

Tuesday's Talk on Child Rights



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

Education and Children's Rights

This week's issue of Tuesday's Talk highlights three extraordinary U.S. educational institutions which offer a range of innovative curricula and degrees in the field of children's rights.

The Civitas Child Law Center was founded in 1993 through the vision and generosity of Loyola School of Law alumnus Jeffrey Jacobs. Law schools previously had done little to prepare students to meet the unique interdisciplinary challenges of representing child clients. The center's goal is to ensure that lawyers are trained to provide quality legal representation for children and to advocate for their interest and well-being. The first law school program to integrate a traditional J.D. curriculum with a specialized course of study in children's law, the center is devoted to teaching, scholarship and service that forges connections among law, social work, medicine, psychiatry, education and other disciplines key to child welfare.

For more details, contact: Civitas ChildLaw Center, Loyola University Chicago, 16 E. Pearson, Chicago, Illinois 60611, Childlaw-center@luc.edu **The Center's Director is: Diane Geraghty**

Established in 2006, the **Center for the Human Rights of Children** represents, coordinates, and stimulates efforts of the Loyola University community to understand and protect the human rights of children, locally and abroad. It seeks guidance and direction from the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child and the global network of children's rights advocates, as well as from scholars from various disciplines. The Center's approaches to the rights of children reflect the university's commitment to the Jesuit social justice mission. Program activities include a forthcoming 2011 symposium, "A Child's Right to Health Care and a Healthy Life," publications, international "immersion" programs for students and faculty, a fellows program, and campus educational events.

For more details, contact: Center for the Human Rights of Children, Loyola University Chicago, 25 East Pearson Street, Suite 800, Chicago, IL 60611, www.luc.edu/chrc **The Center's Director is Katherine Kaufka, JD and their Faculty Fellow is James Garbarino, Ph.D.**

An innovative interdisciplinary field of children's studies was founded in 1991 at

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.

For more details, contact: Brooklyn College Children's Studies Program and Center, 2900 Bedford Avenue, Brooklyn, New York 11210, www.brooklyn.cuny.edu. **The Center's Director is Gertrude Lenzer, Ph.D.**

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Find your Senator's contact information on the following site:

http://www.senate.gov/general/contact_information/senators_cfm.cfm

Useful Links, Resources and Announcements

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 (ISPSCAN) 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 (ISPSCAN) 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."