

CHILDREN'S STUDIES

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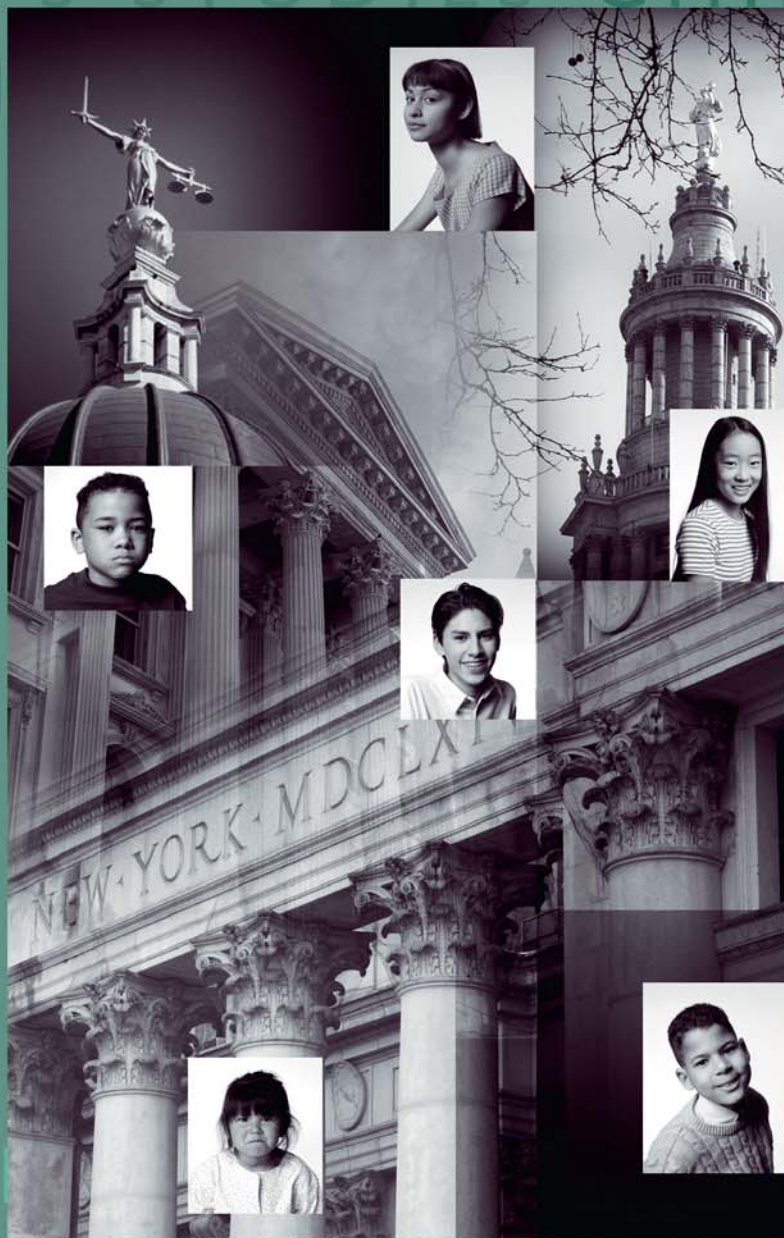
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COLLEGE



# *Children's Studies*

An Interdisciplinary Major

Brooklyn College  
The City University of New York

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*Gertrud Lenzer, Professor, Brooklyn College and the Graduate Center/CUNY; Founding Director, Children's Studies Program and Center, Brooklyn College/CUNY, pictured with students from the Children's Studies Program.*

### *History and Mission of Children's Studies*

Brooklyn College in 1991 was the first academic institution to develop an interdisciplinary liberal arts Children's Studies Program. Called "pioneering" by *The New York Times*, Children's Studies was soon emulated at other colleges and universities.

The vision for this new interdepartmental field of study was based on the insight that children from birth to age eighteen represent in every society a distinct sociocultural class and generational cohort. This recognition set the agenda and mission for Children's Studies—to view children as whole human beings and to integrate knowledge from disciplines in the arts, humanities, social and natural sciences, medicine, and law, disciplines which focus on specific aspects and propensities of children and childhood. The holistic approach of Children's Studies provides students with a comprehensive understanding of the propensities and aptitudes of children in their formal and informal contexts, both historical and contemporary. At the same time, Children's Studies advances the rights of children, who often cannot advocate for themselves.

A 15-credit interdisciplinary minor in Children's Studies was established in 1994 open to all liberal arts majors. In 2001 a 30-credit interdisciplinary concentration for majors in early childhood education teacher and childhood education teacher programs was introduced in collaboration with the Brooklyn College School of Education. In addition, Children's Studies is available to students in the CUNY Baccalaureate Program as a major or minor. In June 2009, the Board of Trustees of The City University of New York approved a Bachelor of Arts degree in Children's Studies at Brooklyn College.

## Children's Studies Program and Courses

The program leading to the Bachelor of Arts degree combines interdisciplinary Children's Studies courses with cognate courses drawn from many participating disciplines. Children's Studies courses include such topics as the history of childhood; human rights of children; autobiography as an inquiry into the child's self; the child's imagination; child development and health; the child in family, school, and community contexts; applied research methodologies; social, economic, and educational policies affecting children and youth; children and disability; and advocacy and policy research in the areas of child welfare and juvenile justice.

## Educational Goals and Career Objectives

The major in Children's Studies addresses the educational goals and career objectives of many undergraduate students who are interested in working with children and youth and who are seeking alternative pathways to careers in related professional fields. Children's Studies majors will benefit from the interdisciplinary and disciplinary courses, innovative research, policy initiatives, internship placements, and the capstone course; graduates will be prepared for postgraduate education or training and for their future success in various professions.

## A Voice for Children

Despite the lip service that is given to the importance of children as our future, children, in their overall dependency upon adults, cannot represent themselves. Children are not only minors, but they constitute, in fact, a social minority in our societies. Children's Studies aims at representing children and their interests through synthesizing knowledge, research, and insights gained from different disciplines and in this manner helping to give children a voice. It is also for this reason that a human rights perspective—as articulated in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948) and the U.N. Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989) with its enlarged understanding of children and its evolving international jurisprudence—provides the overarching framework for Children's Studies.

## Program Objectives of the Children's Studies Major

- ❖ To educate students about children and youth through an interdisciplinary program of study based on the holistic methodology of children's studies.
- ❖ To increase students' knowledge of local, national and international issues concerning children and youth.
- ❖ To increase students' knowledge of New York's child and youth population.
- ❖ To provide training in traditional, contemporary, and evolving research methodologies for studying the well-being of the whole child.

- ❖ To equip students for future careers in professions and occupations related to children and youth.
- ❖ To promote an awareness of child-related issues for students in their present or future roles as parents, citizens, and professionals.

## Program requirements for the Bachelor of Arts in Children's Studies

The major in Children's Studies requires the completion of 30 credits of course work in the Children's Studies Program with a grade of C or higher in each course. Please note that some of these courses have prerequisites.

### Students must complete Tiers I–IV, as follows:

#### Tier I: Foundations of Children's Studies (3 credits)

Children's Studies 20

#### Tier II: The Interdisciplinary Perspective (21 credits)

- Four of the following courses: Children's Studies 25, 30, 31, 32, 33, 34, 35, 40.
- Three of the following courses: Africana Studies 54; Education 34; English 65 or Speech 14.4 or Speech 31; Health and Nutrition Sciences 31 or 36; History 30.4 or 43.21 (crosslisted as Children's Studies 40.1); Psychology 20 or 22 or 24.5; Puerto Rican and Latino Studies 40; Sociology 40.1 or 40.2.

#### Tier III: Advanced Inquiry in Children's Studies (3 credits)

One of the following courses: Children's Studies 21 or 88 or 95.

#### Tier IV: Advanced Research in Children's Studies (3 credits):

Children's Studies 91.

## Courses

### Children's Studies 20: Perspectives on Childhood

3 hours, 3 credits

Childhood viewed from the perspective of health science, history, literature, psychology, sociology, and the arts. Autobiography as inquiry into the child's selfhood; the child's imagination; perceptions of adolescence; the child in relation to the family, school and community; children's experiences of personal, social, and political problems; social, economic, and educational policies affecting children; children's rights and international policy. (This course is not open to students who have completed Children's Studies I.)  
*Prerequisite:* Core Studies I, 3, or 4 and English I; or Core Curriculum I.1, 2.2, or 2.3, and English I; or permission of the program director.



*Nya, a student in the Suzuki program at the Brooklyn College Preparatory Center for the Performing Arts, performed at the Brooklyn College Open House, Children's Studies booth, April 2008. Pictured here with her mom, younger brother, and Professor Gertrud Lenzer.*



*Children's Studies faculty Irma Kramer, Gertrud Lenzer, and Mel Pipe with some of their students at the Children's Studies Commencement celebration, May 2009.*

### **Children's Studies 21: Applied Research in Children's Studies**

3 hours, 3 credits

Study of applied research with children in social science settings; ethical issues that arise when conducting research with children; different approaches to research, both qualitative and quantitative/experimental. Students will gain hands-on experience with one or more research methods inside and/or outside of the class, develop their own research questions, and explore appropriate methodologies for examining them. Critical reading and understanding of research literature and presentation of research findings.

(This course is not open to students who completed this topic as Children's Studies 25 in the Spring or Fall of 2006.)

*Prerequisite:* Children's Studies 20

### **Children's Studies 25: Special Topics: Issues in Children's Studies**

3 hours, 3 credits

Emerging issues, policies, and research in rapidly developing areas relating to children and youth. Topics vary from term to term. (Not open to students who have completed Children's Studies 5.)

### **Children's Studies 30: Human Rights of Children: A Transnational Development**

3 hours, 3 credits

National and international development of the human rights of children movement; central documents, databases, and legislation in the area of children and youth rights; the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) of 1989 and its implementation, Children Ombudsmen in other countries, UNICEF activities, and more. Rights of children to full development, including such topics as street children, child abuse, child prostitution, discrimination on the basis of sex, race, and religion, child soldiers, and child labor.

*Prerequisite:* Core Studies 1, 3, or 4, and English 1; or Core Curriculum 1.1, 2.2, or 2.3, and English 1; or permission of the program director.

### **Children's Studies 31: Children in Crisis**

3 hours; 3 credits

Children in extreme situations of social, cultural, political, and familial disruption. Examination of such global and domestic situations as war, natural disaster, famine, poverty, abuse and terrorism, which lead to starvation, disfigurement, slavery, forced prostitution, child soldiers, forced employment, separation, homelessness, and high incidents of infanticide. Children and Sept. 11, 2001. Conditions faced by children, including foster care, displacement, detention and intra-family abuse and effects of violence and crisis situations on children. Preventative measures and alleviation of children's sufferings.

*Prerequisite:* Core Studies 1, 3, or 4, and English 1; or Core Curriculum 1.1, 2.2, or 2.3, and English 1; or permission of the program director.

### **Children's Studies 32: Professional Performing Child: Past and Present Issues**

3 hours, 3 credits

Examination of the stage child in western history during the last 130 years, with focus on the performer in society, rather than the dramatic character. Construction of popular views of the stage child through an examination of the regulations, laws, and mores applied. Issues in children's employment, such as health and safety, education, professional training and prospects, the role of organized labor, and long-term psychosocial adjustment. Current venues, working conditions and regulations. Scholarly studies and individual histories of professional performing children. (This course is not open to students who have taken Children's Studies 25: Special Topics, during the spring 2000 or spring 2001 semesters.)

*Prerequisite:* Core Studies 1, 3, or 4; or Core Curriculum 1.1, 2.2, or 2.3; or permission of the program director.

### **Children's Studies 33: Children and the Law**

3 hours, 3 credits

This course is designed to provide students with an exploration of the status, rights, and obligations of children according to the American legal system; to acquire a general understanding of aspects of law ranging from family and social service law to juvenile and criminal law as they apply to children and adolescents; and to familiarize students with the growth and development of the American legal system, which in the course of the twentieth century established that children have both substantive and procedural constitutional rights.

*Prerequisite:* English 1 and Core 2.2; or permission of the program director.

### **Children's Studies 34: Child Abuse and Neglect**

3 hours, 3 credits

This course introduces students to contemporary understandings of what constitutes abuse and neglect; methodological difficulties in identifying abuse and neglect, both in terms of identifying individual children at risk, and from the perspective of documenting incidence and prevalence; and the specific, and often controversial, legal and social issues that arise when abuse and neglect are suspected and/or reported.

*Prerequisite:* English I and Core Studies 2.2; or permission of the program director.

### **Children's Studies 35: Interdisciplinary Perspectives on Children and Disability: Local, National, and International Development**

3 hours, 3 credits

A critical overview of children and disability using local, national, and international perspective. Historical to contemporary based discussions on culture and policy demonstrated through education, media, and medical practices specific to children and disability. Understanding of current policy, child-centered research and practices specific to children and disability extending from the U.S. to China. (This course is not open to students who completed this topic as Children's Studies 25: Special Topics, during the fall 2006 or spring 2007 semesters.)

*Prerequisite:* Core Studies 3 or 4; or Core Curriculum 2.2 or 2.3; or permission of the program director.

### **Children's Studies 40: Children of New York**

3 hours, 3 credits

Examination of children's lives in New York, the institutions that affect them, living conditions and lifestyles, housing, education, religion, family structure and public health. Relevant demographic variables, including age, gender, ethnicity, race, geography, and socio-economic status. Children's social organizations in activities such as play, sports, music and dance, Internet use, illegal music downloading, and other forms of media. Examination of demographic trends with focus on child welfare, including legal and social policies affecting children.

(This course is not open to students who completed this topic as Children's Studies 25: Special Topics, during the spring/fall 2005 semesters.)

*Prerequisite:* Children's Studies 20 or Children's Studies 30 or Children's Studies 31; or permission of the program director.

### **Children's Studies 40.1: History of Children, Public Policy, and the Law in the United States**

3 hours, 3 credits

Political and legal history of children's issues in the United States, focused on the attitudes and actions of figures in power. Origins of

public education and welfare, and debate over child labor. Brown v. Board of Education, In re Gault, Tinker v. Des Moines. Abortion, busing, welfare reform, and children's rights in the legal and political arenas.

(This course is the same as History 43.21.)

### **Children's Studies 88: Independent Study in Children's Studies**

Minimum of 9 hours conference and independent work, 3 credits  
Independent research supervised by a Children's Studies faculty member on an approved topic and with approved readings that culminates in a research paper. Periodic conferences. This course may be taken only once for credit.

*Prerequisite:* Children's Studies 20; and 21; Children's Studies 30, or Children's Studies 31, with a grade of C or higher; completion of an approved program of advanced Children's Studies courses; and permission of the director of Children's Studies.

### **Children's Studies 95: Internship in Applied Children's Studies ("Career Exploration Internship")**

7 hours fieldwork, 1 hour conference per week, 3 credits

Off-campus internships to explore careers in professional settings that focus on children, youth, and families. Placements include such institutional areas as the media, advertising, governmental and non-governmental organizations, medicine, law, and corporations whose activities have a bearing on the lives of children and youth. Final report required.

*Prerequisite:* Children's Studies 20 or 30 or 31, or permission of the program director.

### **Children's Studies 91: Professional Perspectives and Children**

3 hours; 3 credits

In-depth examination of careers in child-related professions and occupations by sectors, institutions and public and private agencies. Theoretical and research-based issues relating to professional practice, policy, and advocacy. Academic requirements, training, and career opportunities relating to different professions focusing on and working with children.

*Prerequisite:* Children's Studies 20, Children's Studies 95, or approved alternative, or permission of the program director.

### **Africana Studies 54: The Black Child and the Urban Education System**

3 hours, 3 credits

Study and evaluation of school curricula from preschool through high school in terms of their historical background and contribution to the development of Black children. Finding and writing bibliographical materials relevant to the curricula.

### **Education 34: Urban Children and Adolescents: Development and Education**

3 hours; 3 credits

Relationship between basic developmental processes of children and adolescents and their educational experiences in schools and communities. (Not open to students who have enrolled in or have completed Education 34.3, 48.1, 48.21, 48.22, 58.1, 58.11, 58.12, or 60.1)

### **English 65: Literature for Young People**

3 hours, 3 credits

Literature appropriate for students in elementary and secondary schools. Fundamentals of literature and basic readings of interest to young people.

*Prerequisite:* English 1 or 1.7.

### **Health and Nutrition Sciences 31: Child Development: Typical and Atypical**

3 hours, 3 credits

Health perspectives on development of the child from birth through middle childhood with focus on young children. Emotional, physical, and social development. Deviations from normal patterns of development and study of specific disabilities. Environmental factors of particular importance in guiding growth. Course includes a child observation project.

*Prerequisite or corequisite:* Health and Nutrition Sciences 6.1 or Education 34 or Psychology 1.1.

### **Health and Nutrition Sciences 36: Family Influences on Child Health**

3 hours, 3 credits

Parenthood; prenatal care; development and health of the child from birth to adolescence; school environment; physical handicaps. Requires permission of the chairperson.

### **History 30.4: History of Childhood**

3 hours; 3 credits

Children's place in society and thought from antiquity to the present. Child-rearing practices, childhood disease and mortality, the education of children, literary reflections of childhood experiences in relation to the history of society and culture of the family and of women. (Not open to students who have completed History 24.7.)

### **History 43.21: History of Children, Public Policy, and the Law in the United States**

3 hours lecture; 3 credits

See description for Children's Studies 40.1

### **Psychology 20: Introductory Child Psychology**

3 hours; 3 credits

Principal features of the psychological development of children. Lectures, discussions, class period observations. (Not open to



*Professor Lenzer signing "declaration of major" form for Gail Andrews, one of our first students to declare a major in Children's Studies, July 2009.*

students who are enrolled in or who have completed Psychology 25 or Education 27.1.)

*Prerequisite:* Psychology 1.1 or 2.

### **Psychology 22: Cognitive Development**

3 hours; 3 credits

Theories and experimental evidence relating to development of cognitive processes in children. Language acquisition, perceptual development, symbolic thinking, memory, classification skills, interplay between social and cognitive processes. Independent project.

*Prerequisite:* Psychology 20 or 25 or Home Economics and Consumer Studies 40.

### **Psychology 24.5: Psychological and Developmental Disorders of Childhood**

3 hours; 3 credits

Introduction to the identification, origin, and treatment of psychological and developmental problems and disturbances of early childhood. Topics include developmental crises and neurological and emotional disorders. Focus on family interactions and understanding disability in cultural context.

*Prerequisite:* Psychology 1.1 and either Psychology 20 or 30 or Education 34; or permission of the chairperson.

### **Puerto Rican and Latino Studies 40: The Puerto Rican, Latino, and Caribbean Child in New York City**

3 hours; 3 credits

Puerto Rican, Latino, and Caribbean children in contemporary society. Relation of school curricula to their historical background and cultural contributions. Development of identity; knowledge and appreciation of heritage. Examination, use, and evaluation of instructional materials. Concepts, information, and materials necessary for effective work with target population.

### **Sociology 40.1: The Family**

3 hours; 3 credits

Examination of the structure and function of the family and its relationship with such other institutions of the society as religion, the economy, and the political system; family as a unit of interaction. Family types will be compared: the traditional family, the dual-career family, and the single-parent household; alternatives to the family will be discussed.

*Prerequisite:* Core Curriculum 2.3 with a grade of B– or higher; Core Studies 3 with a grade of B– or higher; or Sociology 5, or permission of the chairperson.

### **Sociology 40.2: Sociology of Children**

3 hours; 3 credits

Sociological analysis of children and childhood. Historical and cross-cultural differences in attitudes toward children. Socialization processes, the family, peer cultures, education, mass media, children as consumers. Such social problems as social inequality and poverty; divorce, adoption, and foster care; racial discrimination; differential schooling; children at risk.

*Prerequisite:* Core Curriculum 2.3 with a grade of B– or higher; Core Studies 3 with a grade of B– or higher; or Sociology 5, or permission of the chairperson.

### **Speech 14.4: Performances of Children’s Literature**

3 hours; 3 credits

Specific performance elements in reading to and with children. (Not open to students who are enrolled in or have completed Speech 14.5.)

*Prerequisite:* Completion of course assigned at speech screening interview.

### **Speech 31: Speech and Language Development**

4 hours; 4 credits

Speech, language, and communication development in relation to motor, perceptual, cognitive, emotional, and social development. Implications for individual, cultural, and linguistic variation and literacy. (Not open to students who have registered for this course in any two prior semesters.)

*Prerequisite:* minimum GPA of 3.00 and Speech 13.

## *Advisement for the selection of the major in children’s studies*

Students who are interested in pursuing the major in Children’s Studies are advised to consult with the Director or the Coordinator of the Children’s Studies Program as early as possible to plan an appropriate sequence of courses. Students selecting this major must also complete an Undergraduate Major form, which may be obtained in 3602 James Hall.

### **For more information, please contact:**

**Professor Gertrud Lenzer**, *Director*,  
Children’s Studies Program and Center, **or**

**Elise Goldberg**, *Coordinator*, Children’s Studies  
3602 James Hall: **718.951.3192**  
**email: [eliseg@brooklyn.cuny.edu](mailto:eliseg@brooklyn.cuny.edu)**

## *Children's Studies Faculty Committee*

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<b>Margaret-Ellen Pipe</b> , Children's Studies/Psychology	718.951.3192
<b>Gail B. Gurland</b> , Speech Communication Arts and Sciences	718.951.5186
<b>Louise Hainline</b> , Psychology	718.951.5252
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<b>Betty Wolder Levin</b> , Health and Nutrition Sciences	718.951.5026
<b>Roni L. Natov</b> , English	718.951.5195
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## *Children's Studies*

In the Service of Children and Youth

### **Brooklyn College**

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Please visit us at

<http://dephome.brooklyn.cuny.edu/childrensstudies>

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