Education and Children’s Rights

Brooklyn College. Called “pioneering” by The New York Times, it was soon emulated by other colleges worldwide. Brooklyn College children’s studies faculty draws on the arts, humanities, social and natural sciences, education, medicine, and the law. Although individual disciplines deal with the experience of childhood and youth, children’s studies considers the different perspectives of these disciplines on children and youth as the main focus of inquiry. It provides students with a holistic and comprehensive understanding of the propensities and aptitudes of children, from birth to age 18, in their formal and informal contexts, both historical and contemporary. At the same time, children’s studies advance the rights of children, who often cannot advocate for themselves.

Every year since its inception, children’s studies has attracted more and more students at Brooklyn College. The Children’s Studies Center was established in 1997 to expand the scope of the academic courses and to promote teaching, research, and community outreach and advocacy. A student-organized Children First Club is now chartered, with a blog by the same name.

Children’s studies offers a concentration for education majors in the early childhood education teacher program (birth-grade 2) and the childhood education teacher program (grades 1-6), a liberal arts minor, and an area of concentration for students in the CUNY Baccalaureate program. The concentrations and minor 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. The Internship in Applied Children’s Studies places students in demanding professional settings.


The Center’s Director is Gertrude Lenzer, Ph.D.

Tuesday’s Talk on Child Rights

The Campaign for US Ratification of the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC)

Sign up and Follow the Campaign on Twitter and Facebook

• Twitter: RatifytheCRC
• Become a Facebook Fan: http://www.facebook.com/home.php?#!/pages/Child-Rights-Campaign/106607756035085

Urge Your Senator to Ratify the CRC

Find your Senator’s contact information on the following site:
http://www.senate.gov/general/contact_information/senators_cfm.cfm


Call to Action:
Visit the following site to take action:
http://www.senate.gov/thecampaignforkusratificationofthecrc/index.cfm

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Development of a General Comment for Article 19 of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child

The UN Committee on the Rights of the Child (the Committee) has given the International Society for Prevention of Child Abuse and Neglect (ISPCAN) and the International Institute for Child Rights and Development (IICRD) the opportunity to work on its behalf to draft a General Comment (GC) for Article 19 of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child. A General Comment is an important guide which the Committee uses to advise States Parties and measure their progress in implementing improved children's rights.

Article 19 presents the Convention’s central orientation to child protection and it embodies the pre-eminent international principles and standards in this area. A General Comment for Article 19 has the potential to meaningfully contribute toward securing the safety, well-being, health, development and futures of children.

In 2009 an outline of the General Comment was produced and reviewed by CRC Focal Group. Components of the outline were analyzed and supported by extensive material developed through review of CRC recorded perspectives, General Comments 1-12, and child protection and child rights literature and knowledge bases. Consultations were held with UNICEF and WHO leadership and with the UN Special Expert on Violence against Children. In March 2010 the writer was selected and Draft 1 of the General Comment was produced.

In April 2010 the Working Group and CRC Focal Group reviewed and revised the first Draft of the General Comment, resulting in the production of Draft 2. It is currently under review by the Committee.

A series of regional consultations are now being held to provide information to advance the drafting of the General Comment, and to foster planning and readiness to support the implementation of a General Comment for Article 19.

The consultations aim to elicit regional perspectives on comprehensive child rights-based care-giving and protection; to elicit, at the request of the Committee on the Rights of the Child, perspectives on particular issues relevant to the draft General Comment; to raise enthusiasm and conduct planning regarding the future implementation process of the General Comment, once finalized; and, where possible, to include the voices/perspectives of children and youth.

By mid-August 2010 substantive feedback from regional consultations will provide the opportunity for it to be incorporated into an initial Draft 3 of the General Comment by the beginning of September 2010.

The initial Draft 3 is then expected to be fine-tuned in time for possible presentation by the Editorial Group to the full Committee on the Rights of the Child at its September-October 2010 session. If Draft 3 is found to be sufficiently close to desired status, further necessary refinements will be made to prepare it for possible adoption by the Committee in its January-February 2011 session.

USA CONSULTATION - August 9th, 2010: Along with facilitators Drs. Kimberly Svevo and Dr. Stuart Hart, Meg Gardinier presented on the USA Campaign’s initiatives. The following program, based on priority issues selected by the Committee on the Rights of the Child, set the stage for afternoon Consultation dialogues:

• Topic 1: Role of the States - Support & Intervention (Sonia Velasquez, American Humane, Children’s Division)
• Topic 2: National Plans of Action/Policy/Resources (Diane Geraghty, Loyola University Civitas ChildLaw Center)
• Topic 3: Mandatory reports (James Garbarino, Loyola University, Center for the Human Rights of Children)
• Topic 4: Children & Families / USA priorities (Linda Spears, Child Welfare League of America)

Results from the USA Consultation Survey will be shared in a future issue of this newsletter.

For further information, please contact:
USA Consultation Chair: Dr. Kimberly Svevo-Cianci, PhD, CRPCI, USA GC13 Working Group Member and Co-Chair; Sonia Velazquez, AHA
GC13 Working Group Co-Chairs:
Dr. Stuart Hart, International Institute for Child Rights and Development (IICRD) shiicrd@uvic.ca www.iicrd.org Dr. Sue Bennett, International Society for the Prevention of Child Abuse and Neglect (ISPCAN) bennett@cheo.on.ca
www.ispcan.org

Article 19:

“States Parties shall take all appropriate legislative, administrative, social, and educational measures to protect the child from all forms of physical or mental violence, injury or abuse, neglect or negligent treatment, maltreatment or exploitation, including sexual abuse, while in the care of parent(s), legal guardian(s) or any other person who has the care of the child.”