

# HUMAN DEVELOPMENT AND FAMILY STUDIES (HDFS)

As a human development and family studies major at UNH, you'll learn to promote the health and well-being of children, individuals, and families. The program curriculum embraces diversity and emphasizes excellence and innovation in best practice, preparing you for a variety of in-demand careers and graduate programs in education, social services, healthcare, and more. Within the major, students specialize in one of three options: child development, early childhood education teacher licensure, or family and lifespan development.

As a major public research university, UNH emphasizes hands-on experience and research opportunities. Students in the human development and family studies major have multiple opportunities to put theory into practice through practicum and internship opportunities at the [Child Study and Development Center](#), and in schools and community-based settings that serve individuals and families.

## Human Development and Family Studies degree options:

- **Child Development:** provides specialized knowledge on the development of infants and children, preparing professionals to work in a variety of careers centered on enhancing child well-being.
- **Early Childhood Education (ECE) Teacher Licensure:** focuses on young children's early learning and teaching strategies to support such learning. This option is approved by the NH State Department of Education with successful completion leading to eligibility for licensure as an early childhood educator (birth - 3rd grade) in the State of NH.
- **Family and Lifespan Development:** emphasizes the quality, and impact of, relationships across the lifespan and individual growth and well-being, preparing professionals to work in a variety of careers that focus on supporting couples, families, or individuals at any age.

Students in the ECE Teacher Licensure option are required to complete a full-year ECE student teaching internship senior year. Students in the Child Development and Family and Lifespan Development options may choose to apply to the optional, full-year, senior year HDFS Community Internship program. Community internship sites include a variety of non-profit and social service agencies around the Seacoast region of New Hampshire with great care taken to match students to sites that best support their career objectives.

## Minors:

The Human Development and Family Studies department offers three complementary undergraduate minors. An undergraduate minor allows students to demonstrate a special area of interest, focus, or expertise and supports their academic major and future educational and career goals. Each HDFS minor highlights key aspects of individual and family development.

- **Child Life**
- **Adolescent and Youth Development**
- **Human Development and Family Studies**

The Human Development and Family Studies minor is only available to non-HDFS majors; however, HDFS majors may choose to minor in Adolescent and Youth Development or Child Life (or a minor outside of the HDFS Department). The Child Life minor may also be taken by HDFS

students interested in working with families and children in a hospital setting.

<https://chhs.unh.edu/hdfs/>

## Programs

- [Adolescent and Youth Development \(Minor\)](#)
- [Child Life Minor](#)
- [Human Development and Family Studies Major: Child Development Option \(B.S.\)](#)
- [Human Development and Family Studies Major: Early Childhood Education Option \(Teacher Licensure\) \(B.S.\)](#)
- [Human Development and Family Studies Major: Family and Lifespan Development Option \(B.S.\)](#)
- [Human Development and Family Studies Minor](#)

## Courses

### Human Development and Family Studies (HDFS)

#### HDFS 444A - Youth Facing Adversity

**Credits:** 4

This course focuses on childhood risks such as poverty, family stress and dysfunction, social and emotional problems, and bullying, as well as how children cope with risk and demonstrate resilience. Students will learn about and visit a number of community programs in New Hampshire that support children and their families in times of stress. Site-visits will include introduction to a range of providers such as child advocates, counselors, social workers, juvenile detention workers, and teachers.

**Attributes:** Social Science (Discovery); Inquiry (Discovery); Writing Intensive Course

**Equivalent(s):** FS 444A

**Grade Mode:** Letter Grading

#### HDFS 525 - Human Development

**Credits:** 0 or 4

This course provides an overview of human development from conception through death with an emphasis on the contexts in which development occurs, and a focus on thinking about ways to enhance the lives of individuals and families across the lifespan. The knowledge gained in this course will allow students to understand the needs of individuals across all life stages, and critically reflect on their own development.

**Attributes:** Social Science (Discovery)

**Equivalent(s):** FS 525, FS 525H, HDFS 525H

**Grade Mode:** Letter Grading

**HDFS 545 - Intimate Relationships and Families**

**Credits:** 4

This course provides students with an overview of contemporary research and theory on intimate and family relationships. An historical overview of marriage, intimate partnering, and the family will be covered while also exploring diverse experiences. Emphasis will be placed on the cultural, societal, and political norms and tensions surrounding intimate and family relationships and related public policy. Students will also have an opportunity to reflect on their own attitudes, thoughts, and values.

**Attributes:** Social Science (Discovery)

**Equivalent(s):** FS 545, FS 645

**Grade Mode:** Letter Grading

**HDFS 553 - Personal and Family Finance for Family Life Professionals**

**Credits:** 4

This course focuses on applied financial management emphasizing teaching financial issues to a variety of audiences. Topics include savings, credit, insurance and retirement, and programs and resources available to facilitate financial education.

**Equivalent(s):** FS 553

**Grade Mode:** Letter Grading

**HDFS 555 - Research Methods in HDFS**

**Credits:** 4

This course is an introduction to research methods as used in Human Development and Family Studies to provide students with a foundational understanding of how to design, implement, complete, and evaluate research studies. The research process will be emphasized, including review and application of current research literature, generating research questions, formulation of hypotheses, conceptual and operational definitions, measurement, sample selection, quantitative and qualitative analyses, designing and interpreting research designs, and understanding ethical responsibilities in research.

**Grade Mode:** Letter Grading

**HDFS 565 - Introduction to Child Life**

**Credits:** 4

This course provides an introduction to the theory and practice of the child life profession and family centered care. Child life professionals work with children and adolescents facing acute, chronic, or life-threatening illness and traumatic injuries, and their families. Topics include children's emotional reactions to hospitalization, use of play, preparation for medical procedures, family support, and designing healing environments.

**Equivalent(s):** SW 565

**Grade Mode:** Letter Grading

**HDFS 586 - Families at Risk**

**Credits:** 4

This course is designed to look at the challenging biological, cultural and situational factors that affect the contemporary family. Concerns such as immigration, terrorism, disease, and media influences will be discussed, along with global problems of climate change, war, violence, alcohol and drug abuse, and economic change. This class is about how families cope with the stress associated with these challenges, but also how they adapt, how to promote resilience, and how families can thrive in the face of adversity. Students will explore remedies, solutions and support networks that help families in crisis.

**Prerequisite(s):** HDFS 545 with a minimum grade of D-.

**Equivalent(s):** FS 586

**Grade Mode:** Letter Grading

**HDFS 590 - Learning Through Play**

**Credits:** 4

This class will focus on theories and stages of play, developmentally appropriate play activities, and examine the role of the teacher/child life specialist in creating an environment which promotes learning through play.

**Grade Mode:** Letter Grading

**HDFS 610 - Introduction to Marriage and Family Therapy**

**Credits:** 4

Marriage and family therapy is a clinical mental health treatment model that sees the entire family system as essential in the healing process. The introduction to marriage and family therapy (MFT) course is designed to provide undergraduate students with the opportunity to develop: (1) an introductory knowledge of core family systems theory concepts; (2) a basic history of marriage and family therapy and its current practices; (3) the application of systems theory in multiple career paths; and (4) the application of introductory level therapeutic skills and practices.

**Prerequisite(s):** HDFS 545 with a minimum grade of C-.

**Grade Mode:** Letter Grading

**HDFS 623 - Infant and Child Development**

**Credits:** 4

This course provides an overview of the physical, cognitive, language, and social-emotional development of children from the prenatal period through early and middle childhood. Theories of development are discussed as well as research methodologies used in the study of child development. Special attention is given to landmark and current research findings regarding development during this period of the lifespan.

**Equivalent(s):** FS 623

**Grade Mode:** Letter Grading

**HDFS 624 - Adolescent Development**

**Credits:** 4

This course examines the normative changes adolescents experience in biological, social, emotional, and cognitive domains. Emphasis is on the contexts of adolescent development including family and peer relationships, school, work, leisure, and broader cultural influences. Students will learn about problematic and risky behaviors as well as the positive development outcomes associated with this period of the lifespan.

**Equivalent(s):** FS 624

**Grade Mode:** Letter Grading

**HDFS 625 - Adult Development**

**Credits:** 4

This course covers the general biological, psychological, and cultural theories and issues related to adult development and aging from emerging adulthood to the oldest old. The course emphasizes diversity in the process of aging and the influence of various contexts on that process. Designed for students who want to become more knowledgeable about successful aging as well as those who plan to work in adult and gerontological research or social services settings.

**Equivalent(s):** FS 625

**Grade Mode:** Letter Grading

**HDFS 630W - Youth Facing Adversity****Credits:** 4

This course focuses on childhood risks such as poverty, family stress and dysfunction, social and emotional problems, and bullying, as well as how children cope with risk and demonstrate resilience. Students will learn about and visit a number of community programs in New Hampshire that support children and their families in times of stress. Students will hear from multiple guest speakers who research and/or support youth at-risk such as child advocates, counselors, social workers, juvenile detention workers, human service professionals, and teachers.

**Attributes:** Writing Intensive Course**Equivalent(s):** HDFS 444A**Grade Mode:** Letter Grading**HDFS 635 - Teaching and Learning in Early Childhood Settings****Credits:** 4

This course covers the theoretical and developmentally-appropriate approaches to supporting young children's physical, social, emotional, and cognitive development in early childhood settings. Weekly four-hour practicum experience working with preschool children at the UNH Child Study and Development Center is required.

**Attributes:** Writing Intensive Course**Prerequisite(s):** HDFS 525 with a minimum grade of C- and HDFS 623 with a minimum grade of C-.**Equivalent(s):** FS 635**Grade Mode:** Letter Grading**Special Fee:** Yes**HDFS 641 - Parenting Across the Life Span****Credits:** 4

This course provides an overview of theory and current research on parenting in contemporary society. The course explores the challenges and changing nature of parenting across development, current parenting issues, and parenting in diverse family types. Students will also have an opportunity to reflect on their own attitudes, thoughts, and values in regards to parenting.

**Prerequisite(s):** HDFS 525 with a minimum grade of D- and HDFS 545 with a minimum grade of D-.**Equivalent(s):** FS 641**Grade Mode:** Letter Grading**HDFS 684 - Curriculum for Young Children****Credits:** 4

This course focuses on the design, implementation, and evaluation of developmentally-appropriate activities in a classroom of young children. This course takes the stance that curriculum is not simply activities or plans, but a product of societal, school, and classroom culture as influenced by particular views of development.

**Attributes:** Writing Intensive Course**Prerequisite(s):** HDFS 623 with a minimum grade of C- and HDFS 635 (may be taken concurrently) with a minimum grade of C-.**Equivalent(s):** FS 734, HDFS 734**Grade Mode:** Letter Grading**HDFS 695 - Independent Study****Credits:** 1-6

Supervised in-depth scholarly experience relevant to any of the HDFS specializations: Child Development, Family Support, and Lifespan Development. Student must work directly with a supervising faculty member to develop and complete the project.

**Equivalent(s):** FS 695**Grade Mode:** Letter Grading**HDFS 697 - Special Topics****Credits:** 1-6

Focused examination of a particular theoretical, methodological, or policy issue.

**Repeat Rule:** May be repeated for a maximum of 8 credits.**Equivalent(s):** FS 697, FS 697W, HDFS 697W**Grade Mode:** Letter Grading**HDFS 707 - Practicum****Credits:** 1-6

Supervised in-depth experience in professional setting designed to increase the student's understanding of and experience working with children, adolescents, or families. Students must work with a supervising faculty member to identify a practicum site. 01) Child, 02) Family, 03) Adolescent.

**Equivalent(s):** FS 707**Grade Mode:** Credit/Fail Grading**Special Fee:** Yes**HDFS 709 - Child Development Internship****Credits:** 4

Supervised teaching internship at the UNH Child Study and Development Center with children 6 wks-6 years old age for 9 hours each week. Internship experiences include teaching, documentation, and assessment. In addition students attend a weekly one-hour seminar for an in-depth reflection and analysis of the internship experience. Materials fees.

**Prerequisite(s):** HDFS 525 with a minimum grade of D- and HDFS 623 with a minimum grade of D- and HDFS 635 with a minimum grade of D-.**Repeat Rule:** May be repeated for a maximum of 8 credits.**Equivalent(s):** FS 709**Grade Mode:** Letter Grading**Special Fee:** Yes**HDFS 743 - Families, Schools, and Community****Credits:** 4

This course takes an ecological approach to emphasize the critical value of effective family-school-community partnerships in enhancing the education of young children. Models of family-school-community partnerships are explored. Practical knowledge regarding the experiences of those from diverse backgrounds to best prepare students to interact with, and support, all children and families is highlighted. Students actively engage within the community to build bridges between families, schools, and the greater community.

**Attributes:** Writing Intensive Course**Equivalent(s):** HS 743**Grade Mode:** Letter Grading**HDFS 746 - Human Sexuality****Credits:** 4

This course addresses the biological, psychological, and cultural aspects of human sexuality and gender across the lifespan. Opinions, attitudes, and values affecting societal responses to sexual issues are explored in relation to scientific research and theory. Students will be better prepared to deal with sexual issues in their personal and professional lives.

**Equivalent(s):** FS 746**Grade Mode:** Letter Grading

**HDFS 757 - Race, Class, Gender, and Families****Credits:** 4

This course explores the intersection of race, class, and gender in family life in the US. Theory, research, and other relevant literature is used to examine the variety of family configurations in our society today and the diverse experiences that individuals and families have as a result of existing social, political, and economic institutions.

**Attributes:** Writing Intensive Course**Equivalent(s):** FS 757**Grade Mode:** Letter Grading**HDFS 760 - Family Programs and Policies****Credits:** 4

This course explores the relationship between family policy and legislation with programs, services, and family experiences at the local, state and national level. Course content includes concepts associated with planning for, implementing, and evaluating family policies and programs; as well as exploring the complexities of family policy and the policy-making process. Course assignments will challenge students to understand and evaluate family policies and programs that are compatible with their professional interests.

**Attributes:** Writing Intensive Course**Prerequisite(s):** HDFS 545 with a minimum grade of D-**Equivalent(s):** FS 760, HDFS 760W**Grade Mode:** Letter Grading**HDFS 771 - Observation and Assessment of Young Children****Credits:** 4

Comprehensive view of various observation techniques for determining children's strengths and emerging skills. Exploration of issues regarding the use of formal assessments and testing with young children, retention and transitional placements, and the parent's role in testing.

**Prerequisite(s):** HDFS 525 with a minimum grade of D- and HDFS 623 with a minimum grade of D- and HDFS 635 with a minimum grade of D-**Equivalent(s):** FS 771**Grade Mode:** Letter Grading**HDFS 776 - Children, Adolescents and the Law****Credits:** 4

This course is designed to familiarize students with the specialized laws and legal systems that govern children and adolescents. Discussion will focus on society's efforts to balance competing interests and goals. The course provides the chance to explore laws and processes that affect children and adolescents as they interact with the court system, their caregivers, families and society at large.

**Attributes:** Writing Intensive Course**Equivalent(s):** FS 776**Grade Mode:** Letter Grading**HDFS 782 - Community Internship****Credits:** 6

Supervised experience working in human services agencies. Students spend a minimum of 16 hours per week in a selected community program. Admission by application only. A senior-level course with 6 credits being taken during the semester. 20 credit hours of HDFS course work required prior to taking this course.

**Prerequisite(s):** HDFS 525 with a minimum grade of D- and HDFS 545 with a minimum grade of D- and HDFS 760 (may be taken concurrently) with a minimum grade of D-**Repeat Rule:** May be repeated up to 2 times.**Equivalent(s):** FS 782**Grade Mode:** Credit/Fail Grading**HDFS 785 - Seminar for Student Teachers I****Credits:** 2

This seminar supplements the student teaching experience and provides a transition to the profession of teaching for those students admitted to the early childhood certification option. Students must apply during the spring semester of their junior year to be considered for the early childhood certification option.

**Prerequisite(s):** HDFS 525 with a minimum grade of D- and HDFS 545 with a minimum grade of D- and HDFS 623 with a minimum grade of D- and HDFS 635 with a minimum grade of D-**Grade Mode:** Letter Grading**HDFS 786 - Seminar for Student Teachers II****Credits:** 2

This seminar supplements the student teaching experience and provides a transition to the profession of teaching for those students admitted to the early childhood certification option. Students must apply during the spring semester of their junior year to be considered for the early childhood certification option.

**Co-requisite:** HDFS 788**Prerequisite(s):** HDFS 525 with a minimum grade of D- and HDFS 545 with a minimum grade of D- and HDFS 623 with a minimum grade of D- and HDFS 635 with a minimum grade of D-**Equivalent(s):** FS 786**Grade Mode:** Letter Grading**HDFS 788 - Student Teaching Young Children****Credits:** 8

Supervised teaching experience. Students spend a minimum of 20 hours per week in a selected program for young children working with a cooperating teacher. Students must apply during the spring semester of their junior year to be considered for the early childhood certification option.

**Co-requisite:** HDFS 786**Prerequisite(s):** HDFS 525 with a minimum grade of D- and HDFS 545 with a minimum grade of D- and HDFS 623 with a minimum grade of D- and HDFS 635 with a minimum grade of D- and HDFS 785 with a minimum grade of D-**Equivalent(s):** FS 788**Grade Mode:** Credit/Fail Grading**Special Fee:** Yes**HDFS 792 - Community Internship Seminar****Credits:** 2

This biweekly seminar focuses on issues of concern to family internship students, provides advanced training in educational strategies for working with families, and develops students' professional skills. Admission to family internship program required prior to taking this course.

**Co-requisite:** HDFS 782**Equivalent(s):** FS 792, FS 792W**Grade Mode:** Letter Grading**HDFS 793 - Community Internship Seminar****Credits:** 2

This biweekly seminar focuses on issues of concern to family internship students, provides advanced training in educational strategies for working with families, and develops students' professional skills. Admission to family internship program required prior to taking this course.

**Co-requisite:** HDFS 782**Prerequisite(s):** HDFS 792 with a minimum grade of D-**Equivalent(s):** FS 792, FS 792W**Grade Mode:** Letter Grading

**HDFS 794 - Families and the Law****Credits:** 4

This course explores statutory law, case law and the judicial processes that affect families as members interact with each other and with society. Students will become familiarized with the family court system and its role in regulating the family.

**Attributes:** Writing Intensive Course**Equivalent(s):** FS 794**Grade Mode:** Letter Grading**HDFS 797 - Advanced Special Topics****Credits:** 1-6

Focused examination of a particular theoretical, methodological, or policy issue.

**Repeat Rule:** May be repeated for a maximum of 8 credits.**Equivalent(s):** FS 797**Grade Mode:** Letter Grading**HDFS 799 - Honors Senior Thesis****Credits:** 2-4

Under direction of a faculty sponsor, students plan and carry out an independent investigative effort in an area of family, child, and/or consumer studies, resulting in a written thesis and an oral presentation before students and faculty. Two-semester sequence as continuing course.

**Attributes:** Honors course**Equivalent(s):** FS 799**Grade Mode:** Letter Grading

## Faculty

[Human Development and Family Studies Department Faculty](#)