



Richard McGrail

Ph.D. Student in Anthropology, admitted Autumn 2010

Bio

BIO

Richard is conducting ethnographic research on the daily lives of children in California's foster care system who live in therapeutic group homes. He questions how relationships of trust and attachment are formed, both between children and their adult caregivers, as well among the children themselves. His project comes during a time of a massive legal reform of California's foster care system--reform which, among other things, attempts to improve the quality of care that children receive while they are placed in group homes. Through his research, Richard hopes to contribute to a qualitative, "micro-logical" analysis of the social-psychological barriers to realizing the values of political liberalism. He also hopes to contribute to the growing interest in anthropology of studying the cultural worlds of children who are experiencing mental and behavioral distress.

Before starting this research, Richard worked as a volunteer CASA (court appointed special advocate) for a child in foster care for four years. He later worked for CASA as a volunteer supervisor.

EDUCATION AND CERTIFICATIONS

- B.A., The University of Texas at Austin , Anthropology (2005)
- M.A., Columbia University , Anthropology (2010)
- Certificate, University of Alaska Southeast , Outdoor Skills and Leadership (2020)
- Wilderness First Responder, National Outdoor Leadership School , Outdoor Education and Leadership (2017)

SERVICE, VOLUNTEER, AND COMMUNITY WORK

- Court Appointed Special Advocate (8/30/2012 - 5/1/2016)

PERSONAL INTERESTS

Music performance and composition; alpine and outdoor sports; Brazilian Jiu Jitsu and mixed martial arts; nature and social documentary photography.

Research & Scholarship

CURRENT RESEARCH AND SCHOLARLY INTERESTS

Ethnographic research describes the daily lives of children in California's foster care system who live in therapeutic residential group homes. Research questions how relationships of trust and attachment are formed between children and their adult caregivers, as well as among the children themselves.