

MASTER OF SCIENCE IN HUMAN DEVELOPMENT AND FAMILY STUDIES, PLAN A

Human development and family studies (HDFS) focuses on processes of development across the lifespan at the individual level and within families. At the level of the individual, the emphasis is on the causes and correlates of developmental change and stability across the lifespan. Topics of study include biological bases of development, cognitive development (e.g., perception, learning, memory), social-emotional development (e.g., social competence, self-regulation, attachment styles), and development of and in social relationships across the lifespan.

Family studies is a broad, multidisciplinary area of inquiry that can be approached from different levels of analysis and with a wide range of methodological tools. Research addresses the study of family structures and the connection of family systems with other social structures (e.g., school, workplace, etc.), and their implications for changes in the nature and quality of family relationships. The field of family studies also focuses on the effect of family structure on the development of individuals within the family, as well as relationship dynamics among family members (e.g., parent-child relationships, sibling relationships, cross-generational relationships), and the influences of these dynamics on physical and mental development across the life course.

On their way to the master's degree, students gain knowledge about typical (i.e., normative) and atypical development at the individual level and at the level of the family and related social institutions. This includes knowledge about development-promoting and development-hindering conditions, such as poverty, health disparities, or social disadvantages, and how risk and resilience factors play out over the life course. Students also acquire skills in the application and interpretation of quantitative and qualitative research methods, the rigorous design of research studies, and program planning and evaluation.

Graduates of this program enter careers in different human service and educational settings, including schools, behavioral health organizations, advocacy organizations, organizations serving older adults, and organizations focusing on social policy and public health issues. Graduates are equipped to assist with the design of intervention programs, the analysis of qualitative and quantitative data collected by such programs, and the dissemination of research findings to a broad array of audiences.

Learn more about the Master of Science in Human Development and Family Studies, Plan A on the Department of Human Development and Family Studies website. (<https://www.chhs.colostate.edu/hdfs/programs-and-degrees/m-s-in-human-development-and-family-studies/>)

[Students interested in graduate work should refer to the Graduate and Professional Bulletin.](#)

Learning Objectives

Students will learn the fundamental principles of human development and family studies from a lifespan developmental and life course perspective, and will specialize in a particular content area (e.g., early childhood development; adolescent development; adult development and aging).

Specifically, successful students will be able to:

1. Demonstrate a detailed knowledge of the fundamental propositions of lifespan developmental and life course theory, and develop a strong appreciation for the multidisciplinary nature of HDFS.
2. Demonstrate skills in the use of qualitative and quantitative research methods to design empirical studies addressing basic and applied research questions in a rigorous scientific way.
3. Demonstrate knowledge and skills to analyze data in a rigorous way, and communicate research findings within the scientific community and to constituent audiences.
4. Apply findings from basic research to practical problems that have been identified as impediments to individuals' development and the optimal functioning of families.
5. Communicate and disseminate research findings generated in the field of HDFS effectively to a variety of audiences.