**Linda Blum, Visiting Research Fellow, Centre for Parenting Culture Studies (CPCS), SSPSSR, University of Kent**

During October 2015, Linda Blum, Associate Professor of Sociology at Northeastern University, Boston, USA, <http://www.northeastern.edu/cssh/faculty/linda-blum> will be in visiting UK, and CPCS will be welcoming her as our first Visitor of the academic year 2015-16.

Linda has been an associate of CPCS since the Centre’s inception, first coming to meet with us back in 2005. She joined us then to share her research about infant feeding, at a special workshop set up to discuss our Research Report about mothers’ experiences of infant feeding <http://www.kent.ac.uk/sspssr/staff/academic/l-m/documents-l-m/infant-formula-full.pdf>. Linda’s contribution then was based on the work she did for her 1999 book, *At the Breast: Ideologies of Breastfeeding and Motherhood in the Contemporary United States*.

More recently Linda’s research has focussed on motherhood and childhood disability, and her new book setting out her findings forms the focus for her upcoming visit. Titled, *Raising Generation Rx: Mothering Kids with Invisible Disabilities in an Age of Inequality*, the themes of this work are as follows:

Recent years have seen an explosion in the number of children diagnosed with “invisible disabilities” such as ADHD, mood and conduct disorders, and high-functioning autism spectrum disorders. Whether they are viewed as biological problems in brain wiring or as results of the increasing medicalization of childhood, the burden of dealing with the day-to-day trials and complex medical and educational decisions falls almost entirely on mothers. Yet few ask how these mothers make sense of their children’s troubles, and to what extent they feel responsibility or blame. *Raising Generation Rx* offers a groundbreaking study that situates mothers’ experiences within an age of neuroscientific breakthrough, a high-stakes knowledge-based economy, cutbacks in public services and decent jobs, and increased global competition and racialized class and gender inequality.

Through in-depth interviews, observations of parents’ meetings, and analyses of popular advice, Linda Blum examines the experiences of diverse mothers coping with the challenges of their children’s “invisible disabilities” in the face of daunting social, economic, and political realities. She reveals how mothers in widely varied households learn to advocate for their children in the dense bureaucracies of the educational and medical systems; wrestle with anguishing decisions about the use of psychoactive medications; and live with the inescapable blame and stigma in their communities.

Over October 2015, Linda will be a panellist for one discussion CPCS is convening that engages her prior research focus. This is ‘The battle over breasts: Good breasts, bad breasts, why the fuss about breasts in public?’ which takes place as part of the annual festival of debates, ‘The Battle of Ideas’ at The Barbican London, on 17th and 18th October <http://www.battleofideas.org.uk/2015/overview>. She will otherwise be speaking about her new work, at a set of seminars and workshops in Kent and elsewhere. Details below, and all are welcome at these events.

Tuesday 6October, Canterbury Christ Church University, Kent, 5pm.

Contact Jennie Bristow [jennie.bristow@canterbury.ac.uk](https://owa.connect.kent.ac.uk/OWA/redir.aspx?SURL=RRGF9k6YNDwZIkl_MsG-IbEAw6rgnHuvmVHTP_gCTqbkJjXd3q7SCG0AYQBpAGwAdABvADoAagBlAG4AbgBpAGUALgBiAHIAaQBzAHQAbwB3AEAAYwBhAG4AdABlAHIAYgB1AHIAeQAuAGEAYwAuAHUAawA.&URL=mailto%3ajennie.bristow%40canterbury.ac.uk" \t "_blank)

Thursday 8 October, SSPSSR Seminar Series, University of Kent, Canterbury, 4pm.

Contact Ellie Lee E.J.Lee@kent.ac.uk

Tuesday 13 October, Roehampton, London. Reading Group on motherhood and disability, 4pm.

Contact Charlotte Faircloth Charlotte.Faircloth@Roehampton.ac.uk

Wednesday 14October, Aston University, 4.30pm.

Contact Pam Lowe P.K.Lowe@Aston.ac.uk

Wednesday 21 October KCL SSHM Seminar Series, London.

Contact Hanna Kienzler, hanna.kienzler@kcl.ac.uk

You can read more and listen to Linda discuss the issues here:

Featured Program, *Disability Awareness*, KBOO Radio (Community Radio Portland, OR), “Invisible Disabilities in an Age of Inequality.” June 22, 2015. [http://kboo.fm/invisibledisabilitiesinanageofinequality](http://kboo.fm/invisibledisabilitiesinanageofinequality%22%20%5Ct%20%22_blank)

Interview segment, *TalkPoverty Radio*, Episode 2, All Eyes on Baltimore. Center for American Progress, May 15, 2015.

[http://talkpoverty.org/podcast/eyes-baltimore/](https://owa.connect.kent.ac.uk/OWA/redir.aspx?SURL=5zsYtB7eHmcZ90Zyk3ePImQ62g7yczMlakyQbezguQ2gx4uB2HrSCGgAdAB0AHAAOgAvAC8AdABhAGwAawBwAG8AdgBlAHIAdAB5AC4AbwByAGcALwBwAG8AZABjAGEAcwB0AC8AZQB5AGUAcwAtAGIAYQBsAHQAaQBtAG8AcgBlAC8A&URL=http%3a%2f%2ftalkpoverty.org%2fpodcast%2feyes-baltimore%2f" \t "_blank)

Blog post, *TalkPoverty.org*, “Following Mothers’ Day, Stop Blaming Mothers.” May 15, 2015.

[http://talkpoverty.org/2015/05/14/blaming-mothers/](https://owa.connect.kent.ac.uk/OWA/redir.aspx?SURL=-JJELIBg3dRwk9B8504qGoBqbvXJ8Go8o3apHfDJ3PSgx4uB2HrSCGgAdAB0AHAAOgAvAC8AdABhAGwAawBwAG8AdgBlAHIAdAB5AC4AbwByAGcALwAyADAAMQA1AC8AMAA1AC8AMQA0AC8AYgBsAGEAbQBpAG4AZwAtAG0AbwB0AGgAZQByAHMALwA.&URL=http%3a%2f%2ftalkpoverty.org%2f2015%2f05%2f14%2fblaming-mothers%2f" \t "_blank)

Featured Program, *Think*, KERA Radio (NPR Dallas), “Raising Children with Invisible Disabilities.” March 25, 2015.

[http://www.kera.org/2015/03/25/raising-children-with-invisible-disabilities/](https://owa.connect.kent.ac.uk/OWA/redir.aspx?SURL=Zb-oj2PTyBmI9K1PKFBDXaiHSSEDtbLQk4n8-rSxTTSgx4uB2HrSCGgAdAB0AHAAOgAvAC8AdwB3AHcALgBrAGUAcgBhAC4AbwByAGcALwAyADAAMQA1AC8AMAAzAC8AMgA1AC8AcgBhAGkAcwBpAG4AZwAtAGMAaABpAGwAZAByAGUAbgAtAHcAaQB0AGgALQBpAG4AdgBpAHMAaQBiAGwAZQAtAGQAaQBzAGEAYgBpAGwAaQB0AGkAZQBzAC8A&URL=http%3a%2f%2fwww.kera.org%2f2015%2f03%2f25%2fraising-children-with-invisible-disabilities%2f" \t "_blank)