

HUMAN DEVELOPMENT AND FAMILY STUDIES, B.S. (HEALTH AND HUMAN DEVELOPMENT)

Begin Campus: Any Penn State Campus

End Campus: University Park, World Campus

Program Description

This major is a multidisciplinary program that examines the development of individuals and families across the life span. HDFS prepares graduates for professional, managerial, or scientific roles in health and human services professions, in public and nonprofit agencies, and in business and industry, as well as for advanced professional or graduate study. Students obtain a broad background in individual and family development across the life span. Courses emphasize biological, psychological, social/cultural, and economic aspects of development as well as applied skill development. We strive for our curriculum (and the experiences and opportunities we extend to students) to foster cultural humility and highlight diverse characteristics, contexts and considerations that impact individuals, families, and communities.

Two options are available within the major:

1. Human Development and Family Science Option
2. Developmental Science for Health Professions Option

All students pursuing the HDFS B.S. are guided to complete a capstone experience customized to their interests. Capstones may include approved field experiences (internships), guided research experiences/projects, and advanced coursework selected to align with individual student interests.

Human Development and Family Science Option

Available at the following campuses: Altoona, Brandywine, DuBois, Fayette, Harrisburg, Mont Alto, Scranton, Shenango, University Park, World Campus, York

This option focuses on the acquisition and application of scientific knowledge about development and family functioning across the life span for the purposes of enhancing personal and family development. Courses emphasize:

1. understanding the biological, psychological, and social development across the life span, and the structuring and functioning of families;
2. understanding basic theoretical and methodological issues; and
3. the development of applied skills in intervention and evaluation, prevention, and in the formulation of social policy.

Students in this option often pursue internships in service settings that work with children, youth, and/or adults. Typical employment settings include preschools, daycare centers, hospital programs for children, youth, and families, institutional and community mental health programs for individuals and families, programs for abused or neglected children and adolescents, women's resource centers, human resources programs, employee assistance programs, nursing homes, area agencies on aging and other community settings for older adults, and public welfare

and family service agencies. This option also provides preparation for advanced training in careers in developmental or family research, teaching at a college or university, or for professional careers that require graduate training. Typical postgraduate pursuits of students completing this option include graduate study in human development, family studies, psychology, or sociology, or advanced professional training in psychology, law, behavioral health, counseling or social work, or other programs related to services for individuals and families.

Developmental Science for Health Professions Option

Available at the following campuses: Altoona, Brandywine, DuBois, Fayette, Mont Alto, Scranton, Shenango, University Park, York

This option is designed for students interested in focusing on human development/developmental science as a foundation to pursue health-related post graduate studies or work careers. This option guides students to acquire and apply scientific knowledge about human development (and family functioning) across the life span; emphasizing understanding biological, psychological, and social development across the life span. Additional coursework focuses on health across contexts. Students also select science foundation courses to complement their study of development across the lifespan and align with their career/post-graduate study interests. Typical postgraduate pursuits of students completing this option include graduate or professional studies in health-related areas (e.g. pediatrics, adolescent medicine, geriatrics, family medicine, psychiatry).

What is Human Development and Family Studies?

Penn State's baccalaureate degree in HDFS prepares students for careers across a range of human service, health care, and helping professions. Coursework guides students to develop the knowledge and skills for their future careers through emphasizing (1) psychological, biological, social, cultural, and economic influences that impact well-being, (2) evidence-based prevention and intervention strategies, and (3) applied skills for impact. The Human Development and Family Science option prepares students for a range of human service and advocacy positions in non-profit and human service organizations, businesses, and government, or to pursue graduate training in social work, counseling, clinical psychology, applied behavior analysis, public policy, program administration and management, law, child life, or research. The Developmental Science or Health Professions option prepares students for graduate study in medicine, psychiatry, occupational therapy, accelerated nursing, physician assistant and other health-related fields. This option includes flexibility to complete pre-health requirements while HDFS requirements emphasize many core competencies recommended by the American Medical Association.

You Might Like This Program If...

- You are interested in working to improve the lives and wellness of individuals, families, and communities.
- You are passionate about working to reduce inequality, advocate for change, and improve well-being through policy, law, and advocacy.
- You are committed to developing a strong foundation of knowledge and skills to pursue medical school, psychiatry, occupational therapy, or accelerated nursing, physician assistant or other health professions programs.
- You are excited by developmental research, social program design, and non-profit or government program administration.

- You are eager to utilize flexible degree requirements to explore careers, pursue experiential learning opportunities, and develop your skills.