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“Global Research, Practice, and Policy Issues in the Care of Infants and Young Children at Risk: The Articles in Context

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Across the world, urbanization, migration, armed conflict, epidemics, and famine disrupt families. Add poverty, abuse, neglect, and parental incapacity due to substance abuse and mental health problems, and the result is millions of children without parental care who come under governmental responsibility, often to be reared in institutions, and at risk for long-term developmental deficiencies and problems.

Over the last two decades and especially recently, national and international governments and non-government organizations have increased efforts to help such children, especially those in low-resource countries. Two types of efforts have been made, one to improve the quality of care provided by institutions and the other to minimize the use of institutions and promote family residential care alternatives. The latter effort includes preventing family separations in the first place, reunification of children with birth families, and developing systems of kinship care, foster care, and adoption.

This Special Issue of IMHJ is devoted to reports pertaining to issues in the research knowledge base, program practices, and country-wide policies for infants and young children at risk. We attempt in this introduction to place these reports in the broader context of this field, identify their unique contributions, and highlight lessons learned that can contribute to improved care practices and better child welfare systems.”