

HUMAN DEVELOPMENT AND FAMILY STUDIES, A.S. (ALTOONA)

Seven Penn State campuses are scheduled for closure after Spring 2027: DuBois, Fayette, New Kensington, Mont Alto, Shenango, Wilkes-Barre, and York. New students are not being admitted at these campuses.

Begin Campus: Altoona

End Campus: Altoona

Program Description

This major integrates practical and academic experiences to provide the student with entry-level professional competence in the human service field. The objective of the major is to offer a general education background, a knowledge base in life span and family development, and a core of professional skills that may be applied in program planning and service delivery activities. The major is offered part-time, in the evening, and through independent learning.

Adult Development and Aging Services Option

Available at the following campuses: Altoona, Brandywine, DuBois, Fayette, Mont Alto, Schuylkill, Scranton, Shenango, World Campus, York

This option is designed to prepare students for a wide variety of service roles in mental health facilities, nursing homes and other institutions for the aged, area agencies on aging, public welfare and family service agencies, women's resource centers, human relations programs, employee assistance programs and customer services and consumer relations programs in business and industry. An approved field experience in any of a wide variety of settings that serve adults, the aged, and their families, is required for this option.

Children, Youth, and Family Services Option

Available at the following campuses: Altoona, Brandywine, DuBois, Fayette, Mont Alto, Schuylkill, Scranton, Shenango, World Campus, York

This option is designed to prepare students for service roles in preschools; day care centers; hospitals; institutional and community programs for emotionally disturbed, abused, or neglected children and adolescents; as well as a variety of public welfare and family service agencies. An approved field experience in a children, youth, or family services setting is required for this option.

Early Childhood Care and Education Option

Available at the following campuses: DuBois, Fayette, Shenango, York

This option is designed to increase professional capabilities in child care training in regard to issues of quality, affordability, and accessibility of programming. The primary foci are on language, literacy, and science reasoning. In the coursework, there is a blending of theory and practice that requires experience in a group setting with young children. Courses concentrate on infants and toddlers as well as older preschoolers. Each course has a strong parent/family communications component and stresses observation techniques appropriate for assessing and evaluating the development of young children.

What is Human Development and Family Studies?

Penn State's Human Development and Family Studies (HDFS) program prepares students for careers across a wide range of human service, healthcare, and helping professions. The HDFS degree is grounded in research-based knowledge on the psychological, biological, social, cultural, and economic influences that impact the well-being of individuals, families, and communities across the lifespan. HDFS coursework guides students to develop skills for working with and caring for diverse individuals and groups through emphasizing mindfulness, compassion, diversity, equity, advocacy and inclusion. Students take courses on infancy, childhood, and adolescent development, transitioning and thriving in adulthood, and healthy aging. Classroom experiences are supplemented by a range of engaged learning opportunities, including internships, research participation, and community partnerships through which HDFS students acquire skills preparing them for impactful careers. The program's flexible curriculum allows academic pathways and engagement experiences to be customized to align with students' career goals.

MORE INFORMATION ABOUT HUMAN DEVELOPMENT AND FAMILY STUDIES (<https://hhd.psu.edu/hdfs>)

You Might Like This Program If...

- You are passionate about pursuing work focused on improving the lives and wellness of individuals, families, and communities.
- You are interested to learn about individual, family, community, and social factors influencing development as well as evidence-based practices that promote the cognitive, social, physical, and emotional well-being of children, adults, families, organizations, and communities.
- You are enthusiastic to use flexible degree requirements and integrated opportunities to pursue career exploration, experiential and engaged learning, and skill development specialized to your specific career goals.