

The Department of Childhood Studies at Rutgers University in Camden, New Jersey puts the issues, concepts and debates that surround the study of children and childhoods at the center of its research and teaching missions. Through a multidisciplinary approach, the Department of Childhood Studies aims both to theorize and historicize the figure of the Child and to situate the study of children and childhoods within contemporary cultural and global contexts.

The Department opened its doors in September 2007, offering interdisciplinary degrees at the B.A., M.A. and Ph.D. levels (<http://childhood.camden.rutgers.edu/>). The Rutgers University Department of Childhood Studies is the first Ph.D. program in Childhood Studies in the United States. Full-time faculty members in the Department of Childhood Studies include **Dr. Daniel Hart**, Distinguished Professor (Psychology) and Chair; **Dr. Daniel T. Cook**, Associate Professor (Sociology); and **Dr. Lynne Vallone**, Professor (English).

Rutgers-Camden is a small and attractive urban campus expanding to accommodate the growth of Southern New Jersey and is located just across the Delaware River from Philadelphia. The diverse and vibrant urban location offers a productive setting for the study of children and childhoods today.

The Department of Childhood Studies is enhanced by the proximity and mutual projects it undertakes with the Center for Children and Childhood Studies, also housed at Rutgers-Camden (<http://children.camden.rutgers.edu>). The Center promotes the understanding, enrichment, and recognition of the significance of the experiences of children through outreach programs that assist children in New Jersey in areas such as health, literacy, and social development and through sponsoring symposia, lecture series, and workshops. The expertise of the Childhood Studies faculty is complemented by the Associates in the Center for Children and Childhood Studies who have appointments in a wide range of departments and schools around the University, including, among others, Anthropology, Psychology, Sociology, Criminology, English, Public Policy, Religion, Philosophy, History, and Law.

Students in the Department of Childhood Studies are encouraged to engage in research projects offered through the Center. Active teacher/scholars, the full-time faculty in the Department of Childhood Studies represents a wide range of interdisciplinary interests. Daniel Hart's research focuses on personality and development in children and adolescents. He also serves as the Director of the Center for Children and Childhood Studies. Daniel T. Cook works primarily on 20th-century and contemporary children's consumer culture and Lynne Vallone's research centers on socio-historical studies of children's literature and the literature and cultural histories of girlhood. More detailed information about each faculty member can be found on the Department of Childhood Studies website. Certainly, graduate students form the core of any post-baccalaureate program and the intellectual atmosphere of the Department of Childhood Studies has been enriched by its inaugural class of fourteen doctoral students (part-time study is available).

The students bring a wealth of accomplishments from a variety of backgrounds including law, early childhood education, literature, educational administration, library science, and psychology, among other disciplines and fields. The students bring their diverse preparation and training to bear on the common enterprise of the study of children and childhoods in historical and contemporary cultural and global contexts.

The curriculum in the Department is multidisciplinary in scope and purpose and provides students with a strong background in both humanistic and social science perspectives on children and their representations. This approach will prepare students for careers in many areas including academics, public policy, social services, youth programming, and education. Courses available to graduate students extend from the two-semester Proseminar in Childhood Studies to a variety

of methods courses (statistical, interpretative, literary), to in-depth study of specific areas such as Children and Childhood in Cross-Cultural Perspectives, Child Growth and Development, The Visual and Material Cultures of Childhood, Issues in Social Policy, The History of Childhood, Growing Up in Africa, Children's Literature, and Children and the Justice System, among many others. The intellectual life of the Department's faculty and graduate students is enhanced by the on-going Research Seminar in Childhood Studies which meets three or four times each semester to discuss topics of interest in the study of children and childhoods from a variety of perspectives. Recent talks have considered the development of spatial awareness in the infant brain, the effects of transnational migration on the emotional lives of Ghanaian families, and the responses of teen readers in dialogue with Mark Twain's character Jim from *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*.

The Department of Childhood Studies at Rutgers, Camden is developing many plans for the future growth and continued success of Childhood Studies. In spring 2009 semester, for example, the Department will host a major conference on children and war. In addition, we are interested in developing possible research collaborations and potential exchanges between our Department and other programs in Childhood Studies. To that end, we will welcome two visiting European scholars at different stages in their careers in the spring 2008 semester. Most importantly, the Department expects to continue to expand over the next several years through the recruitment of additional faculty with full-time appointments in Childhood Studies.

Students interested in graduate study in Childhood Studies at Rutgers University are encouraged to visit our website and to contact members of the Department (**Daniel Hart**, hart@rutgers.edu, **Daniel T. Cook**, dtcook@camden.rutgers.edu and **Lynne Vallone**, vallone@rutgers.edu); for specific questions about guidance through the application process.