Degree(s) Offered: Bachelor of Science in Child and Family Development

Description:
The major in Child and Family Development prepares students to work with children and families in a variety of settings. Courses focus on all age groups including prenatal, infancy, toddler, preschool, school age, adolescence, adults, and seniors. Students gain an understanding of the developmental needs and choices of individuals throughout the life span, seeking to improve their well-being through the creation and dissemination of knowledge. Completion of degree requirements equips students for entry-level positions in child and family oriented agencies, programs, and organizations, and for further study. The major also prepares students to work in business and community services, teach preschool, and work in child, adolescent, aging, and family care services. The Georgia Southern University Child Development Center (CDC) houses observation areas and laboratory facilities for student hands-on learning. Undergraduate students select one of three career paths.

Child Development Emphasis
The Child Development Emphasis career path prepares students with skills and knowledge to work in a variety of child development occupations. Students completing the Child Development emphasis will be prepared to work with young children in early childhood education programs such as early intervention services, pre-K programs, Head Start, childcare centers, and resource and referrals. Students are also prepared to work with youth in a variety of programs such as after school or summer programs, the cooperative extension as 4-H agents, YMCA/YWCA programs, Boys and Girls Clubs, specialty camps, or resident summer camps. Students can also work in child development administrative positions by working as licensing consultants, childcare administrators, and quality consultants and trainers. NOTE: Students do not graduate with teacher certification.

Child Life Emphasis
The child life emphasis prepares students as child life specialists who work with sick and chronically ill children and help their families overcome life’s most challenging events such as illness, disability, and death. Armed with a strong background in child development and family systems, child life specialists promote effective coping through play and self-expression activities. They provide emotional support for families, and encourage optimum development of children facing a broad range of challenging experiences, particularly those related to healthcare and hospitalization. Because they understand that a child’s well-being depends on the support of the family, child life specialists provide information, support, and guidance to parents, siblings, and other family members. They also play a vital role in educating caregivers, administrators, and the public about the needs of children under stress. Our program prepares students to sit for the child life exam, which is required by the Child Life Council in order to become a certified child life specialist. For more information about becoming a certified child life specialist, visit this link: http://www.childlife.org.

Family Service Emphasis
The Family Services emphasis provides students with knowledge and skills to work in a variety of family service occupations. Students completing the Family Services emphasis will be prepared to work with individuals, couples, and families in all stages of the family life cycle. Family service settings include state, local, and non-profit agencies; faith communities, counseling centers; assisted living facilities; health and wellness centers; hospitals; and schools. Examples of family service occupations include child protective services caseworker, adoption specialist, social worker, family life educator, and cooperative extension educator. Our program meets the National Council on family Relation’s criteria for certification in family life education. For more information about becoming a certified family life educator, see http://www.ncfr.org.
Child Development Emphasis

- Early Childhood Education Programs
  - Child Care Center Teacher
  - Pre-K Teacher
  - Head Start Teacher
- After School Programs
- Boys and Girls Clubs
- Camps (Summer, Residential, Specialty)
- Military Child Care Centers
- Child Care Resource and Referral Agencies
- Licensing Consultant
- Training and Technical Assistants
- Early Interventionist
- Child Care Center Director

Child Life Emphasis

- Child Life Programs in Hospitals
- Children’s Clinics
- Community Healthcare Programs
  - Dentist offices
  - Wellness Programs
- Hospice
- Camps for Children with Disabilities
- Residential Programs for Sick Children
- Support Programs for Sick Children and their Families
  - Ronald McDonald House
  - Make-A-Wish Foundation
  - Deliver the Dream

Family Service Emphasis

- Program for Seniors
  - Department of Aging
  - Assisted Living Facilities
- Department of Children and Family Services (DFCS)
  - Child Protective Services
  - Family Support
- Adoption Agencies
- Family Life Educator
- Cooperative Extension Center
- Domestic Violence Shelters
- Child Abuse Prevention Agencies
- Child Advocates
- Youth Development Centers
- Crisis Pregnancy Centers
- Parent Education and Parent Support Programs