

# NEWS RELEASE

Wilfrid Laurier  
University



**World-renowned researcher to deliver keynote address at conference**  
*Positive Systems of Child Welfare conference begins with address by Rachael Hetherington*

**For Immediate Release**

**June 17, 2002**

**59-02**

**Contact: Dr. Gary Cameron**  
**Principal Investigator, Partnerships for Children and Families Project**  
**(519) 884-0710 ext. 3705**

**or Denise Cornfield**  
**Research Coordinator, Partnerships for Children and Families Project**  
**(519) 884-0710 ext. 2086**

WATERLOO (Ont.) – A researcher renowned for her comparative international research on child welfare will deliver the keynote address at the *Positive Systems of Child Welfare* conference. Rachael Hetherington will share her understanding of the diversity of child and family welfare (CFW) at the conference being hosted by the Partnerships for Children and Families Project at Wilfrid Laurier University June 20 and 21.

Hetherington will address the importance of looking beyond a country's 'taken-for-granted' assumptions to discover alternatives for working with children and families on Thursday, June 20 at 9:15 a.m.

Hetherington currently serves as an associate research fellow at Brunel University College in London, England. She has worked as a lecturer, a psychiatric social worker, a guardian ad litem (citizen who volunteers to represent a child before the court, for a social service agency and in the community during a family crisis), and served as the director of the Centre for Comparative Social Work Studies. She has also conducted extensive research comparing international CFW policies and philosophies, and has published widely.

"Rachael Hetherington's experience in the field of international comparative studies makes her an obvious choice to speak at the conference," says project principal investigator, Gary Cameron. "Her vast knowledge of the topic will be an excellent jumping-off point for all those involved in the conference."

– more –

The conference is designed to encourage dialogue on positive systems of CFW. Participants will explore the philosophies and practices of eight distinct cultures: Canada, England, France, Sweden, The Netherlands and the United States as well as Canadian First Nations and the New Zealand Maori. They will be encouraged to reflect on practices in their own settings, considering the desirability and feasibility of a positive CFW system.

The conference will also feature three, free sessions for the public where local CFW organizations will outline alternate ways of reducing harm in child welfare intervention cases. Presenters will share innovative research and alternative methods of providing service to children and families on June 20 from 7 to 9 p.m. at Laurier.

One of the three concurrent sessions will explore opportunities to improve outcomes for youths involved in the child welfare system. Another will review the advantages of partnering service providers and family members to ensure child safety. The third session will cover the benefits of community-based service models.

There is no admission charge for the public workshops, but people interested in attending are asked to reserve a space in advance. Please contact the Partnerships Project at [partnerships@wlu.ca](mailto:partnerships@wlu.ca) or 1-866-239-1558.

The Partnerships for Children and Families Project is a three-year research project directed at understanding the lives and experiences of families and children who are served by children's aid societies and children's mental health services in Ontario. It aims to foster improvements in existing child welfare and children's mental health policies, delivery systems, administration and programming/interventions.

The project brings together community members, professionals and academic partners. It provides a unique opportunity to initiate collaborative programs that will benefit children and families and will lead to a new understanding of critical issues to the broader community.

For more information on the *Positive Systems of Child and Family Welfare Conference* or the Partnerships Project itself, please visit [www.wlu.ca/pcfproject](http://www.wlu.ca/pcfproject).