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## Introduction

This book is about how Childhood Studies has conceptualized the figure of the child, the social field of childhood, and the relationship between age as a category of subjectivity and other categories of subjectivity, including race, class and gender. The book is interested in understanding how subjects are formed, how children come to understand themselves as particular kinds of people through the ways that the structures of class, racism and sexism are pressed upon them by different social, political and cultural forces.

## Childhood Studies

Childhood Studies is a multidisciplinary and interdisciplinary field with a central focus on childhood as a social category or structure and children as social agents or actors. The 'old' social studies of childhood developed out of the child-study movement and the psy-sciences that made the child an object (rather than a subject) of investigation. Their core concern was the education and appropriate development of the child that were central to the disciplines of pedagogy and psychology. Children mainly figured, if at all, as an (often silent) part of the sociology of the family. Sociology entered with psychology and pedagogy in its interest in normal childhood.

What is widely called the 'new social studies of childhood' rejected the notion of children as emergent or developing subjects and focused