

## **Which Graduate Developmental Program Is Right For Me?**

Students interested in pursuing graduate studies in the fields of **Child Development** or **Developmental Psychology** have several options to choose from at the University of Pittsburgh. This document guides students in making these choices.

### **Developmental Psychology or Applied Developmental Psychology?**

There are two distinct graduate programs in developmental psychology at the University of Pittsburgh. The Developmental Program is located in the Department of Psychology in the School of Arts and Sciences (<http://www.psychology.pitt.edu/graduate/developmental/>). The Applied Developmental Program is located in the Department of Psychology in Education in the School of Education (<http://www.education.pitt.edu/adp/>).

The primary distinguishing feature of these programs is the extent to which the training is “applied”. The Developmental Program is for students who seek high-level doctoral training in developmental theory and research, examining typical and atypical developmental processes. Research topics range from basic research questions to more applied issues. Examples of topics currently under investigation include the development of communication, prosocial behavior, and social understanding in infants and toddlers; development of emotion production and discrimination in children with autism; relations between family level economic disparities and children’s school readiness and achievement. The Applied Developmental Program is for students who seek Masters or Doctoral level training in applying research findings to improving developmental practices and in designing,

administering, and conducting research on developmentally appropriate services for children, youth, and families. Current research topics include parenting and instructional practices to enhance children's early reading, mathematics, and vocabulary skills; authentic assessment to guide early childhood interventions; teacher perceptions of sexual minority youth.

### **Clinical/Developmental Joint Program**

Students interested in research concerning developmental psychopathology may also consider applying to the Clinical/Developmental Joint Program, which combines clinical training with developmental training <http://www.psychology.pitt.edu/clinical-developmental-joint-program>. This unique program is designed for students who seek to become clinically informed researchers on issues pertaining to child development and family functioning in atypical or at-risk populations. The joint program typically requires one year of additional study plus a pre-doctoral yearlong internship, potentially leading to licensure as a clinical psychologist.

### **Choosing the Right Program**

The chart below summarizes the differences among the programs described above. The Developmental Program and the Clinical/Developmental Joint Program are options in the Department of Psychology, which offers full-time doctoral training with an emphasis on research. Students are not admitted to pursue the Master's degree although students have the option of applying for a Master's degree en route to the Ph.D. The joint Clinical/Developmental program is accredited by the American Psychological Association. The Applied Developmental Program is an option in the School of Education and admits

students who wish to pursue only a Masters degree, as well as those who wish to pursue doctoral level training. Both part-time and full-time study are available. There is a greater emphasis on applied issues and research and training related to service and practice (but not clinical psychology training). Doctoral students focus on applied research.

|                          | Developmental Program | Joint Developmental & Clinical Program | Applied Developmental Program |
|--------------------------|-----------------------|--|-------------------------------|
| <b>Doctoral Degree</b>   | Yes                   | Yes                                    | Yes                           |
| <b>Masters Degree</b>    | Opt                   | Opt                                    | Yes                           |
| <b>Research Training</b> | Yes                   | Yes                                    | Yes                           |
| <b>Practice Training</b> | No                    | Yes                                    | Yes                           |
| <b>Clinical Training</b> | No                    | Yes                                    | No                            |
| <b>Part-time Option</b>  | No                    | No                                     | Yes                           |

### **Funding**

The Developmental Program and the Joint Clinical/Developmental Program admit full-time students who are funded with Research, Teaching, or Graduate Student Assistantships for 12 months. Similarly, the Applied Developmental Program selects full-time doctoral students for financial support, while part-time graduate students and Masters level students do not typically receive assistantship support.

### **Applications**

Applicants may apply to one or more of these programs, but they should tailor their applications appropriately. Applicants to programs in the Department of Psychology can indicate whether they are interested in the Developmental Program, the Joint Clinical/Developmental Program or both (for application procedure, see

<http://stage.psychology.pitt.edu/graduate/how-apply>

Applicants to the Applied Developmental Program in the School of Education must apply separately to either the Masters or Doctoral Program

<http://www.education.pitt.edu/AcademicDepartments/PsychologyinEducation/Programs/AppliedDevelopmentalPsychology.aspx>