

Doctor of Philosophy in Child Language

Child Language Doctoral Program

The doctoral program in Child Language offers a specialized degree in this interesting area of study. The program crosses traditional academic boundaries to give students the theoretical, empirical, and methodological competence necessary to study basic and applied issues in language acquisition. This multidisciplinary program is a cooperative endeavor of faculty members from the Departments of Applied Behavioral Science, Clinical Child Psychology, Linguistics, Molecular Biosciences, Psychology, and Speech-Language-Hearing: Sciences and Disorders. In addition, the Child Language Doctoral Program has faculty specializing in genetics of language and speech, and in quantitative methods.

Students study 4 areas:

1. Core theoretical and experimental work on language acquisition,
2. Relevant methods and theories in linguistics and psycholinguistics,
3. Theoretical perspectives on developmental psychology, and
4. The nature of disordered language development and methods and techniques for language intervention.

In addition, new areas of study are offered in genetics of language acquisition and impairments, as well as quantitative methods.

Each student is advised by a support committee of 3 faculty members. Enrollment in a proseminar in language acquisition is required of all students in addition to participation in research activities. Opportunities for individual research projects include the projects of participating faculty members and the research teams of the Schiefelbusch Institute for Life Span Studies, the Speech-Language-Hearing Clinic, and the clinical/research facilities of KU Medical Center.

Graduates are candidates for teaching and research positions, clinical positions providing service to communicatively disabled persons, and research work in business and governmental sectors.

Faculty

We are a cross-disciplinary program and our faculty is involved in research spanning many diverse fields of study. Our portfolios are dynamic and growing, so you will be directed to our most recent information.

An internationally recognized scholar leads program activities: Mabel L. Rice (<https://merrill.ku.edu/people/mabel-l-rice/>).

Admission to Graduate Studies

An applicant seeking to pursue graduate study in the College may be admitted as either a degree-seeking or non-degree seeking student. Policies and procedures of Graduate Studies govern the process of Graduate admission. These may be found in the Graduate Studies (<https://catalog.ku.edu/archives/2024-25/graduate-studies/>) section of the online catalog.

Please consult the Departments & Programs (<https://catalog.ku.edu/archives/2024-25/liberal-arts-sciences/>) section of the online catalog for information regarding program-specific admissions criteria and requirements. Special admissions requirements pertain to Interdisciplinary

Studies degrees, which may be found in the Graduate Studies section of the online catalog.

Graduate Admission

The Child Language Doctoral Program is not currently accepting applications for the 2024 year.

Students are admitted to the doctoral program for the fall semester. Applicants must submit a curriculum vita (C.V.) or resume, a personal statement describing professional goals and interest in program, Graduate Record Examination scores (GRE), 3 letters of recommendation, and a list of all courses taken in relevant areas such as child development, linguistics, psychology, special education, speech and hearing sciences, genetics, and statistics. Non-native speakers of English must meet English proficiency requirements (<https://gradapply.ku.edu/english-requirements/>). No one is admitted for a terminal M.A. degree.

Applicants should have earned bachelor's degrees that include course work in linguistics, psychology, speech pathology, genetics, and/or statistics with minimum grade-point averages of B. Preference is given to those with master's degrees in linguistics, psychology, education, special education, speech and hearing sciences, molecular biosciences, genetics, or to applicants with relevant post-baccalaureate work experience. The admissions committee supervises the admission process and recommends applicants for admission.

Please see additional admission information on the Child Language Doctoral Program Admission (<https://cldp.ku.edu/how-apply/>) page.

Students who are interested in enrolling in graduate level coursework in the Child Language Doctoral Program without formal admission to a graduate program at KU are encouraged to apply for graduate non-degree seeking student status. See the admission details above.

Ph.D. Degree Requirements

For the Ph.D. degree, the student must complete all general requirements. These include residence, research skills, comprehensive oral examination, preparation of a dissertation, and the final oral examination and defense of the dissertation. 2 options for fulfilling the research skills requirement are available:

1. Proficiency in a language other than English or reading knowledge of 2 languages other than English can be demonstrated.
2. A record of professional research experience or publication may be used to demonstrate research skills.

Note: Contact your department or program for more information about research skills and responsible scholarship, and the current requirements for doctoral students. Current policies on Doctoral Research Skills and Responsible Scholarship are listed in the KU Policy Library.

For students entering without the master's degree, the requirements for the M.A. may be found on the M.A. degree requirements page.

Ph.D. post-master's requirements include a minimum of 36 additional graduate credit hours. These should include at least 8 hours of additional core courses, 13 hours of additional supplemental courses, 9 hours of additional statistical and methodological courses, and a minimum of 6 hours of dissertation. Continuous enrollment in the proseminar is required.

After completing the research skills requirement and the major portion of the course work, the doctoral student must pass a written preliminary

examination and a comprehensive oral examination. The written examination covers 4 areas:

1. Language acquisition,
2. Psycholinguistics,
3. Developmental psychology,
4. Disordered language development or language intervention.

The comprehensive oral examination covers the major field, taking one of 5 forms:

1. A defense of the written preliminary examinations,
2. A defense of a completed research project,
3. A prospectus for a future research project,
4. A discussion of a major review paper, or
5. A review of a research grant proposal and a simulated site visit defense of the proposal.

All doctoral students are expected to complete a dissertation and complete a successful defense of the dissertation.

All students are expected to be engaged continuously in research on child language. Research involvement is documented with appropriate enrollment in research, thesis, and dissertation credit hours, and in the proseminar in child language.

Courses

See course listings for the Child Language Doctoral Program and cooperating departments.