

# HUMAN DEVELOPMENT AND FAMILY STUDIES MAJOR (B.S.)

<https://chhs.unh.edu/human-development-family-studies/program/bs/human-development-family-studies-major>

## Description

Human Development and Family Studies (HDFS) is an academic discipline focused on understanding the development of individuals and families over time and across the ecological contexts in which they live. HDFS is an applied field of study and a versatile undergraduate major for students interested in working to enhance the lives of individuals and families through in-demand careers in settings that include early childhood education, schools, hospitals, and social service agencies. The HDFS curriculum offers students the opportunity to take courses from child and adolescent development to adult development and aging; family, parenting, and interpersonal relationships; classroom curriculum, observation, and assessment; and family programming, policy, and law. Courses in the HDFS major emphasize diverse experiences across age, gender, race and ethnicity, nationality, and socioeconomic status and prepare students for inclusive programming and practice.

HDFS majors choose between three concentrations: Child Development, Family Support, and Lifespan Development. There is some overlap in coursework and career opportunities across the three concentrations, but each offers unique areas of emphasis.

As a major public research university, UNH emphasizes hands-on experience and research opportunities for undergraduate students. Students in the Human Development and Family Studies program are provided with opportunities to put theory and research into practice through practicum and internship courses in the Child Study and Development Center, and many schools and community-based organizations across the Seacoast region of New Hampshire. Students in the Child Development concentration who complete the Early Childhood Education Teacher Preparation Program will be prepared for certification to teach children from Preschool through 3rd Grade.

### HDFS Undergraduate Concentrations:

- **Child Development** focuses on infancy through childhood with an emphasis on learning, education, and developmentally-appropriate practices and activities.
- **Family Support** focuses on development within the context of families, close relationships, and communities.
- **Lifespan Development** focuses on understanding and supporting development across the entire lifespan.

### Internship Opportunities

Internships are not required for students to complete their degree in HDFS; however there are exciting opportunities to gain hands on experience. Students who want to take part in an internship apply during their junior year for an internship experience that spans their full senior year. An Early Childhood Education (ECE) Teacher Preparation internship is available for qualified students within the Child Development concentration. The Family Support and Lifespan concentrations offer an

internship that introduces high-performing students to careers in human services, advocacy, and policy through placements in the Seacoast Region of New Hampshire.

## CHILD DEVELOPMENT CONCENTRATION

The Child Development concentration is intended for students who have a broad interest in working with children ranging in age from birth to age eight. The concentration has four major foci: child development, teaching methodology and curriculum development, developmentally appropriate learning environments for young children, and home-school-community relations. This concentration prepares undergraduates for careers in early childhood education and related fields requiring in depth knowledge of early development and early childhood programs. Students in the Child Development concentration may apply to the Early Childhood Education (ECE) Teacher Preparation Program during their junior year.

### Child Development: Early Childhood Education (ECE) Teacher Preparation Program

The Early Childhood Education (ECE) Teacher Preparation program prepares students for a career in teaching young children. Course work for this program is designed to maximize in-classroom mentorship and to provide a broad range of exposure across the pre-kindergarten to 3rd-grade levels. This program within the Child Development concentration of the Human Development and Family Studies Department is approved by the New Hampshire State Board of Education. Juniors in the Child Development concentration who have maintained a minimum overall GPA of 3.2 and a departmental GPA of 3.2 are eligible to apply. Please note that this is a competitive program with limited enrollment. Those accepted into the program must maintain this level of academic achievement throughout the program. Students must be prepared to have their own transportation for off-campus internship placements as needed.

### State Teacher Certification

Although students may graduate from UNH with a bachelor's degree in Human Development and Family Studies, having completed the ECE coursework along with all student teaching requirements, they will not be eligible to apply for the New Hampshire State Teaching Certification without the required set of passing test scores. This is a state of New Hampshire requirement; not a condition for graduation from UNH. In order to fulfill a teaching contract with a public-school district, a prospective teacher must be certified by the state in which he/she is to be employed.

### Early Childhood Education (ECE) Internship Course Descriptions

The ECE Internship course (HDFS 785 Seminar for Student Teachers) is a fall semester seminar-based course intended to prepare students, as teacher candidates, for the student teaching experience that takes place in the spring semester. This course emphasizes students' continued development as learners, researchers, and collaborators. Discussions and projects focus on the ways in which these three roles are developed within the classroom and school community. Students meet as a cohort in weekly/bi-weekly seminars on campus. Students should expect to spend a minimum of five hours per week in their assigned classroom (60+ hours). Other expectations for this course include but are not limited to: preparing a resume, observing at other sites, attending professional conferences, starting a professional portfolio to document their achievement of professional teaching standards, and completing additional assignments and readings.

HDFS 786 Seminar for Student Teachers and HDFS 788 Student Teaching Young Children: provide the student teaching experience in the spring semester of the senior year. Students should expect to spend a minimum of twenty-five hours per week (a minimum of 325+ hours total) in their assigned classrooms, gradually assuming increasing teaching responsibilities, culminating in the assumption of two to three lead-teaching weeks. Additional hours outside of actual classroom/program operation hours are expected for meeting and planning with cooperating teachers, preparing for teaching, and attending parent conferences and other school functions, as well as attending professional conferences. Seminars provide continued opportunity for reflection on students' development as teacher candidates, reflecting on classroom practices, identifying teaching strengths and weaknesses, and planning their first professional appointment as teachers of young learners. Students should be prepared to meet weekly after school hours and to complete and present their professional portfolio to faculty and related professionals in the field.

## FAMILY SUPPORT CONCENTRATION

The Family Support concentration focuses on individuals, couples, and families within their social and cultural contexts. Students in this concentration develop knowledge and skills that prepare them to work with individuals and families as they support healthy development and well-being in schools, social service agencies, and non-profit organizations.

### Family Internship

Students in their senior year have the option to complete the Family Internship, in which students apply knowledge gained from their academic studies in a supervised environment. The internship involves a commitment of sixteen hours per week for two semesters, in addition to a three-hour seminar that meets every other week. Students apply for the internship by March 1st of their junior year. Internship applicants must have completed a minimum of twenty credits of departmental coursework prior to their senior year with a minimum departmental GPA of 3.0. Internships are recommended, but not required for completion of the HDFS major.

## LIFESPAN DEVELOPMENT CONCENTRATION

The Lifespan Development concentration focuses on learning about developmental tasks and developmentally-appropriate practices across the entire lifespan. Students in this concentration take courses in each of the developmental periods: childhood, adolescence, and adulthood. Students also gain expertise related to the social contexts impacting development, such as families and communities. Emphasis is placed on the impact of system dynamics, family systems, gender, and cultural differences on development. Students in the Lifespan Development concentration may also apply to take part in the [Family Internship program](#) during their senior year.

## Requirements

### Degree Requirements

**Minimum Credit Requirement:** 128 credits

**Minimum Residency Requirement:** 32 credits must be taken at UNH

**Minimum GPA:** 2.0 required for conferral\*

**Core Curriculum Required:** Discovery & Writing Program Requirements

**Foreign Language Requirement:** No

All Major, Option and Elective Requirements as indicated.  
\*Major GPA requirements as indicated.

## Major Requirements

The core curriculum required of each Human Development and Family Studies student is designed to give a broad introduction to individual and family development and interpersonal relationships across the lifespan. Building off this curriculum, each student will select an area of concentration in Child Development, Family Support, or Lifespan Development that will guide further required coursework. With assistance from faculty advisors, students also choose supporting courses that allow them an individualized component to the major, tailored to their specific interests and career objectives. Lastly, the senior year culminates in the required capstone experience and optional internship opportunity.

Candidates for the Human Development and Family Studies degree must satisfy all of the [University Discovery requirements](#) in addition to satisfying the requirements of their HDFS concentration.

## Core Curriculum

Code	Title	Credits
HDFS 525	Human Development	4
HDFS 545	Intimate Relationships and Families	4
HDFS 555	Research Methods in HDFS	4
Selected Concentration (Requirements listed below)		24
Capstone experience (Requirement listed by concentration below)		4
Supporting Courses (applies to all concentrations) <sup>1</sup>		20

<sup>1</sup> Supporting courses are intended to provide an individualized component to the HDFS curriculum. Because HDFS is interdisciplinary, this allows students to explore related areas that contribute to their academic and professional goals. Students must complete at least 8 additional HDFS credits of (this can include internships) as supporting coursework. The remaining 12 credits of supporting coursework can include additional courses within HDFS or outside of HDFS as long as those taken outside of HDFS:

1. At the 500-level or above
2. Approved by an HDFS advisor

Classes outside of HDFS meeting supporting course criteria are often found in the psychology, sociology, social work, women's studies, education, and communication sciences and disorders departments.

## Concentrations and Requirements (p. 2)

[Child Development Concentration](#) (p. 2)

[Child Development Concentration: ECE Teacher Preparation Program](#) (p. 3)

[Family Support/Provisional CFLE Concentration](#) (p. 3)

[Lifespan Development Concentration](#) (p. 3)

*Note: Students apply to the ECE Teacher Preparation Program during their Junior year.*

## CHILD DEVELOPMENT CONCENTRATION Requirements

Code	Title	Credits
<b>HDFS Core Course Requirements</b>		
HDFS 525	Human Development	4
HDFS 545	Intimate Relationships and Families	4

HDFS 555	Research Methods in HDFS	4
<b>Child Development Requirements</b>		
HDFS 623	Developmental Perspectives on Infancy and Early Childhood	4
HDFS 635	Teaching and Learning in Early Childhood Settings	4
HDFS 684	Curriculum for Young Children	4
HDFS 709	Child Development Internship	4
HDFS 771	Observation and Assessment of Young Children	4
HDFS 743	Families, Schools, and Community	4
Select one additional HDFS course 500 or above		
Supporting Course Requirements (applies to all concentrations)		20
Supporting courses are intended to provide an individualized component to the HDFS curriculum. Because HDFS is interdisciplinary, this allows students to explore related areas that contribute to their academic and professional goals. Students must complete at least 8 additional HDFS credits of (this can include internships) as supporting coursework. The remaining 12 credits of supporting coursework can include additional courses within HDFS or outside of HDFS as long as those taken outside of HDFS:		

1. At the 500-level or above
2. Approved by an HDFS advisor

Classes outside of HDFS meeting supporting course criteria are often found in the psychology, sociology, social work, women's studies, education, and communication sciences and disorders departments.

## CHILD DEVELOPMENT Concentration: EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION (ECE) TEACHER PREPARATION PROGRAM requirements

Code	Title	Credits
<b>HDFS Core Course Requirements</b>		
HDFS 525	Human Development	4
HDFS 545	Intimate Relationships and Families	4
HDFS 555	Research Methods in HDFS	4
<b>Child Development: ECE Requirements</b>		
HDFS 623	Developmental Perspectives on Infancy and Early Childhood	4
HDFS 635	Teaching and Learning in Early Childhood Settings	4
HDFS 684	Curriculum for Young Children	4
HDFS 709	Child Development Internship	4
HDFS 771	Observation and Assessment of Young Children	4
HDFS 743	Families, Schools, and Community (Capstone)	4
<b>ECE Required Courses <sup>2</sup></b>		
HDFS 785	Seminar for Student Teachers	2
HDFS 786	Seminar for Student Teachers	2
HDFS 788	Student Teaching Young Children	8
EDUC 500	Exploring Teaching	4
MATH 601	Exploring Mathematics for Teachers I	4
MATH 703	Teaching of Mathematics in Grades K-5	4
EDUC 706	Teaching & Learning Literacy in the Elementary Classroom	4
EDUC 751A	Inclusive Elementary Education: Literacies and Learning for Diverse Learners	4
or EDUC 760	Introduction to Young Children with Special Needs	
EDUC 703F	Teaching Elementary School Science	4
EDUC 703M	Teaching Elementary Social Studies	4

<sup>2</sup> ECE Required courses may be counted as supporting courses if the supporting course criteria is met.

## FAMILY SUPPORT /PROVISIONAL CFLE CONCENTRATION requirements

Code	Title	Credits
<b>HDFS Core Course Requirements</b>		
HDFS 525	Human Development	4
HDFS 545	Intimate Relationships and Families	4
HDFS 555	Research Methods in HDFS	4
<b>Family Support/Provisional CFLE Concentration Requirements</b>		
HDFS 641	Parenting Across the Life Span <sup>3</sup>	4
HDFS 746	Human Sexuality <sup>3</sup>	4
HDFS 760	Family Programs and Policies <sup>3</sup>	4
HDFS 794	Families and the Law <sup>3</sup>	4
or HDFS 776	Children, Adolescents and the Law	
HDFS 623	Developmental Perspectives on Infancy and Early Childhood	4

or HDFS 624	Developmental Perspectives on Adolescence and Early Adulthood	
or HDFS 625	Adult Development and Aging	
HDFS 586	Families at Risk	4
or HDFS 553	Personal and Family Finance for Family Life Professionals	
or HDFS 797	Advanced Special Topics	
HDFS 757	Race, Class, Gender, and Families (Capstone) <sup>3</sup>	4
<b>Supporting Courses (Applies to all concentrations)</b>		
Supporting courses are intended to provide an individualized component to the HDFS curriculum. Because HDFS is interdisciplinary, this allows students to explore related areas that contribute to their academic and professional goals. Students must complete at least 8 additional HDFS credits of (this can include internships) as supporting coursework. The remaining 12 credits of supporting coursework can include additional courses within HDFS or outside of HDFS as long as those taken outside of HDFS:		

1. At the 500-level or above
2. Approved by an HDFS advisor

Classes outside of HDFS meeting supporting course criteria are often found in the psychology, sociology, social work, women's studies, education, and communication sciences and disorders departments.

<sup>3</sup> Required courses for provisional CFLE certification through NCFR. Plus HDFS 525 and HDFS 545.

Students who wish to become CFLEs are required to complete the Family Internship, including HDFS 782 Family Internship and HDFS 792 Family Internship Seminar.

The Certified Family Life Education designation acknowledges the preventive focus of family life education and assures the designate has met or exceeded the high standards and criteria needed to provide quality family life education.

## LIFESPAN DEVELOPMENT Curriculum

Code	Title	Credits
<b>HDFS Core Course Requirements</b>		
HDFS 545	Intimate Relationships and Families	4
HDFS 525	Human Development	4
HDFS 555	Research Methods in HDFS	4
<b>Lifespan Development Requirements</b>		
HDFS 623	Developmental Perspectives on Infancy and Early Childhood	4
HDFS 624	Developmental Perspectives on Adolescence and Early Adulthood	4
HDFS 625	Adult Development and Aging	4
HDFS 641	Parenting Across the Life Span	4
HDFS 746	Human Sexuality	4
HDFS 794	Families and the Law	4
or HDFS 776	Children, Adolescents and the Law	
HDFS 757	Race, Class, Gender, and Families (Capstone)	4
or HDFS 743	Families, Schools, and Community	
Supporting Courses		20

Supporting courses are intended to provide an individualized component to the HDFS curriculum. Because HDFS is interdisciplinary, this allows students to explore related areas that contribute to their academic and professional goals. Students must complete at least 8 additional HDFS credits of (this can include internships) as supporting coursework. The remaining 12 credits of supporting coursework can include additional courses within HDFS or outside of HDFS as long as those taken outside of HDFS:

1. At the 500-level or above
2. Approved by an HDFS advisor

Classes outside of HDFS meeting supporting course criteria are often found in the psychology, sociology, social work, women's studies, education, and communication sciences and disorders departments.

## Student Learning Outcomes

- Use theoretical frameworks and empirical research to understand and explain child/lifespan development, family process and the interaction of individuals and families with society.
- Recognize and respect a diversity of family forms and processes. Understand how human development and family interactions are shaped by diverse personal contexts and cultures. Understand and be aware of one's own biases, beliefs, and values.

- Understand ethical decision-making processes, and ethical standards and principles relevant to our discipline. Positively represent the profession in academic, professional and community settings.

## Disclosures

### Professional Licensure/Certification Disclosures

The University of New Hampshire offers a number of academic programs designed to lead to professional licensure or certification in New Hampshire. However, completing a UNH degree/program does not guarantee professional licensure or certification. Eligibility may also depend on factors like years of work experience, professional examinations, passing a background check, and other criteria.

UNH does not guarantee that its professional licensure programs will satisfy the criteria of professional licensure boards in other states. Some states maintain different requirements for professional licensure or certification and requirements can change frequently. Federal regulations require the University to make public disclosure of certain information regarding professional licensure or certification programs, regardless of the modality the program is offered (i.e., in-person or online). The University provides guidance below but recommends students contact their state/territory licensing or certification board to ensure a program meets specific state/territory requirements.

Visit the Office of the Registrar's [website](#) for information about whether this program meets professional licensure requirements in your state.