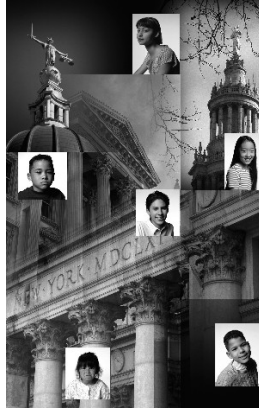


New Children's Studies Major at Brooklyn College



Interdisciplinary Bachelor of Arts Degree Now Offered

Brooklyn College students have taken children's studies minors since 1994 and concentrations since 2001, but this fall—for the first time—they will be able to declare themselves children's studies majors. The new 30-credit B.A. in children's studies boasts breadth and depth, offering students the benefit of perspectives from varied disciplines as well as research opportunities with authorities in the field, relevant internships and career counseling.

Eighteen years ago, Professor Gertrud Lenzer led a committee that established the interdisciplinary field of children's studies and made Brooklyn College a national leader in this innovative, emerging area. "The vision for this new interdepartmental field of study was based on the insight that children from birth to age 18 represent in every society a distinct socio-cultural class and generational cohort," says Lenzer, professor of sociology and children's studies. "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 biological sciences, medicine and law, which focuses on specific aspects and propensities of children and childhood."

Hailed as "pioneering" by The New York Times, the Brooklyn College Children's Studies Program has been emulated by many colleges and universities, and every year enrollment in the program and its courses increases. A rapidly growing field in the United States as well as abroad, there is no better proof that children's studies has come of age than the brand-new bachelor of arts program. "Despite the lip service that is given to the importance of children 'as our future,' children, in their overall

dependency upon adults, have no way of representing themselves," remarks Lenzer. "Children's studies aims at representing them and their interests."

The Children's Studies Center for Research, Policy and Public Service, established in 1997 and directed by Lenzer, gives students the opportunity to shape the public policy that directly impacts the health and well-being of children and youth. Serving as a think tank and catalyst for change, it has hosted four well-attended forums on public policy for legislators, teachers, health care providers, and judicial and law enforcement personnel. Center faculty and staff—experts in the field of children's studies—regularly participate in panels, testify in support of legislation, and conduct research to further the rights of children. "A human rights perspective—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," notes Lenzer.

-Office of Communications at Brooklyn College
Fall 2009