

ABOUT THE Association of Child Life Professionals

Promoting Quality Child Life Services for Children and Families



“Child life services should be considered an essential component of quality pediatric health care and are integral to family-centered care and best-practice models of health care delivery for children . . .

The provision of such services is a quality benchmark of an integrated child health delivery system and an indicator of excellence in pediatric care.”

—American Academy of Pediatrics



The Association of Child Life Professionals is the leading membership association for child life specialists, a group of professionals dedicated to supporting children and families in health care settings and other challenging environments. ACLP's membership is composed of more than 5,000 individuals representing approximately 600 organizations worldwide. ACLP organizes professional development opportunities for child life specialists, such as the ACLP Annual Conference on Professional Issues, and facilitates the exchange of knowledge and resources through face-to-face networking and online learning communities. ACLP also administers the rigorous, examination-based Child Life Certification program, with a continuing education component that ensures a high standard of professional competence among those bearing the Certified Child Life Specialist (CCLS) credential.

Child life specialists help children and families to cope with stressful experiences in hospitals and other settings. They support the optimum development of each child by providing opportunities for play, education, and self-expression, even under the most challenging circumstances. Applying theories of child development, child life specialists promote quality psychosocial care by providing age-appropriate preparation for medical procedures, pain management and coping strategies, and self-expression activities. Understanding that a child's welfare also depends on the well-being of the whole family, child life specialists provide information, support, and guidance to parents, siblings, and other family members.



CHILD LIFE SPECIALISTS . . .

Provide children in the medical setting with age-appropriate opportunities to engage in **PLAY AND CREATIVE ARTS**, encouraging normal development and a sense of **FUN**, even under difficult circumstances



PREPARE CHILDREN FOR MEDICAL PROCEDURES OR TREATMENT using language they can understand, and introduce coping strategies to reduce their anxiety, promote a sense of mastery, and enhance cooperation with the health care team



Promote family-centered care by providing **INFORMATION, ADVOCACY AND SUPPORT** for parents, siblings and other family members



Offer a variety of **SUPPORT SERVICES FOR CHILDREN AND FAMILIES**, which may include planning special events, entertainment, and gift drives, conducting pre-admission hospital tours and consultations, and leading support groups

CHILD LIFE SPECIALISTS are an integral part of the health care team, typically working closely with doctors, nurses, social workers, and teachers, among others. They work in general pediatric inpatient units, as well as specialty areas like the emergency department, surgical and intensive care units, and outpatient areas. Increasingly, child life services are also being offered in other settings, such as community outreach programs, private medical and dental practices, special needs camps, and hospice services.



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