

THE CHRONICLE

of Higher Education.

March 22, 1996
Volume XLII, No.

\$3.25

A8 • The Chronicle of Higher Education • March 22, 1996

Foot- notes

Researchers at Brooklyn College have established a program in children's studies that may be the first of its kind in the country.

Led by Gertrud Lenzer, a professor of sociology at Brooklyn and at the Graduate Center of the City University of New York, faculty members this year inaugurated an undergraduate minor in children's studies and, with the help of a recently announced planning grant from the university, are working to develop new courses for the program.

Children's studies, as Ms. Lenzer envisions it, is an interdisciplinary field that "looks at children as an entire class." Individual disciplines attend to only one part of children's experience, she explains—their psychological development, their place in the family, or their representation in the arts, for example. Similarly, other university programs or research centers focus on only limited sets of issues or on narrowly defined age groups.

"We do not have a down-to-earth liberal-arts program that tries to synthesize the various disciplines," she says.

Ms. Lenzer, who also spearheaded the organization of a section devoted to the sociology of children within the American Sociological Association, acknowledges that there are plenty of researchers doing work on children, but argues that too many of them are working in isolation from the others.

Her hope is that the program at Brooklyn will promote a more integrated perspective on the study of children and childhood.

"We want to develop a knowledge base about children in this country," she says.

Scholarship

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