

1-1-2008

Review of *Doing Science and Doing Good: A History of the Bureau of Child Research and the Schiefelbusch Institute for Life Span Studies at the University of Kansas*. Edited by Richard L. Schiefelbusch and Stephen R. Schroeder.

Warren J. White
Kansas State University

Follow this and additional works at: <http://digitalcommons.unl.edu/greatplainsresearch>



Part of the [Other International and Area Studies Commons](#)

White, Warren J., "Review of *Doing Science and Doing Good: A History of the Bureau of Child Research and the Schiefelbusch Institute for Life Span Studies at the University of Kansas*. Edited by Richard L. Schiefelbusch and Stephen R. Schroeder." (2008). *Great Plains Research: A Journal of Natural and Social Sciences*. Paper 951.
<http://digitalcommons.unl.edu/greatplainsresearch/951>

This Article is brought to you for free and open access by the Great Plains Studies, Center for at DigitalCommons@University of Nebraska - Lincoln. It has been accepted for inclusion in Great Plains Research: A Journal of Natural and Social Sciences by an authorized administrator of DigitalCommons@University of Nebraska - Lincoln.

Doing Science and Doing Good: A History of the Bureau of Child Research and the Schiefelbusch Institute for Life Span Studies at the University of Kansas. Edited by Richard L. Schiefelbusch and Stephen R. Schroeder. Baltimore, MD: Paul Brookes Publishing Company, 2006. xiii + 568 pages. Photographs, references, index. \$49.95 cloth.

Stating “I grow weary knowing about the yearly increase in appropriations for research on the care and feeding of livestock knowing that we appropriate nothing for research on the care and nurture of children,” Dr. Florence Brown Sherbon in 1921 convinced the Kansas Legislature to pass a statute forming the Bureau of Child Research (BCR). From that beginning grew one of the most remarkable research centers in the United States focusing on children with mental retardation. *Doing Science and Doing Good* tells the story of how a small group of visionary researchers and administrators at the University of Kansas and Parsons State Hospital and Training Center were funded in 1957 to teach language and communication skills to children with mental retardation (considered impossible by nearly everyone at that time), and then went on to create an internationally known center that has improved the lives of thousands of children and families in Kansas and across the nation.

The book contains 28 chapters and is divided into two parts. The first part (10 chapters) details BCR projects and activities from 1956 to 1990, including how and why the research center came into existence and the early programs and relationships that developed under the leadership of Richard L. Schiefelbusch. Several chapters recount the horrendous conditions children with mental retardation encountered in state institutions in the 1950s

and 1960s. This early history also recounts the BCR recruitment of the young behavioral researchers who would go on to become some of the most well-known behaviorists in the country (e.g., Donald M. Baer, Montrose Wolf, R. Vance Hall, and Todd Risley), called the “Kansas Mafia” by *Behavior Today*. Two particularly noteworthy projects are discussed by several chapter authors: the Mimosa Cottage Project which successfully taught socially effective skills to adolescent females with severe mental retardation; and the Juniper Gardens Children’s Project, a community based research and service program. The second part covers 1990 (when the BCR was subsumed into a larger and more encompassing entity—the Schiefelbusch Institute for Life Span Studies) to the present. Chapters written by key participants focus on specific projects or centers at the Life Span Institute. The breadth of these projects and centers is striking.

The acknowledgments page notes that most of this book’s readers will probably be former faculty, staff, and students. If true, that can only be regrettable. This is a history of an extraordinary group of professionals who made a difference in the lives of scores of children and their families. **Warren J. White**, *Department of Special Education, Counseling, and Student Affairs, Kansas State University*.