The Department of Human Development and Family Studies at the University of New Hampshire offers a program of study leading to a master of science degree with a core area of study in Child Development. In this core area, students examine the roles of social, cultural and political contexts in the lives of young children. Students will explore the ways in which a child’s social, emotional, moral, and cognitive development impacted by human attachments, support systems, and the social networks of the people and institutions of community and society.

This core area of study presents an ecological and social constructivist framework for understanding the development of children from infancy through the early school years, considering both micro contexts, such as the family, and macro issues, such as social oppression. Students will be expected to develop a deep understanding of how the social construction of childhood has shaped and continues to shape parenting, schooling, and social policy. Students will be required to complete an internship in a child-focused setting.

This core area of study is intended for students with experience working with young children and their families and who desire leadership roles a variety of social service and educational positions. In addition, professionals seeking to enter interdisciplinary doctoral programs with a focus on research, leadership and practical applications can develop advanced knowledge and understanding of child development in context through this program of study.

Admission Requirements

Students in good academic standing with undergraduate degrees in any related field and a specific interest in working with children are encouraged to apply. If a student’s undergraduate program does not include an introductory statistics course or the equivalent, successful completion of such a course is required before beginning graduate work. Additional admissions information and personal interviews may be required of applicants.

Core area applications are due May 15 for fall admission and December 1 for spring admission, but review of applications for fall admission will begin on January 15, and only applications for full-time enrollment received by that date are eligible for department financial aid.

M.S. Degree Requirements

Requirements include completion of a 12-credit core curriculum: HDFS 991 Professional Issues for Family Specialists; HDFS 993 Theoretical Approaches to Family Studies and HDFS 994 Research Seminar; (2) an additional 22 credits of course work including HDFS 930 Child Development in Context, at least 4 credits of HDFS 911 Graduate Internship, and an advanced statistics course; and (3) successful completion and defense of a research thesis (HDFS 899 for 6-10 credits) OR a comprehensive examination in the core area of study plus 8 additional credits of electives.

Students will design a program of study that may include other departmental courses such as HDFS 843: Families, Schools and Community; HDFS 857 Race, Class, Gender and Families;
HDFS 871 Observation and Assessment of Young Children; HDFS 894 Families and the Law and HDFS 872 International Approaches to Child Advocacy. Students may select related courses in other departments as well, such as EDUC 941 Diversity and Child Development; EDUC 942 Sociocultural Perspectives on Teaching and Learning; SOC 873 Sociology of Childhood; and SOC 975 Sociology of the Family.

Resources
Child Study and Development Center - http://www.csdc.unh.edu/
Carsey School of Public Policy - http://carsey.unh.edu/

Contact Information
For more information, contact Corinna J. Tucker at 603-862-2146 or via e-mail at cjtucker@cisunix.unh.edu. Application for admission to the Graduate School must be made on the appropriate forms obtained directly from the Graduate School, 109 Thompson Hall, University of New Hampshire, Durham, NH 03824-1497. Visit UNH’s graduate school website at http://www.gradschool.unh.edu and the Human Development and Family Studies departmental website at http://www.chhs.unh.edu/hdfs/.