

The child life profession is a dynamic, challenging, and often competitive discipline that demands excellence from its practitioners. In traditional hospital settings and beyond, child life specialists are responding to a wide variety of complex issues by applying their unique body of knowledge and skills. As child life professionals are continually challenged to demonstrate their value and expertise to satisfy employer expectations, those individuals who have documented a basic mastery of child life theory and practice – and have the initiative to learn new skills – will become increasingly valuable to their organizations.

Certification is a vital step for child life specialists looking to sharpen their professional edge. The CCLS credentialing program is a voluntary, rigorous, examination-based professional certification credential. The requirements for certification are based on academic and clinical experiences, and successful completion of the Child Life Professional Certification Examination, and are detailed herein.

## Why Become Certified?

There are many benefits associated with becoming a Certified Child Life Specialist:

- **Professional Identity:** Earn the exclusive right to identify yourself as a Certified Child Life Specialist (CCLS), the only credential issued in the child life profession
- **Recognition:** Achieve formal acknowledgement of your professional accomplishment
- **Advancement:** Benefit from enhanced career opportunities, with the potential for increased salary
- **Respect:** Validate your specialized knowledge and expertise to peers, management and other interdisciplinary colleagues.
- **Growth:** Dedicate yourself to continued professional excellence through education and professional development
- **Esteem:** Improve your credibility with hospital administrators and the general public
- **Passion:** Demonstrate your commitment to the child life profession
- **Pride:** Enjoy elevated self-esteem and satisfaction in your work

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**Please read this document carefully!**

**Any questions should be directed to [certification@childlife.org](mailto:certification@childlife.org).**

## What is child life certification?

Child life certification is the process by which, after verification that an individual has met predetermined and standardized criteria, they are granted time-limited recognition and use of the Certified Child Life Specialist (CCLS) credential.

The Child Life Professional Certification Program is administered by the Child Life Certification Commission (CLCC), Association of Child Life Professionals (ACLP) staff, and a professional testing agency. The program fosters uniform standards of practice and ethical conduct among child life specialists. In addition, child life certification promotes protection for the general public from untrained individuals entering into an inappropriate relationship with children and families.

To achieve the CCLS credential, each candidate must satisfy all educational and experiential requirements established by the CLCC, and must demonstrate an acceptable level of knowledge of child life theory and practice by successfully completing the Child Life Professional Certification Examination. The eligibility requirements for the exam are applied fairly, impartially, and consistently within applicable laws, including all US government nondiscriminatory statutes and laws.

Those who successfully complete the exam become certified for a five-year period. During this five-year cycle, CCLSs are required to pay maintenance fees, and in the fifth year of the cycle they must recertify, either by retaking the exam or through verification of required Professional Development Units (PDUs).

Certification is granted independently of a candidate's membership in ACLP.

## How do I become a Certified Child Life Specialist?

Applicants for certification must establish eligibility before they are seated for the Child Life Professional Certification Examination. Eligibility requirements are explained on the following pages.

**There are no exceptions made to the requirements. Establishing eligibility for, taking and passing the Child Life Professional Certification Examination is the only way to become a Certified Child Life Specialist.**

## Child Life Code of Ethics

Application for the CCLS credential and maintenance thereof require compliance with the Child Life Code of Ethics, a body of ethical principles which is derived primarily for the benefit and protection of infants, children, youth and families in settings where the potential for damaging stress or trauma exists. The Child Life Code of Ethics may be found on page 21.

There is a process in place by which consumers and others may report complaints related to the behavioral conduct of CCLS credential holders on the ACLP website. There are also CLCC policies regarding the criminal background of applicants and certificants.

All applicants and credential holders are required to acknowledge their agreement to abide by the Child Life Code of Ethics.

Candidates and certificants who fail to abide by the code may have their certification suspended or revoked.

## Eligibility Requirements Effective January 1, 2019

Effective January 1, 2019, to establish eligibility for the Child Life Professional Certification Exam, the following will be required of all candidates on or before the registration deadline for the exam administration for which they are applying:

### Academic

#### Option 1:

1. Bachelor's degree in any field of study

**-AND-**

2. Coursework: must successfully complete 10 college/university courses as follows:

Child life course taught by a CCLS

A minimum of 2 child development courses that cover ages birth -18

Family systems course

Play course

Loss/bereavement or death/dying course

Research course

3 additional courses in related content areas

*Additional information about the required courses can be found on the following pages*

**- OR -**

#### Option 2:

Degree from an ACLP-Endorsed Academic Program

*\*An eligibility assessment must still be completed—additional instructions can be found on page 11*

### Clinical

Applicants are required to complete a minimum of 600 hours of a child life clinical internship under the direct supervision of a Certified Child Life Specialist who:

- Maintains professional child life certification throughout the supervisory period
- Has a minimum of 4,000 hours of paid child life clinical experience prior to the start of the supervisory period
- Takes responsibility for the educational development and guidance of the candidate in the clinical setting

## Required Coursework Details

- For each of the 10 required courses, it is recommended that students take a 3-credit course or the equivalent to have an appropriate depth of instruction.
- A minimum of one full course must be completed for each of the required areas of study. (A minimum of two courses are required for the child development requirement.)
- In order for a course to count, the required content must be the primary focus.
- All points within the Required Content section of each course must be covered within the course. Applicants may not use the same course to meet 2 or more of these requirements.
- Applicants are required to submit university-generated course descriptions when applying for an Eligibility Assessment.
- Applicants must be prepared to provide university-generated syllabi if requested.
- Due to the limited involvement of the instructor in the curriculum being studied and uncertainty about whether it was equivalent to a traditional course, independent study courses are generally not accepted to fulfill the course work requirements needed to establish eligibility for the certification exam.

<b>1. Child Life</b>	
<b><i>Required Child Life Content:</i></b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A minimum of 3 credit hours or unit equivalency is recommended.</li> <li>• There are 6 required areas of study that must be covered in this course.</li> <li>• <b>All 6 areas must be addressed.</b></li> <li>• <b>More than 1 course may be needed to fulfill this requirement.</b></li> <li>• <b>The following content must be taught by a Certified Child Life Specialist® (CCLS) who meets the requirements below.</b></li> </ul>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Official Documents of ACLP/CLCC</li> <li>○ Scope of Practice</li> <li>○ Impact of Illness</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Family Centered Care</li> <li>○ Therapeutic Play</li> <li>○ Preparation</li> </ul>
<b><i>Instructor Requirements:</i></b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Hold/maintain the CCLS credential throughout the period of instruction</li> <li>• A minimum of 4,000 hours of paid child life clinical experience OR a minimum of two years of experience teaching child life subject matter*</li> <li>• Maintains knowledge of the Association of Child Life Professionals Child Life Code of Ethics and the <i>Official Documents of the Association of Child Life Professionals</i></li> <li>• Pursue training relevant to adult learning styles and evidence-based teaching methodology</li> </ul>	
<p><i>*CCLS must be able to demonstrate that the two years of teaching experience was completed prior to 2022. Beginning in 2022, those without prior teaching experiences who wish to initiate a child life course will only be considered qualified if they have a minimum of 4,000 hours of paid child life clinical experience</i></p>	

## 2. Child Development:

**Required Content:**  
 Typical child growth and development including theoretical content for children and adolescents (birth - 18-years old)

**Required Number of Courses:**

- At least two courses that focus curriculum on typical growth and development (not atypical) and cumulatively cover child development from birth to 18 years.
- A minimum of 3 credit hours or unit equivalency for each course is recommended.

Example 1	One course on children Birth – 8 (early childhood) <span style="color: red;">-AND-</span> One course on children 9-18 (middle childhood and adolescence)
Example 2	One course on early childhood (birth-8 years), <span style="color: red;">-AND-</span> One course on middle childhood (9-12 years), <span style="color: red;">-AND-</span> One course on adolescent (13-18 years).
Example 3	One course on development birth – 18 <span style="color: red;">-AND-</span> One course on infant, school age, or adolescent development
Example 4	Two courses on development birth – 18 ( <b>Not Recommended</b> )

**Clarifications:**

- More than 2 courses may be needed to fulfill this requirement.
- If any portion of this age span is not covered, additional courses must be taken.
- Course titles must contain the words “child” (infant, toddler, middle, latent, adolescent) and “development” and indicate the age range covered by the course. Applicants submitting courses that do not follow this scheme may be required to submit additional information such as course syllabi.
- Courses covering the lifespan of development are not accepted due to the limited amount of time and content allocated for children birth–18 years old.
- Courses focusing on adults or seniors are not accepted.

### 3. Family Systems:

**Required Content:**

Content must focus on a systems approach to understanding families (e.g. an ecological approach or Family Systems Theory)

**Required Number of Courses:**

One course is required  
A minimum of 3 credit hours or unit equivalency is recommended

**Recommended Components:**

Historical and contemporary theories related to family structure and functions  
Family dynamics including broader societal perspectives of diversity and cultural variance  
Family relationships and the dynamics of family life  
Adaptations in family structure and interaction patterns during times of transition  
Adult-child interactions and family roles  
Exploration of current research and theory as it applies to family systems

### 4. Play:

**Required Content:**

This course must focus on the therapeutic aspects and/or learning objectives of play in infants, children, youth, and young adults.

**Required Number of Courses:**

One course is required  
A minimum of 3 credit hours or unit equivalency is recommended

**Recommended Components:**

Classical and contemporary theories on play  
Play as an essential element for children's growth, development, and learning  
Influence of play environments on children's play

**Acceptable Curricula:**

- Observing, assessing, and using play to make judgments about children's learning
- Play as the primary vehicle and indicator of physical, intellectual, social, and emotional development of children
- Play principles and values
- Structuring therapeutic play sessions
- Creativity and play
- Guidance of play
- Play, curriculum and program development
- Art, music, and play for early childhood education\*
- Concepts of leisure, play and recreation\*

*\*Courses that cover all stages of childhood (birth to 18) and non-recreational therapy courses are preferred.*

**Coursework NOT Accepted:**

Courses from the college/university department of physical education are NOT accepted.

## 5. Loss/Bereavement or Death/Dying:

### **Required Content:**

Foundations of loss, bereavement, and/or death/dying

### **Required Number of Courses:**

One course is required

A minimum of 3 credit hours or unit equivalency is recommended

### **Recommended Components:**

Historical, current, cultural, spiritual, and religious perspectives

Topics including ambiguous loss, transitions, palliative care, self-awareness & self-care

Inclusion of content focused on impacts to children and families is recommended

Courses on aging are not accepted

## 6. Research:

### **Required Content:**

Basic research methods, statistics, and outcomes that apply to clinical practice and program review.

### **Required Number of Courses:**

- One course is required
- A minimum of 3 credit hours or unit equivalency is recommended

### **Recommended Components:**

- Foundational research literacy and research ethics
- Introductory approaches to research – quantitative, qualitative, action research, and analysis
- Introduction to knowledge translation and dissemination of research outcomes impacting clinical practice program review
- Introduction to the integral role of research in evidenced-based practice.
- Research processes of data collection, evaluation, literature review, knowledge translation

*Please note: Courses with “research” in the title will be accepted.*

## Joining the Association of Child Life Professionals

Although ACLP membership is not required in order to be certified, ACLP Membership makes sense! By joining ACLP and taking advantage of significant discounts on certification fees and study materials, candidates will benefit from savings that will more than make up for the cost of the first year of membership.

For more information on ACLP membership, please visit the ACLP website.

## 7. Additional Coursework:

### **Required Content:**

Child life or a closely related subject

### **Required Number of Courses:**

- Three courses are required
- A minimum of 3 credit hours or unit equivalency per course is recommended

**Recommended Courses:** It is highly recommended that applicants complete these courses in the following content areas:

- Ethics
- Human Anatomy and Physiology
- Medical Terminology

**Additional Coursework Options:** Applicants who do not complete additional course work in the areas listed above will be required to take three courses from one or more of the following college/university departments:

- Child Life
- Child Development
- Counseling
- Expressive Therapies (only courses that cover the therapeutic applications of play, music, dance, and art will be accepted; fine arts courses are NOT accepted)
- Family Development
- Family Dynamics
- Human Development
- Psychology
- Therapeutic Recreation

**Coursework Options Requiring a Syllabus:** Courses from the following areas of study or departments will be accepted only if the course content (as demonstrated by the course syllabus) is closely related to child life.

- Sociology
- Social Work
- Nursing
- Early Childhood Education
- Special Education
- Human Services
- Marriage and Family Therapy
- Allied Health
- Family Studies

### **Coursework NOT Accepted:**

Courses in Recreation Administration



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## Frequently Asked Questions

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### General

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#### **I was previously certified, but my certification lapsed or expired. Am I still eligible to take the exam?**

All candidates must meet the current eligibility requirements regardless of past certification status. CCLs whose certification has lapsed or expired must re-establish eligibility by starting the application process anew. They must complete an eligibility assessment, documenting the completion of the current eligibility requirements, register for the exam, pay the exam fee, and successfully complete the examination.

#### **I have already established eligibility under the previous requirements, but didn't take (or pass) the exam. What do I need to submit in order to register for the exam again?**

All candidates must meet the current eligibility requirements regardless of past eligibility status. They must complete a new eligibility assessment, documenting the completion of the current eligibility requirements, register for the exam, pay the exam fee, and successfully complete the examination.

#### **Am I required to be a member of the Association of Child Life Professionals to be eligible for certification?**

Candidates for certification are not required to be members of the Association of Child Life Professionals. However, ACLP members receive discounted rates on publications to prepare for the exam, examination fees, and certification fees once certified.

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### Degree

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#### **Do I need to obtain a master's degree to become certified?**

Candidates are required to have a minimum of a bachelor's degree. The previously-announced requirement for a master's degree in 2022 was rescinded. A master's degree is not required.

#### **Do I need a degree in child life to obtain certification?**

Candidates are not required to obtain a degree in child life in order to be eligible to take the Child Life Professional Certification Exam. Candidate's bachelor's degree can be completed in any field of study.

#### **If I'm still in school working on my bachelor's degree, can I take the exam?**

All applicants are required to successfully complete their bachelor's degree on or before the registration deadline for the exam for which they are applying. Applications from students anticipating graduation are not accepted.

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### Course Work

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#### **Do the required courses have to be taken for college credit?**

Yes. Non-credit or audited courses are not accepted.

#### **Do the required courses have to be taken as part of a degree program?**

The required courses can be taken as part of or in addition to a degree program. Check with the college/university about enrollment requirements.

#### **Do the required courses have to be 3-credit classes?**

No. While it is recommended that applicants have at least credit hours or unit equivalency per course, there is no minimum number of credit hours per class at this time.

#### **Where can I take the required courses?**

Courses meeting the requirement may be taken at any college or university that has been accredited by an organization that is recognized by either the US Department of Education or the Council on Higher Education Accreditation or the international equivalent.

#### **Can the required courses be taken online?**

Yes. Courses may be taken either in-person or online.

#### **Am I required to take any child life-specific courses?**

Yes, all candidates must complete at least one child life course, and that course must be taught by a Certified Child Life Specialist. There are six required areas of study that must be covered. See page 4 For further details.

**Why am I required to take a child life course?**

CLCC seeks to ensure that individuals pursuing a career in child life will be proficient in their future practice by requiring an academic background that includes knowledge essential to child life practice. Academic courses that prepare, support, and provide a solid academic and practical foundation for students allow them to build a foundation of knowledge in the core competencies of child life.

**Why does the child life course have to be taught by a Certified Child Life Specialist?**

When preparing students for areas of specialty such as child life, having content experts providing instruction is of great value. Those who have earned the CCLS credential have demonstrated a level of expertise in child life that helps make them uniquely suitable to instruct aspiring child life practitioners.

**Can the child life course be co-taught by a non-CCLS?**

No. All instruction must be provided by a CCLS.

**How do I find a child life course taught by a CCLS?**

The required course may be completed at any fully-accredited academic institution provided the required curriculum and instructor requirements are met. There is a self-identified list of institutions offering a child life course taught by a CCLS on the ACLP website. ACLP/CLCC is not responsible for, nor does it endorse, the content or quality of any of these courses. Prospective students are encouraged to directly contact programs in which they are interested for specific information.

**Do I have to submit a transcript for the child life course in addition to the Child Life Course Verification Form?**

Yes, the child life course must appear on an official college/university transcript with a passing grade and the applicant must request verification through the Eligibility Assessment online process or provide the Child Life Course Verification Form (see the end of this document) signed by the instructor showing that all six required topics of study were covered.

**My child life course did not cover all of the six required topics. What do I need to do?**

Academic programs may choose to provide coverage of the six topics in more than one course as long as each course covering the areas is taught by a CCLS. In such cases, the digital verification process that is part of the Eligibility Assessment or a Child Life Course Verification Form must be submitted for each course, providing confirmation

that the applicant received instruction from a CCLS in each of the required topics of study.

**I'm taking my internship for college credit. Can this count as my child life course taught by a CCLS?**

No. A child life internship or practicum taken for college credit cannot be used to satisfy this requirement. Candidates must have BOTH an internship AND a child life course taught by a CCLS in order to establish eligibility for the exam.

**I took my child life course a while ago and don't have a Child Life Course Verification Form. Can I still use the course to establish eligibility?**

Without verification, courses cannot be used to meet the requirement for a child life course taught by a CCLS. However, they may count toward the other nine courses that are required.

**I am enrolled in classes, but they won't be complete before the registration deadline for the exam I want to take. Can I establish eligibility in anticipation of completing the required courses?**

No. All of the required course work must be complete on or before the exam registration deadline for the administration for which candidates are applying. If any of the required courses are not complete by that date, applicants must wait for a future exam date. Completion must be documented on an official transcript on or prior to the registration deadline.

**I don't know if the classes I've taken will count; can my transcript be reviewed?**

The Eligibility Assessment is the vehicle used to review a candidate's progress toward meeting the eligibility requirements including the course work requirement. In-progress courses are not reviewed. ACLP staff will continue to review courses only until 10 have been approved. Submission of each course from a transcript is discouraged as it is unlikely that they will all be reviewed.

## Clinical Experience

### How do I get the clinical experience?

As the certifying body for child life specialists, CLCC is limited as to the level of assistance we can provide for internship placement. We encourage candidates to contact facilities directly to locate programs and to determine if they are qualified for placement. It is the prerogative of the hiring institution to set the requirements for internship positions, which vary among institutions and may include things that are not required by CLCC.

### Can I use hours that I have worked as a child life specialist or child life assistant to meet the clinical experience requirement?

The required clinical experience hours must be earned through a child life internship. Paid work experience is no longer accepted to meet this requirement.

### Can I use hours that I have worked with children outside the child life profession to meet the clinical experience requirement?

Other types of clinical experience may not be substituted for any portion of the clinical hours. All hours must be obtained through an internship in child life.

### What if my internship ends after the exam registration deadline?

A minimum of 600 hours must be completed *on or before* the exam registration deadline. If the internship is longer than 600 hours, CLCC does not require that the internship be completed by the deadline. Ultimately it is left to the internship supervisor's discretion to verify the hours prior to the conclusion of the internship. However, if a candidate will not have

completed 600 hours by the exam registration deadline, they must wait and apply for another exam administration. Clinical experience must be verified on or prior to the registration deadline.

### Does my internship have to be completed in a hospital?

A portion of the required hours must be completed in a hospital setting. There is no minimum. Remaining hours may be earned in other types of healthcare settings.

### Can I obtain the hours at more than one site?

Yes. If an institution is offering a term shorter than 600 hours, then the candidate will need to acquire additional hours at another facility. Verification of the hours must be obtained from each site where the clinical training is completed.

### Do the clinical hours I completed in the past still count?

Yes, provided that the hours meet the current requirements and can be verified by a CCLS supervisor.

**PLEASE NOTE:** The Clinical Experience Verification Form (see final pages of this document) has been revised. Older versions of the Clinical Experience Verification Form do not include all of the necessary elements to establish eligibility under current requirements.

Prior to 2006, supervisors were not required to meet a minimum number of paid child life work experience hours. If a candidate was deemed eligible prior to 2006 using clinical experience under a supervisor who does not meet the new requirements, they forfeited their eligibility effective January 1, 2006.

## IMPORTANT INFORMATION ABOUT THE ELIGIBILITY ASSESSMENT

The Eligibility Assessment Service is part of an updated two-step exam application process.

### Step 1 - Eligibility Assessment AND Step 2 - Exam Registration

In step 1, applicants log into their profile, pay a non-refundable fee for the Eligibility Assessment, and immediately begin entering their eligibility information, including course work. During this period, applicants are able to save their work and return to their application at any time to monitor their progress towards eligibility. Because many child life internship programs require applicants to document that they have met the academic requirements, a report is available for the applicant to print at any time during the Eligibility Assessment period.

*Once eligibility is established, the applicant's status will change to "candidate," and they may proceed to step 2 - paying the separate exam fee and registering for an exam administration.*

*The Eligibility Assessment Fee is a one-time fee if the candidate successfully completes the examination prior to any changes to the eligibility requirements. However, if the requirements change, the candidate's status will return to "applicant" pending a new assessment (an additional fee applies).*

## Completing the Eligibility Assessment

Applicants are required to complete an Eligibility Assessment, and once eligibility is established, to register for the examination.

Because the Eligibility Assessment is an ongoing process, applicants may leave any requirements blank that have yet to be completed and return later to fill out those sections as the requirements are completed.

1. Login (or create a new customer record) to your ACLP online profile at [www.childlife.org](http://www.childlife.org).
2. Click on Certification
3. Click on Certification Portal
4. Click on Request an Eligibility Assessment
5. Click on Save and Continue
6. Select Payment Type
7. Enter your credit card information
8. Click on Submit Payment

**The following three parts of the Eligibility Assessment may be completed in any order:**

### 1. Enter degree/course work information

- a. Click on Enter degree and courses for review.
- b. Select the credit type – either degree or courses – and click on Continue.

- c. Enter the requested information and click on Save.
- d. From here you may add more courses by selecting Add Another Credit; or, Return to Transcript will take you to your Evaluation Report.

### 2. Enter information for verification regarding the child life course taught by a CCLS

- a. From the Certification Portal, click on Child Life Course Verification.
- b. Enter the requested information and click on Save and Continue.
- c. Enter your instructor's name in the box provided or click on the icon on the far left of the box to open a dialog box that will allow you to search for your instructor's name. It may take 1-2 minutes for the system to search the database for the instructor's name.
- d. Click on Next.
- e. Confirm the information entered and click on Submit Your Application. Doing so will send an email to your instructor requesting that they verify the information submitted.

**Please remember that you must submit an official transcript\* in order for degree and coursework information to be reviewed.**

*ACLP staff will continue to review courses only until 10 have*

### **\*OFFICIAL TRANSCRIPTS**

Once you have submitted your eligibility information, please send your official transcripts to our office.

- If a university provides official transcripts digitally, they can be emailed to [certification@childlife.org](mailto:certification@childlife.org) directly from the institution.

- If your institution does not provide the digital option for official transcripts, please mail the transcripts to:  
Certification, Association of Child Life Professionals, 7600 Leesburg Pike West, Ste 200, Falls Church, VA 22043

**Note:**

- CLCC does not accept fax or email transmission of transcripts from applicants since this transmission automatically renders them "unofficial."

- CLCC does not accept unofficial transcripts that have been printed by the applicant from the university website.

- You will be notified via email when your official transcripts have been received in our office. You may then expect to see results on your Evaluation Report on your online profile approximately 2—3 weeks.

- If the name that will appear on your official transcripts does not match the name on your Eligibility Assessment, please provide us with a verification of your name change such as a copy of a marriage license. This documentation may be faxed, emailed or mailed to our office.

been approved. Submission of each course from a transcript is discouraged as it is unlikely that they will all be reviewed.

**3. Enter clinical experience for verification**

- a. Click on Clinical Work Verification.
- b. Enter the requested information and click on Save and Continue.
- c. Enter your supervisor's name in the box provided or click on the icon on the far left of the box to open a dialog box that will allow you to search for your supervisor's name. It may take 1-2 minutes for the system to search the database for the instructor's name.
- d. Click on Next.
- e. Confirm the information entered and click on Submit Your Application. Doing so will send an email to your supervisor requesting that they verify the information submitted.

Only clinical experience that has been completed can be verified. If you are currently completing your internship, please wait until it is completed to start this process.

**Providing Supporting Documentation**

All candidates are required to send supporting documentation needed to establish eligibility.

Documentation presented in a foreign language must be translated into English, at the applicant's expense, by a professional translation agent with a notarized signature or stamp attesting to the accuracy of the contents.

We strongly encourage candidates to send any supporting documentation using a delivery method that will provide them with receipt confirmation. Applicants may use their receipt to confirm that their materials were successfully delivered to our office.

**Applicants are required to submit the following:**

<b>Examination Fees*</b>	
<b>ACLP Members</b>	<b>Non-members</b>
\$300.00 U.S.	\$450.00 U.S.

\*As of publication date; all fees are subject to change.

**1. Bachelor's Degree Documentation Required:**

An original OFFICIAL\* transcript from the college/university conferring the degree, which shows the type of degree granted and the date conferred. Please confirm that the transcript is issued after the date the degree was conferred.

**2. Course Work Documentation Required:**

Applicants must request verification through the Eligibility Assessment online process or provide the Child Life Course Verification Form signed by the CCLS instructor showing that all six required topics of study were covered.

**AND**

An OFFICIAL\* transcript from each college or university where the course work was completed.

- All 10 courses including the child life course must appear on the transcript(s) with a passing grade.
- No in-progress courses will be accepted.
- Transferred courses from another school must have a passing grade listed on the transcript or be documented by another OFFICIAL\* transcript from the original college/university.
- Online courses must be reflected on an OFFICIAL\* transcript with a passing grade.

**\*NOTE: "OFFICIAL" is defined by each college/university; for details, please check with the school's Registrar's Office. Faxed and photocopied transcripts are not accepted. Emailed transcripts are only accepted if sent directly by the academic institution and are considered official by the school.**

**3. Clinical Experience Documentation Required:**

Applicants must request verification of their clinical experience through the Eligibility Assessment online process or provide the Clinical Experience Verification Form signed by the CCLS supervisor verifying that a minimum of 600 hours of child life clinical training was completed. If hours were earned at multiple sites, verification of the hours must be obtained from each site.

Please note that previous, outdated versions of the Clinical Experience Verification Form do not include all of the necessary elements to establish eligibility under current requirements, and will not be accepted.

## Eligibility Assessment Frequently Asked Questions

### How do I get my course work reviewed?

The Eligibility Assessment is the vehicle used to review an applicant's progress toward meeting the eligibility requirements (including course work).

Applicants pay a fee\* to initiate an Eligibility Assessment and submit information and materials (including official transcripts and other verification documents) as the requirements for establishing exam eligibility are completed. Once all steps in the Eligibility Assessment have been completed, the applicant is granted access to register for an upcoming exam.

*\*If the eligibility requirements change, a second payment of this fee will be required as a new assessment must be opened.*

### When can I expect "results"/updates?

You will be notified via email when your official transcripts have been received in our office. You may then expect to see results on your Evaluation Report on your online profile in approximately 2—3 weeks. You may print and disburse the Evaluation Report at any time.

### What about courses "in progress?"

Only those courses that appear on an official transcript with a passing grade will be reviewed for acceptance as part of an Eligibility Assessment. Any "in progress" courses will appear as ineligible but you may provide updated official transcripts once they become available and those courses will be re-evaluated.

### My instructor has verified my CL course but it still appears as ineligible on my report. Why?

Your Child Life Course, while verified by your instructor, has not been reviewed or accepted because we have not yet reviewed an official transcript documenting successful completion of the course. Course work, including the child life course is not "eligible" until staff has reviewed official transcripts and confirmed that the submitted course work has been completed with a passing grade.

**Documents submitted will not be returned. Please keep copies of all materials submitted for your records .**

### How do I submit transcripts?

If your university provides digital versions of official transcripts, these may be emailed to [certification@childlife.org](mailto:certification@childlife.org) directly from your institution.

If your institution does not provide the digital option for official transcripts, please mail the transcripts to ACLP, 7600 Leesburg Pike West, Ste 200, Falls Church, VA 22043

CLCC does not accept faxed or emailed transcripts from applicants since this transmission automatically renders them "unofficial."

CLCC does not accept unofficial transcripts that have been downloaded by the applicant from the university website.

If the name that appears on your official transcripts is different than that on the Eligibility Assessment, please provide us with a verification of name change such as a copy of a marriage license. This documentation may be faxed, emailed or mailed to our office.

### Do I have to do an Eligibility Assessment if I did a course work review?

Yes, all course work must be submitted as part of an eligibility assessment. The discontinued course work review service was an optional, informal process by which individuals gauged their progress toward the completion of the 10 course requirement; versus the current eligibility assessment wherein the applicant establishes eligibility for the exam.

## If you establish eligibility to sit for the exam...

Candidates will be notified by email if eligibility has been established. They are then given access to register for an upcoming exam administration window. There will be a slight delay between establishing eligibility and the email with exam registration information.

Candidates will subsequently be contacted by ACLP's testing agency with information about how to schedule the exam at the testing center and on the date preferred.

Candidates are permitted to choose a date within the testing window based on the appointment schedule of the testing center selected. Candidates may only take the exam 1 time during a testing window.

After scheduling the exam, candidates will have the opportunity to save and print an **admission document which must be presented at the testing center on the day of the exam.**

### Eligibility Appeals Process

Candidates who are unable to establish eligibility may appeal the decision by submitting a letter to the Certification Commission stating the reason for the appeal.

The request for appeal must be accompanied by any supporting documentation the applicant wishes to submit.

## Registering for the certification exam

Once a candidate has established eligibility, they are given access to register for the certification exam. There will be a slight delay between establishing eligibility and the email with exam registration information.

Please note that candidates are required to register a minimum of five days prior to the start of the exam administration window. It is recommended that candidates apply as soon as possible as the schedule at the desired testing center may fill up quickly. See below for the exam registration deadlines.

Testing Window	Registration Deadline
March 15-30	March 10
August 15-30	August 10
November 1-15	October 27

### To register online:

1. Log into your online profile
2. Click "Visit Profile" under the log in boxes
3. Click on Event/Webinar Registration
4. Select the desired test administration window
5. Click on Register
6. Follow the on-screen instructions

After registering for the exam, our testing partner will contact you with information necessary to schedule the exam. Please note that you must schedule the exam a minimum of 5 days prior to the desired testing date.

## Special Testing Accommodations

All examination sites are fully accessible and compliant with the Americans with Disabilities Act. Special testing accommodations require documentation and are scheduled subject to approval upon review of the required documentation. Candidates for whom English is a foreign language and/or those with a visual, orthopedic, speech or hearing impairment, other health or physical impairment, a specific learning disability, or a psychological or mental disorder that requires modifications to the usual testing environment can apply for special accommodations. Only those candidates who have been granted this approval in advance will receive special accommodations during testing.

To apply, please complete the [Special Accommodations Packet](#). Requests for special accommodations must be included at the time you register for the exam in order to be considered. **To ensure adequate time for review, applicants requesting special testing accommodations must establish eligibility and register for the exam two weeks prior to the registration deadline.**

## Withdrawals and Scheduling Changes

### Can I withdraw from the examination?

**Withdrawal requests must be RECEIVED by 11:59 PM eastern time a minimum of five days prior to the start of the testing window for which the candidate is scheduled.** Requests received after this date will not be honored and the candidate will forfeit the entire examination fee.

Requests must include the approved test administration window (month and year) and the applicant's name and signature.

Examination fees will be refunded (less a \$50.00 US processing fee). The candidate must establish eligibility for any future exam administration.

### Can I defer my application to another administration?

**Deferral requests must be RECEIVED by 11:59 PM eastern time a minimum of five days prior to the start of the testing window for which the candidate is scheduled.** Requests received after this date will not be honored and the candidate will forfeit the entire examination fee.

The candidate must continue to meet all eligibility requirements in place for the new exam administration.

Requests must include the approved test administration window (month and year), the desired test administration window (month and year), and the applicant's name and signature.

There is a \$50 US processing fee for each administration change.

### IMPORTANT NOTES ABOUT SCHEDULING CHANGES:

**If you have received login information from our testing vendor and/or scheduled the exam through their website you must contact BOTH ACLP and SMT directly to make any scheduling changes.**

**SMT may elect to charge a fee for schedule modifications in addition to any fees ACLP charges.**

**If you wish to reschedule the exam within the same testing window and you do not contact SMT at least five days prior to the day you are scheduled to take the exam, you will forfeit the entire examination fee.**

## Examination Format and Content

The Child Life Professional Certification Examination is comprised of 150 multiple-choice questions. The allotted time to complete the examination is four hours.

The following is a listing of the domains specific to each area of child life practice, with a notation of the percentage of examination items (questions) related to each domain. This is taken from the [Exam Content Outline](#) and although the actual content varies from administration to administration, all exams follow this blueprint.

DOMAIN	# QUESTIONS	% OF EXAM
I. Professional Responsibility	30	20%
II. Assessment	60	40%
III. Intervention	60	40%

The Child Life Professional Certification Examination is an objective test that covers relevant knowledge, understanding, and practical application of child life theory and practice as determined by the Child Life Certification Commission and other Certified Child Life Specialists surveyed. The exam is developed by a committee of experts in the child life profession as a measurement of basic, entry-level knowledge of each candidate.

The committee starts with a periodic Practice Analysis which defines the profession of child life by delineating the domain, tasks, knowledge and skills necessary for competent practice as a child life specialist. From this assessment, content areas and their appropriate relative emphases are defined. A survey of child life practitioners validates the content outline.

Of the 150 questions on the exam, 25 are pretest items and are not weighted (not counted toward candidates' scores). Piloting items in this manner allows items to be analyzed before they become weighted and provides verification that the items contribute toward measuring a candidate's proficiency in the material and are not irrelevant or poorly-written. Candidates answer the pretest items, and then performance data is used in a statistical analysis to determine if the questions perform as intended. If so, their ability to contribute to a test's quality is verified and they can be considered for inclusion on future exams as scored items.

Each form of the Child Life Professional Certification Examination is equated to ensure that candidates are neither penalized nor rewarded if an exam form is more difficult or easier than any other version of the exam. Collecting performance data enables the test administration agency to conduct this important process.

For more detailed information about how the exam is developed and how it is scored, please visit the [ACL P website](#).

## How to Prepare—Recommended Resources

The following are references that cover the basic concepts in child life theory and practice. These references are used to validate the content of the Child Life Professional Certification Exam. Most are available through the [Bookstore](#) section of the ACLP website.

1. [Psychosocial Care of Children in Hospitals: A Clinical Practice Manual](#) Gaynard, et al. (1998)
  2. [Meeting Children's Psychosocial Needs Across the Healthcare Continuum](#) Rollins, Bolig, & Mahan (2018)
  3. [The Handbook of Child Life](#) Thompson (2018)
  4. [A Child in Pain: What Health Professionals Can Do to Help](#) Kuttner (2012)
  5. [ACL P Official Documents of the Child Life Council](#) ACLP (2020)
  6. [Making Ethical Decisions in Child Life Practice](#) Burns-Nader et al (2021)
  7. [How to Help Children through a Parent's Serious Illness](#) McCue & Bonn (2011)
  8. [Research Methods for Child Life Specialists](#) Burns-Nader et al (2021)
  9. [Emotional Safety in Pediatrics](#) Gordon (2021)
  10. [The Value of Certified Child Life Specialists: Direct and Downstream Optimization of Pediatric Patient and Family Outcomes](#) Boles, J. et al. (2020)
  11. [Health equity and children's rights](#) Council on Community Pediatrics and Committee on Native American Child Health (2010)
  12. [Technology and interactive media as tools in early childhood programs serving children from birth through age 8](#) National Association for the Education of Young Children & Fred Rogers Center for Early Learning and Children's Media at Saint Vincent College. (2012)
  13. [The Impact of Racism on Child and Adolescent Health](#) Pediatrics (2019)
  14. Any normal growth and development textbook
- This list was updated December 2021.*

This document and any updates are available on the Association of Child Life Professionals website at: [www.childlife.org](http://www.childlife.org)

Any questions regarding the content of the Candidate Manual should be addressed to: [certification@childlife.org](mailto:certification@childlife.org).



## Exam Day Instructions

Exam appointments are made based on the operating schedule of the testing center selected by the candidate.

Candidates have four hours in which to complete the exam. At the discretion of the site administrator, candidates may be admitted to the examination up to 20 minutes late. Late arrivals will be required to sign a statement acknowledging that they will receive no extra time to complete the exam.

## What To Bring

### Personal Identification

To gain admittance to the examination room, all candidates are required to present a government-issued photo identification. Acceptable forms of identification include a valid driver's license, passport, or military identification card.

### Admissions Document

At the time candidates schedule their exam appointment, the testing agency will provide an admissions document to each examinee. In order to be admitted to the exam, **candidates are required to present this document at the testing center on the day of their appointment.**

If a candidate has been pre-approved for special testing accommodations, candidate should present the confirmation e-mail sent by CLCC indicating the accommodations that have been approved to ensure that the appropriate testing accommodations are made onsite.

### Other

Earplugs for sound suppression are allowed. Headphones and ear buds are not permitted.

**Please bring as few personal belongings as possible.**

Books (including all types of dictionaries), papers, electronic/cellular devices (pagers, telephones, etc.), food, water bottles and most other personal belongings will NOT be permitted at your testing station. Some testing centers have lockers for examinees' use during the exam however this is not

## What NOT To Bring

guaranteed at every location. Neither ACLP nor CLCC is responsible for the security of any personal possessions brought to the examination.

### During the Examination

No food or beverages (including water) will be allowed in the testing room unless prior approval has been received for medical reasons. Candidates must submit a Special Accommodations Application Packet to request this approval.

Candidates may exit the testing room to use the restroom or water fountain. Only one person will be permitted to leave the room at a time. Candidates will not be permitted to make up the time lost while away from the examination. If candidates wish to use the restroom, they should raise their hand and the proctor will give further directions.

There is an inherent risk of connectivity issues with computer-based testing. Candidates who experience technical difficulties that affect their performance must report these to the proctor immediately (prior to receiving their exam result) and contact SMT immediately after leaving the testing center to report the problem.

Any concerns about the testing site and/or proctors should be reported immediately and noted on the exit survey at the end of the examination/prior to receipt of the exam results.

### Examination Day Absences

Refunds will only be approved if the absence is the result of a documented personal or medical emergency. Absences are reviewed by the committee on a case-by-case basis. Refund requests must be received in writing with supporting documentation detailing the reason for absence within 14 days of the examination date. CLCC reserves the right to verify any information submitted regarding examination day absence. If the absence is excused, payment for the exam will be refunded, less a \$50 U.S. application processing fee, or may be deferred to the next test administration in accordance with the policies herein.

### Inclement Weather

If severe weather or natural disaster makes the testing center inaccessible or unsafe, the test administration may be canceled. Test administration will be delayed or canceled only in emergencies.

Candidates who cannot safely reach the test site because of severe weather conditions and wish to request a refund of the examination fee,

must send the written request with documentation of the weather conditions to CLCC within 14 days of the scheduled examination date. CLCC will evaluate the circumstances on a case-by-case basis.

## Exam Feedback

Examinees will be given the opportunity to comment on the examination administration, content, or any of its elements prior to leaving the examination room. Exam proctors will provide instruction on this process. Candidates with concerns about the accuracy of specific exam questions must provide this feedback prior to leaving the testing room. Since CLCC constantly works to improve the testing process, candidates are strongly encouraged to provide feedback on the exam prior to leaving the testing room.

## Examination Security

Any candidate who gives or receives assistance, or whose behavior is disruptive during the examination, will be required to leave the testing room immediately. The candidate's answers will not be scored and the situation will be reported to CLCC for review and possible action by the Ethics Committee. Any candidate who observes inappropriate test taking behavior should report it to appropriate testing personnel. In order to detect fraud, the performance of all candidates is monitored and analyzed statistically.

The entire item (question) bank, examination materials and each form of the examination are the property of the Association of Child Life Professionals Inc. Distribution of exam content or materials through any form of reproduction, including oral and written communication, is strictly prohibited and punishable by law. Any individual who removes or attempts to remove examination material from the test site will be prosecuted; this includes memorization of questions.

Test development and security requirements prevent CLCC from releasing test questions or other specific exam content to anyone, under any circumstances.

Discussion of exam content with other candidates following the exam is considered a breach of examination security and is not permitted.

## After the Exam/Score Reporting

You will receive a preliminary score report before leaving the testing center. The scores will be subjected to a statistical analysis and there is a very slight chance that they will change. You will be

notified if there is a change to your score. Once your results are posted in your ACLP Online User Profile, they are considered final.

The purpose of the Child Life Professional Certification Exam is to measure an individual's performance compared to a specific criterion (the established passing score as defined by subject matter experts), this is called a criterion-referenced exam. This type of exam is not intended to measure a range of levels of competence, but rather to confirm that an individual meets a minimum level of competence. Like most credentialing exams, the objective of the Child Life Professional Certification Exam is to measure candidates' comprehension of the body of knowledge identified in the Practice Analysis Study, not to compare it with that of other candidates.

The goal of criterion-referenced assessments is to measure performance most precisely in a narrow range near the passing score. The more precise the exam is in this range, the less suitable it is for assessing aptitude at levels above/below the passing score. As a result it would be inappropriate to use test scores to rank individuals.

**For this reason, CLCC does not release test scores above the passing score.** If a candidate reaches or exceeds the passing score, they will not receive their numerical score, only the information that they have passed the exam. This is done in part to prevent the improper ranking of individuals by stakeholders such as prospective employers. Candidates who do not meet the cut score will receive their numerical scaled score as well as the percentage of correct answers they provided for each of the three domains. This information is provided to help candidates focus their studies for future examinations.

## Confidentiality

Registration for the Child Life Professional Certification Examination constitutes authorization for the testing agency to release that candidate's exam results to CLCC, ACLP staff, and to the candidate only. Access to score reports is limited to those staff members at ACLP and its test administration agency who are involved in the production and distribution of these reports.

Only group performance data will be utilized by CLCC, ACLP Staff, ACLP's test administration agency or others designated by the CLCC for purposes of research, development and reporting to the profession.

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## I Didn't Pass the Exam – What Are My Options?

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### Re-Examination Procedures

Candidates can only take the exam once per testing window. Three test forms will be available each year. Therefore, candidates are allowed to sit for the examination three times per year and will be administered a different test form with each attempt. After three attempts, a candidate must skip an administration (testing window) of the examination. If they fail a fourth time, candidates must skip another administration of the examination prior to taking a fifth time. When a candidate is required to skip an examination administration, the candidate is encouraged to seek out learning opportunities and coursework to gain further information regarding the child life profession and skills. If eligibility requirements have changed since the last examination attempt, a candidate must reestablish eligibility prior to retaking the examination. Candidates are limited to taking the examination 5 times. Additional attempts require the approval of the Appeals Committee.

### Examination Appeals

Only appeals relating to the testing environment or administration and its effect on candidate performance will be considered.

A candidate must submit a letter to CLCC stating the reason for the appeal, including supporting documentation, within 14 days of the date on which the exam was administered.

The Appeals Committee has no access to examination questions or individual candidate answers. Candidates with concerns about the accuracy of specific exam questions must provide this feedback prior to leaving the testing room.

Candidates who experience technical difficulties that affect their performance during computer-based testing must report these to the proctor immediately (prior to receiving their exam scores) and contact SMT immediately after leaving the testing center to report the problem.

Certification will not be granted through appeal. Candidates must pass the examination at another administration to become certified, but the CLCC may grant a waiver or reduction of fees.

## Congratulations! You're a Certified Child Life Specialist!

Candidates who successfully complete the Child Life Professional Certification Examination begin a five-year certification cycle as Certified Child Life Specialists (CCLSs).

Certified Child Life Specialists are permitted to use the initials "CCLS" after their names. CCLS is a registered certification mark. It is not punctuated with periods.

Certified Child Life Specialist is a credential, not a job title, and can only be used by those who have passed the certification exam.

Shortly after the testing window closes, you will receive a wall certificate along with important information on maintaining the CCLS credential. Please be sure to review this material carefully as well as the [Child Life Professional Certification Maintenance and Recertification Manual](#).

## Maintaining Certification

In order to keep their certification status active, CCLSs are required to pay a certification maintenance fee each of the first four years of the five-year certification cycle.

Whereas examination and recertification fees cover expenses directly related to those specific activities, the principal purpose of the certification maintenance fee is to enable the ongoing work on behalf of CCLSs.

Newly certified or recertified CCLSs pay the first of these four payments in the calendar year immediately following the year in which the exam was passed or the year in which recertification was achieved. For example, if a CCLS passes the exam at any of the administrations in 2019, the first certification maintenance payment will be due on or before January 31, 2020.

Individuals who do not pay these fees allow their certification to lapse, and are no longer permitted to refer to themselves as Certified Child Life Specialists or use the CCLS credential. If certification lapses due to non-payment of maintenance fees, an individual must re-establish eligibility under current requirements, take and pass the certification examination to regain the credential.

### Revoking the CCLS Credential

Child life professional certification may be revoked for any reason CLCC deems appropriate, including, but not limited to, the following reasons:

- Falsification of certification materials
- Falsification of any information requested by CLCC
- Violation of the Child Life Code of Ethics
- Conviction of a felony or other crime of moral turpitude relating to the provision of child life services
- Cheating on the examination
- Failure to maintain the confidentiality of the certification examination

These are current policies and are subject to change. Please refer to the detailed information about maintaining the credential and the recertification process found in the [Child Life Professional Certification Maintenance and Recertification Manual](#)

## Recertification

In the fifth year of the certification cycle, CCLSs must recertify in order to continue their certification. Recertification is required in order to promote continuing competence. As the child life profession continues to evolve and expand, it is imperative that child life specialists keep abreast of current research and best practices in order to promote competency and consistent quality in the delivery of psychosocial care to children and families.

During the year in which a CCLS's certification expires, CLCC will send recertification reminders via email. CCLSs may opt to recertify through Professional Development Units (PDUs) or by retaking the Child Life Professional Certification Examination.

Individuals who become certified or who recertify in 2015 or subsequent years and who elect the PDU option will be required to acquire 60 PDUs over the course of the five-year certification cycle on topics related to each of the domains of the Exam Content Outline as well as the topic of professional ethics. These are detailed in the [Child Life Professional Certification Maintenance and Recertification Manual](#).

If a CCLS does not recertify during the final year of the five-year certification cycle, certification expires.

To regain the credential, an individual with expired certification must re-establish eligibility under current requirements, take and pass the certification examination.

## Child Life Code of Ethics

Certified Child Life Specialists subscribe to a body of ethical principles which are in accordance with the Association of Child Life Professionals' Child Life Mission, Values, and Vision Statements and Operating Principles and which are derived primarily for the benefit and protection of children (unless modified, children refers to infants, children and youth), and families in settings where the potential for damaging stress or trauma exists.

Certified Child Life Specialists recognize that they are ethically responsible to: (1) children; (2) other professionals; (3) staff, students and volunteers who are receiving training and supervision; and (4) themselves, both personally and professionally.

It is understood that ethical behavior should not result from edict but from a personal commitment on the part of the individual as a professional. In any situation, the course of action chosen is expected to be consistent with the ethical principles either stated or implied herein.

All those providing child life services (including specialists, administrators, assistants, interns and students) share as a goal: (1) maximizing the physical and emotional health as well as the social, cognitive and developmental abilities of children, and (2) minimizing the potential stress and trauma that children and their families may experience. These goals are best accomplished by adhering to this code of ethics.

**Principle 1** -- Certified Child Life Specialists hold a primary commitment to the psychosocial care of the patient and family and uphold the [mission, vision, values](#), and operating principles of the profession.

**Principle 2** -- Certified Child Life Specialists have a duty to maintain objectivity, integrity, and competence, while exhibiting compassion.

**Principle 3** -- Certified Child Life Specialists have an obligation to maintain an environment that respects variations in culture, age, gender, race, ethnicity, physical ability, sexual orientation, gender identity/expression, religious affiliation, veteran status, and socioeconomic status.

**Principle 4** -- Certified Child Life Specialists respect the privacy of children and families and maintain confidentiality within the standards and requirements of employers, local governing regulations, or private practice standards.

**Principle 5** -- Certified Child Life Specialists demonstrate the competencies of the child life profession by continuous efforts to improve professional services and practices provided in the diverse settings in which they work, and in the community at large.

**Principle 6** -- Certified Child Life Specialists provide services within their competencies and make appropriate referrals with due regard for the professional competencies of other members of the health care team and the community within which they work.

**Principle 7** -- Certified Child Life Specialists respect the duties, competencies and needs of their professional colleagues and maintain the utmost integrity in all interactions with the institutions or organizations that employ them or in their private practices.

**Principle 8** -- Certified Child Life Specialists continually seek knowledge and skills that update and enhance their understanding of all relevant issues affecting the children and families they serve.

**Principle 9** -- Certified Child Life Specialists respect the conventions of scholarly inquiry and will recognize their responsibility for ethical practice in research.

**Principle 10** -- Certified Child Life Specialists use integrity to assess and amend any personal relationships, social media exchanges, or situations that may interfere with their professional effectiveness or objectivity, or otherwise negatively impact the children and families they serve. Child life professionals ensure the conclusion of their professional role before any personal relationship is permitted to develop with children or the members of families they have served.

**Principle 11** -- Certified Child Life Specialists recognize that financial gain should never take precedence over the mission, vision, values, and operating principles of the profession.

**Principle 12** -- Certified Child Life Specialists accountable for the supervision and training of others (e.g., staff, students, volunteers) assume responsibility for teaching ethical professional values and providing optimal learning experiences.

*Revised January 2020*

## Child Life Professional Certification Exam Content Outline, *effective January 1, 2019*

*Number of questions in parentheses*

### Domain I: Professional Responsibility (20% - 25 questions)

1. Practice within the scope of professional knowledge and clinical expertise. (8)
  - A. Establish and maintain professional boundaries.
    1. Therapeutic relationships with patients, families, and staff.
    2. Helping professions (e.g., social work, child life, music therapy, etc.)
  - B. Demonstrate knowledge of confidentiality and privacy laws.
  - C. Adhere to the Child Life Code of Ethics for child life professionals.
    1. Use of social media
    2. Identification of conflicts of interest
    3. Personal, peer, and professional accountability
    4. Continue to seek knowledge and skills related to the healthcare environment
  - D. Advocate for the protection, safety, and rights of the child and family.
    1. Mandated reporting
    2. Emotional safety
    3. Safe environment
    4. Consent and assent
  - E. Employ knowledge of cultural fluency and provide individualized and equitable care.
2. Engage continuously in self-reflective and evaluative professional child life practice. (8)
  - A. Integrate self-reflective skills into daily practice (e.g., awareness of biases, projection, transference, etc.)
  - B. Define evidence-based practice and operate under its principles.
  - C. Participate in activities of inquiry and integrate findings into practice.
    1. Quality improvement
    2. Research processes (e.g., data collection, evaluation, literature review, knowledge translation, benchmarking, etc.)
  - D. Initiate and seek opportunities for clinical supervision and professional/personal growth.
  - E. Identify methods of self-care to manage the impact of exposure to pediatric illness, injury, and healthcare (e.g., stress management, compassion fatigue, secondary trauma, etc.)
3. Collaborate and communicate effectively as a member of the care team. (9)
  - A. Employ clear and objective documentation standards in accordance with workplace policy.

1. Assessment
  2. Plan of care
  3. Intervention
  4. Outcome/Evaluation
- B. Apply principles of adult learning to represent the child life profession and/or the institution to internal and external audiences.
    1. Speaking to individuals and groups (e.g., media, donors, community, higher education, healthcare professionals, and students)
    2. Integrate a variety of educational techniques (e.g. lectures, hands-on activities, use of multimedia)
  - C. Educate others about expected reactions and responses to the healthcare experience using child development and family systems theories, and principles of psychosocial care.
  - D. Recognize the strengths of the interdisciplinary team.
    1. Identify opportunities for collaboration (e.g., co-treating, research, etc.)
    2. Recognize and initiate appropriate referrals (e.g., scope of practice)

### Domain II: Assessment (40% - 50 questions)

1. Identify and apply relevant healthcare data to develop a comprehensive assessment and plan of care. (10)
  - A. Consider the impact of diagnosis, procedures, and treatment.
  - B. Anticipate the impacts of illness, injury, and healthcare experiences.
  - C. Predict the impact of healthcare trends, issues, and environment on stress and coping.
2. Identify and apply developmental frameworks to develop a comprehensive assessment and plan of care. (13)
  - A. Assess the physical, cognitive, and social-emotional development of the child.
  - B. Apply developmental theories to anticipate response and reactions to illness, injury, and healthcare experiences.
  - C. Select and apply theories of child development.
    1. Stress, trauma, and adverse child experiences
    2. Coping
    3. Temperament
    4. Emotional health
    5. Resiliency
    6. Attachment
  - D. Identify variables that impact a child's vulnerability to illness, injury, and healthcare experiences (e.g., history of abuse, physical limitations, absence of support system, etc.).

3. Identify and apply knowledge of family systems to develop a comprehensive assessment. (8)
  - A. Examine the families' norms, composition, practices, communication styles, and preferences.
  - B. Demonstrate knowledge of family systems and family stress adaptation theories.
  - C. Identify how children and families interpret and make meaning of health, illness, and loss.
  - D. Identify the strengths and challenges in family dynamics and utilization of supports.
4. Identify and apply cultural and contextual factors to develop a comprehensive assessment. (8)
  - A. Assess and articulate comprehension of sociocultural needs and learning styles.
  - B. Describe and apply philosophies and practices of patient-centered care.
  - C. Consider socioeconomic status, justice, access and equity, etc. when identifying the availability of community resources.
  - D. Explore cultural and spiritual values, beliefs, and needs.
5. Demonstrate assessment strategies and processes. (11)
  - A. Apply formal and informal techniques to assess patient/family acuity and psychosocial risk.
  - B. Adapt services to meet the patient/family's needs, goals, and preferences.
  - C. Apply the cyclical process of assessment, plan, intervention, and evaluation of services.
  - D. Collect, interpret, and integrate relevant data into psychosocial assessment and plan of care.

**Domain III: Intervention (40% - 50 questions)**

1. Demonstrate comprehensive knowledge and skills in play theories and application. (11)
  - A. Facilitate types of play relevant to illness, injury, and healthcare experiences.
    1. Normalizing play
    2. Developmental play
    3. Healthcare play
    4. Therapeutic play
    5. Child-directed play
  - B. Prescribe appropriate play practices to facilitate optimal coping (e.g., relationship building, mastery, assessment, education, normalization, etc.).
2. Provide education specific to the individual needs of children and families as it applies to illness, injury, and healthcare experiences. (11)

- A. Assimilate healthcare, family, and child variables to implement a plan of care that supports individualized learning needs.
  1. Preparation (e.g., teaching dolls, books, technology, medical equipment, tours, etc.)
  2. Diagnostic teaching
  3. Coping strategies (e.g., alternative focus, deep breathing, guided imagery, integrative and expressive therapies, etc.)
  4. Advocacy for pain management
- B. Empower children and families to advocate for their needs related to illness, injury, and healthcare experiences.
3. Provide coping support for patient and families experiencing loss and/or grief. (12)
  - A. Anticipate the implication of trauma, loss and/or bereavement for children and families.
  - B. Define and distinguish palliative, hospice, and end-of-life care.
  - C. Understand and recognize cultural and spiritual preferences.
  - D. Describe developmental perceptions of and reactions to trauma, loss, and/or bereavement.
  - E. Define and distinguish grief, bereavement, and mourning.
  - F. Articulate types (e.g., anticipatory, complicated, etc.) and theories (e.g., stages and tasks, etc.) of grief experienced by children and families
  - G. Provide support and resources to promote transition.
  - H. Facilitate opportunities for expression of feelings, meaning making, and legacy work.
4. Adapt child life skills to support diverse populations (e.g., gender, sexuality, developmental differences, behavioral health, sensory and processing considerations, etc.) (4)
5. Apply child life development and family systems theories to provide emotional support within the child life scope. (7)
  - A. Environmental safety (e.g., playroom design, healing environment, sensory stimulation, etc.)
  - B. Emotional safety (e.g., healthcare adherence, impact of the healthcare plan, etc.)
6. Utilize clear and sensitive communication skills that develop trusting relationships across the continuum. (5)

The Child Life Certification Commission cannot bestow competence on individuals, but rather recognizes it. It is the responsibility of academic and clinical preparation programs to put forth competent individuals who are prepared to establish eligibility to sit for and pass the certification exam.

The purpose of this form is the verification of internship hours for the purpose of establishing eligibility for the Child Life Professional Certification Examination. The internship hours being verified should involve training and education in a manner that results in minimum, entry-level competence in each of the areas of the Child Life Professional Certification [Exam Content Outline](#). All concepts and relevant skills delineated therein are required for a complete training experience.

## Clinical Rotation Supervisors

Clinical rotation supervisors must meet the following criteria:

1. Maintains professional child life certification throughout the clinical training program
2. Has a minimum of 4,000 hours paid child life clinical experience prior to taking on the supervisory role
3. Is responsible for the educational development and guidance of the applicant in the clinical setting.

Clinical rotation supervisors must:

- Have daily contact with the individual, working at least 80% of the same hours
- Have no dual relationships with the individual (family member, spouse, friend, etc.)
- Arrange for alternate supervision of the individual by another qualified CCLS in their absence
- Model for and then observe the individual demonstrating a minimum, entry-level competence
- Directly observe the individual in order to monitor and evaluate performance
- Schedule private, weekly, formal, and uninterrupted supervision meetings with the individual

## Internship Coordinator

Internship coordinators must meet the following criteria:

1. Maintains professional child life certification throughout the clinical training program
2. Has a minimum of 4,000 hours paid child life clinical experience prior to taking on the supervisory role
3. Is responsible for the educational development and guidance of the applicant in the clinical setting.

In lieu of a formal internship coordinator, a designated clinical supervisor must be named to fulfill this role and complete the verification form. The designated individual must meet the clinical rotation supervisor requirements.

Internship coordinators must:

- Be responsible for oversight of internship program with the support of the clinical rotation supervisors.
- Work with the clinical rotation supervisors to educate, evaluate, mentor, and coach interns
- Ensure educational opportunities for interns are available to help them gain knowledge and experience in relation to the [Exam Content Outline](#)
- Serve as a liaison between the child life department and academic institutions, where applicable
- Schedule private, weekly, formal, uninterrupted supervision meetings with the individual
- Provide intern with the Clinical Experience Verification Form at the completion of the internship

## Important Notes

- ◆ Candidates are permitted to accrue the required clinical hours at more than one institution. This form must be completed by each institution.
- ◆ Candidates are required to complete some of the required hours in a hospital setting. There is no minimum.
- ◆ Candidates submitting this form who completed the internship with remote supervision must have previously obtained authorization through the [Extenuating Circumstances Policy](#). The internship coordinator must indicate on this form that remote supervision was approved.
- ◆ Photocopies of the original form are accepted as documentation when establishing eligibility for the exam.
- ◆ Exam candidates are encouraged to keep a copy of this form for their records.

## Instructions

Complete the requested information on the following page and submit by upload to the applicant's record, fax to 571-483-4482, scan/email to [certification@childlife.org](mailto:certification@childlife.org) or mail to:

Association of Child Life Professionals  
7600 Leesburg Pike West Ste 200  
Falls Church, VA 22043



Applicant Name \_\_\_\_\_ Institution Name \_\_\_\_\_

CLCC-Approved Remote Supervision Yes or No (circle one)

**Clinical Rotation Supervisor 1**

Name (printed) \_\_\_\_\_ CCLS # \_\_\_\_\_

Dates of supervision from \_\_\_\_\_ to \_\_\_\_\_

By signing this form, the clinical rotation supervisor attests to meeting the supervisor requirements and directly observing the intern successfully perform or be trained in the skills identified on the [Exam Content Outline](#).

Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

**Clinical Rotation Supervisor 2**

Name (printed) \_\_\_\_\_ CCLS # \_\_\_\_\_

Dates of supervision from \_\_\_\_\_ to \_\_\_\_\_

By signing this form, the clinical rotation supervisor attests to meeting the supervisor requirements and directly observing the intern successfully perform or be trained in the skills identified on the [Exam Content Outline](#).

Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

**Clinical Rotation Supervisor 3**

Name (printed) \_\_\_\_\_ CCLS # \_\_\_\_\_

Dates of supervision from \_\_\_\_\_ to \_\_\_\_\_

By signing this form, the clinical rotation supervisor attests to meeting the supervisor requirements and directly observing the intern successfully perform or be trained in the skills identified on the [Exam Content Outline](#).

Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

**Internship Coordinator or Designated Individual**

Name (printed) \_\_\_\_\_ CCLS # \_\_\_\_\_

Interns must be trained on all items on the [Exam Content Outline](#) by one of the following: clinical rotation supervisor or internship coordinator. By signing this form, the coordinator (or designated individual) attests that they meet the internship coordinator requirements and that all these elements were included in the training experience. By stating that the applicant exhibits minimum, entry-level competence, you attest that they have been adequately trained relevant to the [Exam Content Outline](#), supervised by an appropriately-qualified CCLSs, and during this period, the applicant has demonstrated minimum, entry-level competence in all areas of the [Exam Content Outline](#): (Check one)

Yes

No

Start Date \_\_\_\_\_ End Date \_\_\_\_\_ Number of Hours Completed \_\_\_\_\_

Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

The required child life course(s)\* must have a focus on children in the health care environment and must be taught by a Certified Child Life Specialist (CCLS) who:

- Maintains the CCLS credential throughout the period of instruction
- Has a minimum of 4,000 hours of paid child life clinical experience OR a minimum of 2 years of experience teaching child life subject matter\*\*
- Maintains knowledge of the Child Life Code of Ethics and the Official Documents of the Association of Child Life Professionals
- Pursues training relevant to adult learning styles and evidence-based teaching methodology

**Notes:**

- ◆ To be accepted, courses MUST be taken for college credit (non-credit/audited courses are not accepted) AND be taken at an academic institution that has been accredited by an organization recognized by either the US Department of Education or the Council on Higher Education Accreditation or the international equivalent
- ◆ Candidates MUST submit an official transcript documenting that a passing grade was achieved.
- ◆ Courses may be taken either in-person or online.
- ◆ There is no minimum number of credit hours per course.
- ◆ Photocopies are accepted.
- ◆ Students should keep a copy of this form for their records.
- ◆ When complete, submit this form by fax to 571-483-4482, email to certification@childlife.org, or mail to: ACLP 7600 Leesburg Pike West, Ste 200, Falls Church, VA 22043

The following required topics of study were/were not covered in this course: *(Please check the appropriate box next to each of the topics below)* Covered NOT Covered

- |   |                            |                            |
|---|----------------------------|----------------------------|
| 1. <b>Child Life Documents</b> -Official Documents of ACLP including the Child Life Code of Ethics, Child Life Competencies, and Standards of Clinical Practice, the Child Life Mission, Values and Vision Statements,  | <input type="checkbox"/> Y | <input type="checkbox"/> N |
| 2. <b>Scope of practice</b> – The spectrum of child life practice in direct and non-direct services in pediatric health care including a historical review of the profession and its development in the evolution of children’s healthcare.                               | <input type="checkbox"/> Y | <input type="checkbox"/> N |
| 3. <b>Impact of illness, injury and health care on patients and families</b> – Stressors and developmental and psychosocial treatment issues that affect the health care experience of a “child and family” including siblings within the context of developmental theory | <input type="checkbox"/> Y | <input type="checkbox"/> N |
| 4. <b>Family-Centered Care</b> – Principles of patient-/family-centered care, including principles of respect and dignity, information sharing, supporting participation in care, and collaboration in relationship to child life practice.                               | <input type="checkbox"/> Y | <input type="checkbox"/> N |
| 5. <b>Therapeutic play</b> – Elements/benefits of play, and various therapeutic play modalities for the clinical setting.   | <input type="checkbox"/> Y | <input type="checkbox"/> N |
| 6. <b>Preparation</b> – Historical/current perspectives on the rationale for, and techniques/outcomes of preparation, as well as accepted preparation methods for healthcare encounters and life-changing events.   | <input type="checkbox"/> Y | <input type="checkbox"/> N |

By signing this form you attest that all conditions set forth above have been met and the indicated areas of instruction were delivered by a CCLS to the student named below.

Student Name \_\_\_\_\_

Course Name \_\_\_\_\_

Academic Institution \_\_\_\_\_ Semester/Year \_\_\_\_\_

CCLS Instructor Name \_\_\_\_\_ Certification # \_\_\_\_\_

CCLS Instructor Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

\*Academic programs may choose to provide coverage of these six topics in more than one course as long as each course covering the areas is taught by a CCLS. In such cases, a Child Life Course Verification Form must be submitted for each course, providing confirmation that the applicant received instruction from a CCLS in each of the required topics of study.

\*\*CCLS must be able to demonstrate that the two years of teaching experience was completed prior to 2022. Beginning in 2022, those without prior teaching experiences who wish to initiate a child life course will only be considered qualified if they have a minimum of 4,000 hours of paid child life clinical experience