Proposal for Customized Field in Child and Youth Policy

The proposed customized field in child and youth policy focuses on those policies that operate outside of the traditional school classroom, and also aim to promote child well-being and educational achievement. While school is largely at the center of publicly-funded programming for children, other programs aim to help prepare children for school, complement their school day experiences, and enhance families and communities in their ability to support children. Although child and youth policy is distinct from education as a field, collaboration with schools and determination of the relative responsibilities of the education system versus other public and publicly-funded agencies is an important question in the field. Studies in child and youth policy draw on multiple disciplines including economics, sociology, psychology, and political science. The field is inherently interdisciplinary and studies may be best categorized by the age and related needs of the target population. I propose to organize my studies in the child and youth policy field based primarily on the age of the children that these programs and policies serve. These three areas include:

1. Early childhood, including child care and early childhood education.
2. Out-of-school activities for elementary and middle school students, such as traditional afterschool and summer programs.
3. Out-of-school activities for youth (up to age 24), such as youth employment programs.

Despite the importance of these child and youth policy areas for children’s development, education and well-being, they occupy a relatively grey policy space. In contrast to schooling, in which children’s right to access at least a minimal level of education is generally accepted and codified with government-provided services available to all children, the level of public versus private responsibility for meeting children’s needs outside of the classroom is much less clear. Further, the appropriate goals for child and youth policies that operate outside of the classroom are varied and subject to debate. For instance, while child and youth policies may aim to promote academic achievement and attainment, they also focus on non-academic child and youth development goals as well as broader goals such as providing supervision for children to enable parents to work. At the same time, while there are a multitude of programs and policies that contribute to child and youth outcomes, such as welfare, housing support, and health insurance, this field focuses on those with the explicit and primary goal of promoting child and youth social development and educational attainment.

The field aims to answer the following questions related to policy formation, implementation, and evaluation of child and youth policy:

- What type of policy/political climate is most conducive to promoting and sustaining policies in the interests of children?
- What are the key policy levers for action in child and youth policy?
- What types of programs and policy goals are politically popular with policy makers and the public in the child and youth policy realm?

1 Although children are usually defined as those under age 18, the definition of youth generally extends to those up to age 24. For instance, New York City’s Summer Youth Employment Program serves those up to age 24, and the U.N. definition of youth includes those age 15-24.
• Based on rigorous research, what policies and programs have been shown to be most effective?
• How should child and youth policies/programs be evaluated and what are appropriate outcome measures?
• How do differences in access to programs and resources, largely along family and community SES lines, affect development and educational attainment?
• How do societal expectations related to what children need outside of school, as well as societal conceptions of public versus private responsibilities in meeting these needs, influence child and youth policy?

**Preparation**

**Coursework**

- WWS 528c Education Policy, Woodrow Wilson School, Princeton University (Shorris, Spring 2005)

**Related Papers Prepared in Graduate Courses**

- Public Financing to Promote Summer Learning for Low-Income Children: An Analysis of the STEP UP Act and Other Public Financing Options, for P11. 2140 Public Finance and Economics, Prof. Chan, Fall 2009

- Summer Learning for Low-Income Students: A Public Policy Response, for G53. 2371 Public Policy, Prof. Mead, Fall 2009.


- Summer Learning Program Evaluation, for P11. 2901 Research Methods, Prof. Gillespie, Fall 2008.

- NCLB and NAEP: Policy Analysis and Recommendations, for WWS 528c Education Policy, Woodrow Wilson School, Princeton University (Shorris, Spring 2005)

**Child and Youth Policy as a Field**

**Academic Journals**
The Future of Children
New Directions for Youth Development
Educational Evaluation and Policy Analysis
Child Development
Literature
In addition to the literature organized by age group served, the readings in the section directly below represent key readings that address children and child policy more broadly and from multiple disciplinary perspectives.

Broad Approaches to Children and Child Policy
- Tough, P., Whatever it Takes: Geoffrey Canada’s Quest to Change Harlem and America, 2008.
Early Childhood Education

ECE as a Strategy

- Heckman, J. “Policies to foster human capital” Research in Economics, Volume 54, Issue 1, March 2000, Pages 3-56

Impacts of ECE

- Haskins, R. “Competing Visions.” Education Next, Winter 2004

Out of School Time for Elementary and Middle School Students

Participation and Costs


• The Cost of Quality Out-of-School-Time Programs by Jean Baldwin Grossman, Christianne Lind, Cheryl Hayes, Jennifer McMaken and Andrew Gersick, January 2009,

**Impacts of OST**

• Susanne James-Burdumy, Mark Dynarski and John Deke, “When Elementary Schools Stay Open Late: Results From the National Evaluation of the 21st Century Community Learning Centers Program” EDUCATIONAL EVALUATION AND POLICY ANALYSIS 2007; 29; 296

• After-School Pursuits: An Examination of Outcomes in the San Francisco Beacon Initiative by Karen E. Walker and Amy J.A. Arbreton March 2004, PPV


• Charles Smith, Thomas J. Devaney, Tom Akiva, Samantha A. Sugar, Quality and accountability in the out-of-school-time sector (p 109-127)

• Nicole Yohalem, Robert C. Granger, Karen J. Pittman. The quest for quality: Recent developments and future directions for the out-of-school-time field (p 129-140) New Directions for Youth Development Volume 2009 Issue 121, Pages 1 - 140 (Spring 2009)

Special Issue: Defining and Measuring Quality in Youth Programs and Classrooms Issue Edited by Nicole Yohalem, Robert C. Granger, Karen J. Pittman
Summer Programs


Out-of-school Activities for high school-age youth


Key Organizations/Websites on Children, Families, and Social Policy
This proposal has been approved by the following faculty members who have agreed to write questions for the exam:

Amy Ellen Schwartz
Beth Weitzman
J. Lawrence Aber