



# **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 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 to gain assessment skills through observation. In addition, students will also have "hands-on" experience with patients and families as they plan activities and develop communication skills.

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.

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 a **9 week** experience of **approximately 200 hours**, averaging 24 hours a week within the child life department. Schedules are mutually agreed upon between the child life practicum coordinators and the student. Practicum student schedules consist of two primary rotations in various areas of the hospital working under the supervision of different child life specialists. 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.

**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 transcript (does not need to be official) from all institutions attended.
- B. Have completed 3 out of the 10 ACLP required courses for Academic Eligibility before Practicum start date:
  - a. Play course
  - b. Child Development course
  - c. Child Life course
- 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.
- D. Have at least a junior level standing in a baccalaureate program (i.e. complete at least 60 hours) before starting the practicum program.
- E. The practicum must be completed within one semester if accepted.

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

- A. **TACLP Practicum Application**
- B. Professional Resume
- C. College or university transcript(s) that list course work and cumulative GPA. *Does not need to be official.*
- D. **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:  
[childlifepacticum@texaschildrens.org](mailto:childlifepacticum@texaschildrens.org)

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.

\*Individuals meeting the minimum entrance requirements may submit an application addressed to the Practicum Coordinators by mail or email. Applicants are responsible for meeting the application deadlines listed below. *Applications postmarked by the date of deadline will be accepted.*

**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  
Attention: Child Life Practicum Coordinators  
Caley Johns & Morgan Sullivan  
6621 Fannin Street WT 16-277  
Houston, Texas 77030