Why should you choose HDFS?

- Gain experience in a high quality preschool classroom at the U of I Child Development Laboratory.
- Join a multidisciplinary research team exploring origins and solutions for childhood obesity, autism, or many other critical problems facing children and families.
- Spend winter break volunteering at an orphanage, health care clinic, or preschool in Cape Town, South Africa.
- Join a summer study tour to learn about youth and family challenges in Brazil.
- Get involved in service activities in the greater Champaign-Urbana community.
- Prepare for graduate or professional study in HDFS, social work, counseling, medicine, allied health professions, law, human resources, or education.
- Present results of your own project at the U of I Undergraduate Research Symposium.
- Train in state-of-the-art methods to identify developmental disabilities in infants and promote resilience in families.

Imagine your future in HUMAN DEVELOPMENT AND FAMILY STUDIES

Discover the possibilities IN HUMAN DEVELOPMENT AND FAMILY STUDIES

“...it is so easy for [HDFS students] to get involved with a wide variety of opportunities. You are able to get a lot of hands-on experience that will help you as you decide what you would like to do after graduation. The advisors and professors really care about your success, and they are very willing to help you.”

– Jasmine Washington, HDFS Student

Schedule your visit today!

Department of Human and Community Development
University of Illinois College of ACES
Dr. Gerry Walter
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ACES College of Agricultural, Consumer and Environmental Sciences
With a major in Human Development and Family Studies (HDFS), you could become a professional who prevents child and partner abuse, helps immigrant families, assists children in hospitals to deal with medical procedures, develops curricula for after-school programs, identifies ways that couples can maintain healthy relationships, directs a child care center, or works with the aging population.

Our students combine classroom work with practical experience to gain an in-depth understanding of how children develop, how families function effectively, and how to improve the lives of children, families, and the professionals who work with them. Tailor your experience to fit your own professional goals, whether you’re seeking employment after graduation or pursuing graduate or professional school.

Our Concentrations

CHILD AND ADOLESCENT DEVELOPMENT
Learn about the emotional, social, physical, and cognitive development of children and adolescents, and see how research helps parents, caregivers, educators, and others enhance lives. Prepare for a career as an early childhood educator, child life specialist in a medical facility, adoption caseworker, day care center director, social worker, pediatrician, child psychologist, occupational or physical therapist, attorney, or professional in a host of other fields where you can help meet the varied needs of diverse children and families.

FAMILY STUDIES
Learn about the diverse ways families in the United States and around the world meet the needs of their members and their communities. Discover how professionals help families harness opportunities and meet the challenges of a modern and changing world. Prepare for a career in counseling, marriage and family therapy, social work, family law, human resources, family services, or other fields requiring in-depth understanding of family relationships.

Our Opportunities

GO PLACES
Whether in a semester learning about families and culture in Europe or a winter break volunteering in a South African preschool, it’s easy to include a study abroad experience in your HDFS program. More than a third of our students graduate having studied abroad at least once.

GAIN EXPERIENCE
Help teach in a preschool classroom. Show parents of children with autism how to use the latest teaching materials. Assist local officials in planning more effective social service delivery. In HDFS, professional development includes practical experience, and these are just a few ways you can put what you’ve learned in the classroom to work.

CONDUCT RESEARCH
Be part of a team seeking ways to identify early developmental problems, improve the lives of adolescents living in poverty, help families manage stress, or combat childhood obesity. Our HDFS faculty are conducting cutting-edge studies on these issues and more, and our students make important contributions in all phases of the research process.

GET INVOLVED
Our students are active members of the community, both on and off-campus. Starting with your very first class, you’ll get the chance to be involved with our three student organizations, the on-campus Child Care Resource Service, or The Autism Program, as well as local youth centers, family service agencies, and other places where your skills can make a real difference in people’s lives.