



# **Child Life Department**

## **Practicum Program Description and Application Packet**

*Please read contents carefully.  
Incomplete applications will not be reviewed.*

# Child Life Practicum Program

## Overview:

Texas Children's Hospital is the nation's largest, not-for-profit pediatric hospital with licensure for 737 beds. This state-of-the-art facility provides primary, secondary and tertiary care for a diverse population of chronically and acutely ill children. Texas Children's Hospital collaborates with the Baylor College of Medicine to support a comprehensive pediatric medical education and research program. The Child Life Program was established in 1975 to meet the unique developmental, social, emotional, and recreational needs of hospitalized children. Reporting directly to Patient and Family Services, program team members include: over 40 child life specialists, 9 activity coordinators, 2 full-time children's library coordinator, two music therapists and an administrative secretary. Child Life Specialists serve as members of interdisciplinary teams in the following patient care areas at Texas Children's Hospital: Neonatal ICU, Pediatric ICU, Progressive Care, Outpatient Clinical Care, Emergency Center, Adolescent Unit, Orthopedics, General Medicine/Transplant, Surgery, Cardiology, Clinical Research Center, Pulmonary, Neurology, Hematology/Oncology, Pediatric Dialysis, and Pavilion for Women. Child Life Specialists in all areas of the hospital utilize therapeutic play to promote growth and development, communication opportunities, and coping skills of pediatric patients.

## Program Description:

The Child Life Practicum at Texas Children's Hospital is designed as a *pre-internship experience* for individuals interested in pursuing a child life internship and a career as a certified child life specialist. During the practicum, students have an opportunity to become familiar with the child life profession and children's reactions to hospitalization and illness. The program's foundation is to provide the students the opportunity to learn how child life specialists apply theory to practice. Therefore, a large part of the practicum schedule consists of students shadowing child life specialists and other staff through observation to gain assessment skills. In addition, students will also have some "hands-on" experience with patients and families as they plan activities and develop communication skills.

In order to encourage a diverse learning experience, students accepted for the practicum program will not be considered for an internship at Texas Children's Hospital.

Practicum placements are unpaid and do not guarantee future employment at Texas Children's Hospital. Housing, transportation, parking expenses, meals, and medical insurance are the responsibility of the student. It is highly recommended for individuals to apply for practicum programs at several different hospitals in order to assess differences in facilities, child life programming, practicum content and structure. Additionally, sharpening interviewing skills now will be an asset when entering the competitive job market.

For additional general information about practicums, internships, certification, and the child life profession, please visit the Child Life Council website, at [www.childlife.org](http://www.childlife.org).

**The specific goals and objectives of the program are:**

1. To become familiar with child life profession.
2. To recognize and understand patients' and families' reactions to stress, illness, and pain.
3. To recognize the developmental, psychosocial, and medical needs of patients and families and how those needs are incorporated into goals of normalization and coping.
4. To understand the value of play in the health care setting and increase skills in facilitating therapeutic play through planning group and individual activities.
5. To develop communication skills with patients/families and other health care professionals.
6. To recognize the importance of working within an interdisciplinary team.
7. To continue to develop professional attitudes, maturity, and judgment.
8. To set goals and self-evaluate one's performance.
9. To integrate theory and research into practice (Evidence Based Practice).

**Practicum Schedule:**

The practicum program is a **230-hour, 13 week** experience with the students scheduled in the child life department for **18 hours per week**. Schedule is mutually agreed upon between the child life practicum coordinators and the student. The typical schedule is three (3) six-hour days with a break for lunch. Practicum hours can only be scheduled Monday-Friday during business hours due to child life staffing and patient care needs. However, some special events and rare shadowing opportunities may be in the evening. Typically, practicum student schedules consist of two rotations in two different areas in the hospital working under the supervision of two different child life specialists. Each rotation is typically six weeks. Also the practicum student is assigned work in one activity area throughout their practicum with one child life activity coordinator. This schedule may vary due to child life staffing and other considerations.

**Practicum Assignments:**

To help the students reach the goals and objectives of the practicum program, the assignments are created to maximize students' learning and to prepare students for a child life internship. Assignments include but are not limited to: a daily journal, activity plans, assigned readings and observations, and a final project. Students will complete weekly child life modules which will provide hands-on learning experiences to increase their knowledge and skills. Students can expect to receive a mid-term and final evaluation from their supervisors.

**Entrance Requirements:**

Applicants must:

- A. Be enrolled in, working toward, or have completed coursework that will prepare them to sit for the child life exam (such as child development, theories of child development, etc.) which is verified by an **official transcript** (no photocopies, e-mail, or opened copies) from all institutions attended.
- B. Have completed before application due date:
  - a. one 3-hour college level class in growth and development (i.e. human development, child development, developmental psychology)

**AND**

- b. a minimum of two additional 3-hour courses related to the child life core concepts (i.e. intro to psychology, death and dying, learning and behavior)
- C. Complete a minimum of 100 hours of verified experience with physically well children in a structured environment. A structured environment would include day care, lab school, school, nursery, camp, after school program, hospital, etc where there is formalized child care environment. The care of children at home such as being a nanny, babysitting, or caring for one's own children does not count toward this requirement. Verification of hours must be documented utilizing the **Verification Form** included in the application. Additional experience working with children with special needs or ill/injured children is preferred but not required. The 100 hours of experience with children must have occurred within the past 12 months.
- D. Have 3.0 GPA on 4.0 point scale for completed college level coursework.
- E. Have at least a junior level standing in a baccalaureate program (i.e. complete at least 60 hours) before starting the practicum program.
- F. Be able to commit a minimum of 240 hours to the practicum program.
- G. The practicum must be completed in one semester if accepted.

**\*Individuals meeting the minimum entrance requirements** may submit an application to the Practicum Coordinators. Applications not containing all of the following components will be considered incomplete. **INCOMPLETE AND LATE APPLICATIONS WILL NOT BE REVIEWED.**

**A complete application must include the following:**

- A. Practicum Checklist
- B. Practicum Applicant Information Sheet
- C. Practicum Questionnaire
- D. Child Life Relevant Coursework List
- E. Resume or Curriculum Vitae
- F. College or university transcript(s). Please send a separate transcript(s) for each institution. Must indicate cumulative GPA. Does not need to be official.
- G. Two Letters of Recommendation - at least one who has directly observed and can assess your work with children, parents, and professionals. Recommendations must be paragraph style narration and address your specific knowledge and skills relative to your work with children, parents, and professionals (no photocopies or e-mails).
- H. Verification of 100 hours working with children using provided verification form. Please use a separate form for each institution.

If possible, please include all documents in one envelope to help ensure that no documentation is lost. You may send your recommendation letters and/or transcripts directly to the practicum coordinator. However, the applicant is the one responsible for lost or late documentation. Please ensure that the institution or person mailing the documents puts the practicum coordinator's name on the envelope.

Unfortunately, the submission of an application does not guarantee placement at Texas Children's Hospital, as our program has high volume of applicants and a limited number of placements. Due to limited placement availability, we highly recommended that individuals apply for a practicum experience at several institutions.

**Application deadlines:** The Child Life Department of Texas Children's Hospital offers child life practicum experiences three times per year. The deadlines for the applications are as such:

**Fall Term:** March 29

**Spring Term:** September 19

**Summer Term:** January 19

**RETURN WITH COMPLETE APPLICATION PACKET TO:**

Texas Children's Hospital  
Child Life Services WT 16-277  
Attention: Practicum Coordinators  
Caley Johns & Morgan Sullivan  
6621 Fannin Street  
Houston, Texas 77030



Applicant Name: \_\_\_\_\_

**Texas Children's Hospital  
Child Life Department  
Practicum Application Checklist:**  
(Please enclose with application)

\_\_\_\_ **Practicum Applicant Information Sheet**                      \_\_\_\_ **Child Life Relevant Coursework List**

\_\_\_\_ **Practicum Questionnaire**    \_\_\_\_ **Resume or Curriculum Vitae**

\_\_\_\_ **Official College or University transcript(s) of all institutions attended (No photocopies)**

*Institution:* \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_ *Enclosed in application (preferred)*

\_\_\_\_ *Mailed separately*

*Institution:* \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_ *Enclosed in application (preferred)*

\_\_\_\_ *Mailed separately*

*Institution:* \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_ *Enclosed in application (preferred)*

\_\_\_\_ *Mailed separately*

\_\_\_\_ **Two Letters of Recommendation (No photocopies, e-mails, copies of e-mails)**

*From:* \_\_\_\_\_ *Title:* \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_ *Enclosed in application*

\_\_\_\_ *Mailed separately*

*From:* \_\_\_\_\_ *Title:* \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_ *Enclosed in application*

\_\_\_\_ *Mailed separately*

\_\_\_\_ **Verification of 100 hours worked with children in a structured environment.** Verification of hours must be documented utilizing the *Verification Form* included in the application. Please use a separate form for each institution.

*Institution/Organization:* \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_ *Enclosed in application (preferred)*

\_\_\_\_ *Mailed separately*

*Institution/Organization:* \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_ *Enclosed in application (preferred)*

\_\_\_\_ *Mailed separately*

*Institution/Organization:* \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_ *Enclosed in application (preferred)*

\_\_\_\_ *Mailed separately*



**Texas Children's Hospital  
Child Life Department  
Practicum Applicant Information Sheet**

**Applying for Year** \_\_\_\_\_ **Fall** **Spring** **Summer**

***Personal Information***

Name	
Present Address:	
Permanent Address:	
E-mail Address:	
Phone – day:	
Phone – evening:	
Phone – cell:	

***Emergency Contact***

Name:			
Relationship:			
Address:			
Phone-home:		Phone-work:	

***Application Category***

\_\_\_\_\_ University Affiliated (Practicum Hours \_\_\_\_\_ Non-Affiliated (Not for College Credit)  
For College Credit)

*If University affiliated, please complete*

University Sponsor/Advisor Name	
University Name	
Address	
University Department Address	
Phone	
E-mail Address	

**Academic Information**

*Please information for all universities and colleges attended*

University Name			
Major			
GPA – Cumulative:		GPA in Major	
Graduation date:			

\_\_\_\_ Bachelors    \_\_\_\_ Masters

University Name			
Major			
GPA – Cumulative:		GPA in Major	
Graduation date:			

\_\_\_\_ Bachelors    \_\_\_\_ Masters

University Name			
Major			
GPA – Cumulative:		GPA in Major	
Graduation date:			

\_\_\_\_ Bachelors    \_\_\_\_ Masters

What days and times are you available to fulfill your practicum hours?

What other commitments will you have during your practicum?

I understand it is the sole responsibility of the applicant to confirm receipt of application packet. I understand if my application packet is incomplete, I will not be considered for the practicum program.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature



# Texas Children's Hospital Child Life Department Practicum Questionnaire

(These may be typed on a separate piece of paper. Please limit answers to 200 words.)

1. What are your career goals?
2. What strengths (skills and talents) would you bring to the child life practicum?
3. What are your growth challenges related to working with children?
4. What are your expectations of a practicum program?

**Texas Children's Hospital**  
**Child Life Department Practicum Program**  
**Child Life Relevant Coursework List**  
*(All courses listed must be present on official transcripts)*

<b><i>Course Number and Title</i></b>	<b><i>Where</i></b>	<b><i>Year</i></b>	<b><i>Term</i></b>	<b><i>Grade</i></b>
<i>(i.e. Child Development)</i>	<i>Baylor University</i>	<i>2010</i>	<i>Spring</i>	<i>A</i>



## Supervised Hours Working with Children Verification Form

*(Applicant: This form is to be completed by all places from which you are submitting hours.)*

I confirm that (applicant) \_\_\_\_\_ has  
completed \_\_\_\_\_ hours at (Institution) \_\_\_\_\_ in  
(location) \_\_\_\_\_ working with:

(Type of experience – check one)

- ☐ Working with children who are physically well
- ☐ Working with children in a healthcare or stress-related environment
- ☐ Working with children with special needs

The applicants experience consisted of the following experiences (list typical types of interactions with children):

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Signature/Credentials: \_\_\_\_\_

Printed Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Title: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone Number: \_\_\_\_\_