Goals for Student Learning:  
Child and Adolescent Development Majors

The faculty of the Child and Adolescent Studies Department has identified five broad areas that are central to preparing students to work effectively with children, adolescents, and families. Through a hierarchically structured curriculum, students are provided with increasingly challenging opportunities to develop these competencies, which are elaborated in course-specific learning objectives. To achieve their personal and professional goals related to the discipline, students are expected to assume responsibility for their own learning, develop the ability to assess critically their performance using objective criteria, and engage in self-initiated lifelong learning and professional growth.

1) Theory, Research, and Contexts of Development  
Demonstrate understanding and appropriate application of key developmental theories and concepts. Exhibit knowledge of empirically derived biological-physical, socio-emotional, and cognitive developmental milestones, as well as individual differences and common variations in development. Understand how the contextual and individual factors interact to influence development, including the influences of biology, gender, families, peers, institutional practices, societal change, social class, communities, culture, and public policies.

2) Developmental Inquiry  
Demonstrate understanding of the criteria for selecting and applying a variety of scientific research methods. Be able to interpret scholarly research and literature and to advance the understanding or assessment of development, developmental contexts, public policies, and/or institutional practices.

3) Information Literacy  
Access and comprehend quality information sources relevant to a specific task. Integrate and evaluate information to draw reasonable conclusions based upon evidence. Demonstrate the capability to articulate ideas, taking into consideration purpose, audience, and presentation mode.

4) Field-Based Practice  
Demonstrate an ability to integrate developmental theory and concepts to foster effective practice in order to work effectively with children, adolescents, and families from diverse backgrounds. Exhibit knowledge of the purpose, structure, and processes of community organizations and government agencies focused upon the needs of children, adolescents, and families and demonstrate an ability to use that knowledge effectively to shape and enhance communities. Understand that the needs of children, adolescents, and families are multifaceted and may best be addressed from a collaborative, interprofessional approach.

5) Professional Growth  
Engage in regular self-assessment of professional competencies and practice within the bounds of expertise. Acquire proficiency with field relevant technology resources. Develop collaborative skills to work productively in groups. Demonstrate an understanding of developmentally appropriate, ethical practice informed by research, relevant professional standards, and legal mandates. Commit to using knowledge of development proactively to advocate on behalf of children, adolescents, and families.

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