Minnesota has an early childhood workforce crisis. Minnesota needs high-quality early childhood providers to support children, and work with parents in our state. The economic vitality of our state is impacted by quality of early childhood programming. Teacher effectiveness is at the core of quality.

Why UMD

The Bachelor of Applied Science degree in Early Childhood Studies (ECS) is designed to prepare professionals to work with young children and their families. With exposure to theoretical and best practice principals, graduates will be prepared to create effective learning environments designed to support early cognitive, social, emotional, and physical development.

Compelling current research in the field of child development and education emphasizes the importance of early investment in quality programming for young children and families. The recognition of “critical periods of development” has altered the landscape of best practices in early years and hence the required competencies for professionals serving young children and their families. Concentrating on the ages 0-5 years provides students an opportunity to delve deeper into the growing plethora of interdisciplinary literature and resources available to the early childhood field. At the core of the major is the focus on quality services and programming for young children and families.

The ECS major utilizes a comprehensive approach to equipping students with knowledge in the foundation of child development and well-being, drawing from the fields of infant and early childhood mental health, interpersonal neurobiology, early childhood education, and early childhood special education. The major also aims to equip students with developmentally appropriate practices for nurturing curiosity and facilitating the development of creativity and appreciation of the arts during the early years.

In addition to a host of core Early Childhood Studies courses and liberal education requirements, students either select a minor, or recommended interdisciplinary electives offered by the early childhood program or other disciplines in the university.

Acquired Skills

- Students will demonstrate an understanding of the skills needed to effectively support infant and early childhood mental health.
- Students will demonstrate an understanding of the skills needed to effectively support early childhood education.
- Students will demonstrate an understanding of the skills needed to effectively support children and families enrolled in and early childhood special education.
- Students will demonstrate an understanding of the skills and strategies needed to act as advocates on behalf of children and families.
- Students will develop a personal philosophy that addresses working with children and families through an ethical and values informed lens.
- Through taking electives in other areas students will demonstrate and understanding of the skills needed to support children in various settings other than in an education setting.
Career Possibilities

- Early Childhood classroom teacher
- Child Life Specialist (with additional coursework)
- Early Childhood policy advocate
- Criminologist (focused on child well-fare)
- Social Worker (focused on child well-fare)
- Early Childhood Home Visiting Specialist
- Early Childhood Trauma Informed care specialist
- Head Start teacher
- Montessori teacher (with additional coursework)
- Early Childhood Environmental Education teacher
- Early Childhood Workforce specialist
- Early Childhood Community Outreach/Advocate

Scholarships

Students in CEHSP are eligible to apply for more than 100 scholarships each academic year typically totaling $120,000 annually. For more information on scholarship opportunities, visit our scholarship webpage (https://z.umn.edu/scholarshipcehsp).

UMD’s Education Department has over 25 scholarships ranging from $1,000 to $10,000. Scholarships vary in criteria and some are specifically for subject areas or students entering student teaching in the US or starting their student teaching abroad.

Student Clubs

- Education MN Student Association (EMSA)
- Access For All (AFA)

Faculty Highlights

Faculty participate in scholarly and service based efforts at the national, state and local levels. Faculty has combined experience 100 years in ech, ecse, infant mental health, administration, higher ed, and family ed. Faculty have won campus and college awards for outstanding teaching, advising, and service.