



The International MA Program in Education and Development in Early Childhood

BUILDING BRIGHTER FUTURES FOR CHILDREN IN UNDER-RESOURCED COUNTRIES

Around the world, millions of children grow up in poverty, instability, and limited access to quality early childhood education and care. While demand for graduate programs in early childhood education and development has grown significantly across North America and Western Europe, professionals from under-resourced countries often lack access to advanced training that reflects the cultural and social realities of the communities they serve.

The International MA Program in Education & Development in Early Childhood at the University of Haifa was created to address this critical gap. Unique in its focus, it is the only international master's program in Israel dedicated to advancing child development research and practice in developing regions. Designed for educators, psychologists, health professionals, social workers, legal advocates, and policy makers, the program has trained professionals for over a decade.

Led by internationally recognized experts in education and child development, it combines academic study in developmental psychology, neuroscience and parenting studies with research, fieldwork, and applied practice. This integrated training equips participants to implement evidence-based solutions and improve the lives of vulnerable children and families.

We are now recruiting a new cohort to begin in October 2026, continuing the flagship program in close partnership with Israel's Ministry of Foreign Affairs.



Voices from the Program

Our students cite the program as a transformative opportunity.

"Our cohort comes from diverse backgrounds, yet shares a common purpose: to help create a better world for children. Your investment in us is an investment in the children at the heart of our communities."

— **Wamweru Muthara**, Founding Director of Nawirisha (a social enterprise supporting women childcare entrepreneurs in low-income urban communities in Kenya) and 2025 Fellow of the Early Childhood Development Action Network (ECDAN)



» A Global Impact

Since its launch in 2014, the program has attracted students from over 40 developing countries across Africa, Asia, Eurasia, and South America, creating a vibrant multicultural environment that fosters cross-cultural collaboration. To date, the program has trained nearly 200 professionals who are applying their expertise to address critical challenges affecting children and families in high-risk regions worldwide.

This intensive one-year master's program, taught in English, is offered by the School of Therapy, Counseling and Human Development at the University's Faculty of Education, with administrative support from the International School. Through this initiative, the University of Haifa advances its broader vision of sustainability, innovation, and international engagement, while empowering leaders committed to improving the well-being of children in under-resourced communities.

Academic Leadership

Prof. Abraham (Avi) Sagi-Schwartz is Founder and Emeritus Head of the Center for the Study of Child Development, and former Dean of the Graduate School and Faculty of Social Sciences at the University of Haifa. A leading scholar in developmental psychology and attachment research, he has received major international honors from organizations including the Society for Research in Child Development, the International Society for the Study of Behavioral Development, as well as the Bowlby-Ainsworth Award for attachment research. He serves on the Executive Committee of UNICEF Israel.

Prof. Yair Ziv, is a leading scholar in developmental psychology and Chair of the School of Therapy, Counseling and Human Development at the University of Haifa. For more than a decade he headed the University's Multidisciplinary Program for Early Education and Development. He also led the Early Education Committee for the Israeli Ministry of Education and has served on numerous national and international early childhood initiatives, including as a consultant to UNICEF's Global Early Childhood Development Indicator Initiative.

For Your Consideration

With your partnership, outstanding leaders from developing countries will return home equipped to improve the lives of children in their communities.

» **A gift of \$500,000** will provide 20 full scholarships for the 2026–27 academic year, covering tuition, housing, health insurance, and monthly living expenses.

» **A visionary gift of \$2.5 million** will provide naming recognition for the International MA Program in Education and Development in Early Childhood, supporting full scholarships for 20 students annually for five years.