What Can I Do With A Major In…
Child & Family Studies

Compiled by the staff at the SUNY Oneonta Career Development Center

Introduction

Are you interested in working with families and children? Do you want to make a difference in people’s lives? Then a major in Child and Family Studies might be suitable for you.

A Child and Family Studies major prepares you for work in any occupation that involves children and/or families, such as welfare, county and state agencies, non-profit community programs, youth organizations and Social Services. It utilizes the bodies of knowledge of the social and behavioral sciences to develop to theoretical frameworks for the study of children and families.

This major is excellent preparation for advanced professional training and/or graduate work whether for a Master’s Degree in Social Work, advanced degree work in any of the social or behavioral science disciplines, counseling, Child Development, Family Studies, Public Health, Public Administration or Family Law.

Functional Skill Set for Child & Family Studies Majors

- Bachelor’s degree is sufficient for entry-level positions (usually minimum requirement).
- Advanced degrees are essential for clinical and therapeutic counseling positions; Masters or Ph.D. Degrees are often needed for administrative, supervisory, teaching, and advanced research positions.
- Additional or specialized training qualifies you for higher paying and more responsible positions.
- Obtain experience working with children through volunteerism or part-time jobs.
- Learn federal and state government job application process.
- Obtain experience in advocacy.
- Acquire licensing/certification for some areas.
- Volunteer in a healthcare setting.
- Secure leadership positions on campus.
- Get related experience through internships or part-time jobs.
- Build computer skills in word processing, database, and spreadsheet programs.
- Seek related work experience, particularly summer camps or special needs areas.
- Learn to work well with all types of people through volunteer or paid positions.
- Obtain Child Life Certification for some areas.
- If planning on Social Work: A Master’s in Social Work is generally necessary or related field, such as psychology or sociology. Extensive field work and client contact.
Related Career Titles for Child & Family Studies Majors

- 4-H Specialist
- Abuse Registry Counselor
- Adoption Counselor
- Adult Educator
- Agency Administrator
- Art Teacher
- Art Therapist
- Author, Children’s Books
- Camp Counselor
- Caseworker
- Child Advocate
- Child Care Consultant
- Child Care Lobbyist
- Child Care Worker
- Child Development Specialists
- Child Life Specialist
- Child Protection Social Worker
- Child Psychologist
- Child Support Enforcement Specialist
- Child Welfare Worker
- Children’s Librarian
- Clown
- Coach
- Community Education Coordinator
- Consultant to Child-Related Industry
- Consumer Educator
- Crisis Counselor
- Curriculum Specialist
- Daycare Center Director
- Education Advisor
- Education Consultant
- Elementary School Guidance Counselor
- Elementary School Teacher
- Extension Specialist
- Family Finances Consultant
- Family Life Educator
- Family Life Specialist
- Family Planning Counselor
- Foster Parent
- Head Start Program Director
- Health Educator
- High School Teacher
- Hospital Child Life Specialist
- House Parent, Halfway House
- Illustrator, Children’s Books
- Juvenile Officer
- Kindergarten Teacher
- Mental Health Counselor
- Middle School Teacher
- Midwife
- Music Teacher
- Music Therapist
- Nanny
- Nurse Practitioner
- Nursery School Teacher
- Obstetrical RN
- Parent Education Specialist
- Pediatric Dentist
- Pediatric Medical Assistant
- Pediatric Rehabilitation
- Pediatrician
- Physical Education Instructor/Teacher
- Preschool Teacher
- Product Tester
- Public Relations Specialist
- Recreation Leader
- Recreation Therapist
- Rehabilitation Counselor
- Rehabilitation Therapist
- Researcher
- Sales Representative
- Sales Representative, Child Care Products
- School Counselor
- School Nurse
- School Social Worker
- Social Services Program Coordinator
- Social Worker
- Special Education Teacher
- Speech/Language Pathologist
- Youth Services Coordinator
Some Organizations that Typically Employ Child & Family Studies Majors:

- Administration
- Adoption Agencies
- Adult Homes/Senior Citizen Programs
- Advertising
- Advocacy
- Camps
- Case Management
- Child Abuse Centers
- Child Protection Services
- Child Welfare Services
- Childcare Programs
- Children’s Homes
- Church Schools
- Consulting
- Counseling
- Credit Departments
- Curriculum Development
- Department of Health, Education & Welfare
- Department of Justice
- Department of Veterans Affairs
- Detention Centers
- Development
- Drug Abuse Programs
- Early Childhood Programs
- Education
- Elementary Schools
- Family & Children’s Services
- Foster Care Agencies
- Home Economics
- Hospitals-Hospices
- Human/Social Services
- Interior Department
- Journalism
- Legislation
- Management
- Marketing Research
- Nursery School/Preschools
- Parent-Child Education
- Pediatric Health Care Facilities
- Private Schools
- Programming
- Public Relations
- Public Schools
- Publishers, Education Materials
- Rehabilitation
- Research
- Residential Homes
- Sales
- School Boards
- School Health & Nutrition Services
- Shelters
- Staff Benefits
- Teaching
- Toy Companies
- Trade Organizations
- Vocational Rehabilitation
- Writing/Editing
Start a Strategic Plan

- Obtain certification in CPR, safety and first aid for children, adults, and infants.
- Certifications for specialized areas including Child Life Specialist or Child Advocacy.
- Obtain part-time summer, internship, or volunteer experience in childcare, schools, hospitals, camps, or overseas programs or in advocacy/service-oriented programs dealing with alcoholism, drug abuse, family violence, aging, poor, disabled, etc.
- Learn federal, state, and local job application procedures.
- Take additional courses in your area of interest.
- Extensive field work and any volunteer experience or job-related experience is very important.

Professional Organizations and Associations for Child and Family Studies

American Association of Early Childhood Educators
3612 Bent Branch Court
Falls Church, VA  22041

National Association for the Education of Young Children
1509 16th St NW
Washington DC  20036-1426
http://www.naeyc.org/

American Association of Family & Consumer Sciences
1555 King St 4th Floor
Alexandria, VA  22314-2738
http://www.aafcs.org/

National Association of Childcare Professionals
207 W. Main St., Number 1
Christianburg, VA  24073-2960
http://www.naccp.org

National Child Care Information Center
http://nccic.org

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# Child and Family Studies

## What can I do with this major?

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<th>Areas</th>
<th>Employers</th>
<th>Strategies</th>
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<td><strong>Pre-School/Day Care</strong></td>
<td>Private, public, franchise and corporate day care centers, Pre-schools, Montessori schools, Religious organizations, Extended school programs, Recreation programs, Health clubs, Private homes, Family day care, Federal, state and local government: Department of Health and Human Services, Head Start</td>
<td>Obtain experience working with children through volunteer, intern or part-time positions. Demonstrate patience, creativity and the ability to work well with people of various backgrounds. Develop strong communications skills to deal effectively with students, staff and parents. Acquire appropriate certification, such as Child Development Associate (CDA) or Pre-K licensure for some pre-school settings. Certification varies by state. Note that some private employers seek staff whose religious values match their organizations' missions.</td>
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<td><strong>Education</strong></td>
<td>Public and private schools (K-12), Public pre-school programs (Head Start), Private pre-school programs, Montessori schools, Adult education programs, Extension offices, Colleges and universities</td>
<td>Develop excellent interpersonal, public speaking and writing skills. Learn to work well with different types of people. Gain experience working with a target age group through mentoring, tutoring or volunteering with a school-based organization. Serve as a peer mentor, resident assistant or student advisor to cultivate leadership and communication skills. Join student chapters of national teaching organizations. Acquire appropriate certification for public school (and some private school) teaching positions, which varies by state. Obtain graduate degree for counseling, student affairs and administrative positions. A master’s degree may be sufficient for teaching at community or two-year institutions. Pursue a Ph.D. for college and university teaching and research opportunities.</td>
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<tr>
<td>SOCIAL SERVICES</td>
<td>Case Management</td>
<td>Exhibit a desire to help others, along with communication and organizational skills.</td>
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<td>Advocacy</td>
<td>Seek experience as a volunteer, intern or paid employee with social service or non-profit organizations.</td>
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<td>Program Development</td>
<td>Become familiar with government and community resources available for those in need.</td>
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<td>Community Education</td>
<td>Develop a wide range of skills such as presenting, grant writing and fundraising, as professionals in nonprofit organizations may fill multiple roles in their positions.</td>
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<td>Volunteer Coordination</td>
<td>Learn to work well with different types of people from varying socioeconomic, racial, ethnic and religious backgrounds.</td>
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<td>Administration</td>
<td>Supplement curriculum with courses in social work, sociology or psychology.</td>
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<td>Research</td>
<td>Pursue additional coursework to specialize in an area or with a certain population such as addiction, gerontology, child welfare, etc.</td>
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<td>Evaluation</td>
<td>Consider earning Certified Family Life Educator (CFLE) credential through the National Council on Family Relations.</td>
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<td>Fundraising</td>
<td>Become familiar with government hiring procedures.</td>
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<td>Public Relations</td>
<td>Obtain a master's degree and appropriate licensure in mental health counseling, social work or rehabilitation counseling to provide therapy.</td>
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<td>Grant Writing</td>
<td>Earn a graduate degree for greater access to administrative positions.</td>
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<td><strong>ADVOCACY</strong>&lt;br&gt;Domestic and International Advocacy&lt;br&gt;Humanitarian Services, i.e. human rights, family planning, world health, disaster relief&lt;br&gt;Development:&lt;br&gt;  Economic&lt;br&gt;  Community&lt;br&gt;  Housing&lt;br&gt;Policy Development&lt;br&gt;Program Administration&lt;br&gt;Fundraising/Development&lt;br&gt;Volunteer Coordination&lt;br&gt;Grant Writing</td>
<td>Community action agencies&lt;br&gt;Nonprofit organizations&lt;br&gt;Private voluntary organizations&lt;br&gt;Faith based organizations (FBO's) and churches&lt;br&gt;International aid and relief organizations&lt;br&gt;NGO's (Non-governmental Organizations), i.e. Action Aid, Oxfam, International Red Cross&lt;br&gt;Federal government agencies with International focus: Peace Corps, USAID, Foreign Service (State Department)&lt;br&gt;Community assistance focus: Housing and Urban Development, Department of Health and Human Services&lt;br&gt;State and local government agencies</td>
<td>Demonstrate strong desire to help others. Volunteer at social service agencies to gain experience and demonstrate interest. Participate in campus &quot;alternative break&quot; trips or church-led mission trips to gain experience assisting groups in need. Pursue leadership roles in campus and community advocacy organizations, and learn how to motivate individuals and groups. Develop excellent research, writing, communication and organizational skills; fundraising experience may be helpful for some positions. Complete an internship with a government organization in area of interest. Research federal, state and local job application procedures.</td>
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<td><strong>HEALTHCARE</strong>&lt;br&gt;Hospital Based Family Support/Child Life Services (provide emotional support, educate children and families, identify resources, coordinate events)&lt;br&gt;Health, Nutrition, Safety Education&lt;br&gt;Advocacy</td>
<td>Hospitals&lt;br&gt;Doctors’ offices&lt;br&gt;Healthcare facilities&lt;br&gt;Specialized camps/schools&lt;br&gt;Hospice programs&lt;br&gt;Funeral homes&lt;br&gt;Social service organizations&lt;br&gt;Public health programs&lt;br&gt;Federal, state and local government including:&lt;br&gt;  Department of Health and Human Services:&lt;br&gt;    Administration on Aging&lt;br&gt;    Administration for Children and Families&lt;br&gt;    Substance Abuse &amp; Mental Health Services Administration&lt;br&gt;    Health Resources &amp; Services Administration</td>
<td>Volunteer in a healthcare setting such as a hospital or specialized children’s camp. Develop a high comfort level working in clinical environments with children and families under stress. Acquire strong communication skills, and plan to work on interdisciplinary teams of doctors, nurses, counselors, etc. who provide care to children. Obtain Child Life Specialist certification through the Child Life Council, and be willing to relocate for greater access to positions in children’s hospitals. Prepare to work nights, weekends and holidays in some healthcare settings. Earn a master's degree in social work, counseling, nutrition, public health or related area for increased opportunities.</td>
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<td><strong>BUSINESS</strong>&lt;br/&gt;Market Research&lt;br/&gt;Product Testing&lt;br/&gt;Product Development&lt;br/&gt;Management&lt;br/&gt;Sales&lt;br/&gt;Customer Service</td>
<td>Manufacturing companies of children's clothes, toys, furniture and food&lt;br/&gt;Consumer protection agencies&lt;br/&gt;Department and retail stores&lt;br/&gt;Social service organizations with business components, i.e. tax assistance, financial planning</td>
<td>Demonstrate initiative, attention to detail, organization and problem-solving skills.&lt;br/&gt;Learn to communicate effectively with a wide-range of people. Consider taking interpersonal communication and public speaking classes.&lt;br/&gt;Earn a business minor or supplement program with courses such as accounting, management, finance, etc. to increase understanding of business theory.&lt;br/&gt;Obtain sales/retail experience with companies catering to children's needs.&lt;br/&gt;Join business or retail student organizations and secure leadership positions.</td>
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<td><strong>COMMUNICATIONS</strong>&lt;br/&gt;Research&lt;br/&gt;Curriculum/Resource Development&lt;br/&gt;Journalism&lt;br/&gt;Writing&lt;br/&gt;Editing&lt;br/&gt;Public Relations</td>
<td>Organizations geared toward children and families including:&lt;br/&gt;Book publishers&lt;br/&gt;Radio and TV stations&lt;br/&gt;Newspapers&lt;br/&gt;Magazines&lt;br/&gt;Social service organizations&lt;br/&gt;Manufacturers&lt;br/&gt;Consumer protection agencies&lt;br/&gt;Professional associations</td>
<td>Develop excellent grammar and writing skills.&lt;br/&gt;Learn to think critically and research effectively.&lt;br/&gt;Take elective courses in the communications field such as journalism, broadcasting, public relations and advertising, or earn a minor in one area of interest.&lt;br/&gt;Obtain experience with a college newspaper, yearbook, alumni publication or with local radio or television stations.&lt;br/&gt;Compile a portfolio of writing samples, ad campaigns and other relevant work, especially those that have been published.&lt;br/&gt;Develop desktop publishing, webpage design and other computer skills. Online communication is increasing, while print is declining.&lt;br/&gt;Pursue an active role, preferably leadership, in journalism organizations.&lt;br/&gt;Prepare to work in deadline-oriented environments and to withstand criticism.</td>
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GENERAL INFORMATION

- A Bachelor's degree is sufficient for entry-level positions.
- Advanced degrees are essential for clinical and therapeutic counseling positions.
- The Child and Family Studies major can serve as preparation for students pursuing advanced training in other areas such as healthcare, i.e. pediatric nursing, family medicine; law, i.e. family law, elder law, child advocacy; and ministry, i.e. youth ministry, pastoral counseling. Research admissions requirements and take prerequisites courses for programs of interest.
- A Master's degree or Ph.D. is often needed for administrative and supervisory positions.
- A Ph.D. is required for most college teaching and advanced research positions.
- Additional or specialized training qualifies one for higher paying opportunities and positions of greater responsibility.
- Obtain part-time, summer, internship or volunteer experience in child care, schools, hospitals, camps, or overseas programs or in advocacy or service-oriented programs addressing alcoholism, drug abuse, family violence, aging, poverty, disabilities, etc.
- Obtain certification for specialized areas including Child Life Specialist or Family Life Educator.