Meet our faculty.

See what our Alumni are doing.

Become a part of our community.
Welcome to the Family and Child Studies (FCS) program! FCS offers degree programs from the bachelor’s to the doctoral level that reflect the role of diverse families in New Mexico’s multicultural environment and in a global world. Within the context of the mission and core values of the College of Education and the Department of Individual, Family and Community Education, FCS prepares professionals who will work in educational, social service and public policy environments to facilitate individual and family well-being.

The Family and Child Studies program is accredited by the National Council for Family Relations for preparing our students to become nationally certified Family Life Educators through both the graduate and undergraduate levels. We prepare our students by developing a deep appreciation and responsiveness to the many diversities in humans and to the many biological, situational, familial, and ecological factors that influence human functioning and adaptation.

Our students make significant and unique contributions in addressing the challenges families face in New Mexico and our nation. We prepare individuals to be licensed early childhood teachers, home visitors, family service providers, administrators of child and family service programs and research scientists. Our graduates hold leadership positions in education, government, policy and advocacy organizations, both in New Mexico and nationally.

Our faculty are internationally recognized scholars who conduct research focused on a variety of topics that influence human growth and development, family relations and support, and overall well-being. We invite you to join us as we work together to prepare professionals to work with children and families as educators, service providers, policy makers, researchers, and leaders in fields relevant for enhancing children’s development and family health and wellbeing.
Apply

Graduates of our dynamic program can expect to find work in a variety of fields, such as: Department of Nursing at UNM, Child Abuse Response Teams (including Para Los Ninos), Children, Youth and Families Department, Battered Shelters (including S.A.F.E. House), homeless shelters

M.A.

Master’s Degree in Family and Child Studies in one of the three following concentrations: Family Life Education, Human Development and Family Relations and Early Childhood Studies. The program offers flexibility in developing programs of study that meet students’ interests. Acceptance into the program is based on ratings of several factors including scholarship, academic background (especially in the social/behavioral sciences), work experience, letters of recommendation, a personal statement and multicultural experience. Students from academic backgrounds other than family and child studies are strongly encouraged to apply.

Students will make significant and unique contributions in addressing the challenges families face in New Mexico and our nation. Students prepare to work in early childhood settings, as home visitors, family service providers, administrators in family and child services, and research scientists. Our alumni hold leadership positions in education, government, policy, and advocate organizations in New Mexico and nationally.

Ph.D.

Our Ph.D program is grounded in an interdisciplinary perspective that assumes that family dynamics can best be understood within the multiple contexts in which they occur. In addition to the 12-hour doctoral core, students plan an individualized program with their Committee on Studies that focuses on the area of Family Studies and which may include courses in the graduate unit as well as from other units. To be eligible for the doctoral core courses (advanced seminars in theories, research and legal, ethical and policy issues in Family Studies and Internship), students will be expected to have had graduate courses (Family Studies Master’s Core courses) or their equivalents in human growth and development, family interaction, managing family resources, multicultural issues in working with families and children, introductory statistics and a course in research methods.

Applications are due for Fall Admission by February 15 and for Spring Admission by September 15th

Please contact Dr. Ryan Kelly at ryankelly@unm.edu for more
Alexandra N. Davis
Assistant Professor & FCS Undergraduate Coordinator

Alexandra’s research examines sociocultural and contextual factors related to positive functioning, including prosocial and moral development among ethnic minorities and low-SES youth and adolescents. She loves travelling, spending time with friends, and as a huge sports fan, she loves playing basketball.

Ziarat Hossain
Professor, Regents’ Lecturer, and Interim Associate Dean for Curriculum and Faculty Student Affairs

Zia teaches developmental, theoretical, and cross-cultural courses in Family and Child Studies. His research documents patterns of fathers’ involvement in the family across cultural communities. He is a former Society for Cross-Cultural Research president and Fulbright Scholar. He enjoys traveling and music.

Cara Streit
Assistant Professor

Cara focuses on the role of various family processes in predicting U.S. Latino/a youth’s prosocial development. She examines culturally-specific family processes and mainstream family processes socialize prosocial behaviors in U.S. Latino/a families. She also considers the important roles of mothers, fathers, and siblings. She enjoys going to baseball games, spending time with her family, friends, dogs and exploring local coffee shops and breweries.

Ashley Martin-Cuellar
Lecturer III

Ashley is interested in mental health clinicians with a personal history of trauma and how this history impacts their experience with compassion fatigue and compassion satisfaction. Additionally, in her work as a Marriage and Family Therapist, she is interested in trauma-informed care and specifically, with trauma-informed parenting education, including the impact trauma has on parenting practices.
Every year, our faculty conducts cutting edge research of the complex influences, relationships, and ecologies of development across lifespan.

Our research is disseminated across a range of respected journals.

Maria Elena Cecilia Salazar
Lecturer III

Maria Elena’s interests are guided by her experiences as a student, educator of preschool through graduate students, and as mother of children in New Mexico’s public schools and institutions of higher learning. She utilizes culturally relevant literature and curriculum with students of all ages, and feels literacy is a gateway to academic success. During her free time she enjoys cooking and visiting the many historical sites across New Mexico and the greater Southwest.

David T. Lardier Jr.
Assistant Professor

David’s research focuses primarily on youth and community empowerment in under-served communities of color, as well as the mechanisms through which youth can be involved in research and policy change as both activists and actors of social change. He examines the development and practice of empowerment-based prevention programs that meet the diverse needs of youth and their communities.

David J. Atencio
Associate Professor

David is a New Mexico native and a graduate of UNM and Stanford, and has been with the College of Education since 1998. David’s research focuses on the development of self-regulation, motivation, and mindfulness in young children. He has provided leadership in improving professional development systems for early care, early education, and family support professionals. With his family, he is a music minister in his church.

Ryan Kelly
Associate Professor and FCS Graduate Coordinator

Ryan researches the influence that family risk (e.g., Physical and psychological harsh parenting tactics, marital violence) has on youth health and development over time with a focus on sleep. He also focuses on health disparities and understanding the extent to which the negative consequences of risk exposure varies by ethnicity and socioeconomic status. He enjoys spending time with family, cheering on the Lobos, exercising, and trying family restaurants.
While she did not start her career at UNM focusing on Family & Child Studies, minoring in the program as an undergraduate helped her realize her true goals: “I realized how much I enjoyed learning about the multiple theories of children and families and the level of importance it has, not only in my own family, but also in families throughout my community and my home state of New Mexico.”

Since returning to UNM and graduating from the FCS Masters program, Miquella began working with at-risk family and children as the program manager at the Para los Niños and Child Abuse Response Team at the UNM Health Sciences Center. There, she works with a medical team to document and interpret child abuse, neglect, and other medical conditions.

“The knowledge that I gained fueled my motivation to work with children and families who are at-risk or who have adverse childhood experiences in and around my community.”
Ashley came to the FCS program after completing her degree in Marriage and Family Therapy. “I realized that I loved working with families, but also wanted to learn and engage with research and teach,” this decision started her journey to where she is now: A Post-Doctoral Fellow within the Family and Child Studies program, along with running her own private practice for individuals and families.

During the more difficult times in the program, she felt supported by both fellow students and faculty, who helped her through the program. Going to conferences, having close access to faculty, and making connections through the program made the experience a success for her.

She now gives back through a passion for the field: “I get to do what I have grown to absolutely love—teaching and research!”
Meet Oliver Lardier! Son of Dr. David Lardier

Research Areas include:

Mastering his bear crawl, jumping, spinning around, vrooming around the house with his cars, and watching Sesame Street or Frozen.

Meet Jack Kelly! Son of Dr. Ryan Kelly

Research Areas include:

Chasing ducks at the Campus Duck Pond, pushing his lawnmower around the neighborhood, teaching his dad about child development, and watching The Grinch no matter the season.

Thank you for reading and getting to know all of us--faculty, students, and alumni.

Now, we want to get to know you! Feel free to visit us at our site: coe.unm.edu/FCS or give us a call at 505.277.4535

For questions regarding our undergraduate program, please reach out to Dr. Alex Davis at alexdavis@unm.edu

For questions regarding our graduate program, please reach out to Dr. Ryan Kelly at ryankelly@unm.edu

We look forward to hearing from you,

Support

Please contact Mary Wolford if you are interested in learning how you can support the Family and Child Studies Program here at the University of New Mexico. Gifts are also accepted to the program in memory of Professor Virginia Shipman.

Mary Wolford
Sr. Director of Development
College of Education
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New Scholars