Major in Human Development and Family Studies

Human Development and Family Studies (HDFS) is an interdisciplinary major focusing on the development of individuals across the lifespan, within the context of family and culture. Students complete foundational coursework in human development (i.e., infancy and childhood, adolescence, emerging and young adulthood, middle and later adulthood/aging) and in the area of family studies. Students become familiar with theory and research in the field and learn to identify factors influencing cognitive, emotional, social, and physical development across the lifespan. Students participate in an internship in order to apply knowledge and skills acquired in foundational course work. The HDFS major offers five concentrations that enable students to specialize within the major and prepare for different career paths. In addition to selecting one of five concentrations, students also have the opportunity to work toward the Gerontology Interdisciplinary Minor or director qualifications in early childhood settings, or apply to the Early Childhood Education Major.

Learning Outcomes

Students will demonstrate:

- Content knowledge and understanding of theory, research, and practice relevant to optimizing the development, health, and well-being of individuals and families across the lifespan in the context of the larger social environment.
- Effective written and oral communication skills appropriate to the field of human development and family studies.
- The ability to access, critically evaluate, and apply multiple forms of information related to individuals and families.
- Professional and leadership skills with individuals and families, including ethical and culturally sensitive conduct.

Potential Occupations

Graduates with a major in HDFS are prepared to work in a variety of human service settings including youth services organizations; early childhood, elementary, adolescent, and parent education programs; health care organizations; juvenile and adult corrections; family and community services; and programs serving older adults, including long-term care facilities. Students interested in teaching human development and family studies content at the secondary level should explore the interdepartmental major in Family and Consumer Sciences, Education Concentration. HDFS graduates are also well prepared to pursue advanced degrees in mental health, behavioral and social sciences, education, health and medicine, or other professional programs.

Some examples of career opportunities with a bachelor's degree in HDFS include, but are not limited to: early childhood teacher, early childhood administrator, adult recreation programmer, career development specialist, family services specialist, human development specialist, adult education teacher, human resources coordinator, youth agency administrator, community outreach worker, women's program administrator, youth intervention and prevention program administrator, youth employment, training, and development specialist, parent educator, children-family educator, child protection worker, family assistance worker, program administrator, public relations specialist, youth services worker, case manager, nonprofit agency administrator, and residential center manager.

To help guide students in their career planning, there are five concentrations within the Human Development and Family Studies major. The HDFS Major Program of Study consists of the HDFS foundational courses, which are required for all students regardless of concentration, 15 credits selected from the list of courses within students' chosen concentration, and additional electives to reach 120 credits as required for graduation. Students must declare a minimum of one concentration and may not declare more than two concentrations in the HDFS major. The declared concentration(s) are listed on the students' transcripts and thus indicate specialized training within the HDFS degree program.

Human Development and Family Studies Concentration

The Human Development and Family Studies Concentration is a general concentration that is available to HDFS majors who do not choose one of the more specific concentrations. This general concentration is an excellent choice for students who are interested in a lifespan or more general focus in HDFS and are not seeking the specialized training offered in the other four concentrations. Students choosing this concentration will be preparing to enter a variety of different careers or graduate programs, as outlined above. The curriculum includes primarily HDFS, psychology, and social work courses as well as selected courses from other disciplines for a well-rounded and robust education in human development and family studies. By selecting this concentration, students have an opportunity to participate in a variety of experiential learning courses and internship options as they explore and prepare for their career path and additional credentialing options. Please note that the HDFS general concentration does not appear on students' transcripts.

Early Childhood Professions Concentration

The courses in the Early Childhood Professions Concentration prepare students for careers in early childhood education as well as professional work with children across a variety of settings, including working with children with special needs. This concentration is an ideal choice for first and second year HDFS majors who plan to apply to the competitive on-campus Early Childhood Education Major during their sophomore year. As well, this concentration is the preferred choice for students interested in the early childhood education careers that do not require teacher licensure, or for students who will pursue a graduate degree and licensure in childhood education. Students interested in working with children with special needs, those seeking director qualifications in early childhood education, and those seeking other relevant credentials would also benefit from choosing this concentration. The curriculum incorporates courses from several disciplines that focus on early child development, education, diversity, and professional skills.

Pre-Health Professions Concentration

Many students pursuing an HDFS degree plan to apply to graduate or professional programs in a variety of health professions. The Pre-Health Professions Concentration prepares students for these careers and supports their goals of obtaining graduate training. Some of the careers students in this concentration pursue are: allied health practitioner, anesthesiologist assistant, child life specialist, chiropractor, dentist, medical doctor, music therapist, naturopathic or complementary medicine practitioner, nurse, occupational therapist,
optometrist, pharmacist, physical therapist, physician’s assistant, podiatrist, speech and language pathologist, or veterinarian. The courses within this concentration include a focus on science and also help prepare students to work with individuals (and their families) with disabilities, mental and physical illness, or those experiencing death, dying, or grief. In addition, students in this concentration are strongly encouraged to consult with pre-professional advisors in the Center for Advising and Student Achievement for specific course (and corresponding course prerequisite) recommendations based on the credentials that they are pursuing, as the prerequisite requirements vary for graduate and professional programs.

**Prevention and Intervention Sciences Concentration**

The Prevention and Intervention Sciences Concentration is designed for students who are preparing for careers in the helping and human services professions such as counselors, educators, and social service providers, as well as for students seeking a research career in human development and family studies or a related field. This concentration is an excellent choice for students interested in careers requiring either a bachelor’s degree or additional credentials. Concentration coursework emphasizes evidence-based programs, and students will learn how to design and implement community-based prevention and intervention programs for youth, adults, and families. Students can either focus on a specific aspect of the lifespan or choose courses across the lifespan.

**Leadership and Entrepreneurial Professions Concentration**

The Leadership and Entrepreneurial Professions Concentration guides students who are preparing for entry-level or long-term leadership positions in organizations that promote the optimal development of individuals and families. Students in this concentration may intend to work in organizations as directors, managers, or owners. This concentration includes coursework in finance, management, marketing, public policy, professional communication, and leadership. This concentration is also appropriate for students preparing for careers in legal services, such as lawyers or politicians. Students in this concentration may choose to pursue additional credentials in leadership, business and entrepreneurship.

**Online Degree Program**

The HDFS major is offered in two formats, both leading to a Bachelor of Science degree. We offer on-campus classes to local degree-seeking students, and we offer distance students the HDFS degree through the Division of Continuing Education and CSU OnlinePlus (http://www.online.colostate.edu). The Online Bachelor of Science Degree in HDFS (http://www.online.colostate.edu/degrees/hdfs) provides a high-quality university education that is flexible, convenient, and accessible for working and distance students. The courses in the online program are the same as the on campus courses. As well, the five HDFS concentrations are available online with only some limitations, as not all CSU courses are available online. The online Bachelor of Science degree in HDFS carries the full accreditation of CSU and is indistinguishable on student transcripts from the on campus version of the degree.

**Concentrations**

- Early Childhood Professions Concentration
- Human Development and Family Studies Concentration
- Leadership and Entrepreneurial Professions Concentration
- Pre-Health Professions Concentration
- Prevention and Intervention Sciences Concentration