



Children and Work Research Series: Session 17

“It’s intimidating going into your first job” Young Teens and Workplace Safety

27 September 2023 - 10am EST / 4pm CET - Zoom. Register [here](#).

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Abstract

Our paper looks at young workers’ thinking about, and experiences of, safety issues in relation to first paid jobs. Drawing on focus groups and interviews with young Canadians between the ages of 11 and 16, across two waves of data collection, we highlight participants’ narrow understandings of safety at work alongside their limited safety training; discuss neoliberal individualism and hyper-responsibility in their thoughts and solutions about workplace safety; complicate an individualized approach to workplace safety by illustrating the relational agencies evident in workplace encounters; and note how attention to relationality can inform approaches to improving safety in early work.

Speakers’ Bio

Rebecca Raby is a sociologist in the Department of Child and Youth Studies at Brock University, Canada. She studies constructions of childhood and youth, intersecting inequalities in young lives, qualitative methodologies, and theories of participation and agency. Her recent publications include *Smart Girls: Success, School and the Myth of Post-Feminism* (2017, University of California Press) (with Shauna Pomerantz), and the edited collection *The Sociology of Childhood and Youth in Canada* (2018, Canadian Scholars’ Press (with Xiaobei Chen and Patrizia Albanese). Her most recent research projects have focused on young people’s very earliest work, children’s experiences during the pandemic, and homeless children living in transitional housing.

Lindsay C. Sheppard is a PhD Candidate in the Department of Sociology at York University. She has a BA (Honours) and MA in Child and Youth Studies from Brock University. She is curious about girlhood, age, digital feminisms, collective identity, and conceptualizing agency. She has worked as a research assistant at Brock University and York University on projects about young people’s early work (with Rebecca Raby), children’s experiences of the COVID-19 pandemic (with Rebecca Raby), and parenting with technology during the COVID-19 pandemic (with Natalie Coulter). Using a feminist posthuman framework, Lindsay’s dissertation is exploring girls’ feminism on Instagram to understand questions of gender, age, technology, and collective feminist identity.