

What is Child and Family Studies?

Child and Family Studies (CFS) is the scientific study of child and family development. CFS students learn how social systems and societal institutions are interconnected in ways that either foster or hinder the development of children, youth, and families. CFS students also learn how the social, economic, and cultural contexts in which children and families live create opportunities for some and barriers for others. CFS students are prepared to enter the work world with the scientific knowledge and the practical skills needed to understand children and families and how to intervene to improve their welfare.

The CFS major is designed to accommodate the special interests and strengths of students while allowing for flexibility and individualization. CFS students complete an integrated core curriculum that includes human and child development, family dynamics and interaction patterns, research methods, and interpersonal and professional skills needed to function effectively in the workplace. Core coursework is complemented with a range of elective options that give students a broad, general education as well as specialized knowledge in areas of their choosing. The major includes a 12 credit-hour, field-based experience (the practicum) that enables students to hone practical skills and apply knowledge in a work setting consistent with their personal and professional goals.

Career Opportunities in Child and Family Studies

CFS graduates are prepared to work with individuals and groups from diverse backgrounds and in diverse

settings: in schools as early childhood educators, with agencies providing services to children and families, and with for-profit businesses.

Recent graduates are employed in the following positions:

- teachers in public and private schools
- administrative staff and teachers in child care and pre-school agencies
- case managers with the Department of Children's Services
- counselors in programs serving abused children and children with severe behavior problems
- therapists for adults and children in mental health centers
- family support workers in programs teaching parenting skills
- agents with the Cooperative Extension Service
- account managers for major consumer products companies
- sales representatives for insurance, pharmaceuticals, and other products

Many students pursue graduate study to prepare them for specialized work and professional positions. Recent graduates are studying for advanced degrees in:

- Elementary and Secondary Education
- Child and Family Studies
- Adult Education
- Counseling
- Law
- Social Work
- Ministry
- Nursing
- Exercise Science

Salary Trends in Child and Family Studies

Entry-level salaries vary widely depending upon field and from state to state. These entry-level salaries usually range from \$20,000 to \$30,000 per year. Because many CFS-related jobs have ties with educational and governmental agencies, many positions have long-term career ladders and good benefit packages.

High School Preparation

Students should take as many courses in the social sciences as possible, especially those dealing with child development, family life education, consumer studies, economics, sociology, psychology, and sex education. Volunteer work can help you examine whether you enjoy being with and helping young children, low-income families, as well as families and youth who are experiencing stress and crisis in their lives. You should visit with your guidance counselors for other advice about preparing for your university experience.

How to Major in Child and Family Studies at UT

Students can choose Child and Family Studies as their major upon admission to UT or at some later time. Students may obtain initial information from the College of Education, Health, and Human Sciences advising office or from the Department of Child and Family Studies. After admission to CFS, students are assigned individual faculty advisors who help them plan their program of study.

Requirements for Child and Family Studies

All CFS students must complete 35 credit-hours of core courses that teach students about human and child development, family dynamics and interaction patterns, research methods, and interpersonal and professional skills. The field-based experience completes the core requirements. Students must earn a minimum grade of "C" in all CFS core courses. In addition to the core coursework, students complete 44 credit hours of required general education courses and select 46 credit hours of elective coursework designed to broaden their educational experience as well as provide specialized knowledge in areas of their choosing. Students must maintain a cumulative GPA of 2.5 to successfully complete the program.

FOR MORE INFORMATION :

Carole McDonald, Administrative Assistant
 Department of Child and Family Studies
 115 Jessie Harris Building
 Knoxville, Tennessee 37996-1912
 Email: carolem@utk.edu
 Web: <http://cfs.he.utk.edu>

Special Programs, Co-ops and Internships

In addition to the major, CFS students may pursue two professional options:

- A teacher licensure program in Early Childhood Education that prepares students to teach Pre-K through grade 4 classes in the state of Tennessee.
- A certification program through the National Council on Family Relations that prepares students for certification as a Family Life Educator. With this designation, students have the knowledge and skills to develop and implement family life education programs and services in a variety of community agencies.

All CFS students conclude their program of study with a practicum experience which gives them real-world experience in their field, an opportunity to explore career interests, and the chance to learn more about children and families and the support services available to them. Students electing the teacher licensure option in early childhood education complete their practicum in the department's Child Development Laboratory School. Other students secure practicum placements with area agencies serving the needs of children and families. Recent placements include: The Department of Children's Services, Knox County Juvenile Court, the ICN Follow-up Center at the UT Medical Center, Helen Ross McNabb Center, Child and Family Tennessee, Children's Hospital, and Co-operative Extension.

Finally, some students choose to work with CFS faculty members on current research projects where they learn advanced research methods and how knowledge about children, youth, and families is discovered.

Highlights of CFS

The CFS curriculum has a strong, applied focus. Learning about child development and family dynamics and developing the skills to use this knowledge with children and families to improve their well-being is at the core of the major. The department's primary mission is to graduate students who have acquired the competence to work professionally with children and families and who also possess knowledge and skills to enhance their own family life.

Sample Curriculum

Freshman

Introduction to Child and Family Studies .	2
English Composition I & II	6
Natural Science Electives	8
Arts and Humanities Electives.....	6
Mathematics (Algebraic Reasoning)	3
Mathematics (Statistical Reasoning)	3
Total	28 Credit Hours

Sophomore

Human Development.....	3
Marriage and Family: Roles and Relationships	3
History Electives	6
Foreign Language Electives	6
Social Science Electives	6
Specialty Area Electives	6
Elective	3
Total	33 Credit Hours

Junior

Development in Infancy and Early Childhood or Development in Middle Childhood and Adolescence	3
Family Interaction	3
Introduction to Research Methods and Statistics	3
Specialty Area Electives	15
Advanced Social Science Electives	6
Diversity Among Children and Families	3
Total	33 Credit Hours

Senior

Development of Professional Skills.....	3
Practicum: Community, Teaching, or Research	12
Specialty Area Electives	6
Advanced Social Science Electives	6
Electives.....	4
Total	31 Credit Hours

Grand Total125 Credit Hours

The practicum experience concludes the program of study and serves the department's primary mission by integrating what has been learned in the classroom with the demands of the real world. For one student, the practicum was an opportunity "to tie together everything I had learned in my classes and have a hands-on, unedited experience of working with youth and families. It also was a way to confirm my career choice." The practicum experience is an empowering, and potentially life-changing, experience. Students gain self-confidence and the assurance that they can make a contribution to their chosen profession. As expressed by a recent graduate:

"I have learned a lot about myself and how I would really enjoy spending my career. Professionally, I have become more assertive. I have developed administrative skills that will be useful in any job setting. I have learned to apply my book knowledge to practical experience, and I have come to appreciate the CFS curriculum. I feel ready for new endeavors and am anxious for what is actually ahead."

Note: This sheet is for general information only. For more specific information on this program refer to the UT catalog at <http://tennessee.edu/catalogs> or contact the college.

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