

**MEMO**

**To:** Faculty Senate

**From:** Colby Kervick and Stephen Everse, Co-Chairs of the Faculty Senate

**Date:** January 11, 2024

**Re:** Approval of a proposal for a new minor in Childhood Studies (CHS) submitted by the Department of Education (DOE) in the College of Education and Social Services

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The CAC unanimously approved via electronic ballot a proposal for a new minor in Childhood Studies (CHS) submitted by faculty members in the Early Childhood Program in the Department of Education (DOE). The intended start date of the new minor would be Fall 2024 if approved by the faculty senate and Board of Trustees.

***Program Description and Rationale***

The Childhood Studies (CHS) minor is designed to provide students with a holistic and interdisciplinary understanding of the lived experiences of children and the social and cultural constructions of childhood. The program aims to equip students with the knowledge and skills needed to work with or on behalf of children in various fields, including education, social services, health sciences, psychology, counseling, speech and language pathology, political science, and law.

**Main Elements of the Program:**

- **Overview of Primary Purpose:** Unlike a major in Early Childhood Education, the CHS minor is non-licensure and complementary to any major across the university. The primary purpose of the CHS minor is to:
  - Provide students with a holistic perspective on childhood, considering diverse sociocultural, linguistic, political, economic, and historical contexts.
  - Develop students as informed, compassionate, and effective advocates for children's well-being in areas such as education, social services, health sciences, psychology, counseling, speech and language pathology, political science, and law.
  - Emphasize social justice, diversity, equity, and inclusion in understanding the challenges faced by children globally and locally.
  - Cater to students from various majors and colleges, allowing them to tailor the program to their interests while providing a valuable complement to their academic pursuits.
  - Respond to the urgent demand for professionals with expertise in early childhood, considering the rising rates of anxiety, depression, and mental health challenges among children, as well as the childcare crisis affecting the workforce.
- **Curriculum Synopsis:** The curriculum consists of a minimum of 18 credits, including an introductory course (EDEC 007/1070) exploring Critical Childhood Studies, a developmental knowledge course (choose one), one to two interdisciplinary electives, one to two early childhood electives, and a capstone course (EDEC 3070) involving a community-engaged action research project. The program is intentionally designed to allow for differentiation based on students' interests while ensuring a comprehensive understanding of childhood studies.
- **Intended Audience:**
  - The CHS minor is open to students from any major and college across the university who have a particular interest in working with or advocating for children. It complements a wide range of

academic pursuits and provides valuable insights for those entering fields related to children's well-being.

- **Learning Objectives/Outcomes:**

- **1. Complex View of Childhood:** Demonstrate a complex and competency-based view of childhood, understanding how children are influenced by culture and function as social agents.
- **2. Cultural Awareness:** Increase awareness and appreciation for how socially, culturally, and physically diverse backgrounds shape children's lives.
- **3. Inclusive Knowledge and Skills:** Develop knowledge and actionable skills in child development, social science, care, and education that are relational, inclusive, multidisciplinary, pluralistic, anti-bias, and anti-racist.
- **4. Advocacy for Children:** Interrogate and advocate for children's needs and rights through a capstone experience, conducting a community-engaged action research project.

### **Rationale for Inaugurating the New Program:**

- **Philosophic Goals:** The Childhood Studies (CHS) minor is grounded in a set of philosophic goals that align with the overarching principles of fostering a holistic and interdisciplinary approach to childhood studies. The program seeks to:
  - **Promote Comprehensive Understanding:** Encourage students to adopt a complex and competency-based view of childhood, recognizing the multifaceted influence of culture and the agency of children in their own right.
  - **Emphasize Cultural Awareness:** Increase awareness and appreciation for the impact of socially, culturally, and physically diverse backgrounds on children's lives.
  - **Advocate for Inclusivity:** Develop knowledge and actionable skills in child development, social science, care, and education that are relational, inclusive, multidisciplinary, pluralistic, anti-bias, and anti-racist.
  - **Inspire Advocacy:** Instigate students to interrogate and advocate for children's needs and rights through a capstone experience involving a community-engaged action research project.
- **Relationship to Missions of University and Unit(s):** The CHS minor is strategically aligned with the missions of both the University and the Department of Education, emphasizing:
  - **Civic Learning and Engagement:** Contributing to the mission of the University by fostering civic learning and engagement among students, empowering them to be active agents of positive social change.
  - **Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion:** Aligning with the mission of the University's Division of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion, the program incorporates values and dispositions that are family-centered, community-based, culturally competent, collaboratively engaged, and oriented toward diversity, equity, inclusion, justice, and belonging (DEIJB).
  - **Land Grant Commitment:** Fulfilling the land grant commitment of the University by cultivating thinkers and doers who work to advance the rights, education, and welfare of children.
  - **Academic Exploration:** Offering an interdisciplinary minor that complements various majors across the university, contributing to a diverse and dynamic academic landscape.

### **Justification and Evidence for Demand**

- **Justification:** The initiation of the Childhood Studies (CHS) minor is driven by pressing needs in the realms of education, social welfare, and the job market.
  - **Education Needs:** The National Governor's Association has underscored a growing demand for skilled professionals in Early Childhood Education. With rising rates of anxiety, depression, and mental health challenges among children, there is an urgent need for practitioners who possess a deep understanding of the social determinants influencing children's well-being. The CHS minor addresses this educational need by providing students with specialized knowledge and skills to navigate the complexities of childhood, emphasizing the broader social and cultural contexts shaping children's experiences.
  - **Social Needs:** The CHS minor responds to critical social needs, particularly in the context of the childcare crisis. Economists House, Pugliese & Vesely (2022) have highlighted the global

workforce problem affecting the economy, with disproportionate impacts on minorities, especially women of color. The program is designed to prepare professionals who can contribute to addressing this crisis and advocating for the welfare of children in diverse sociocultural and economic contexts.

- **Job Market Needs:** In light of the national mental health and childcare crises, there is a growing demand for professionals with expertise in childhood studies. The CHS minor equips students with the necessary skills to meet the needs of the job market, fostering a nuanced understanding of childhood and providing actionable insights for various fields. This includes education, social services, health sciences, psychology, counseling, speech and language pathology, political science, and law. The interdisciplinary nature of the program ensures that graduates are well-prepared to address the multifaceted challenges facing children in today's society.
- **Evidence of Demand:** The evidence of demand for the CHS minor is supported by national trends and specific local and regional needs. Surveys conducted among current students expressing interest in child-related fields and feedback from prospective employers affirm the demand for graduates with a background in childhood studies. The identified gap in the university's offerings further emphasizes the need for a specialized program like CHS to meet the educational, social, and job market demands in the field of childhood studies.

### ***Relationship to Existing Programs***

- **Unique Features:** The CHS minor distinguishes itself from existing programs by offering a non-licensure, interdisciplinary approach to childhood studies. Unlike the major in Early Childhood Education, the minor is complementary to various majors across the university, providing flexibility for students in different disciplines.
- **Comparison to Similar UVM Programs:** While UVM offers majors in related fields, such as Early Childhood Education, Human Development and Family Studies, and Psychology, the CHS minor stands out for its interdisciplinary nature. It bridges gaps between disciplines, offering a unique perspective on childhood studies that is not covered comprehensively in existing programs.
- **Connections to Existing UVM Programs:** The CHS minor enhances the university's portfolio by providing an interdisciplinary option for students interested in child-related fields. Graduates from the CHS minor could potentially become candidates for existing graduate programs in education, social work, psychology, and related fields.
- **Potential Effects on Other Academic Units/Departments:** The CHS minor is designed to be inclusive and not competitive with existing programs. It complements rather than duplicates content covered in majors such as Early Childhood Education. The proposed program has received letters of support from affected units, highlighting its potential positive impact on the university's academic landscape.
- **Responses to Feedback During the Development Period:** During the development of the proposal, the proposers sought feedback from a variety of stakeholders across campus. One concern was raised regarding potential overlap with existing programs. In response, the proposers clarified the distinct interdisciplinary focus of the CHS minor, ensuring it augments, rather than duplicates, content covered in other programs and emphasized the need for specialized training in childhood studies, which the CHS minor uniquely provides. Overall, the response to concerns during the development of the proposal highlighted the strategic positioning of the CHS minor as a program that collaborates with existing offerings and strengthens the university's commitment to interdisciplinary education and addressing societal needs related to childhood studies.

To complete the Childhood Studies minor, undergraduate students must complete a minimum of 18 credits, including 9 or more credits at the 2xxx-level or higher and two required courses (EDEC 1010 and EDEC 3070), which serve as an introduction and a capstone of the minor, respectively.

<b>CHS Minor: Program at a Glance</b>	
<b>COURSE CATEGORY</b>	<b>CREDITS</b>
<b>Introduction</b> <i>(required)</i> EDEC 007/1070 D2/S1: Movie Night-Critical Childhood Studies	3
<b>Developmental Knowledge</b> <i>(choose one)</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•EDEC 063/1630: Child Development (3c)</li> <li>•HDFS 005/1050: Human Development (3c)</li> <li>•PSYS 150/2400: Developmental Psych: Childhood (3c)</li> </ul>	3
<b>Interdisciplinary Elective(s)**</b> <i>(choose one to two, see below)</i>	3-6
<b>Early Childhood Elective(s)</b> <i>(choose one to two)</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•EDEC 1010 D2/GC2: Intro to Early Care and Education (with Civic Learning 4c)</li> <li>•EDEC 2130 AH1: Creative Arts and Movement</li> <li>•EDEC 2510 SU: Science of Everyday Life</li> <li>•EDEC 3810: Inquiry-Based Pedagogy</li> </ul>	3-6+
<b>Capstone</b> <i>(required)</i> EDEC 3070: SL/GC2/WIL2: Community Engaged RESEARCH (variable credit)	3-6
<b>TOTAL CREDITS*</b> <i>*Students must take 9 or more credits at the 2xxx level or above.</i> <i>**Students may double dip one interdisciplinary elective with their major requirements if allowable by the student's major.</i>	<b>18</b>

#### **CHS Interdisciplinary Elective Course List:**

ANTH 1100 Cultural Anthropology  
 ANTH 1470: Parenting and Childhood  
 CSD 1200: Intro to Disordered Communication  
 CSD 1250: Communication Differences & Disorders in the Media  
 CSD 1940: Dev of Spoken Language  
 CSD 3200: D2: Culture of Disability  
 ECLD 2020: Bilingual Education and Policy  
 ECLD 3040: SL: Relating/Responding Community Needs  
 ECLD 3050: SL: Family School and Community Collaboration  
 ECSP 2100: Individualized Practices for Inclusion  
 EDHE 2520 D1: Race, Bullying & Discrimination  
 EDSP 3040: Relating and Responding to Community Needs  
 EDSP 3230 Collaboration and Communication in School and Community  
 EDSP 3250. D2: Culture of Disability  
 EDSP 3899: Global Resilience Through Family, School & Comm (travel study)  
 GEOG 2772: Historical Geography: Mapping American Childhoods  
 HDFS 1050: Human Development,  
 HDFS 1600: Family Context of Development  
 HDFS 2010/CNSL 2010 Helping Relationship  
 HDFS 3630 Advanced Child Development  
 HDFS 2205 Developing Through Relationships  
 PSYS 2400: Developmental Psych of Childhood

PSYS 3520, Fit Kids Special Populations  
 PSYS 3450 (SL) Fit Kids Applied Research  
 SOC 2355: Sociology of Childhood  
 SOC 2460: Sociology of Disaster  
 SOC 2220: Sociology of the Holocaust  
 STAT 1050: QR-Statistics and Social Justice  
 GSWS 1500: Gender, Sexuality and Women's Studies  
 POLS 2455: Politics of Sex

**Admission Requirements and Process**

There are no prerequisite courses required to begin or complete the minor, although students may choose an interdisciplinary elective that requires a prerequisite, particularly if situated in a unit different from the student's home major.

Early Childhood (Birth-Grade 3) Education major is not acceptable with this minor due to overlap.

There are currently no restrictions to the minor.

**Anticipated Enrollment and Impact on Current Programs**

They anticipate increased enrollment in many Early Childhood Education (EDEC) courses as illustrated below. They will offer EDEC 1070 and EDEC 2130 both semesters instead of spring-only. They will also add one newly developed capstone course, EDEC 3070.

Course Number/Name	Credit Hours	Current Enrollment	Expected Enrollment with CS minor
<b>EDEC 1010 CL/D2/GC2:</b> Intro to Early Care and Education	<b>4</b>	<b>30 F</b> <b>30 S</b>	<b>40F</b> <b>40S</b>
<b>EDEC 1070 D2/S1:</b> Movie Night-Critical Childhood Studies	<b>3</b>	<b>100 S</b>	<b>100 F</b> <b>100 S</b>
<b>EDEC 1630:</b> Child Development	<b>3</b>	<b>44 F</b>	<b>60</b>
<b>EDEC 2130 AH1:</b> Arts and Movement	<b>3</b>	<b>22 S</b>	<b>24 F</b> <b>24 S</b>
<b>EDEC 2510 SU/N1:</b> Science of Everyday Life	<b>3</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>32</b>
<b>EDEC 3810:</b> Inquiry-Based Pedagogy	<b>3</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>25</b>
<b>EDEC 3070 SL/GC2/WIL2:</b> Advocacy in Action (6-10c)	<b>3-6</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>20</b>

Work is continuing to create bridges between and among programs, with interest and expertise in Childhood Studies. Partnering units include, ANTH, CSD, GEOG, HDF, PSYCH, SOC, STAT. Work will be ongoing to foster new and increasingly innovative collaborations.

Currently, there are no minors available in the University catalogue which enable students to focus exclusively on children and childhood, with the intention of breadth, depth and interdisciplinarity, related to this particular demographic.

Minimal overlap does exist with the Human Development and Family Science (HDF) minor, and similarities, differences and opportunities for collaboration have been explored. However, these two minors are highly

distinct in that CHS will focus fundamentally on issues that impact children, while the HDF minor considers the full scope of human development from conception through death. The two minors would have no required course work in common. Dialogue between the HDF program and faculty developing the CHS minor proposal revealed mutual enthusiasm and a stated expectation that some HDF majors are likely to declare CHS as a minor to enhance focus on this particular population of interest, just as current Early Childhood majors, minor in HDF.

HDF and CHS faculty are committed to sustaining communication over time. Faculty will collaborate on drafting catalogue language and engaging in marketing and recruitment, by vetting initiatives with acting Program Coordinators. Every three years, they will conduct “an alignment check” to ensure that the programs remain distinct and that students and other stakeholders understand those distinctions.

### ***Advising***

Each and every student who declares a minor in CHS will be assigned a faculty advisor from the Early Childhood Education program to support their planning, registration and academic success in the minor. A Childhood Studies Minor Student Program Guide is also in development. Advisors will hold group information and planning sessions once per semester and be available for one-on-one consultations.

### ***Assessment Plan***

In order to evaluate the effectiveness of the program, identify areas of improvement and monitor the efficacy of implemented changes over time, the program plans to collect data and review that data annually to create action plans in response. As housed within the Department of Education (DOE) in the College of Education and Social Services (CESS), the CHS Minor would participate in the APR (Annual Program Review) process already in place. This would include the DOE Chair’s review of course evaluation and advisement data for all required courses and advisors in the minor. In terms of elective courses, the program will conduct a syllabus review to ensure alignment with program outcomes every three years and consult with faculty in other colleges regarding this process.

Embedded in the minor’s capstone course will be an exit survey which will target the following questions by gathering both quantitative and qualitative data:

- a. How well did the program offer what you needed or wanted in your pursuit of the CHS minor?
- b. How well did you achieve the stated outcomes of the minor via your course work?

In order to understand the student completion rate and rate of minor growth over time, CESS Student Services will also gather and share data regarding:

- a. Number of students who enroll in the minor
- b. Number of students who complete the minor

### ***Staffing Plan, Resource Requirements, and Budget***

Units offering an interdisciplinary elective for the minor have been consulted and are open to either growing enrollment in the course, or including CHS minors when space is available given course caps. There should be no negative impact on cost to other academic units.

There are no immediate needs for faculty appointments, however, after three years of the program, the core faculty and program and CESS administrators will examine enrollment patterns to determine if additional resources are warranted.

## ***Library Resources***

Dan DeSanto, CESS Subject Librarian, was consulted on 6/9/23, and no additional library resources are required.

### **A. First year costs in addition to current budget;**

As a new minor program, they envision growth to be gradual over the first five years and the administrative burden to remain relatively low. In the first year, and years following, there will be need for a one-section release for program coordination and advisement capacity for all students in the minor. No other costs are anticipated.

### **B. Total costs for first five years in addition to current budget.**

A conservative excel budget was shared with the Dean. The model is based on the assumptions below:

1. Students in the minor will accrue 18 credits over 2 years.
2. Each cohort is 10 students. Except for FY25 (AY24-25), this will bring the average up to 20 after FY2026.
3. The direct cost includes one course release, at 11%, for program coordination and one instructor for one section, at 11%, to teach the new capstone course, EDEC 3170, concurrently being proposed.

The current model shows the Net Revenue will be about \$57,860 by the end of Year 5 (FY2029). They are expecting to recruit more students over Year 2, and this is the base budget. As the minor grows, the potential net growth will be reviewed, keeping the actual expenses at the same level.

## ***Evidence of Support***

There was extensive communication with academic units likely to be involved with the minor, and a log of communications from 2/2/23 to 9/11/23 was included.

Letters of support were obtained from the following:

### **A. Department(s) of minor(s):**

Kimberly Vannest, PhD, Chair, Department of Education  
Jason Garvey, PhD, CoChair, Department of Education

### **B. School or college curriculum committee(s):**

Juliet Halliday, PhD, Chair CESS Curriculum Committee;

### **C. School or college dean(s).**

Katharine Shepherd, EdD, Dean, College of Education and Social Services

### **D. Interdisciplinary Partners at UVM**

1. ANTH Luis Vivanco
2. GEOG Shelly Raybeck and Meghan Cope
3. HDF Camelia Maianu
4. PSYS John Green
5. SOC Alice Fothergill
6. POLS Peter VonDoepp
7. CSD Michael Cannizzaro
8. CELO Susan Munkres

### **E. Community Partners**

1. Map Levin, Executive Director, The Vermont Early Childhood Advocacy Alliance
2. Sherry Carlson, Let's Grow Kids

**Summary**

The proposed minor in Childhood studies meets the growing academic interest among current and prospective UVM students at the nexus of children's welfare, education, and critical issues of social justice. The CHS minor is available to all UVM students (excluding only Early Childhood Education majors) and complements degrees across Colleges. The CAC subcommittee felt the proposal comprehensively addressed all program proposal components and therefore we recommend approval of the new minor by the FS and Board of Trustees.