

**Child Life Department**

Practicum Program Description & Additional Forms

*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. 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 coordinators, four music therapists, an administrative secretary, animal assisted therapy, a media producer, an art therapist, and two school coordinators. Child Life Specialists serve as members of interdisciplinary teams in the following patient care areas at Texas Children's Hospital: Neonatal ICU, Pediatric ICU, Transitional 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. At this time, child life practicums are only offered at our main campus located within the Texas Medical Center.

**Program Description:**

The Child Life Practicum at Texas Children’s Hospital isdesigned asa *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 to gain assessment skills through observation. 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 Association of Child Life Professionals 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 an **approximately 200 hours**, **13 week** experience with the students scheduled in the child life department for **16 hours per week**. Schedule is mutually agreed upon between the child life practicum coordinators and the student. The typical schedule is two eight-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 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, with a transitional week between the two rotations. 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, case studies, 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:

1. 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 transcript (does not need to be official) from all institutions attended.
2. Have completed before application due date:
   1. one 3-hour college level class in growth and development (i.e. human development, child development, developmental psychology)

**AND**

* 1. 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)

1. 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.
2. Have 3.0 GPA on 4.0 point scale for completed college level coursework.
3. Have at least a junior level standing in a baccalaureate program (i.e. complete at least 60 hours) before starting the practicum program.
4. Be able to commit a minimum of 200 hours to the practicum program.
5. 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:**

# TACLP Practicum Application

# Professional Resume

# College or university transcript(s). Please send a separate transcript(s) for each institution.  Must indicate cumulative GPA. *Does not need to be official.*

# Two TACLP Reference Forms - at least one who has directly observed and can assess your work with children, parents, and professionals. This can be emailed directly to: [childlifepracticum@texaschildrens.org](mailto:childlifepracticum@texaschildrens.org)

# Verification of 100 hours working with children using provided verification form. Please use a separate form for each institution. (Emailed to: [childlifepracticum@texaschildrens.org](mailto:childlifepracticum@texaschildrens.org))

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 a 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

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**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):

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

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

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

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

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

Email form to: childlifepracticum@texaschildrens.org