We entered CIRCY’s sixth year as busy as ever. Following our fifth anniversary review and members’ consultation, we revised our underpinning themes. As outlined in our latest Annual Report, we have set out our themes as three underpinning conceptual concerns that intersect to inform the conceptualisation of childhood and youth across space and time:

- ‘Good’ childhoods? Everyday and (extra)ordinary lives
- Childhood publics/Public childhoods
- Emotional lives

Of course, not all projects engage with all of these concerns, but as they span substantive topics and disciplinary boundaries, they generate transdisciplinary space in which our work, collectively, builds critical understandings of childhood and youth.

With that in mind, our seminar programme for 2018-19 mixes disciplinary perspectives, creating spaces designed to disrupt taken-for-granted disciplinary assumptions.

The autumn term began with a seminar from Professor Pamela Cox from the University of Essex, who spoke about the research that underpinned her recent book with Barry Godfrey, Heather Shore and Zoe Alker: Young Criminal Lives: Life Courses and Life Chances from 1850, based on the first cradle-to-grave study of the experiences of 400 adults who passed through the early youth justice and care systems as children in the northwest of England.

Our second event was co-hosted by the Sussex Centre for Human Rights Research, and brought Emma Nottingham from the University of Winchester to share her research on critically ill children in the age of social media, posing the challenge ‘how can we protect ‘generation tagged’?’

Building on our underpinning concern with childhood publics and public childhoods, our next event brought together Pam Thurschwell (School of English and CIRCY Steering Group member) with Sevasti-Melissa Nolas (now based in Sociology at Goldsmiths, but formerly in the School of Education and Social Work, and also a Steering Group member). Drawing on Melissa’s European Research Council Connectors study, and Pam’s research on Ann Frank’s diary for her forthcoming book on adolescence, they discussed childhood publics, exploring cross-disciplinary perspectives on idioms and genres in listening to children and young people.

The final event of this busy autumn term was the launch of TRANSFORM-IN EDUCATION, a new initiative led by Rebecca Webb (CIRCY Steering Group member) and Perpetua Kirby. Jointly hosted with the Centre for Teaching and Learning Research (CTLR), we celebrated the launch of this important and timely initiative, which challenges the idea of an exclusive emphasis on children’s conformity within schools, aiming to critique and creatively disrupt the taken-for-granted, including what can be done or thought within their school day. We were delighted that Sussex Provost, Saul Becker, was able to join our celebrations at which he highlighted the synergies between the TransformIn initiative and the University’s 2025 Strategic Framework, valuing a long tradition of developing experimental work that is disruptive by design.
**Spring Term Seminars**

Plans for the spring term are no less exciting, with a programme of seminars which includes an exciting range of disciplinary perspectives:

- **Childhood and Dress**  
  Monday 11 February, 4.30-6pm  
  Hannah Field, Lecturer in Victorian Literature, School of English, University of Sussex & Kiera Vaclavik, Professor of Children’s Literature and Childhood Culture, Queen Mary, University of London

- **Children Who Care: Young carers research policy and practice**  
  Monday 25 February, 5-6.30pm  
  Saul Becker, Professor of Social Work & Social Policy and Provost & Feylyn Lewis, Research Fellow, University of Sussex

- **Youth in Palestine**  
  Monday 18 March, 4.30-6pm  
  Dr Rachael Stryker, Assistant Professor, Department of Human Development & Women’s Studies, California State University, with a response from Mario Novelli, Professor of the Political Economy of Education, University of Sussex (joint CIRCY/CIE event)

- **Children, happiness and the law**  
  Monday 8 April, 4.30-6pm  
  Dr Maria Moscati, Lecturer in Family Law & Co-director of the Centre for Cultures of Reproduction, Technologies and Health (CORTH), University of Sussex

- **Universal Ethics in International and Comparative Education**  
  Monday 29 April, 5.30-7pm  
  Esther McMahon, CIRCY Research Fellow, University of Sussex & Dr Lizzi Milligan, Senior Lecturer, Department of Education, University of Bath

**PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT AND KNOWLEDGE EXCHANGE**

Engagement with key public and professional stakeholders, including (but not confined to) academic audiences, is fundamental to CIRCY’s approach. We have been involved in a variety of public engagement, advisory work and knowledge exchange activities over the last few months.

- **Maria Moscati** (Law) has been working with schools in London and Italy on her project Children, Law and Happiness, and also gave a workshop ‘The right to be myself’ for Year 6 children at the Italian School in London. Maria also gave a presentation to the SLSA Conference 2018 about her work on family mediation: Rainbow after the Storm: Using Visual Arts to Enhance Access to Justice for Children Involved in Family Mediation.

- **Perpetua Kirby** (Education) presented her doctoral research at the British Educational Research Association (BERA) annual conference in Newcastle in September - and won second prize in the BERA Early Career Researcher Presentation Awards! Her prize winning paper was ‘Learning hard’: children’s lived experiences of classroom character initiatives, exploring how positioning children as lacking in resilience denies them the opportunity to explore different understandings of the world. Congratulations Perpetua!

- **Michelle Lefevre** (Social Work) is serving on the Project Board for the Contextual Safeguarding Scale Up Project, which has been funded by the Big Lottery fund to create Contextual Safeguarding systems in three local authority sites across England and Wales until 2022. Michelle also presented her research on Social Work Communication with Children in the Home Visit to student social workers at Bedfordshire University in December.

Also in December, **Nuno Ferreira** (Law) gave a guest lecture entitled ‘Human Rights of the Most Vulnerable: Children, LGBTI and the Right to Asylum in Europe’, at the Leuven Centre for Global Governance Studies, KU Leuven, Belgium.

- **Jeri Dammman** (Social Work) gave a webinar to the Birth Parent National Network (BPNN), a national consortium in the UK ‘working to promote and champion birth parents as leaders and strategic partner in prevention and child welfare system reform.’ She spoke about ‘Birth Parent Involvement at a System Level in Child Welfare: Exploring the perspectives of birth parents in parent partner programs’, to attendees including birth parents, professionals, and representatives of national child welfare policy and practice initiatives across the US.

- **Janet Boddy, Fidelma Hanrahan** (both Education) and **Paul Shuttleworth** (Social Work) all attended the EUSARF biennial conference in Porto in October, where they each presented their research. Paul presented his doctoral research, on Absent Voices - Children's Accounts of the Meaning of Kinship Care. Janet and Fidelma were part of a symposium centred on their Norwegian Research Council funded project Against All Odds?, and Janet also gave the opening keynote at the EUSARF postgraduate academy, and the closing keynote for the main conference, where she spoke about Navigating Precarious Moments? The Experience of Young Adults who Have Been in Care in Norway, Denmark and England. Janet has also been working with Oslo Met University in a new adjunct professor role in the Department of Childhood, Family and Child Welfare Research at NOVA, and she is also advising the new Nuffield Foundation funded Family Justice Observatory, chairing a task group on quality standards in qualitative research.

**MEMBER’S NEWS**

**Victoria Jaynes** has joined the Department of Social Work & Social Care and Sussex Humanities Lab in a Research Fellow post in Digital Sociology. She brings expertise spanning young people’s experiences of gender and digital technology, and parent practices of sharing children’s lives on social media - commonly known as ‘sharing’. **Emeline Brué** is a Lecturer in Product Design in the School of Engineering and Informatics. Her previous research in childhood and disability studies includes particular expertise in inclusive design and assistive technologies.

We are also delighted to welcome four new PhD students to CIRCY:

- **Kathleen Bailey** is researching multi-species relations in early years communities, exploring the conceptualisation of biophilic pedagogy, and supervised by Rebecca Webb and Janet Boddy (both Education)

- **Evelyn Keryova** is studying how YouTubers and their young audiences interact with one another, and is being co-supervised by Liam Berriman and Rachel Thomson (both Social Work)

- **Marusa Levstek** is studying young people’s participation in the creative arts, supervised by Robin Banerjee (Psychology) and co-funded by Our Future City

- **Loreto Rodríguez** is working with Janet Boddy (Education) and Michelle Lefevre (Social Work) studying young children’s experiences of psychotherapy following sexual abuse.
The stunning riverside location of the EUSARF conference in Porto

Robin Banerjee (Psychology) has continued his advisory work for Welsh Government, on the development of their new National Curriculum. He also gave the opening keynote address at the British Psychological Society (BPS) Developmental Section Annual Conference in September this year.

Also in September, Liam Berriman (Social Work) gave an invited seminar for University College Cork’s Children and Young People Research Cluster on ‘Researching Everyday Childhoods in a Digital Age’. A recording of the talk is available online.

FUNDING NEWS

Gillian Ruch (Social Work) has been awarded ESRC Impact Accelerator funding to develop her Talking and Listening to Children (TLC) project. The funding will allow the team to purchase ‘kitbags’ that can be given to social workers to use in their work with children. The TLC research found that fewer than 20% of social workers in the study used play materials and creative resources when communicating with children. The Kitbag is a purpose made resource for promoting the emotional health and wellbeing of children and can be customized for working with children in different contexts. Impact Accelerator funding will be used to host an event for Principal Social Workers, to support social workers to try using kitbags to enhance the quality of their communication with children.

The ‘kitbag’ from the Talking and Listening to Children (TLC) project

Robin Banerjee (Psychology), working with Janet Boddy (Education) and Lucy Roberts (Psychology) has secured funding to work as the Evaluation Partner for NESTA’s Future Ready Fund: Social and Emotional Skills, an initiative that aims to support organisations in developing work to support social and emotional skills among secondary school students. The team will be working alongside NESTA and the organisations they fund for the initiative, to support their evaluation of their work. The project will run until September 2020.

OPPORTUNITIES

There is a great opportunity for a funded PhD studentship at Zaragoza in collaboration with Nicola Yull’s (Psychology) chatlab, on intergenerational digital play. The deadline is 2pm on 31 January 2019.

RECENT PUBLICATIONS

Berriman, Liam and Mascheroni, Giovanna (2018): ‘Exploring the affordances of smart toys and connected play in practice’. New Media & Society. ISSN 1461-4448


Keep In Touch!

Let us know (email Josey Wilkin, josey.wilkin@sussex.ac.uk) if you’re interested in taking part in any of our upcoming members events or other activities, or just want to find out more:
• CIRCY Writing Workshop on Friday 25 January 2018
• Blue Skies research ideas workshop, date to be confirmed
• Working with video methods workshop, 12 June 2018

Contact Janet Boddy (CIRCY Director, j.m.boddy@sussex.ac.uk) directly, if you have a ‘ghost’ bid (something that wasn’t funded, but which haunts you) that you’d like to redevelop and would like our advice or support. And please let us know if you have any ideas for members’ events or seminars, or need any support with developing research or writing, or with research-related activities such as networking events or conference attendance.

THANK YOU!

And finally, we extend huge thanks to Esther McMahon, who has been the CIRCY Research Fellow for the last year.

Esther is now working at the Institute for Employment Studies, but will still be teaching in the School of Education and Social Work.

From mid-January, CIRCY support will be provided by Loreto Rodriguez, PhD Doctoral Researcher in Childhood and Youth (based in ESW), and we look forward to welcoming Loreto to her new role.