



OUR MISSION IS TO UNDERSTAND AND IMPROVE THE LIVES OF PEOPLE OF ALL AGES IN
RELATIONSHIPS, FAMILIES, ORGANIZATIONS, AND COMMUNITIES.

DEGREE PROGRAM:

With sufficient qualifications, students with master's degrees are **admitted directly into the Ph.D. program in Human Development**, with emphases on adult development and aging, child and adolescent development, family studies, and marriage and family therapy. Students with bachelor's degrees are admitted to the doctoral track and **complete an M.S. degree en route to the Ph.D.** The completion of the Master's thesis prepares students for admission into the Ph.D. program.

ADMISSION MATERIALS:

GRE Scores, a personal statement, and three letters of recommendation are required in the application.

CONTACT INFORMATION:

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Graduate Studies
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APPLICATION DEADLINE:

January 5th

Graduate Study in Human Development

Our Ph.D. Program:

- Offers opportunities for cross-disciplinary research,
- Focuses on theory and research training for pursuing academic and research careers, and
- Provides funding through research and/or teaching assistantships.
- Faculty members actively publish and present with graduate students and have strong records of research support from state, federal, and foundation sources.

Four Focus Areas of Study:

Adult Development and Aging (ADA)

Child and Adolescent Development (CAD)

Family Studies (FS)

Marriage and Family Therapy (MFT)



For more information and to apply, visit:

www.hdfs.vt.edu

Adult Development and Aging

Focus Area

A distinguishing feature of the Adult Development and Aging (ADA) focus area of the program is its cross-disciplinary focus. Faculty are involved in research linked with a variety of other departments at Virginia Tech including:

- Engineering
- Biological Sciences
- Human Nutrition, Foods, and Exercise
- Psychology
- Sociology

ADA faculty members also have a strong record of research support from state, federal, and foundation sources.

Core Research Areas in ADA:

- Chronic health conditions
- Cognitive functioning
- Elder abuse and neglect
- Family caregiving
- Relationships in later life



Current Faculty Research:

- **Chronic Diseases in Older Adults**
Dr. Tina Savla
- **Health Outcomes After Disasters; Disability Needs and Health Outcomes; Post-operative Cognitive Outcomes**
Dr. Laura Sands
- **Informal and Formal Caregiving**
Drs. Tina Savla, Karen Roberto, & Laura Sands
- **Interventions to Improve Cognitive Function**
Dr. Benjamin Katz
- **Mild Cognitive Impairment**
Drs. Karen Roberto, Rosemary Blieszner, Benjamin Katz, & Tina Savla
- **Slips and Falls; Cancer and Aging**
Dr. Karen Roberto
- **Spirituality and Resilience**
Dr. Rosemary Blieszner



CONTACT INFORMATION

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Child and Adolescent Development

Focus Area

Children are our future. Families, schools, and communities nurture children's development. Understanding how environments support optimal development, designing and testing programs to foster development, and putting them into practice is the focus of our research. The Child and Adolescent Development (CAD) content area focuses on understanding how to support optimal development for children and adolescents and their families. The program focuses primarily on theory and research training for graduate students interested in pursuing academic and research careers.

Core Research Areas in CAD:

- Attention, memory, and learning
- Children's emotional development & socialization
- Cognitive development
- Developmental trajectories of risk
- Early childhood education
- Parent – child relationships



Current Faculty Research:

- **Adolescent Sexual and Romantic Relationships**
Dr. Rose Wesche
- **Children's Emotion Regulation**
Dr. Cindy Smith
- **Children's Mathematical Thinking and Learning**
Dr. Caroline Hornburg
- **Children and Technology**
Dr. Koeun Choi
- **Developmental Trajectories of Risk**
Dr. Kee Jeong Kim
- **Dynamics of Parent-Child Interactions**
Drs. Brittany Howell & Cindy Smith
- **Early Childhood Education**
Drs. Isabel Bradburn, Caroline Hornburg, & Cindy Smith
- **Infant Neurological Development**
Dr. Brittany Howell
- **Prevention and Health Promotion**
Drs. Christine Kaestle & Rose Wesche
- **Siblings of Children with Disabilities**
Dr. Carolyn Shivers



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Family Studies

Focus Area

The Family Studies (FS) content area of the Human Development program provides a systematic approach to observing, understanding, and analyzing close relationships and families within their individual, social, and historical contexts. A major goal of the program is to prepare students for careers in the family field in teaching, research, and direct service.

Family Studies faculty employ theoretically rich research questions with rigorous analytic techniques, resulting in publications in top-tier academic journals and other academic sources including Family Relations, Journal of Marriage and Family, Family Process, Journal of Family Issues, as well as the Sourcebook of Family Theory and Research.

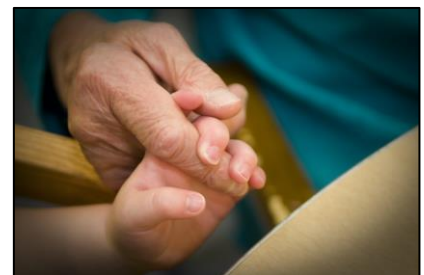
Core Research Areas in FS:

- Families of incarcerated individuals
- Health and families
- Social justice and social action
- Theories and application related to gender



Current Faculty Research:

- **Emerging Adults' Perceptions of Gender and Sexuality**
Dr. April Few-Demo
- **LGBT-Parent Families; Family Perspectives on Cancer Survivorship**
Dr. Katherine Allen
- **Mother's Reentry into the Community After Incarceration; Child Trauma & Parental Incarceration**
Dr. Joyce Arditti



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Marriage and Family Therapy

Focus Area

The MFT Ph.D. focus area within the Department of Human Development and Family Science is the oldest continuously accredited doctoral program of its kind. It is fully accredited by the COAMFTE. Students and graduates say among the many features of the program that stand out are faculty's support for students' individual research interests, their openness to new ideas and approachability, the breadth of clinical training, and the commitment to the Scientist-Practitioner model.

MFT faculty employ theoretically rich research questions with rigorous analytic techniques, resulting in publications in top-tier academic journals and other academic sources including *Ageing and Society*, *Journal of Marital and Family Therapy*, *Journal of Couple and Relationship Therapy*, and *Family Relations*. Students in the MFT program focus on research and scholarship that promotes wellbeing in individuals, families, and communities.

Core Research Areas in MFT:

- Community participatory research and intervention development
- Family therapy education
- Grandparent-headed families
- LGBTQ+ youth and emerging adults



Current Faculty Research:

- **Influence of Relationship Education on Individual and Couple Functioning; Provision of Therapeutic Services for Individuals with a History of Adverse Childhood Experiences**

Dr. Jenene Case Pease

- **Psychosocial Health and Well-being of LGBT Youth and Their Families; LGBT Affirmative Therapy Practices**

Dr. Erika Grafsky

- **Relational Processes in Custodial Grandfamilies; Decision Making and Relational Conflict in Late Life Families**

Dr. Megan Dolbin-MacNab

- **Suicide Prevention and Intervention Research, Dissemination & Implementation Science, Family Psychotherapy for LGBTQ+ Youth**

Dr. Jody Russon



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