supplemented with foster care grants (FCGs) to assist them with the costs of fostering a child. Financially needy families tend to opt for the FCG in preference to the Child Support Grant (CSG) because of the higher monetary value attached to the FCG, thereby increasing the number of foster grant beneficiaries.

As South Africa is one of the countries that are faced with an HIV and AIDS epidemic, there has been a large increase in the number of orphans from HIV- and AIDS-related deaths, which has resulted in an increasing need for alternative placements for orphaned and vulnerable children, such as foster care (Van der Westhuizen, Roux and Strydom 2012). Traditional family structures have not only been disrupted by the HIV and AIDS epidemic, but also by the phenomenon of absent fathers (Mavungu, Thomson-de Boor and Mphaka 2013). This situation can be attributed to many factors, such as separation or divorce, death or illness of either parent, parental labour migration, very low marriage rates and also high levels of non-marital childbearing (Marteleto, Cavanagh, Prickett and Clark 2016; Pilon 2003).

Consequently, after the promulgation of the Children's Act 38 of 2005, the government embarked on a campaign to retain and recruit additional social workers to implement the provisions of the Act (Recruitment and Retention Strategy for Social Workers 2008). However, despite these efforts, social workers and Children's Courts did not have the capacity to process the backlog of 300 000 court orders in respect of foster care reviews, which threatened the termination of FCGs (Böning and Ferreira 2013; Ngwenya and Botha 2012). In 2011 the Gauteng High Court was therefore compelled to grant a blanket extension of all expired court orders for two years in order to continue payments of the FCGs. This order was subsequently extended (Breen 2015). However,

according to the Social Pension System (Socpen 2016), in November 2016 more than 100 000 children continued to have expired court orders.

It is therefore not surprising that due to heavy administrative workloads, many social workers are only able to focus on the physical needs of foster children and tend to neglect their psychosocial needs (Pretorius and Ross 2010). In this regard, Stone (2014) contends that many foster parents are not always adequately prepared or equipped to manage and deal with the different demands posed by children who have multifaceted emotional, cognitive, health and educational needs arising from early deprivation or abuse.

For example, as early as in 2007, Louw and Joubert (2007) found that foster children affected by HIV and AIDS experienced attitudes of powerlessness, unresolved and unventilated grief and suppression of traumatic memories. Pretorius and Ross (2010) interviewed a group of foster children who articulated feelings of fear, sorrow and ambivalence in relation to their experience of foster care. Roux, Bungane and Strydom (2010) found that the changes in the lives of foster children caused them to experience instability, uncertainty, confusion and frustration. In addition, they felt stigmatised by their families and the community and struggled with anxiety, low self-esteem and depression.

While there has been some research on foster children's general feelings about their placements, there would seem to be a paucity of studies focusing on specific aspects. The current research therefore explored (1) foster children's understanding of the reasons that led to them being fostered, (2) foster children's feelings about being adolescents in foster care, (3) foster children's biological parents, (4) foster children's current foster home environments, and (5) the social work services foster children had received. According to Erikson (1963), the task of adolescence is to establish independence from the family and to establish an identity and social role. During this stage of the life cycle adolescents also have a strong need to be like their peers and to be accepted by them. In addition, adolescence is the stage when the young person is likely to experience strong emotions related to physical and cognitive changes. Hence the research study was aimed at building on the already existing research regarding the feelings and emotions that children in foster care experience, with particular reference to adolescents wrestling with issues of identity as a foster child. The primary theoretical lens framing the study was attachment theory in which attachment is defined as a profound and lasting emotional connection between a child and his/her primary caregiver in the first few years of development (Dubois-Comtois, Cyr, Pascuzzo, Lessard and Poulin 2013). The assumption underpinning the study was that children's early experiences in relation to attachment to biological parents and other caregivers can potentially have an impact on their subsequent relationships with foster parents and other persons.

METHODOLOGY

Research Approach and Design

The research was located within a qualitative research paradigm and employed a phenomenological approach which acknowledges the significance and quality of the experiences of individuals regarding a certain aspect or phenomenon (Creswell 2009), in this case, the feelings and emotions adolescents in foster care experience with regard to being placed in foster care.

Population and Sample

The population of this research study comprised children in foster care served by the Greater Benoni Child Welfare. Within this population, a purposive, non-probability sample was drawn from the database at the agency and included 15 adolescents who were placed in foster care and who were in high school. This particular sample was selected for this study in that children who are already in high school are generally assumed to be at a developmental stage where their thinking is operational. As adolescents in high school are generally above 13 years of age, it would mean that they would be at the formal operational stage according to Piaget's developmental theory and more likely to understand and be able to answer questions that related to their emotions and feelings with regard to being placed in foster care (Watts, Cockcroft and Duncan 2013).

Research Instrumentation

A semi-structured interview schedule comprising mainly open-ended and a few closed-ended questions was used as the research tool for the study. The schedule was tested on two children who were placed in foster care and who met the criteria for the sample but did not participate in the final study. The pretest participants were from a township and did not use English as their first language. As they were able to understand all the questions, it was not necessary to amend the schedule.

Data Collection

Although the original intention was to collect data through focus groups, on the advice of the University's Human Research Ethics Committee, the approach was changed to individual interviews owing to the sensitive nature of the topic explored. Data collection was carried out during the school holidays so as not to interfere with participants' schoolwork. Participants were all black Africans and English was not their first language of communication. The researcher therefore translated all interview questions

into isiZulu and Sepedi/Sesotho in order for participants to be able to understand and respond appropriately.

Data Analysis

Thematic analysis of the data involved the following five steps of data analysis conceptualised by Terre Blanche, Durrheim and Painter (2006): (1) *Familiarisation and immersion* whereby the researchers read the transcribed data more than once to familiarise themselves with the material, (2) *Inducing themes* involved looking for themes and sub-themes, (3) *Coding* incorporated grouping the different codes based on commonality and relevance to the themes, (4) *Elaboration* allowed the researchers an opportunity to reconsider the coding to revise the methods used, and (5) *Interpretation and checking* entailed interpreting the information and checking themes for similarities and whether any meaningful information might have been overlooked.

Trustworthiness

In order to enhance dependability of this study, the same researcher conducted all the interviews using the same interview schedule. Credibility was enhanced through pretesting the interview schedule and providing a detailed description of the research procedures as well as the theoretical framework guiding the study. In terms of transferability, although the small, non-probability sample precluded generalisation of the findings to the broader population of foster children, the results in respect of emotions experienced by these children may be transferable or applicable to other adolescents in foster care. With regard to confirmability, member checking was employed whereby participants were shown a draft of the findings so that they could make any comments, clarify issues and suggest any additions to or omissions from the information. The researcher also kept a reflective journal throughout the study where a detailed account of the research process was described. In addition, correspondence checking was employed whereby the researcher's categorisation of themes was checked by her supervisor to ensure that they corresponded with the themes that the latter had identified.

Ethical Considerations

Ethical principles adhered to during the study included informed consent, voluntary participation, the right to decline participation and to withdraw from the study with no negative consequences, confidentiality, non-maleficence, and non-deception.

Limitations of the Study

The study was based on a small, non-probability sample recruited from the Greater Benoni Child Welfare. Thus it may not be feasible to generalise the findings to the

broader population of foster children in Gauteng, or even in Benoni as there are other non-governmental organisations and governmental agencies that work with children in foster care. Moreover, Daveyton, in the Ekurhuleni Metropolitan Municipality of Gauteng, is not a racially diverse community, thus the findings of the study were obtained from a sample of black adolescents only. The implication is that the results obtained cannot be extrapolated to the white community. A further weakness is related to the sensitive nature of the research topic. It is possible that some of the participants may have furnished socially desirable responses, although efforts were made to put the adolescents at ease by reassuring them that there were no right or wrong answers.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Findings are discussed systematically in accordance with the objectives of the study, and themes that surfaced from the responses are illustrated with verbatim quotes from the participants.

Profile of participants

According to the demographic profile of foster children who participated in the study, the ages of participants ranged from 13 to 18 years as the study focused on the adolescent stage of the life cycle. Most of the participants, i.e. 12 out of the 15, were female. Twelve of the children interviewed used isiZulu as their main language of communication. Only three children were Sepedi/Sesotho speaking. The children were all in high school and the majority (8) were in grades 8 and 11. Only two children were in grade 12. Although the Greater Benoni Child Welfare renders services to all racial and cultural groups, all the foster children in the study were from Daveyton, which is largely home to persons from the African race, hence all research participants were black Africans.

Reasons for being placed in foster care

The first objective was to engage the foster children regarding their understanding about the circumstances that led to them being fostered. The number of children whose biological mother was deceased and their biological father was unknown made up 9 out of 15 of the adolescents. Two children had mothers whose whereabouts were unknown and their biological father was deceased, three children were double orphans as both parents were deceased, and only one child out of the 15 participants was not related to the foster parent as the whereabouts and identity of both parents were unknown. It is of interest that all the children in the present study were aware of the reason for them being fostered, unlike the findings from a study by Roux et al. (2010) where more than half of the children had not been informed about reasons for their placement.

While participants were not asked about the cause of parental death, it is possible that these deaths could be related to the HIV and AIDS epidemic, particularly given that

according to UNICEF (2015), South Africa has the largest figure of HIV-infected people in the world, with approximately 3.7 million children orphaned due to AIDS-related deaths. Children who do not know their fathers are also considered orphans as there is a possibility that their fathers could be deceased (UNICEF 2015). Based on the results of the Census that was conducted in South Africa in 2011, there were about 3.4 million children who were orphans, 2.8 million of those were paternal orphans, 1.3 million were maternal orphans and 670 895 were double orphans (Chiumia 2014).

Feelings about being adolescents in foster care in relation to their peers who are not in foster care

The second objective was to establish their feelings about being adolescents in foster care in relation to their peers who are not in foster care. The following themes emerged:

Theme one: Feelings of sadness

“I feel bad because when you don’t have parents you no longer get the same things you used to get before,” commented a 14-year-old girl living with her aunt.

Theme two: Feeling stigmatised and excluded

Another theme articulated by three of the participants was the feeling of being stigmatised and excluded, as conveyed in the following responses:

“Sometimes when my friends talk about their fathers at school I feel left out and wish my own father was around,” explained a 17-year-old girl living with her maternal grandmother.

An 18-year-old boy living with his grandmother remarked: “Whenever I have to miss school for a review I feel that other kids judge me.”

“I feel sad and ignored sometimes. When my aunt’s children are being bought stuff by their dad I feel left out,” said a 15-year-old girl.

Consistent with these findings, Roux et al. (2010) explain that children placed in foster care are made vulnerable by the circumstances that led to their placement as well as the situation that they find themselves in. Moreover, foster children are usually stigmatised not only by their peers but by their families and relatives as well. Children who are affected by HIV and AIDS face many emotional, psychological and social burdens as they have to deal with the pain of not having their parents, being lonely, and feeling stigmatised and marginalised (Roux et al. 2010).

Feelings about biological parents

The third objective was to elicit the adolescents' emotions in relation to their biological parents. In response to questions relating to their biological parents, nine of the participants knew that their mothers were deceased but the identity and whereabouts of their biological fathers were unknown. Five of them did not know both their biological parents. Some of the emotions experienced were as given below.

Theme one: Love parents and miss them

A 17-year-old girl replied: "I love both my parents. Yes, my dad was never there to raise me, but I still feel that he is my dad."

One participant said: "I would tell them that I love them and I miss them. It would be nice if they could visit me one day."

Theme two: Sadness and loneliness

Feelings of sadness and loneliness were apparent in the responses of seven of the adolescents, as reflected in the following quotes:

A 17-year-old girl living with her maternal grandmother commented: "It hurts because I have never seen them both (my parents)."

"It really makes me sad because if they were still alive, I wouldn't be living with my aunt and my sister and I would not be mistreated," expressed a 13-year-old girl.

"I feel very sad because I do not know my mother. She passed away when I was four years old. My father calls me every now and then and sometimes I go and visit him," a 13-year-old girl remarked.

Participants expressed feelings of sadness and loneliness because they missed their parents and had no one to talk to in their foster homes. Consistent with this theme, Louw and Joubert (2007) also reported feelings of loneliness among the adolescents they interviewed who had been orphaned by HIV and AIDS.

Theme three: Feeling angry and neglected

Feelings of resentment surfaced in the responses of three of the participants, as reflected in the following two verbatim quotes:

"I understand that my mother passed away, but if my dad is out there he should at least want to see me," explained a 17-year-old girl.

An 18-year-old girl responded: "I feel fine. I have never seen my mother since I was born and I once saw my father. He doesn't want anything to do with me."

In this regard, Van der Westhuizen et al. (2012) attribute feelings of anger to part of the grieving process that adolescents need to go through before they can reach a state of acceptance of abandonment by the death of their parents. Also in line with these findings, Mavungu et al. (2013) maintain that in South Africa approximately one out of every two fathers is not present in their child's life and development.

Foster home environment

Objective four was to ascertain the feelings of the adolescents who were interviewed regarding their foster home or family. Themes included the following:

Theme one: Happiness and appreciation

A common theme articulated by ten of the participants was a feeling of happiness and gratitude at being fostered and taken care of physically and emotionally. These feelings were encapsulated in the following verbatim responses:

"I live well. We all live well. I am happy that my granny took the responsibility to look after me when my parents died," said a 16-year-old boy.

"I really have no complaints staying with my grandmother. I am happy that I have someone I can cry to," responded a 14-year-old girl.

A 17-year-old girl said: "My granny is like a mother to me. She buys me things when I ask for them. I do not feel left out. I would never want to leave her."

A 17-year-old girl commented: "Although it hurts that my parents did not raise me, I am happy that my grandmother took the responsibility to look after me and my sister."

"I feel good because she helps me at home. I can also have school uniform and other things that I need," stated an 18-year-old girl.

"I feel good because I used to be a trouble child and they would call me and talk to me and reprimand my behaviour. Whenever I would go back to my ways they never gave up on me; they always reprimanded me and made sure that I am doing the right thing," said an 18-year-old girl living with her unrelated foster parents.

These responses highlight the positive relationships enjoyed by these participants with their grandmothers and foster parents and the appreciation that these children felt for the persons who were prepared to foster them, provide for their material needs and ensure

that they were disciplined and well brought up. Similar findings were documented by Van der Westhuizen et al. (2012) in their study of 30 foster children in the North West province of South Africa.

Theme two: Neutrality, emotional blunting or disassociation

A further theme that emerged was a feeling of neutrality. The following responses capture this apparent lack of emotion:

“I don’t know. I do not feel anything. Really. I do not pay mind to it; I mean I have my granny now,” said a 16-year-old boy.

A 16-year-old boy living with his paternal grandmother stated: “I don’t know. I guess I have never thought about it.”

“It is not something I pay mind to. My granny is here to look after me. It does not make a difference,” said a 14-year-old girl living with her grandmother.

This type of response could possibly have reflected feelings of disassociation or denial of any emotions experienced, which was identified as a defence mechanism by Renn (2002) who explored childhood trauma in relation to attachment theory. This finding suggests that these adolescents may not have been afforded the opportunity to ventilate their feelings about being in foster care. Alternatively, they might have been placed in the care of their grandparents from a very early age and had no other point of reference. Hence the foster care arrangement was perceived as a normal part of their socialisation. Pretorius and Ross (2010) point out that in South Africa, the most common form of foster care is kinship foster care placement. This form of placement helps children to adapt more easily to the environment as there is a sense of familiarity and cultural stability. This form of placement could further explain why these participants expressed feelings of neutrality about the placement.

Theme three: Feeling unhappy, neglected and scapegoated

A 16-year-old girl commented: “I am not happy. I do not like it here. My grandmother does not even buy me toiletries or sanitary pads with the grant. She uses it for her own things while I am suffering.”

When asked about how she felt about being fostered by her grandmother, another participant stated: “Honestly, I do not like it. I am with her because I have nowhere else to go.”

“It is not great because I am blamed for everything that goes wrong in that house,” responded a 13-year-old girl living with her aunt.

Similar concerns were documented by Ross, Pretorius, Nathane-Taulela, Gerrand and Berhane (2008) who found that foster children catered for by the Nelson Mandela Children's Fund, complained about the FCG not being spent on their needs or being scapegoated when things went wrong in the home. In relation to attachment theory, when there is a lack of suitable caregiving, secure attachment does not progress between the caregiver and the child (Turner 2008). Some of the responses suggested that these children did not enjoy very good relationships with their caregivers, which could have an impact on their ability to form and sustain attachments.

Social work services

The fifth objective was to explore participants' views regarding the type of social work services they received.

Theme one: Not knowing their social workers

When they were probed about the social work services and who their social workers were, 13 of the children explained that they had never seen their social worker or gave the name of someone who no longer worked at the Greater Benoni Child Welfare, suggesting that termination of the worker-client relationship had not been dealt with adequately. For example, "I have never seen my social worker," said a 17-year-old girl. Another participant remarked, "Honestly, I would be lying if I said I know my social worker. I don't even know the last time I came here." Two respondents knew their social workers. However, neither of them knew the name of the social worker. One of them explained that she last saw her social worker three or four months previously, which would seem to be a relatively long absence.

The fact that these participants did not know the names of their social workers suggests that social work services in these cases were relatively infrequent. However, a shortcoming of the study is that it did not probe the length of time that the adolescents had been placed in foster care. Other participants gave the name of a social auxiliary worker who came to inform them that their FCG was about to lapse and that the grant had to be reviewed for another two years.

Similar responses were obtained by Ross et al. (2008) in their study of foster children. They found that foster children were seldom visited by social workers and attributed this finding in part to the heavy workloads of social work personnel. Ngwenya and Botha (2012) explored the foster care backlog in the Johannesburg office of the Department of Social Development and found that social workers were faced with an overwhelming demand for services and an inability to cope with these demands. This situation has negative implications for foster children and their families who receive poor service delivery. It also affects the image of the social work profession in the community as well as job satisfaction of social workers.

Two of the participants confidently named social auxiliary workers as they thought those persons were their social workers and reported that those were the people they had had contact with recently. This misunderstanding on the part of the foster children is understandable given the lack of clarity by the general public regarding the differences between these two professions, and suggests the need for public education in this regard.

Theme two: The need for other social work services besides foster care reviews

Participants were vocal in expressing their need for other social work services in addition to foster care reviews. Furthermore, the children wanted social workers to conduct groups in schools, encourage them with their studies and explain how they might do well in school, as well as how they should behave in a respectable and acceptable manner.

“It would be nice if social workers came to our schools and conducted groups that will encourage us,” said a 16-year-old girl.

“I expect social workers to remove me from a place I feel abused. I expect social workers not to place me with someone who mistreats me,” explained a 13-year-old girl.

A 14-year-old girl remarked, “The groups they do for us over school holidays are nice. They have to continue.”

A 17-year-old boy reflected, “It would be nice if social workers came to our schools and checked how we are doing, besides coming to school only to check if we are there or to inform us about a review.”

“I would like for my social worker to motivate me and encourage me every now and then,” stated an 18-year-old girl.

The finding that social workers mainly visited the children when a FCG review was due, may be attributed to the fact that the review process is a statutory requirement in terms of the Children’s Act. It also reflected the current crisis within foster care in this country highlighted by Ngwenya and Botha (2012).

CONCLUSIONS

Among the conclusions reached was that 14 out of the 15 foster children who were interviewed were placed with family members, which provides further support for the finding by Garcia, O’Reilly, Matone, Kim, Long and Rubin (2015) that in South Africa foster care is mainly based on kinship care. The findings regarding the participants not knowing their fathers or being unaware of their fathers’ whereabouts, are also in

line with research studies conducted by Richter, Desmond, Hosegood, Madhavan, Makiwane, Makusha, Morrell, and Swartz (2012) and Mavungu et al. (2013) regarding the phenomenon of absent fathers in South Africa. All the participants who were interviewed were aware of the reason for them being placed in foster care. They were able to articulate a range of positive and negative feelings in relation to being fostered, their biological parents and their foster parents, which highlighted the emotional distress they experienced.

The fact that social workers tended to only make contact with the foster children when the foster grant needed to be reviewed, suggests that their focus was predominantly on the grant review rather than the emotional needs of the children. Of particular concern is the implication of lack of social work counselling services on the emotional and psychosocial health of these vulnerable children. It is also questionable whether these children had been afforded the opportunity to ventilate and come to terms with these issues, which prompted the title of this article, "Beyond the silence". However, on the positive side, the finding that the children enjoyed the groups held during the holidays, highlighted the value of this form of social work intervention.

Finally, one also needs to consider whether all children currently placed in foster care meet the strict definition of being in need of care. As Proudlock (2014) has stated, "Child protection social workers and courts should be providing services to raped, assaulted, neglected, abandoned and orphaned children. There is no need for them to have to spend their skills and time processing paper work for grant applications for children, the majority of whom are quite safely living with their grannies or aunts."

RECOMMENDATIONS

In terms of social work practice, it is recommended that as part of their supervisory responsibilities, social workers undertake regular visits to foster families. Social workers need to approach foster care from a broader more holistic perspective. In other words, they need to focus not only on the FCG but also on the well-being of foster children and their families by engaging in case work interventions as well as group work. For example, being part of support and growth groups may be helpful as foster children may then be afforded the support they need, particularly in the adolescent stage of the life cycle as it is considered the most complex stage in one's development. This approach is likely to dispel the notion that foster families only need financial support from the government.

It is also recommended that the current foster care policy be reviewed and amended to emphasise the need for social workers to offer other forms of support to foster families than foster care applications and reviews. Moreover, the foster care placement and reviews need to be regularly monitored so that distressed children who are unhappy in their foster homes are brought to the attention of social workers and do not become invisible. A kinship grant as recommended by Breen (2015) could potentially provide

financial support for children placed with family members who are not necessarily in need of care, and could relieve social workers from the onerous burden of reviewing vast numbers of FCGs. The thinking behind kinship grants would be in line with section 186 of the Children's Second Amendment Act of 2015 which allows the courts to extend a foster care placement until the child is 18 years of age and removes the requirements of two yearly social work reports and court reviews.

REFERENCES

- Böning, A., and S. Ferreira. 2013. "An Analysis of, and Different Approaches to, Challenges in Foster Care Practice in South Africa." *Social Work/Maatskaplike Werk* 49 (4): 519–569.
- Breen, N. 2015. *Policy Brief: Foster Care in South Africa – Where to From Here?* Johannesburg: Joburg Child Welfare.
- Chiumia, S. 2014. "Factsheet: How Many Orphans are there in South Africa?" <https://africacheck.org/factsheets/factsheet-how-many-orphans-are-there-in-south-africa/> (accessed 24 October 2016).
- Chuong, C., and D. Operario. 2012. "Challenging Household Dynamics: Impact of Orphanhood, Parental Absence, and Children's Living Arrangements on Education in South Africa." *Global Public Health* 7 (1): 42–57. <https://doi.org/10.1080/17441692.2011.574147>
- Creswell, J. W. 2009. *Research Design: Qualitative, Quantitative, and Mixed Methods Approaches*. London: SAGE Publications.
- Dubois-Comtois, K., C. Cyr, K. Pascuzzo, M. Lessard, and C. Poulin. 2013. "Attachment Theory in Clinical Work with Adolescents." *Child and Adolescent Behavior* 1 (3): 1–8.
- Erikson, E. 1963. *Childhood and Society*. Toronto: Norton.
- Garcia, A., A. O'Reilly, M. Matone, M. Kim, J. Long, and D. M. Rubin . 2015. "The Influence of Caregiver Depression on Children in Non-relative Foster Care versus Kinship Care Placements." *Maternal and Child Health Journal* 19 (3): 459–467. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10995-014-1525-9>
- Louw, L., and J. M. C. Joubert. 2007. "The Experiences of Adolescents Orphaned by HIV/AIDS Related Conditions." *Social Work/Maatskaplike Werk* 43 (4): 376–391.
- Marteletto, L. J., S. Cavanagh, L. Prickett, and S. Clark. 2016. "Instability in Parent-Child Coresidence and Adolescent Development in Urban South Africa." *Studies in Family Planning* 47 (1): 19–38. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1728-4465.2016.00048.x>
- Mavungu, M. E., H. Thomson-de Boor, and K. Mphaka. 2013. "*So We Are ATM Fathers*": A Study of Absent Fathers in Johannesburg, South Africa. Centre for Social Development in Africa, University of Johannesburg, and Sonke Gender Justice: Johannesburg, South Africa.
- Ngwenya, P., and P. Botha. 2012. "The Foster Care Backlog: A Threat to the Retention of Social Workers?" *Social Work/Maatskaplike Werk* 48 (2): 209–224.
- Pilon, M. 2003. *Preparation of the UNESCO 2003 EFA Monitoring Report*. Foster Care and Schooling in West Africa: The State of Knowledge.

- Pretorius, E., and E. Ross. 2010. "Loss, Grief and Bereavement: The Experiences of Children in Kinship Foster Care." *Social Work/Maatskaplike Werk* 46 (4): 469–485.
- Proudlock, P. 2014. *The Foster Care System is Failing a Million Orphans: Child Rights NGO's Call for a Kinship Grant*. Press Release by the University of Cape Town, 23 October 2014.
- Renn, P. 2002. "The Link between Childhood Trauma and Later Violent Offending: The Application of Attachment Theory in a Probation Setting." *Attachment and Human Development* 4 (3): 294–317. <https://doi.org/10.1080/14616730210167203>
- Republic of South Africa. 2006. *Children's Act 38 of 2005*. Pretoria: Government Printers.
- Republic of South Africa. 2008. *Recruitment and Retention Strategy for Social Workers*. Pretoria: Department of Social Development.
- Republic of South Africa. 2015. *Children's Second Amendment Act, 2015. Government Gazette no. 38704 of 17 April 2015*. Pretoria: Government Printers.
- Richter, L., C. Desmond, V. Hosegood, S. Madhavan, M. Makiwane, T. Makusha, R. Morrell, and S. Swartz. 2012. *Fathers and Other Men in the Lives of Children and Families: Strategies to Overcome Poverty and Inequality – Towards Carnegie III*. Cape Town: HSRC Press.
- Ross, E., E. Pretorius, T. Nathane-Taulela, P. Gerrand, and S. Berhane. 2008. "Foster Care among the Partner Organizations of the Nelson Mandela Children's Fund: The Impact of Systemic Structures, Challenges and Opportunities on the Well-being of Foster Children." *Report Prepared for the Nelson Mandela Children's Fund*. Johannesburg: University of the Witwatersrand.
- Roux, A., X. Bungane, and C. Strydom. 2010. "Circumstances of Foster Children and Their Foster Parents Affected by HIV and AIDS." *Social Work/Maatskaplike Werk* 46 (1): 44–56.
- Socpen 2016. *Social Pension System*. Pretoria: Department of Social Development.
- Stone, D. 2014. "U.S. Foster Care: A Flawed Solution that Leads to Long-term Problems?" <http://www.stirjournal.com/2014/05/12/u-s-foster-care-a-flawed-solution-that-leads-to-more-long-term-problems/> (accessed 16 May 2016).
- Terre Blanche, M. J., K. Durrheim, and D. Painter. 2006. *Research in Practice: Applied Methods for the Social Sciences*. Cape Town: UCT Press.
- Turner, L. 2008. "Attachment Style of Children in Foster Care and its Relationship to Interpersonal Cognitive Complexity." PhD dissertation, Wichita State University.
- UNICEF. 2015. "Orphans and Vulnerable Children." http://www.unicef.org/southafrica/protection_6631.html (accessed 24 October 2016).
- Van der Westhuizen, J., A. Roux, and C. Strydom. 2012. "The Circumstances and Needs of Adolescent Orphans in Foster Care." *Social Work/Maatskaplike Werk* 48 (4): 467–485.
- Watts, J., K. Cockcroft, and N. Duncan. 2013. *Developmental Psychology*. 2nd ed. Cape Town: UCT Press.