Child development practitioners and researchers focus on providing better ways to foster the intellectual and emotional development of children. The child learning and development major focuses on the fundamental processes of child and adolescent development within the contexts of families, schools, peer groups and larger cultural surroundings. The degree provides undergraduate students a rigorous science-based curriculum that immerses them in the theories, findings, research methods and best practices that the scientific study of child development has to offer. Opportunities for supervised and independent research, as well as field placements that involve working with children, families, schools and social services, are provided in addition to formal coursework.

**Careers in Child Learning and Development**

The child learning and development degree prepares students for a wide range of careers in education, psychology, social work, family medicine, public health, family law and public policy.

The major is especially well suited for students seeking elementary teacher certification. Students who elect to add teacher certification will develop a strong foundation in child development as well as accumulate clinical teaching skills and field experience. The University’s Career Center is an important resource for students pursuing their careers. Professional career counselors are available to help clarify career goals, provide strategies for mastering job interviews and writing professional cover letters and resumes and help students connect with campus recruiters.

**Child Learning and Development at UT Dallas**

UT Dallas offers two undergraduate degree plans in child learning and development:

- The BS in child learning and development requires 120 hours to graduate: 42 hours from the University’s core curriculum, 36 hours of child learning and development courses and 41 hours of electives and a one-hour seminar.
- The BS in child learning and development with the EC-6 teacher certification requires a minimum of 45 additional hours of coursework that can be completed within the free elective hours.
- Junior and senior child learning and development majors with at least a 2.5 GPA are eligible to receive college credit for a volunteer internship in the community.

** Marketable Skills**

Upon successful completion of the BS in Child Learning and Development degree program, UT Dallas students will learn and identify fundamental processes of child and adolescent development within the contexts of families, schools, peer groups, and larger cultural milieu with the following skills:

- Students will demonstrate scientific literacy, especially as it pertains to research in child and adolescent development.
- Students will apply ethical standards, psychological concepts, and/or research findings to inform applied issues related to child and adolescent development.
- Students will demonstrate effective writing and oral skills to communicate information about the scientific study of child development and its application.
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. A large number of BBS undergraduates participate in hands-on research in our many scientific laboratories. Our research teams translate the latest research into treatments and share this knowledge through community outreach. The School provides innovative training and research, offering an array of programs to develop creative thinkers. Undergraduate training in BBS prepares students to enter graduate schools or the workplace, leading to successful careers in health, science, education, child and social services, innovation, and/or the business world.

BBS undergraduates enter many career pathways. In health, they study medicine, dentistry, physical therapy, speech-language pathology, audiology, clinical psychology, optometry, and many others. In science, they develop careers as investigators, technicians, clinical trial coordinators, and educators. Besides clinical and scientific careers, many other BBS alumni are leaders in social services, child interventions, technology development, human factors, software design, and many other fields.

Academic Departments

**Neuroscience:** This program 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 sensory neurobiology and pain.

**Speech, Language, and Hearing Sciences:** Based at the Callier Center for Communication Disorders, this program provides students with hands-on scientific training and emphasizes clinically applied research training in speech, language, and hearing and in all disorders that affect the ability of children and adults to communicate.

**Psychology:** This department focuses on all aspects of cognitive, developmental, and social psychology, and cognitive neuroscience. Areas of expertise include brain imaging and measurement; 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).

Fast Tracks

The Fast-Track program enables undergraduate students to take up to 15 hours of graduate courses that will count toward both a bachelor's degree and a master's degree in applied cognition and neuroscience, speech-language pathology, or human development and early childhood disorders. Students must have at least 90 credit hours and meet the graduate admission requirements to qualify.

Undergraduate Programs

**Neuroscience: Multiple Tracks in the Undergraduate Major**

**Medical Neuroscience:** This track meets the overwhelming demand for advanced training in this growing department for students who wish to go on to professional education in health fields, such as medicine. This track has an emphasis on opportunities for disease-oriented course work and clinical translational research.

**Neuroscience Research:** This track emphasizes research in neuroscience with enhanced laboratory experiences to prepare students for a future as neuroscience researchers, such as through PhD programs.

**Industrial Track:** This track is focused on students whose goal is to advance neuroscience through business, entrepreneurial and/or therapeutic discoveries.

Contact Information

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Psychology. Undergraduate Psychology Majors

Psychology: Training in psychology provides students with invaluable knowledge about human behavior, research methods, and data analysis that has applicability not only to careers and further study in psychology per se, but also to a wide variety of other occupations, including law, management, and medicine. Further advanced study can lead to professional careers in clinical areas, such as clinical psychology, counseling, or social work; industrial psychology; human factors engineering; and myriad other fields.

Child Learning and Development: This major prepares students for a wide range of careers in education, psychology, social work, family medicine, public health, family law, and public policy, among other areas. The major is especially well suited for students seeking elementary teacher certification. Students will develop a strong foundation in child development and accumulate teaching skills by combining a degree in child learning and development with an elementary teacher certification.

Speech, Language, and Hearing Sciences: Undergraduate Major

Audiology and Speech-Language Pathology: Education in communication sciences and disorders prepares students for advanced training and/or employment in this exciting field. Professions in speech-language pathology (SLP) and audiology are consistently rated among the best careers for the changing job landscape. SLPs and audiologists are employed in a variety of school and healthcare settings, such as schools, clinics, and hospitals.

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 the National Institutes of Health, the National Science Foundation, and the 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).