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## Child Abuse & Neglect

Volume 30, Issue 1, January 2006, Pages 27-37

# Parental experience of child protection intervention: A qualitative study

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<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.chiabu.2005.08.012>

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### Abstract

#### Objective

To explore the ways in which parents experience and negotiate child protection intervention.

#### Method

A qualitative grounded theory approach was used. In-depth qualitative interviews explored the experiences of 18 parents who had received child protection services. Grounded theory methods were used to build a model representing the ways these parents perceived and reacted to intervention.

#### Results

The ways parents perceive workers using power was shown to be the primary influence

shaping parents' views of intervention and their reactions to it. Two perceptions of power emerged: parents perceived power being used over them as a form of control or power with them as a form of support. Three ways of responding to intervention emerged: parents fought workers by openly opposing them, "played the game" by feigning co-operation, or worked with them in collaborative relationships. Parents experiencing power being used over them tended to fight or play the game while parents experiencing power being used with them tended to work with intervention. No evidence was found linking case type (non-voluntary or voluntary cases) to whether parents perceived power being used by workers over them or with them.

## Conclusions

Findings highlight the importance of practitioners and policy makers being aware of the impact power has on worker-parent interaction. Doubts are raised about the viability of policies separating policing and helping in child protection through differential response systems.

## Résumé

French-language abstract not available at time of publication.

## Resumen

Spanish-language abstract not available at time of publication.



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## Keywords

Child abuse and neglect; Client views; Casework

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† This research was supported by a Social Sciences & Humanities Research Council Award.

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