

School of Behavioral and Brain Sciences

Master of Science in Human Development and Early Childhood Disorders



Program Description

The Master of Science in Human Development and Early Childhood Disorders degree program prepares students to work with young children (from birth to five years) and their families in clinical, hospital and educational settings. Combining coursework with practical experiences—from homes to preschools, clinics to specialized intervention programs—the curriculum introduces students to core concepts related to children’s physical, cognitive, emotional and social development and to an advanced, specialized understanding of important competencies, such as:

- Developmental assessment and identification methods.
- Diagnostic and intervention techniques.
- Developmental delays and disorders.
- Best practices for working with families.



Through coursework combined with supervised practicum and internship experiences, graduates are qualified to work as Early Intervention Specialists and Developmental Specialists. With one additional year of work experience, graduates typically qualify for Level 2 Infant Mental Health Endorsement by First3Years (formerly the Texas Association for Infant Mental Health) an internationally recognized credential.

Practicum and internship placements are tailored to students’ interests and training needs and take advantage of the diverse and innovative early intervention programs serving young children and their families in North Texas, including those conducted by the UT Dallas Center for Children and Families.

Benefits

In the Human Development and Early Childhood Disorders master’s program, students gain a broad understanding of their discipline, apply their knowledge and analytical skills to address practical problems and develop skills to communicate and work effectively in collaborative environments.

Other benefits include:

- *Comprehensive Curriculum:* Courses and lab work in the Human Development and Early Childhood Disorders program introduce students to new ideas, technologies, and competencies while preparing them to succeed in hospital, clinical and educational settings.
- *Facilities:* The School of Behavioral and Brain Sciences is housed in Green Hall and the Erik Jonsson Academic Center, and is enhanced by six centers in the Dallas-Fort Worth Metroplex.
- *Labs and Internships:* Students have the opportunity to conduct hands-on research in one of the more than 50 labs across campus and within the School’s centers and institutes.
- *Location:* Situated in the greater Dallas region—recently rated by Forbes magazine as the #1 “Best City for Jobs”—UT Dallas provides students with easy access to employers and internship opportunities, not to mention a large and supportive alumni population.

Contact Information

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Career Opportunities

Graduates of the Human Development and Early Childhood Disorders program have gone on to professional careers as Early Intervention Specialists, Developmental Specialists and Parent Educators in a variety of settings, such as:

- Non-profit agencies
- Hospitals
- Healthcare clinics
- Schools

Marketable Skills

Upon successful completion of the MS in Human Development and Early Childhood Disorders, UT Dallas students will apply knowledge about typical and atypical early child development, assessment, and best practices to best serve children and their families with the following skills:

- Students will utilize skills in comprehensive developmental assessment to plan and implement appropriate intervention services.
- Students will apply principles of ethical professional practice, including use of reflective supervision to increase self-awareness, when working with children and their families.
- Students will critically evaluate research evidence to promote best practices in assessment, intervention, and service delivery.

Application Deadlines and Requirements

Priority application deadline for the fall semester is February 15. The program will consider applications on a rolling basis until May 1. Visit the Apply Now webpage to begin the application process, and see the Human Development and Early Childhood Disorders website for additional information.

Applicants to the Human Development and Early Childhood Disorders master's program should have:

- A bachelor's degree or its equivalent.
- A grade point average (GPA) in undergraduate-level coursework of 3.0 or better on a 4.0-point scale.
- Test Scores: GRE scores are optional. Letters of Recommendation: Applicants must submit three letters of recommendation from individuals able to judge the candidate's potential for success in the master's degree program.
- Admissions Essay: Applicants must submit an essay outlining their academic interests and career goals.
- International applicants must submit a TOEFL score of at least 80 on the internet-based test. Scores must be less than two years old. See the Graduate Catalog for additional information regarding English proficiency requirements for international applicants.

Although the program is designed for students with backgrounds in psychology, special education, physical and occupational therapy, early childhood education, speech/language pathology and communication disorders, students from other disciplines who have relevant experiences and interests are also encouraged to apply. Application fees may be waived for members of some professional organizations serving underrepresented groups, such as Teach for America, McNair Scholars, and the Institute for the Recruitment of Teachers (IRT).

All off-campus field experiences, including practicum and internship placements, require a criminal background check; students who fail the criminal background check will not be able to complete the master's degree.

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About the School



The School of Behavioral and Brain Sciences is focused on the intersection of mind, brain and behavior. Through the school's research-intensive culture, our professors and students work together to unravel mysteries that will improve human lives. They accomplish this by engaging in novel scientific discovery, translating the latest research into treatments, and sharing this knowledge through professional and community outreach. The School provides innovative training and research, offering an array of programs to develop creative thinkers. Graduate training in BBS prepares students to become scientists, educators, clinicians, social service professionals, innovators, and corporate leaders.

Graduate Research

The School of Behavioral and Brain Sciences is committed to translating the latest research into interventions that add depth to education and provide valuable contributions to the health and well-being of humans. BBS researchers in neuroscience, psychology, and speech, language, and hearing sciences have many research grants from the most prestigious national funding agencies, including the National Institutes of Health and the National Science Foundation.

Departments

Neuroscience. Research in the Department of Neuroscience focuses primarily on cell and circuit plasticity in the nervous system and how this influences behavior. Major research strengths are in learning and memory; targeted plasticity for therapeutic intervention; and the neurobiology of pain.

Speech, Language, and Hearing Sciences. Research in the Department of Speech, Language, and Hearing Sciences, based at the Callier Center for Communication Disorders, this program emphasizes clinical and translational research in basic scientific understanding of brain and behavioral mechanisms of speech, language, and hearing, as well as on disorders that affect the ability of children and adults to communicate. Research strengths broadly encompass basic science, applied (translational) applications, prevention, and remediation.

Psychology. Research in the Department of Psychology focuses on all aspects of cognitive, developmental, and social psychology, and cognitive neuroscience. Areas of expertise include learning and memory; reasoning; perception; modeling; lifespan development (from early childhood through the oldest old); and brain disease (e.g., autism, schizophrenia, traumatic injury, neurodegeneration, addiction).

BBS Graduate Programs		
Applied Cognition and Neuroscience	MS	
Audiology		AUD
Cognition and Neuroscience		PHD
Speech-Language Pathology	MS	
Speech, Language, and Hearing Sciences		PHD
Human Development and Early Childhood Disorders	MS	
Psychology	MS	PHD

Contact Information

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About the School



Research Centers

Many of the school's activities are shaped significantly by faculty and student involvement in five centers listed below.

Callier Center for Communication Disorders: The Center is a national leader in providing care for children and adults with speech, language, and hearing disorders. Supporting this clinical mission, faculty members research the causes, treatments and prevention of communication disorders.

Center for Advanced Pain Studies: This Center's mission is to elucidate fundamental mechanisms underlying chronic pain, and to discover novel therapeutics for the treatment of chronic pain through academic, public and private partnerships.

Center for BrainHealth: This Center focuses its research on understanding the brain's ability to restore or protect healthy function, to protect the brain from unnecessary mental decline and to heal the brain through treatments that regenerate function.

Center for Children and Families: Center research emphasizes parenting and healthy families, strengthening interpersonal relationships, and enhancing thinking and learning.

Center for Vital Longevity: This Center focuses on understanding and expanding the capacity of the aging mind, aiming to understand how the brain changes over the lifespan, the consequences of neural aging on everyday function, and interventions that show promise for slowing cognitive aging.

Texas Biomedical Device Center: The Center consists of scientists, engineers, medical doctors, regulatory specialists, and clinicians committed to the development of affordable and innovative therapies and technologies to improve the quality of life for individuals suffering from neurological disorders.

Additional Facts about BBS

- Our Audiology and Speech-Language Pathology programs are ranked #2 and #10 in the nation respectively, according to *U.S. News and World Report*.
- The School is home to leading experts in Psychology, Neuroscience and Speech, Language, and Hearing Sciences.
- In fiscal year 2019, BBS faculty members were responsible for nearly \$13 million in total research funding, including roughly \$12 million from National Institutes of Health, National Science Foundation, and Department of Defense.
- BBS has more than 2,300 undergraduate students and nearly 600 graduate students, including two of the top 10 undergraduate majors at UTD (Neuroscience, Psychology).

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