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Performance Review and Quality in Social Care. Anne Connor and Stewart Black.

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that social work is an adaptable profession and that its involvement of different fields of endeavor has relevance to practitioners in different national settings.

Aletha C. Huston (Ed.), *Children in Poverty*, New York: Cambridge University Press, 1994. \$19.95 papercover.

It is now widely known that the proportion of children in poverty increased steadily during the 1980s. The problem of child poverty has been dramatized by numerous advocacy groups and it is now widely reported in the media. However, while many deplore the situation, there is little agreement about what should be done about it. In recent welfare reform discussions, many have argued that the solution to the poverty problem can be found in promoting parental responsibility, hard work and self-sufficiency. However, the authors of this book are critical of simple, rhetorical answers to pressing social problems such as child poverty. Slogans, they point out, do little except meet political objectives and foster complacency. They argue that a variety of policy options are needed if the problem of poverty among children is to be addressed in meaningful ways. These policy options involve health care, income support, child care, early childhood education, parental support (particularly for adolescent mothers) and economic programs.

The book is based on a conference held at the University of Kansas in June 1988 and like most publications emanating from conferences, it lacks coherence and structure. Nevertheless, the different articles touch on some important issues and Huston's concluding chapter offers a useful summary of the material. It also identifies key areas in which future policy involvement is needed. Current events in Washington do not, however, auger well for her hope that the solutions proposed in the book will be implemented.

Anne Connor and Stewart Black (Ed.), *Performance Review and Quality in Social Care*. London: Jessica Kingsley Publishers, 1994. \$39.50 hardcover. (Available from Taylor and Francis, 1900 Frost Road, Bristol, PA 19007-1598)

Social service programs are under greater pressure than ever before to demonstrate their effectiveness. Taxpayers and

politicians are not only reluctant to provide resources to fund the social services but are becoming insistent that social expenditures be justified in terms of efficiency criteria. Although many social workers and social service personnel are suspicious about the motives of those who call for accountability, it offers an opportunity to rigorously determine which interventions work and do in fact meet their stated objectives. As the editors of this book demonstrate, evaluation research can be used effectively by policy makers and administrators to test and identify effective solutions to current social ills.

Connor and Black have produced a useful collection of articles dealing with performance evaluation in the British social services such as the National Health Services, the Local Authority Social Services Departments and the central government agencies. Although the book focuses on Britain, its message has relevance to the United States where similar demands for accountability are being made. The book will, therefore, be of value not only to readers who have an interest in comparative social welfare but to those who are involved in evaluation research and quality assurance in the social services. The book contains a particularly useful section on consumer involvement in outcome research. Other topics include staff appraisal, the role of inspection in the social services, personal supervision, and responses to consumer complaints. The book shows that there are many issues, in evaluation research in both Britain and the United States that require extensive discussion and further analysis.

Duncan Lindsey, *The Welfare of Children*, New York: Oxford University Press, 1994. \$29.95 hardcover.

Duncan Lindsey's book makes a major contribution to current discussions on child welfare. It not only provides a thorough survey of the field, but offers an incisive critique of the way the system currently fails to meet its declared objective of enhancing the welfare of children.

Lindsey's thesis is a simple but important one. He argues that the current child welfare system has focused excessively on the problem of child abuse and ignored the far more widespread