

**ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL RESEARCH COUNCIL
END OF AWARD REPORT**



For awards ending on or after 1 November 2009

This End of Award Report should be completed and submitted using the **grant reference** as the email subject, to **reportsofficer@esrc.ac.uk** on or before the due date.

The final instalment of the grant will not be paid until an End of Award Report is completed in full and accepted by ESRC.

Grant holders whose End of Award Report is overdue or incomplete will not be eligible for further ESRC funding until the Report is accepted. ESRC reserves the right to recover a sum of the expenditure incurred on the grant if the End of Award Report is overdue. (Please see Section 5 of the ESRC Research Funding Guide for details.)

Please refer to the Guidance notes when completing this End of Award Report.

Grant Reference	RES-451-26-0538		
Grant Title	<i>Changing Parenting Culture seminar series</i>		
Grant Start Date	<i>1 December 2008</i>	Total Amount	£17,296.48
Grant End Date	<i>31 July 2010</i>	Expended:	
Grant holding Institution	University of Kent		
Grant Holder	Dr Ellie Lee		
Grant Holder's Contact Details	Address	Email	
	SSPSSR, Cornwallis NE, University of Kent, Canterbury CT2 7NF	E.J.Lee@kent.ac.uk	
		Telephone	01227 827526
Co-Investigators (as per project application):		Institution	
Charlotte Faircloth		At time of application University of Cambridge, now University of Kent	

1. NON-TECHNICAL SUMMARY

Please provide below a project summary written in non-technical language. The summary may be used by ESRC to publicise your work and should explain the aims and findings of the project. *[Max 250 words]*

*The seminar series **Changing Parenting Culture** comprised 5 events that took place over 2009 and 2010. The 5 subject areas covered were: ‘From child-rearing to ‘parenting’: what’s new about contemporary parenting culture?’; ‘Gender and parenting culture: Intensive fatherhood?’; ‘Child-rearing in a risk society’; ‘Changing Parenting Culture: the problems of parenting policy’; and ‘Pregnancy and pregnancy planning in the new parenting culture’. The overall aim of the series was to explore the way that the cultural meaning of ‘parenting’ has expanded and how it has become an object of expertise and policy making. Through a series of conversations we hoped to discuss the history and sociology of this development, and its effects for parents’ experience and for the workings of specific child-rearing related activities. The series was a great success. The events brought together in a very powerful way detailed study of particular aspects of the contemporary experience of parenting including TV parenting programmes, feeding babies, family planning, and outdoor play, with a wider socio-cultural analysis of the history and contemporary features of parenting culture. Overall the series attracted a diverse group of people, stretching beyond academic colleagues, as research users of a variety of kinds participated as panellists and attended events.*

2. PROJECT OVERVIEW

a) Objectives

Please state the aims and objectives of your project as outlined in your proposal to the ESRC. *[Max 200 words]*

- *To consolidate a genuine interdisciplinary research agenda around the construction and working of contemporary parenting culture;*
- *To elaborate a conceptual framework that can capture the working of contemporary parenting culture;*
- *To provide an interdisciplinary forum for informed discussion and development of our understanding of the way that intensive motherhood and the new parenting culture works and informs contemporary child-rearing practices;*
- *To track the way practices such as infant feeding, sleeping, disciplining etc. are influenced and modified by the demands of our parenting culture;*
- *To consider gender and parenting culture, and in particular to track change and continuity in cultures of fatherhood, and how this relates to change and continuity in fathering practices;*
- *To involve post post-graduate and early career stage colleagues in this project;*
- *To bring together researchers, parenting organisations, policy makers from Britain and abroad in order inform the deliberation of the public on this issue;*
- *To widen the agenda of policy makers and help them to reflect on how their activities bears upon the experience of different constituencies of parents.*

b) Project Changes

Please describe any changes made to the original aims and objectives, and confirm that these were agreed with the ESRC. Please also detail any changes to the grant holder’s institutional affiliation, project staffing or funding. *[Max 200 words]*

The original duration was 1 December 2008 - 20 April 2010. The intention was to hold four seminars in January 2009, April 2009, September 2009 and February 2010. In the end, the grant period was extended cost-free to 31 July 2010, and a further seminar was added to the programme that was held in June 2010. The reasons for this amendment related to the success and impact of the original four seminars. There was great enthusiasm among those who attended to develop discussion in a new way through considering the relation between parenting culture and pregnancy, and offers of collaboration (including financial support) were forthcoming from two sources, Centre LGS at Kent University, and British Pregnancy Advisory Service (bpas), an important research user.

c) Methodology

Please describe the methodology that you employed in the project. Please also note any ethical issues that arose during the course of the work, the effects of this and any action taken. [Max. 500 words]

An organising group was set up shortly following announcement of the award which comprised: Ellie Lee (Kent), Charlotte Faircloth (Cambridge), Jan Macvarish (Kent), Helen Reece (Birkbeck/LSE), Emma Head (Keele), Pam Lowe (Aston), Geraldine Brady (Coventry), Janice McLaughlin (Newcastle), Lesley Hoggart (PSI/Greenwich), Frank Furedi (Kent), Jennie Bristow (journalist). Members of the organising group worked hard to circulate electronic information to as many potential participants as possible through a variety of email lists covering different academic disciplines, and via user-group mailing lists. Publicity centred on a bespoke website which provided details of all planned events and materials reporting content for all completed events. See: <http://www.parentingculturestudies.org/seminar-series/index.html>. The details of those registering to attend were added in an on-going way to an email list held by Parenting Culture Studies, and interested parties were thus updated about the events and alerted to new materials (the seminar series was publicised in 20+ such newsletters sent out from 22 July 2008 onwards). The final programme details were: **Seminar 1**, 8th and 9th January 2009, Kent University, From child-rearing to 'parenting': what's new about contemporary parenting culture? **Seminar 2**, 3rd April 2009, Cambridge University, Gender and parenting culture: Intensive fatherhood? **Seminar 3**, 16th and 17th September 2009, Aston University, Child-rearing in a risk society. **Seminar 4**, 16 February 2010, British Library, Changing Parenting Culture: the problems of parenting policy. **Seminar 5** (additional to original programme), 22nd and 23rd June 2010, Kent University, Pregnancy and pregnancy planning in the new parenting culture. Overall the series attracted a diverse group of people: **Seminar 1 (41 attended)**. Programme (20): academic 11; student/early career 4; disciplines 8; practitioners 2; journalists/other 3/ Participants (21): academic 10; student 5; practitioners 2; journalists/other 4. **Seminar 2 (36 attended)**. Programme (13): academic 10; student/early career 2; disciplines 6; practitioners 0; journalists/other 1 /Participants (23): academic 14; student 3; practitioners 2; journalists/other 4. **Seminar 3 (49 attended)**. Programme (25): academic 19; student/early career 3; disciplines 11; practitioners 1; journalists/other 2/ Participants (24): academic 10; student 6; practitioners 5; journalists/other 3. **Seminar 4 (108 attended)**. Programme (26): academic 17; student/early career 2; disciplines 8; practitioners 3; journalists/other 4 /Participants (82): academic 56; student 15; practitioners 7; journalists/other 4. **Seminar 5 (72 attended)**. Programme (23): academic 18; student/early career 3; disciplines 7; practitioners 2; journalists/other 0 /Participants (49): academic 18; student 17; practitioners 9; journalists/other 5. Through the series participants were asked to supply a short biog if they wanted to. Not all did, but this list details many of the participants: <http://www.parentingculturestudies.org/seminar-series/participants.html>

d) Project Findings

Please summarise the findings of the project, referring where appropriate to outputs recorded on *ESRC Society Today*. Any future research plans should also be identified. [Max 500 words]

- The seminar series has, so far, generated two main outputs.

- a special issue of *Health, Risk Society* (published July 2010)
- a special section of *Sociological Research Online* (to be published Winter 2010)

It has also encouraged new research funding applications of which one for an early career stage fellowship and one for a new piece of research have been successful. Some who presented at seminars have been invited by user-participants to talk at the latter's events e.g. Family and Parenting Institute, Institute of Ideas.

- Every event was oversubscribed. The main opportunity for feedback was through an evaluation form. In addition some individuals mailed organisers with further comments. Summary scores from the evaluation are:

Seminar 1 For pre-seminar arrangements; Programme; Accommodation and Dining/Refreshments, overwhelmingly marked 4 or 5/5 in all categories.

Typical comments:

'This has been an extremely valuable two days. Well worth attending. The presentations have varied but have all fitted into the overarching aim of this first seminar. It has been useful to be part of an interdisciplinary discussion of research with a common theme. Too often research does get pigeon-holed. Personally, it has really provided me with 'food for thought' and a whole range of issues to reflect upon. I look forward to the forthcoming seminars which I would certainly be keen to attend. Thank you.'

'Rare to have this quality of focus of discussion at a seminar. Excellent!'

Seminar 2 For pre-seminar arrangements; Programme; Accommodation and Dining/Refreshments, overwhelmingly marked 4 or 5/5 in all categories, though several participants noted that the room was a little too small.

Typical comments:

'Really enjoyed the day and being able to lose myself in hearing such interesting and contemporary debates and ideas (and to remind myself/think through how my own work fits into these) Excellent.'

'The emphasis on current government policy and rhetoric was really very valuable'.

Seminar 3 For pre-seminar arrangements; Programme; Accommodation and Dining/Refreshments, overwhelmingly marked 4 or 5/5 in all categories.

Typical comments:

'I think that these series of seminars have been very thoughtful, have built upon each other and have created a really substantial intervention in this area'.

'We should have more seminar series like this one!'

'Overall the quality of this seminar programme is excellent, the development of the arguments across the sessions and programmes is exactly what should occur in the ESRC seminar series programme'.

Seminar 4 For pre-seminar arrangements; Programme; Accommodation and Dining/Refreshments, overwhelmingly marked 4 or 5/5 in all categories (though some participants would have liked more biscuits - !)

Typical comments:

'Very thought-provoking and intellectually stimulating sessions! Particularly attractive for students due to free of charge. Access and contemporary discussions!'

'An excellent series of discussions, which ended in a fantastic venue. Raised so many interesting questions - some of which were answered, some weren't, but leaves plenty of scope to take these topics further'.

'This has been an absolutely fantastic seminar series - it would be great if you could continue'.

Seminar 5 For pre-seminar arrangements; Programme; Accommodation and Dining/Refreshments, overwhelmingly marked 4 or 5/5 in all categories.

Typical comments:

'A fantastic program with wonderful speakers. Very well organised event - thanks to the funders and organisers for bringing the U.S speakers over!'

'As a convenor of a parenting organisation, I think this whole series has certainly informed the deliberation of the public on this issue - it has been very relevant to what parents are thinking and would like to understand more of'

'This was a fantastic conference, interesting speakers and an audience interested in stimulating new ideas around the issues. As a whole the series was fantastic and has made a great difference to my work. It is a great shame it has now come to an end.'

e) Contributions to wider ESRC initiatives (eg Research Programmes or Networks)

If your project was part of a wider ESRC initiative, please describe your contributions to the initiative's objectives and activities and note any effect on your project resulting from participation. *[Max. 200 words]*

3. EARLY AND ANTICIPATED IMPACTS

a) Summary of Impacts to date

Please summarise any impacts of the project to date, referring where appropriate to associated outputs recorded on *ESRC Society Today*. This should include both scientific impacts (relevant to the academic community) and economic and societal impacts (relevant to broader society). The impact can be relevant to any organisation, community or individual. *[Max. 400 words]*

The comments above indicate the impact of the events on colleagues who attended, in provoking new thoughts and ideas. As noted above, research users of a variety of kinds participated as panellists and attended events. It is difficult to know precisely how this has shaped their thinking but these are additional comments made by some, which demonstrate the impact of the events on those working outside the academy:

'For me, attending the first Changing Parenting Culture series was like being hit by a thunderbolt. Suddenly so many of the issues that I'd been considering as a journalist suddenly came in to focus. The research and discussions that occur at the series cut through the buzz of popular notions about parenting and unearth deeper and more philosophical issues related to children and parents. The series helps quantify and examine issues that otherwise remain on the periphery. I've found it an essential critical tool in my coverage and comment about parenting for the Times. Long may it continue.'
Jennifer Howze, *The Times*

'As Information Officer at One Plus One the seminar series was a very useful opportunity to consider current academic thought on the changing parenting culture. I was able to cement some really fruitful links with other attendees as well as disseminate information about One Plus One and the services we provide, particularly in terms of our research and information resources available. I also got lots of details of new references, resources, articles and books to add to our library collection, keeping it fully up to date. The series was timely, relevant, interesting and a very useful information gathering opportunity. Thank you!' Laura Dimmock, One Plus One

[With reference to Seminar 5] *'The conference was of particular benefit to service providers in that it provided a more 'nuanced' and sophisticated analysis of how women think about pregnancy planning, and decision-makings than is usual. Speakers highlighted the way in which women and their partners might accrue benefit as well as risk to non-use of contraception. This has potential impact on the way that strategies to reduce the number of unplanned and unwanted pregnancies are framed. The discussion on methodology regarding qualitative research - specifically regarding the way women reporting unplanned planned pregnancies 'tell their stories' will be valuable to those looking to analyse feedback from service users, which is increasingly required as a part of Quality Audit. The discussion on the nature of 'stigma' was also valuable to those needing to understand the self-image and self-concerns of service users.'* Ann Furedi, bpas

We also did press work through the series with some success (the results are here: <http://www.parentingculturestudies.org/seminar-series/press.html>).

b) Anticipated/Potential Future Impacts

Please outline any anticipated or potential impacts (scientific or economic and societal) that you believe your project might have in future. [Max. 200 words]

*The observation made most frequently by those who attended the seminars drew attention to their coherence. The concept *parenting culture* remained the central focus throughout. It was the quality of the programmes - the development of ideas through individual seminars and across the series - that stood out most of all. Scholars from many disciplines presented at/attended events and the value of this inter-disciplinarity was remarked upon through the series, as participants commented on feeling a genuine sense of intellectual excitement and stimulation resulting from the discussion. Early career stage colleagues were involved throughout; more than 10 doctoral students / early career stage appeared on panels over the series. On this basis, the most likely future impact will arise through further consolidation of a new research agenda developed through the series, related to which will be new research and dissemination of ideas about the problems of contemporary parenting culture.*

You will be asked to complete an ESRC Impact Report 12 months after the end date of your award. The Impact Report will ask for details of any impacts that have arisen since the completion of the End of Award Report.

4. DECLARATIONS

Please ensure that sections A, B and C below are completed and signed by the appropriate individuals. The End of Award Report will not be accepted unless all sections are signed.

Please note hard copies are NOT required; electronic signatures are accepted and should be used.

A: To be completed by Grant Holder

Please read the following statements. Tick ONE statement under ii) and iii), then sign with an electronic signature at the end of the section.

i) The Project

This Report is an accurate overview of the project, its findings and impacts. All co-investigators named in the proposal to ESRC or appointed subsequently have seen and approved the Report.

ii) Submissions to *ESRC Society Today*

Output and impact information has been submitted to *ESRC Society Today*. Details of any future outputs and impacts will be submitted as soon as they become available.

OR

This grant has not yet produced any outputs or impacts. Details of any future outputs and impacts will be submitted to *ESRC Society Today* as soon as they become available.

OR

This grant is not listed on *ESRC Society Today*.

iii) Submission of Datasets

Datasets arising from this grant have been offered for deposit with the Economic and Social Data Service.

OR

Datasets that were anticipated in the grant proposal have not been produced and the Economic and Social Data Service has been notified.

OR

No datasets were proposed or produced from this grant.



SIGNATURE:

NAME: Dr Ellie Lee

DATE: 3 September 2010

B: To be completed by Head of Department, School or Faculty

Please read the statement below then sign with an electronic signature to confirm your agreement.

This Report is an accurate overview of the project, its findings and impacts.

SIGNATURE:

NAME: Chris Hale

POSITION: Head of School of Social Policy, Sociology and Social Research

DATE: 02 September 2010

C: To be completed by Finance Officer of Grant-Holding Research Organisation

Please read the statement below then sign with an electronic signature to confirm your agreement.

ESRC funds have been used in accordance with the ESRC Research Funding Guide. All investigators named in the proposal to ESRC or appointed subsequently have seen and approved the Report.

SIGNATURE:

NAME:

POSITION:

DATE: