

# Alumni Spotlight: Julie Herdt

## HDFS Undergraduate Committee

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Julie, a graduate of the HDFS and SPED programs in 2021, has found career success as a special education inclusion preschool teacher and itinerant coach in a Utah school district. Currently completing her Master's in Inclusive Early Childhood Education and a Graduate Certificate in Infant Toddler Mental Health, Julie credits her HDFS coursework as the foundation for her profound understanding of working with children and families. Reflecting on her journey, Julie remarks, "My degree in HDFS provided me with the essential knowledge and skills to effectively support children and parents, even as I pursued my SPED degree."

Julie's passion for HDFS blossomed after taking an introductory class. Inspired by her experience working with children with autism, she dedicated herself to learning how to best serve their needs. Throughout her academic journey, Julie embraced the research process, embodying the role of a "teacher researcher" and fostering a mindset of continuous learning and growth. Julie found the flexibility of HDFS being available online allowed her to pursue her career and education simultaneously.

Julie's advice to prospective HDFS students resonates with her own transformative journey: "Embrace the multitude of options offered by HDFS. It opens doors for both graduate school and beyond, enriching your professional journey and enhancing your impact in the field." As Julie continues to nurture inclusive early childhood education, her story underscores the potential of an HDFS major in shaping purposeful careers and empowering positive change in communities.