Childhood Studies
Undergraduate study
Childhood studies is the social science of childhood and adolescence. We are one of only a few schools in the UK to offer a truly interdisciplinary approach to the study of children and young people’s lives from birth to 19 years of age.

Childhood studies at Bristol combines theoretical understanding from areas such as psychology, sociology, education, policy studies, law, health and social care, anthropology and history to understand children’s lives from a national and global perspective.

Childhood studies at Bristol is unique in being located within a social policy environment, giving depth and breadth to the course. The School for Policy Studies is a research intensive department focusing on the analysis, implementation, impact of, and evidence for policy. We were placed in the top five in the UK in the most recent government Research Exercise Framework (REF), confirming the excellence of our research.

You will benefit from studying with world-leading researchers whose work is focused on children and families, including: research with children with disabilities; studies of poverty and child health in the developing world; safeguarding children in online and off-line worlds; social exclusion and crime among adolescents; therapeutic programmes for children; children’s health and wellbeing; educational provision and more. You can choose to study childhood studies as a Single Honours subject or in combination with either management or quantitative research methods.

Q-step programme
The University of Bristol is part of the £19.5 million Q-step programme, designed to promote a step change in quantitative social science training. Funded by the Nuffield Foundation, ESRC and HEFCE, the University of Bristol Q-Step Centre is part of a national network of 15 centres working to address the shortage of social science graduates with quantitative skills.

We offer a unique set of three- and four-year degree programmes that combine core disciplinary learning with enhanced quantitative skills training focusing on applied data analysis relevant to research in the social sciences. Look for course titles that include ‘with Quantitative Research Methods’ in this leaflet and find out more at bristol.ac.uk/qstep.

BSc Childhood Studies is ranked top in the UK in The Guardian university league table 2018 (social work category).

Courses

Single Honours courses
BSc Childhood Studies
three years L520
BSc Childhood Studies
with Management
three years L524
BSc Childhood Studies
with Quantitative Research
Methods
three years L522
BSc Childhood Studies
with Study Abroad
four years L525
MSci Childhood Studies
with Quantitative Research
Methods
four years L523

Why study childhood studies at Bristol?

This leaflet contains information for students planning to start university in autumn 2018. We have made every effort to ensure all details are correct at the time of going to press (June 2017). However, since this information is subject to change, you are advised to check the University’s website, bristol.ac.uk/ug-study, for the latest updates.
What will you study?

All our degrees are designed to introduce you to the interdisciplinary social science of childhood and adolescence and to develop your skills and knowledge through the three years.

The first year enables you to explore constructions of childhood and to discuss contemporary issues, debates and challenges in childhood. You will begin to develop an understanding of child psychology and further your critical academic and research skills.

The second and third years allow you to develop your own specific pathway through the degree, depending on your particular interests and career choice. For example you might choose to follow a pathway in education, psychology, early years’ provision, social work or law and justice, or you may choose a mix of units from different pathways. Optional units include:

- Child and Adolescent Psychology: examining aspects of psychological development relating to the lives of children and young people. This unit explores the physical, cognitive and social growth of young people, paying particular attention to the various cultural contexts of development and the rich diversity of individuals.

- Play and Creativity: exploring the importance of play and creativity to children’s learning, development and leisure experiences. Attention will be paid to innovative theorists and curricular approaches, to contemporary theories of play, and to the ways in which play is influenced by popular cultures, new media technologies and forms of organised provision, such as games and sports. Underpinning the unit is a consideration of how we observe and assess children and engage in creative enterprises with children, as well as how we can respond to diversity, equity, quality and ethical practice in providing for children in these areas.

- Children and Young People in the Law: within an overall framework of children’s rights this unit analyses children and young people’s status within the English legal system. Through a wide range of topics we explore the tensions inherent within children’s participation and self-determination in legal contexts. This includes children and young people as witnesses and defendants in criminal proceedings; as subjects of medical intervention; as refugees and asylum seekers; as parties to parental divorce and separation; when involved in adoption, fostering and child protection proceedings. Discussions will focus on the potential discrepancies between enabling children’s autonomy and ensuring their best interests are paramount in legal decisions. We consider how these competing and sometimes contradictory aims can be reconciled.

Study Abroad

Our new ‘with Study Abroad’ course provides an exciting opportunity to spend your third year studying in English at one of our partner institutions overseas. You will take units from the broader social sciences, arts and humanities, including languages. Our current exchange partners include City University of Hong Kong (China), Linköping University (Sweden), University of British Columbia (Canada), University of Washington (USA) and Waseda University (Japan).

Teaching methods

We use a variety of teaching methods, including lectures, seminars, tutorials, clinics and guided independent study. You will develop transferable skills through working with others in small groups and through giving presentations. Several units include visits to different types of statutory and voluntary provision for children, young people and their families for the purpose of study and observation. You will also be supported to undertake voluntary work with children and their families to enhance your learning.

Assessment and feedback

We place a strong emphasis on the role of assessment in supporting your academic development. We use a mixture of exams, assessed essays and, in some cases, portfolios of work. You will be assigned a personal tutor for the duration of your studies to help you understand and implement the feedback you receive.

‘I am an Inter-country Caseworker at Children and Families Across Borders... The foundation of knowledge that I built during my time at Bristol is fundamental to my work [and] completing my degree gave me the skills and confidence I need.’

Rose (BSc Childhood Studies 2015)
Global and national initiatives have created a strong demand for people with expertise in childhood studies who are able to work across disciplinary and professional boundaries in the public, private and voluntary sectors. The skills you acquire throughout the degree will enable you to compete strongly for the wide range of vacancies that require a graduate with critical and analytical abilities.

An Honours degree in childhood studies provides an academic foundation for a career in a range of fields, such as education and teaching, psychology and therapeutic work with children, the management of children’s services, law, policing and youth justice, social work, national and international charities, family support, children’s health and wellbeing, government and the civil service, and research and development. A number of graduates go on to postgraduate study and doctoral research. The research and teaching base at the School for Policy Studies provides an excellent opportunity to further specialise in areas that interest you at undergraduate level.

Volunteering can help enhance your skills and develop practical experience valued by employers. There are lots of opportunities to volunteer for children’s charities, schools and community groups in the Bristol area via the childhood studies courses and the Students’ Union skills and volunteering programme.

Careers and graduate destinations

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We are looking for students who are enthusiastic, committed and have a genuine interest in children, adolescents and their families. You might demonstrate this through your interests and aspirations, relevant paid or unpaid work, positions of responsibility at school, college or work, non-academic achievements and your responses to challenges faced.

Typical offer for BSc Childhood Studies*

Visit bristol.ac.uk/ug18-childhood for Joint Honours and other qualifications.

A-levels ABB (contextual BBC†).

IB Diploma 32 overall (contextual 29†) to include 16 points at Higher Level (contextual 14†).

English Language Profile B††

GCSEs English Language and Mathematics at grade C or above.

†For information on contextual offers, visit bristol.ac.uk/ug-apply/#typical-contextual-offers.

††For details of English language profiles, bristol.ac.uk/ug-language-requirements.

Selection

UCAS or Common Application.

Deferred entry

Welcomed, particularly if you use this period to gain relevant experience.

*The typical offer is indicative only and the University accepts a wide range of qualifications. The information is correct at the time of printing (June 2017); however, we recommend you check the University’s website for the most up-to-date information: bristol.ac.uk/ug-study.
Contact us

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If you have any questions about courses, applications or any aspect of being a UK or international student at Bristol please contact the Enquiries Team.

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University guide to the city of Bristol
bristol.ac.uk/citybristol

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