NEW NAME FOR THE SCHUBERT CENTER: THE SCHUBERT CENTER FOR CHILD STUDIES

In the fall of 2006, the Schubert Center for Child Development was renamed the Schubert Center for Child Studies. The name change reflects the expanding nature of interest in children and childhood in the field at large and at the Schubert Center.

The Schubert Center’s Child Policy Initiative

The Child Policy Initiative builds on Case’s existing strengths, including an undergraduate minor in Childhood Studies and a campus-wide network of Case faculty members who are engaged in child-related research from a wide range of disciplinary perspectives in the social sciences, medicine, nursing, dentistry, public health, law, and the humanities.

The overriding goal of the Child Policy Initiative is to develop a comprehensive, innovative program of multidisciplinary education, research, and communications focused on child policy. Specific objectives for each program component are:

EDUCATION Three new child policy courses were offered for the first time in the 2005-2006 academic year, and have now become permanent course offerings: Childhood Studies (CHST) 301, Child Policy, gives undergraduate students an overview of the policy-making process and introduces them to key child policy issues. Childhood Studies (CHST) 302, Experiential Learning in Child Policy, gives students an in-depth understanding of the child policy making process at the state and federal levels, and includes an experiential component through which they spend several days in Columbus or Washington DC meeting with policy makers and seeing the process in action. Childhood Studies (CHST) 398, Child Policy Externship, awards course credit to Mann Child Policy Externs for experiential learning opportunities in community agencies involved in child policy issues. In addition, in order to broaden students’ exposure to child policy, policy modules have been developed and infused into existing courses related to children and childhood. These modules draw on the expertise of local child advocates and policymakers.
The Childhood Studies Minor, initiated in 1999, provides an educational opportunity for undergraduate students to pursue a wide array of interests related to children and the experience of childhood. The minor focuses on the life stages from infancy through adolescence, and also includes issues of parenting, gender, and the role of children in society and culture. As noted, the Schubert Center for Child Studies has developed three new child policy courses that are now permanent offerings in the undergraduate curriculum; student experiences in two of those courses (CHST 302 and CHST 398) are shared here.

EXPERIENTIAL LEARNING IN CHILD POLICY (CHILDHOOD STUDIES 302) was offered for the first time in spring 2006. Eight students enrolled in the class, and learned more about how child policy is created at the federal level. The highlight of the course was a trip to Washington DC. There, students met with House Representatives Ted Strickland, Chris Shay, and Stephanie Tubbs Jones. They also met with senior staff in the offices of Representatives Sherrod Brown, Ralph Regula, Tim Ryan, Deb Pryce, and Dave Hobson, and Senators George Voinovich and Mike DeWine.

The students also had the opportunity to learn about the policy making process from a number of organizations focusing on policy, advocacy, and research including the Center on Budget and Policy Priorities, the Congressional Budget Office, the Government Accountability Office, Voices for Children, the Children’s Defense Fund, and the Heritage Foundation.

Student Maya Brown has this to say about Experiential Learning in Child Policy (CHILDHOOD STUDIES 302): “When we went to Washington, I learned so much from meeting with congressional staff. I found out more about how the legislative process works and what kinds of questions to ask to understand policy issues. The experience also prepared me for the November election because I learned how to be a well-informed citizen; now I can make the best choices when voting for elected officials. I recommend this course to anyone who might be interested in policy. I think all of the students came away from the trip wanting to go back to DC, and energized about the differences we can make in child policy.”
Since spring 2005, in partnership with a number of community policy-making organizations, the Schubert Center has provided undergraduate students practical hands-on experience working with professionals who design and implement policies that impact the lives of children and families. Through Mann Child Policy Externships (CHILDHOOD STUDIES 398), students have been placed with local organizations active in social policy in the areas of child health, education, law, juvenile justice, mental health, and child welfare where they have the opportunity to apply concepts learned in the classroom to an organizational environment. The externships also provide valuable professional work experience. To date, six students have been placed in sites including the Alliance of Child Caring Service Providers, the Center for Community Solutions, Invest in Children, and Voices for Children of Greater Cleveland.

Alumni siblings Carol Mann (Flora Stone Mather College, 1971) and Robert Mann (Western Reserve College 1973) so valued their experiences as undergraduate students that they have generously provided support to today’s undergraduate students. Since the early 1990s, the Manns have provided funding that allows students to engage in important and life changing experiences outside the usual classroom environment. Through their generosity, students have traveled throughout the world to participate in research projects on children. The Manns currently support the Mann Child Policy Externships as well as other experiential learning opportunities such as the 2005 Spring Break trip to Washington DC.
MEET MOLLY IRWIN, DIRECTOR OF THE SCHUBERT CENTER’S CHILD POLICY INITIATIVE

Molly Irwin recently assumed the Directorship of the Schubert Center’s Child Policy Initiative. Molly’s professional experience working to improve the lives of children and families spans more than 15 years, and includes work in local and state government, and the private sector. She served as Interim Director for the Cuyahoga County Early Childhood Initiative (now called Invest in Children), and managed its comprehensive external evaluation, working closely with program directors and staff, a team of national researchers, County elected and appointed officials, private stakeholders, and funding agencies. Her private sector experience includes managing the Program Planning and Evaluation unit at a health and human services consulting firm. Prior to coming to Cleveland, Molly spent three years working with the South Carolina Department of Health and Environmental Control. She holds a Master’s degree in Public Health (MPH) in the area of Maternal and Child Health from the University of Alabama at Birmingham; prior to receiving her MPH, she served in the United States Peace Corps in Honduras. Molly is currently pursuing her doctorate in Social Welfare at the Mandel School of Applied Social Sciences.

RESEARCH

A compendium of research on children, *As Life Unfolds: Research on Children and Childhood at Case Western Reserve University*, is now available. This 2006 publication highlights research being conducted across the Case campus that focuses on children and childhood. Additionally, a series of in-depth, stand alone Research and Policy Briefs has been initiated. These briefs summarize new and ongoing child-related research underway at Case, and highlight implications for policy and practice. Please consult the Schubert Center website, www.case.edu/artsci/schubert, for information about the availability of these publications.

COMMUNICATIONS

Regular forums are convened by the Schubert Center to stimulate an ongoing dialogue between members of the Case community and policy experts and advocates in Northeast Ohio. In addition, a directory of Case faculty with research expertise on children and childhood has been published in *As Life Unfolds* and also on the Schubert Center’s website. This directory is part of the continuing effort to broaden public access to university resources and to better connect faculty who have common interests.

The Child Policy Initiative is supported by funding from The George Gund Foundation and The Cleveland Foundation. Student externships and other special educational experiences for students are supported by endowment income designated for this purpose by the Mann Endowment Fund held by the Schubert Center, College of Arts and Sciences.
Case Conversations On Children In Research And Policy

This continuing seminar series fosters interdisciplinary discussions and relationships among Case faculty, students, staff, and members of the wider community interested in children and childhood. The Schubert Center is off to a good start with this year’s offerings. In September, Drs. John Kennell and Susan McGrath spoke to a capacity audience about the history and success of doula-supported labor and delivery in the US. Kristen Brooks, a certified doula and nurse midwife also spoke about the policy implications of this important work.

In October, the Schubert Center co-hosted a panel discussion with the Center on Urban Poverty and Community Development that focused on November election issues affecting children and families. Over 70 students, staff, faculty, and community members joined in discussing issues including county health and human services funding, early care and education, primary school funding, and minimum wage and taxes. The panel was moderated by Amy Nicholls Swanson, Executive Director of Voices for Children of Greater Cleveland. Panelists included: William Denihan, Chief Executive Officer of the Cuyahoga County Community Mental Health Board; Lori McClung, Senior Fellow and Associate Director of Policy, Planning, and Programs for the Center for Community Solutions; Zach Schiller, Research Director for Policy Matters Ohio; and Steve Steel, Director of Field Organization for the Ohio Fair Schools Campaign.

In November, Dr. Leslie Heinberg spoke to another capacity audience about the issues contributing to pediatric obesity and her experience with successful treatment plans. Ann Stahlheber, of Community Health Services of the Cuyahoga Country Board of Health added a discussion about the policy issues involved and other programs occurring locally to address childhood obesity.

SEE SEMINAR SERIES SCHEDULE ON BACK PAGE >
2006-07 seminar series  
CASE CONVERSATIONS ON CHILDREN IN RESEARCH AND POLICY

For further information about this series, please visit the Schubert Center for Child Studies website: www.case.edu/artsci/schubert

TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 12, 2006
Doula Support: What’s Good for Mother is Good for Baby
John H. Kennell, M.D., Professor Emeritus of Pediatrics; Susan K. McGrath, Ph.D., Psychologist

TUESDAY, OCTOBER 10, 2006
Election 2006: What’s at Stake for Kids? A panel discussion of the election issues affecting children and youth
Co-sponsored with the Center on Urban Poverty & Community Development, MSASS
Moderator: Amy Nicholls Swanson, Executive Director, Voices for Children of Greater Cleveland

TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 14, 2006
Fighting the Rising Tide of Pediatric Obesity
Leslie J. Heinberg, Ph.D., Associate Professor, Department of Epidemiology and Biostatistics

TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 6, 2007
Children with Psychiatric Problems: Achievements and Challenges of Pediatric Psychopharmacology Research
Robert L. Findling, M.D., Professor, Department of Pediatrics and Psychiatry

TUESDAY, MARCH 6, 2007
Making a Little Go a Long Way: The Effects of Incentive Programs on Student Performance
Eric P. Bettinger, Ph.D., Assistant Professor, Department of Economics

TUESDAY, APRIL 17, 2007
Children’s Health Policy
Participants to be announced