

***How does the Risk and Prevention Master's Program compare with the Harvard Graduate School of Education's Human Development & Psychology Master's program?***

*Content:*

Risk and Prevention (R&P) master's program is a two semester (32 credit) degree program dedicated to the practical application of cutting edge research on risk, resilience, and prevention programming for children and adolescents in both school and community settings. Students choose from a range of interdisciplinary courses that address the prevention of psychological, academic, and social problems and the promotion of healthy human development. Special emphasis is placed on the roles that relationships play in the processes that foster resilience and recovery. Students explore a wide range of issues, including the influences of early attachment, violence and trauma, gender and sexuality, and resilience and motivating factors as they relate to educational process and prevention practices. Risk and Prevention is a more structured program that focuses on research-based practice experiences with both targeted populations and universal approaches.

The Human Development and Psychology (HDP) Master's Program is a two-semester (32 credit) program designed for students interested in the development of children and adults and how knowledge of development can be applied to educational issues. The purpose of the program is to introduce practitioners and future researchers to theory and research on child, adolescent, and adult development and to reflect on potential applications to education. The program seeks to apply developmental theory and research to issues such as cultural diversity, gender equity, bilingualism, literacy development, academic achievement among high-risk populations, educational progress of immigrants, promotion of inter-group relations, prevention of the consequences of risk in the lives of children and adolescents, effective learning and thinking, brain processes in learning, children's emotional development, the effects of daycare and preschool on young children, and the development of interpersonal relationships. Those in the program examine empirical evidence about language development, cognitive development, social and relational development, and cultural differences. The program in Human Development and Psychology seeks to bridge traditional divisions between academic disciplines and between basic and applied research, building on developmental thinking and incorporating an understanding of diversity. It focuses on the cognitive, emotional, communicative and relational development of the individual, from birth through early adulthood, considering sociocultural and other contexts in which this development takes place.

*Key Differences in Curriculum:*

The Human Development and Psychology program covers a broad spectrum of human development related topics, whereas the Risk and Prevention required courses are more specifically focused in one aspect of Human Development and Psychology; prevention and intervention work with at-risk children and adolescents. However, R&P students do have many electives. Students enrolled in either program may take some of the same courses, but their requirements are different.

Risk and Prevention requires its students to enroll in either a year-long practice placement at a school or community partner site (16 hours per week) OR enroll in a research placement connected to one of the faculty research projects (8 hours per week) and take a research methods course. The practice placements offer practical experiences in prevention, intervention, applied research, program development and policy implementation through partnerships with school- and community-based health and social service agencies. The research experience placements offer students an opportunity to participate as part of a research team and depending on the stage of the particular project -- in refining research questions, exploring research design, developing and collecting information from participants, synthesizing qualitative and quantitative data, applying basic analytic strategies, and presenting and translating research data into practice.

While students in the HDP master's program have the option to interview for placements at Risk and Prevention placements, they are not guaranteed placement since the R&P students have priority for slots.