



Dear child life practicum applicant,

Thank you for your interest in our child life practicum! The Cook Children's child life practicum program provides students an opportunity to become more familiar with the field of child life and the needs of hospitalized infants, children, youth, and families.

This packet is designed to outline the Cook Children's child life practicum application requirements. Please read it all the way through. Many of your questions are answered in this packet. Should you have additional questions or seek clarification, please refer to the FAQ section of our webpage or email ChildLifeStudents@cookchildrens.org.

We recognize how important it is to find a program that is the right fit for you. Our Child Life department is large, with over 60 Certified Child Life Specialists. Other department members are child life activity coordinators, Child Life Zone staff, music therapists, school teachers, therapeutic clowns, artists in residence, and the resident dogs in our Sit...Stay...PLAY program. Below you will find a brief overview of our program philosophy. We hope this helps you have a better understanding of our program.

Our philosophy

The child life program at Cook Children's strongly emphasizes balance between play and preparation. This balance is achieved through clinical practice. We are a "hands-on" department. Though we believe that we have a function in educating staff and advocating for children, the majority of our time is spent with the patients and families. We believe child life has a role in the changing health care environment and we are evolving in response to this. In addition to the traditional inpatient areas, we offer integrated services in the Emergency Department, Radiology, PICU, NICU, Special Procedures Unit, and most outpatient areas. We are team focused, both within our department and within our areas of coverage, and we see students as a part of that team. Practicum students have many opportunities for both formal and informal learning, hands-on clinical practice, and collaboration with peers. All students are given opportunities for self-directed learning. We also help students identify and access resources within the Cook Children's Health Care System.

Program Information

- We follow most educational modules of the [Association of Child Life Professionals Pre-Internship modules](#) for child life practicum with the exclusion of the DEI module
- We offer child life practicum three times a year: spring, summer, and fall semesters
- The child life practicum is a 5-week experience
 - 32 hours/week, consisting of four 8-hour days (Monday through Thursday)
- Students will obtain approximately 150-170 hours of child life practicum experience
- Students are expected to be available for child life practicum during standard business hours
 - Certain individual rotations may require a practicum student to work some evenings
- The child life practicum curriculum includes a variety of assignments and readings

Applicant Requirements

- Junior level in college or beyond, graduate student, or college graduate
- Must have a minimum of 100 hours of paid and/or volunteer experience interacting with children, beyond required experiences for courses
 - Experience in a hospital or established child life program is preferred
- Applicants must show the following courses with a final passing grade or “in progress” on the academic transcript (unofficial transcripts are encouraged)
 - (1) child development course
 - (1) play course
 - (1) child life course

IMPORTANT: Please view [this document](#) and visit the [ACLP webpage](#) for more detailed information.
- If the child life practicum is for academic credit or the fulfillment of any academic requirements, it is the applicant’s responsibility to verify the child life practicum at Cook Children’s Medical Center fulfills the expectations of the academic program

SACLP application deadlines

Please refer to the child life practicum webpage for up to date deadlines for each semester.

Application Submission Requirements

- We use an [online application process](#)
- All documents must be submitted to the online submission portal in PDF format
- The submission portal closes at 11:59 pm (Central time) the night of the application deadline. It is your responsibility to ensure your application submission is complete by that time.
- Reference forms will be completed online as well, and are also due by 11:59 p.m. (Central) the night of the application deadline. It is your responsibility to notify your references of this deadline requirement.

Explanation of Application Requirements

- [SACLP Child Life Practicum application](#) and essay responses
- All academic transcripts; unofficial transcripts are acceptable
- Two (2) Reference Forms – this is an electronic form that is submitted via email by the reference. You will identify your references and submit their information when you apply through our portal.
 - One (1) reference must be completed a person who has directly observed and/or supervised your experience with children.
 - One (1) reference may be completed by a person (nonfamily member) of your choice.
 - You will receive a confirmation email each time one of your references submits the form.
 - Your application will be considered incomplete if all reference forms are not received via email by 11:59 p.m. on the application deadline date (deadline dates are posted above)
- Professional résumé

Application reminders

- The [online submission portal](#) will close at 11:59 p.m. the night of the application deadline. Incomplete applications will not be considered
- Each application will be examined to ensure that the student meets our program's basic requirements
- Submitting a completed application does not guarantee a student an interview or placement; only the most qualified applicants will be invited for an interview

Interview information

- Interviews are conducted via Zoom
- We use an interview format called Multiple Mini Interviews (MMI)
- Only the most qualified applicants will be offered interviews
- We interview between eight and ten applicants each semester



Additional requirements for applicants who are accepted as child life practicum students – This is for your information only, these will be completed once a student is accepted into the child life practicum program. Costs associated with each requirement are approximations.

- Clear criminal background check
- Current negative drug screen (\$45)
- Current negative TB Test
- American Heart Association Healthcare Provider BLS certification (\$65)
- Proof of immunity (MMR, varicella, adult Tdap, Hepatitis B series, COVID-19, current influenza)
- Current health insurance
- Proof of individual liability insurance or coverage by university (\$35)
- Signed individual educational experience agreement (when practicum is not for school credit)
- Signed affiliation agreement between university and Cook Children's (when practicum is done for school credit)

If you have additional questions, please email ChildLifeStudents@cookchildrens.org

Child life practicum program goals

1. Enrich rapport building skills
2. Introduce child life services
3. Develop, implement, and adapt activities
4. Enhance assessment skills

The child life practicum student is exposed to the child life profession through observation and participation in child life activities. This exposure is designed to prepare child life practicum students for a more intensive, career-oriented training experience (internship).

Through active observation, hands-on participation in various areas of programming, and ongoing supervision and feedback, students will integrate knowledge with practice as they...

1. Become familiar with the child life profession.
2. Develop communication skills with children/families in the health care setting, as well as with other health care professionals.
3. Recognize and understand children's/adolescents' reactions to stress, illness, and pain.
4. Recognize the value of play and psychosocially supportive interventions.
5. Learn to plan and facilitate a variety of activities for groups of children of diverse ages and capabilities, as well as for individual children or teens and practices these skills in activity centers and at bedside.
6. Gain knowledge of medical terminology, diagnoses, and procedures.
7. Set goals for learning and evaluates own performance.
8. Begin to develop professional attitudes, growth, maturity, and judgment by functioning as a member of the health care team.

Specific expectations will be reviewed during program orientation.