

Preliminary Conference Announcement

**Multiple Childhoods/Multidisciplinary Perspectives:
Interrogating Normativity in Childhood Studies**

Department of Childhood Studies
Rutgers University, Camden, New Jersey, USA

May 20-21, 2011

We invite submissions for participation in a conference hosted by the Department of Childhood Studies of Rutgers University in Camden, New Jersey, USA on ***Multiple Childhoods/Multidisciplinary Perspectives***. As a field, childhood studies has flourished in large part because scholars have recognized the necessity of moving between and beyond traditional academic disciplines and have resisted the idea that there exists one, normative version of childhood common to all. Indeed, ***Multiple Childhoods/Multidisciplinary Perspectives*** seeks participation from those who work to counter the presumption or invocation of an unproblematically normative childhood by making visible how varied material and institutional circumstances, ideologies and beliefs and daily practices serve to shape the unfolding lives and experiences of children.

In this spirit, participants are encouraged to interrogate practices and discourses surrounding childhood and childhood studies, asking, for instance: What forms do childhoods take in various social arrangements? How do the dynamics of social class, ethnicity, race, nationality, gender, sexuality, sexual orientation and religion configure notions of “appropriate” and “inappropriate” childhoods? How do children understand various kinds of social difference and inequalities? What about the understandings of researchers, and those who care for or otherwise attend to children? In what ways do conceptualizations of “the child” and of presumed normative childhoods—in research, in the commercial world, in institutional and everyday settings, in literature and discourse—inform the kinds of actions undertaken by and on behalf of children?

Papers may be on any topic or subject that takes children and youth as a central theme and addresses ideas or invocations of normative childhood(s). Examples include, but are not limited to:

- racialized, ethnic, gender and class positioning/identities and the valuation of particular childhoods as “good,” “bad” or “different”
- socially and economically disadvantaged childhoods in Global South as well as Global North contexts
- queer/sexually questioning children and youth

- children (and their families) facing physical, developmental and/or emotional challenges and disabilities
- children's rights and forms of public and civic participation
- historical assumptions about normative versions of children and childhoods
- representations of children, youth and childhoods in literature, popular discourse and popular culture (political and commercial speech, advertising, film and television)
- the various childhoods emergent through consumer-media culture
- conceptualizations of normative/non-normative childhoods as codified in law, policy, governance and schools
- methodological and theoretical interventions addressing multiple childhoods

Deadlines

Submission and registration deadlines, fees, conference website and logistical information will be posted in the summer of 2010.

Look for announcements or visit <http://childhood.camden.rutgers.edu>

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The Department of Childhood Studies at Rutgers University in Camden, New Jersey, USA (<http://childhood.camden.rutgers.edu>) opened its doors in September 2007 as the first doctoral-granting program in childhood studies in North America. Since that time, the department has earned a national and international reputation for innovative scholarship on children and childhood, holding several major conferences and symposia, including *Children and War* (April 2009), an *Urban Youth Symposium* (November 2009) and *Exploring Childhood Studies* (April 2010) coordinated by the department's graduate students. Rutgers-Camden is a beautiful, urban campus located just across the Delaware River from Philadelphia and easily accessible by train or by plane via the Philadelphia International Airport.