New Books from Childhood Studies Faculty

**Big and Small: A Cultural History of Extraordinary Bodies** (Yale University Press)
Dr. Lynne Vallone, Professor of Childhood Studies

From the Publisher: Exploring miniaturism, giganticism, obesity, and the lived experiences of actual big and small people, Vallone boldly addresses the uncomfortable implications of using physical measures to judge normalcy, goodness, gender identity, and beauty. This wide-ranging work surveys the lives and contexts of both real and imagined persons with extraordinary bodies from the seventeenth century to the present day through close examinations of art, literature, folklore, and cultural practices, as well as scientific and pseudo-scientific discourses. Generously illustrated and written in a lively and accessible style, Vallone’s provocative study encourages readers to look with care at extraordinary bodies and the cultures that created, depicted, loved, and dominated them.

**Renewing Democracy in Young America** (Oxford University Press)
Dr. Daniel Hart, Distinguished Professor of Psychology w/ James Youniss

From Publisher: In *Renewing Democracy in Young America*, Hart and Youniss examine the widening generation gap, the concentration of wealth in pockets of the US, and the polarized political climate, and they arrive at a compelling solution to some of the most hotly contested issues of our time. The future of democracy depends on the American people seeing citizenship as a long-term psychological identity, and thus it is critical that youth have the opportunity to act as citizens during the time of their identity formation. Proposing that 16- and 17-year-olds be able to vote in municipal elections and suggesting that schools create science-based, community-oriented environmental engagement programs, the authors expound that by engaging youth through direct citizen-participatory experiences, we can successfully create active and committed citizens.
Meredith Bak, Ph.D.
Assistant Professor of Childhood Studies

Meredith Bak presented papers at conferences at Brock University (St. Catharines, Ontario), the University of Pittsburgh, and at the annual meeting of the Society for Cinema and Media Studies in Toronto. Her ongoing work focuses on the intersections between media cultures and the toy industry, including a project in development on animate toys. Her chapter on fairy tales and material culture appears in *The Routledge Companion to Media and Fairy-Tale Cultures* (Routledge, 2018). She is the Undergraduate Program Coordinator in the Department of Childhood Studies.

Kate Cairns, Ph.D.
Assistant Professor of Childhood Studies

Kate Cairns published articles in *Children & Society* and *Agriculture and Human Values*, as well as a coauthored chapter in *The Bloomsbury Handbook of Food and Popular Culture*. An additional coauthored article will be published in *Signs* this summer. She also coauthored short pieces in *Viewpoint Magazine* and the *Gender & Society* blog. Kate’s research on youth and food insecurity was featured in various media outlets, including *Slate* and *Civil Eats*. She delivered conference presentations at the American Sociological Association meetings in Montreal, the International Conference on Geographies of Children, Youth and Families in Loughborough, and the Conceptualizing Childhood and Youth Conference in St. Catharines. Moving forward, Kate is co-organizing (with Dan Cook) a one-day conference this coming August for the Consumers and Consumption section of the American Sociological Association. She has been named a 2018-19 Faculty Fellow at the Rutgers Institute for Research on Women (IRW). As part of this fellowship, she will be attending a weekly seminar at Rutgers New Brunswick throughout the coming year.

Sarada Balagopalan, Ph.D.
Director of Graduate Studies
Associate Professor of Childhood Studies

Sarada Balagopalan delivered a paper, “Mass Education and the Naturalization of Children’s Labour: ‘Compulsory Education’ in the Bombay Presidency, 1923-26” at the conference on Poverty and Education from the 19th century to the present: India and Comparative Perspectives held at the German Historical Institute London in September 2017. As part of the 25th anniversary of the journal *Childhood*, Sarada was invited to participate in a Conversation, with three other academics, on “Global/Local Research on Children and Childhood in a Global Society”. Structured around four sets of questions, this Conversation will appear in the journal later this year. Sarada is currently engaged in new fieldwork on adolescent girls in urban India and their transition from school to work, with a particular focus on their navigation of soft skills, including spoken English. Sarada continues to serve as the Associate Editor for the *SAGE Encyclopedia in Children and Childhood Studies*, is on the Editorial Board of the journal *Childhood* and is on the Advisory Board of the journal, *Contemporary Education Dialogue*. Sarada is a Board member of Nirantar, a New Delhi-based NGO on gender and education, and served this past year as an Advisor to their qualitative study on the everyday lives of youth in Delhi’s resettlement colonies.
Dan Cook gave a keynote presentation on “Play, Agency and Creativity and Other Complicities in Childhood Studies” for the Conceptualizing Childhood and Youth conference at Brock University in Ontario in October. In April, he offered up “The “Play-sumer” In and Of Creative Industries” at the Child and Teen Consumption Biennial conference in Angoulême, France and, last June, spoke on some his historical research about children, money and property at the SHCY conference at Rutgers-Camden.

Cook continues his research on kids’ industry professionals, “Children’s Market Professionals and Moral Economies of Childhood,” aided by a grant from the Rutgers University Research Council.

Cook has been working on several projects and collections. He is co-editing the *SAGE Encyclopedia of Children and Childhood Studies* (5 vols.), expected to be published in 2019. He is also co-editing the forthcoming edited volume *Reimagining Childhood Studies* with Spyros Spyrou (University of Cyprus) and Rachel Rosen (University College London) which will be published by Bloomsbury in 2018. Cook also curated a “conversation” among the former editors of *Childhood* as part of the journal’s 25th anniversary celebration (Vol 25, No. 1, Feb. 2018).

Dr. Wenhua Lu’s research centers around child and adolescent health disparities, with a focus on minority and underserved populations. Since May 2017, Dr. Lu has published 5 articles in leading public health journals, including the *Administration and Policy in Mental Health and Mental Health Services Research*, *Journal of Health Care for the Poor and Underserved*, and *International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health*, and presented 7 peer-reviewed abstracts in prestigious conferences, including the Society of Research on Adolescence. Dr. Lu’s research has been featured in various media outlets, such as *NJTV News*, *Morning Dose TV*, *Philadelphia Inquirer*, and *Rutgers Today*, and she has been invited to give several research talks. Based on her research achievements to date, Dr. Lu was selected as the recipient of multiple prestigious national awards, including the 2017 NIMHD Health Disparities Research Institute scholarship and the 2018 Judy K. Black Early Career Research Award of the American Academy of Health Behavior. In March 2018, Dr. Lu was also elected as the 2018-2021 term chair of the Diversity and Equity Council of the American Academy of Health Behavior.

Currently, Dr. Lu is working on two health disparities research projects to 1) examine the mechanism underlying unmet mental health service needs among Asian American adolescents with mental health disorders, and 2) investigate the real-time influence of neighborhood environments on adolescent food-purchase behaviors using mobile technologies. Dr. Lu’s research has been funded by the Rutgers Catalyst Grant and the Rutgers Research Council Award, and she is also the Co-Project Director of a RWJF-sponsored youth civic engagement project to evaluate the implementation and impact of RWJF’s Next Generation Community Leaders initiative in 11 underserved minority communities across New Jersey.
In June, 2017, Rutgers-Camden hosted the 9th Biennial Conference of the Society for the History of Children &Youth, which Dr. Miller was proud to have organized. (Now is the time to make plans to attend the 2019 conference at Australian Catholic University in Sydney!) Her article, “Assent as Agency in the Early Years of the Children of the American Revolution,” received an Honorable Mention from the JHCY article prize committee. She is at work on an article focused on children’s art created in the aftermath of war, “Drawing Sustenance,” which she presented at the University of Salzburg Conference co-sponsored by the United Nations Office for Children and Armed Conflict. She is also working on her current book project, “Young Defenders: American Youth, Patriotism and Nationalism.”

Although her scholarly work is no longer primarily focused on Scouting, journalists come calling when the topic is in the news. In early October, 2017, when the Boy Scouts of America decided to admit girls to their ranks, Dr. Miller gave interviews to the Washington Post, Boston Globe, and Atlantic Monthly as well as the National Public Radio affiliate in Los Angeles.

Lauren Silver started a research program in Transformative Childhood Studies and her manuscript, “Transformative Childhood Studies—A Remix in Inquiry, Justice, and Love,” is currently under review. She presented two invited keynote conference lectures: one at the April 2018 “Playing with Childhood Conference” at the University of Pittsburgh (Pittsburgh PA) and the other at the April 2018 “Youth & Civic Engagement” conference organized by the Institute for Child and Youth Studies, Lethbridge University (Lethbridge, Canada). Lauren presented a paper titled, “Reproductive (In)Justice: Young Parents, the State, and a Call for Social Change,” at the February 2018 Eastern Sociological Society Meeting (Baltimore, MD). Lauren was appointed by the Rutgers-Camden Provost, Michael Palis, to serve as Faculty Director of Engaged Learning and Scholarship.
John Wall, Ph.D.
Professor of Religion and Childhood Studies

John Wall made numerous presentations at conferences, universities, and classrooms on his book *Children’s Rights: Today’s Global Challenge*. He also presented a paper, “From Childhood Studies to Childism,” at a symposium at Roskilde University, Denmark as part of an effort to create a new center for social studies through the prism of childhood. He published a book chapter titled “The Global Human Rights of Modern Child Slaves.” And he continued work on a multi-disciplinary project for which he is PI on “Exploring Interdisciplinary Global Studies.”

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Professor of Childhood Studies