

Crisis Nursery: Literature Review

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Crisis Nursery is a place that provides a safe haven for children and their families during times of crisis and distress. This organization is located in Urbana, IL, and offers support and caters to the needs of vulnerable children and their families when they are in need. The heart of this organization is providing a commitment to ensure the well-being, safety, and protection of children, offering temporary care during times of need. Crisis Nursery serves to offer compassion, counseling, and resources to families who are struggling and to help reduce parental stress, improve parenting skills, and reduce the risk of child maltreatment. Through their dedication and efforts, Crisis Nursery stands as a light by offering resilience and stability for the community and protecting the most vulnerable among us, children.

There was no question when choosing this organization. They are doing wonderful things for so many people in the community. Being able to be a small part of their day was truly rewarding. This organization, their children, and their families make volunteering effortless. Being able to have the opportunity to directly contribute to the well-being and safety of vulnerable children and families in the community is deeply fulfilling and impactful. Volunteering for Crisis Nursery is a chance to give back to the community. Volunteering shows empathy, compassion, and personal growth while making a meaningful impact on the lives of those in need. Volunteering for such an amazing organization was truly a rewarding experience.

Student 1: Makynzie Wagner

Child Welfare and Foster Care Statistics

The Crisis Nursery plays a pivotal role in mitigating the challenges children face in foster care, particularly in influencing their placement outcomes. By providing a safe haven for

children during moments of family crisis, the Crisis Nursery offers crucial support that can ultimately impact child placement after foster care. Firstly, by offering temporary respite care, the Crisis Nursery reduces the immediate stressors on families, potentially mitigating the need for children to enter foster care altogether (The Annie E. Casey Foundation, 2022). This early intervention preserves family integrity, connecting children to their biological families whenever possible. Moreover, the Crisis Nursery serves as a stabilizing force for children already in foster care. “In 2021, 203,770 children under 18 entered foster care in the United States, a rate of 3 per 1,000. The entry rate has hovered at 3 or 4 per 1,000 for two decades. Kids ages 1 to 5 make up the largest share (29% in 2021) of children entering care(The Annie E. Casey Foundation, 2022).” Providing a nurturing environment during turbulent times helps children cope with trauma and instability, potentially improving their emotional well-being and behavior (The Annie E. Casey Foundation, 2022). This, in turn, may positively influence placement decisions by demonstrating the child's ability to adapt and thrive in various environments. Furthermore, the Crisis Nursery is a valuable resource for foster families. Offering temporary respite care alleviates caregiver burnout and stress, enabling foster families to continue providing stable and supportive environments for children in their care (The Annie E. Casey Foundation, 2022). This support network strengthens the foster care system as a whole, fostering positive placement outcomes for children.

In summary, the Crisis Nurseries' impact on child placement after foster care is multifaceted. It provides immediate relief during times of crisis and contributes to the long-term stability and well-being of children in foster care. By preserving family connections, supporting foster families, and nurturing children through difficult times, Crisis Nursery plays a crucial role in shaping positive placement outcomes for children in the foster care system.

Making Sense of Childcare Instability Among Families with Low Incomes: Reasons for Changing Childcare Arrangements

In, “Making Sense of Children Instability Among Families with Low Incomes: Reasons for Changing Childcare Arrangements,” the authors delve into the intricate web of factors influencing child care decisions within economically disadvantaged families. Through meticulous research and analysis, they uncover a nuanced landscape where childcare instability is not merely a matter of chance but is often a result of complex, interwoven circumstances. By employing a mixed-methods approach, the study sheds light on both desired and undesired reasons that prompt changes in childcare arrangements, offering valuable insights into the underlying dynamics (Pilarz et al., 2022). Moreover, the authors explore the often-overlooked dimension of planned versus unplanned changes, highlighting how families navigate these transitions with varying degrees of agency and control. Their findings underscore the importance of adopting a holistic perspective when addressing childcare instability among low-income families, recognizing the multifaceted nature of their challenges and the need for comprehensive support mechanisms.

Economic constraints often serve as a primary driver for these changes as families strive to balance childcare costs with their limited financial resources. Additionally, the availability of affordable, quality childcare options can be scarce in low-income communities, leading families to frequently switch between different arrangements in search of more suitable and accessible alternatives (Pilarz et al., 2022). This frequent turnover can disrupt children’s routines and development, exacerbating the stress and instability already experienced by these families.

Consequently, parents may resort to informal arrangements, such as relying on relatives or friends, which may lack consistency and reliability, further contributing to childcare instability.

Recognizing the crucial role of stable childcare in supporting parental employment and children's well-being, policymakers and community stakeholders must prioritize initiatives to improve the accessibility and affordability of childcare services for low-income families (Pilarz et al., 2022). By addressing the systemic barriers that underlie childcare instability, such as insufficient subsidies and limited availability of childcare slots, society can work towards creating a more equitable environment where all families have access to stable and nurturing childcare options. Overall, this research contributes significantly to our understanding of childcare dynamics in marginalized communities, informing policy and intervention efforts to foster stability and empowerment within these vulnerable populations.

Student 2: Shanique Williams

Infants, Children, and Youth in Foster Care with Prenatal Substance Exposure: A Synthesis of Two Scoping Reviews

Infants, children, and youth in foster care who have been exposed to prenatal substance use face unique challenges that may increase their likelihood of utilizing crisis nursery programs. Research synthesized from two scoping reviews highlights several factors contributing to this trend. Firstly, prenatal substance exposure can lead to developmental and behavioral issues in children, which may necessitate specialized care and support (Marcellus and Badry, 2021). Crisis nursery programs offer a safe and nurturing environment equipped to address the complex needs of these vulnerable populations, including medical supervision and therapeutic interventions tailored to their specific circumstances. Secondly, the caregivers of children with prenatal

substance exposure may encounter heightened stress and difficulties in meeting the child's needs due to the associated developmental delays or behavioral concerns. In such cases, crisis nursery programs serve as invaluable resources, offering temporary respite care to caregivers, enabling them to recharge and seek support while ensuring that the child receives appropriate care in a supportive setting (Marcellus and Badry, 2021). Furthermore, the complex medical and developmental needs of infants and children with prenatal substance exposure may pose challenges for traditional foster care placements. Crisis nursery programs, equipped with trained staff and resources to address these needs, offer a specialized alternative that can accommodate the unique requirements of these children while ensuring their safety and well-being (Marcellus and Badry, 2021).

In summary, infants, children, and youth in foster care with prenatal substance exposure are more likely to utilize crisis nursery programs. This is due to the specialized care and support they offer, the respite they provide to caregivers, and their ability to address the complex needs of this vulnerable population. These programs play a crucial role in supporting both the children and their caregivers, ultimately contributing to improved outcomes for children affected by prenatal substance exposure in foster care.

Safe Havens in Times of Need: The Role of Crisis Nurseries

Safe Haven in times of need is crucial, and crisis nurseries play a vital role in providing refuge for individuals facing challenging circumstances. These specialized facilities serve as a safe haven for children during times of crisis, offering a secure environment where their well-being is prioritized (Lee, 2019). Crisis nurseries are designed to accommodate children temporarily when their families encounter emergencies, such as domestic violence, medical

crisis, or other situations that jeopardize the safety of the child (Lee, 2019). In these organizations, trained professionals and caregivers are dedicated to ensuring the emotional and physical welfare of the children under their care (Lee, 2019). The facilities are equipped with resources to meet the diverse needs of the children, including nutritious meals, educational activities, and emotional support (Lee, 2019). This nurturing environment aims to alleviate the immediate stressors on families, allowing them the time and space to address the underlying issues causing the crisis (Lee, 2019).

Moreover, crisis nurseries serve as a preventive measure, intervening early to protect children from potential harm and trauma (Lee, 2019). By providing a safe haven, these facilities contribute to the overall well-being of the community, fostering resilience and stability (Lee, 2019). The existence of crisis nurseries underscores the importance of collective responsibility in safeguarding the most vulnerable members of society, ensuring that they have a secure place to turn to in times of uncertainty.

Student 3: Jonny Yap

Outcomes from a Randomized Controlled Trial of the Relief Nursery Program

Child abuse in the United States is a substantial public health problem, with over 4.1 million allegations and an estimated 676,000 substantiated victims, according to the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (Eddy et al., 2019). They estimate that annually, the United States government spends almost over \$80 billion on child abuse cases (Eddy et al., 2019). Studies show that child abuse could cause future health problems such as anxiety, depression, and conduct disorders (Eddy et al., 2019). Eddy et al. (2019) conducted a two-year study that found that Relief Nursery programs could help build strength within and support

families and assist children and parents in constructively coping with life stressors, promising to minimize child abuse and create child resilience. Relief Nursery program focuses on preventing the cycle of child abuse and neglect by implementing an ecological model of child development (Eddy et al., 2019). By tackling the child's exosystem (social systems), microsystem (cognitive development), and macrosystem (culture and society), their research concluded that supporting the parents in times of crisis by taking care of the children creates favorable opportunities for the parents and at the same time, save the child from getting abused or neglect (Eddy et al., 2019).

Brief Stress Reduction Strategies Associated with Better Behavioral Climate in a Crisis

Nursery: A Pilot Study

In 2016, there were approximately 3.5 million American children reported to Child Protective Services (DePasquale et al., 2020). Children who are at the highest risk for child abuse tend to come from families with extremely limited financial, material, and social resources (DePasquale et al., 2020). The children's families face life stressors such as food and job insecurity, high risk of eviction, homelessness, unsafe neighborhoods, and interpersonal violence (DePasquale et al., 2020). The US Government implemented crisis nursery programs, which provide short-term, overnight respite care to under-resourced families experiencing isolation, instability, stress, or trauma (DePasquale et al., 2020). Crisis nurseries provide critical short-term services to parents and children with few or no social, financial, or physical resources during a crisis (DePasquale et al., 2020). The ultimate long-term goal is to keep families together while keeping the children safe as the short-term goal (DePasquale et al., 2020). DePasquale et al. (2020) implemented a module using mindfulness-based stress reduction (MBSR) strategies on children who are under the care of crisis nurseries in Minneapolis, Minnesota. Children were

taught to be emotionally calm and regulate behavior (DePasquale et al., 2020). The study aims to impact children's behavioral attitudes toward stress, which may lead to positive coping skills that children can "take home" (DePasquale et al., 2020). The study found that MBSR was associated with significantly increasing the children's self-regulatory behavior and coping skills but did not decrease aggressive behaviors (DePasquale et al., 2020).

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