



Certification

**Hello from the Child
 Life Certification
 Commission (CLCC)!**

Welcome to the first CLCC Connection of 2019, ushering in spring with details you might never have imagined about how the Child Life Professional Certification Examinations are created.

It would be hard to calculate the total hours of training, support, and individual effort contributed by our volunteer subject matter experts to construct the exams. CLCC volunteers attend to countless details, putting in an amazing number of hours to develop and review each exam question. Then, following the process of writing dozens of new questions, comes the work of creating the entire exam form. These volunteers are admirable and worthy of a huge thank you!

Be sure to review the new [Exam Content Outline](#), the source of topics for new questions written this past fall. To learn more about how and why the outline was developed, listen to [ACLP #Podcast #8: The Results of the Job Analysis](#) with the Child Life Certification Commission Executive Committee; comprised of myself, Chair-Elect Sherwood Burns-Nader, Immediate Past-Chair Nancy Ramhapp and Ame Enright, our Director of Certification.

And remember that we continue to build the CLC Commission, seeking new volunteers through the

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Certification Numbers

Total Current CCLSs: 6032

Residing in:	AK - 8	MS - 23
US- 5567	AL - 77	MT - 3
Australia - 5	AR - 31	NC -217
Canada - 343	AZ - 124	ND - 12
China - 2	CA -534	NE - 40
Georgia - 1	CO - 94	NH - 29
Hong Kong - 10	CT - 66	NJ-185
India - 1	DC - 15	NM -12
Italy - 1	DE - 16	NV - 18
Japan - 54	FL - 260	NY-316
Kenya - 2	GA-179	OH-296
Kuwait - 2	HI - 9	OK - 33
Mexico - 2	IA - 82	OR - 36
New Zealand - 3	ID - 14	PA -207
Norway - 1	IL - 226	RI - 20
Philippines - 3	IN - 94	SC - 78
Poland - 1	KS - 45	SD - 13
Puerto Rico - 2	KY - 52	TN-156
Qatar - 9	LA - 61	TX-539
Romania - 1	MA -253	UT - 80
Singapore - 4	MD -107	VA -91
South Africa - 1	ME - 12	VT - 17
Spain - 2	MI - 179	WA -104

VIF process. Forms are due on Monday, February 11th!

Thank you,

Bindy Sweett

Chairperson

Child Life Certification Commission

Switzerland - 2	MN - 155	WI - 113
Taiwan - 5	MO - 161	WV - 9
United Kingdom - 8		

Important Dates to Remember

March

10 – Registration deadline for March testing window

15-30 – March exam administration

31 – Last day to pay Certification Maintenance Fee with late fee before becoming inactive

Exam Development

The Child Life Professional Certification Exam is overseen by the Child Life Certification Commission (CLCC) and is administered 3 times each year. The exam consists of 150 questions (also known as “items”), and to pass the exam, test takers must get a scaled score of 500 or higher. The highest possible scaled score is 800.

This month, we spoke to Sara Reynolds, CCLS, who is the Commissioner for the Item Writing Committee and Ame Enright, Director of Certification for ACLP, to find out what happens behind the scenes when developing and writing questions for the exam.

Item Development

Item writers and item writing coaches work on cultivating questions for the exam on an ongoing basis. Currently, there are two co-chairs, 20 item writers and 4 item writing coaches on the committee. Committee volunteers:

- Are members of ACLP
- Are CCLSs
- Receive item writing training once they are on the committee
- Have from a few years to decades of child life experience

You may wonder what criteria makes a good exam question. Item reviewers work with item writers to finalize items submitted. Before an item is placed on the exam, it has been reviewed by a minimum of 3 CCLSs. Sara Reynolds explains that, “Item Review looks for questions that have valid references from the updated reference list, are not overly easy or tricky, and are reflective of best practices. We look for questions that

involve critical thinking and span Bloom's taxonomy. You won't see lots of questions that involve memorization of definitions straight from a text book, but rather more real-life application questions to test an applicant's understanding of professional competencies."

Exam References

CLCC added a few items to the reference list for exam preparation, which includes the updated versions of [The Handbook of Child Life](#) Thompson (2018) and [Meeting Children's Psychosocial Needs Across the Healthcare Continuum](#) Rollins, Bolig, & Mahan (2018), and also [A Child in Pain: What Health Professionals Can Do to Help](#) Kuttner, L. (2010). A comprehensive list of publications for exam study is available at <https://www.childlife.org/certification/the-exam/preparing-for-the-exam>.

March 2019 Exam Administration

The exam that will be administered in March 2019 is what is referred to as a beta exam. Because it is based on a new blueprint that was the result of the [2018 Job Analysis](#), the cut score or passing point has to be determined. As a result, candidates taking the upcoming administration will not receive their results on the day they take the exam. It may take up to six weeks for the results to be released.

Determining the Passing Point or Cut Score

Director of Certification, Ame Enright, provided the following information about how the cut score is determined. This process, the Cut Score Study (CSS), is in line with credentialing industry standards that are set by the [NCCA, National Commission for Certifying Agencies](#).

CLCC recruits Subject Matter Experts (SMEs) who are knowledgeable and accomplished in the field of child life. These SMEs practice in different geographic regions and diverse practice settings. They discuss the concepts of entry level, minimal competency, and eligibility requirements and the relationship among these concepts and the certification process. The SMEs also discuss the profile of a minimally competent candidate who meets the eligibility requirements to sit for the exam.

The participants are then asked to consider 100 minimally-competent candidates and decide how many of those 100 candidates would answer each exam question correctly. This sample allows for the various strengths and weaknesses of entry level candidates. Easy items have higher ratings, and difficult items have lower ratings. A large number of items rated as "easy" would lead to a higher cut score, while a large number of items rated as "difficult" would lead to a lower cut score.

The CSS is facilitated by a member of the psychometric staff of our testing agency who guides the SMEs in the process. SMEs are asked to read each question and assign a rating between 0 and 100 on a standard setting worksheet. If there is a large difference between the ratings of the high and low raters, each is asked to explain their rationale for their item difficulty rating.

The SMEs are provided with the p-values for all items. A p-value is the percentage of candidates who have actually answered the question correctly during the beta administration. (The need to collect the statistical performance data is the reason candidates will not get their scores immediately.) P-values are given to the SMEs in order to provide the reality of candidate performance. After considering the historical performance data and the other SMEs' ratings, the SMEs are given an opportunity to adjust ratings if they believe the original ratings were not based on the appropriate criteria.

This process is repeated until it has been established that the SMEs understand the procedure for assigning the values, and there is reasonable consensus as to the item ratings in accordance with the definition of minimal competency.

In this manner, the SMEs individually rate all items on the exam form. Our psychometrician then calculates the average cut score for the exam. Mean percentage and standard deviation of each judge's ratings and a correlation between the ratings of an individual judge and the ratings of the remaining number of judges are calculated. The average reliability of the judges' ratings (intra-class correlation) is calculated resulting in the cut score for the exam form.

A CSS is conducted after each [Job Analysis](#) or roughly every 5 years. After the CSS is complete, common item linear equating (CILE) is applied in order to provide equivalent passing standards across forms of the examination. Equating is the process that makes the administration of different exam forms fair, allowing for the individual differences in the difficulty of the items on each. This is what allows us to provide instant results to candidates who take the exam at later administrations of the form.

Volunteering with CLCC

The Certification Commission is currently comprised of 12 commissioners and 7 committees. Three of these are related to the development of the certification exam. There are approximately 50 individual volunteers doing this work. Most volunteers start out as Item Writers. If you are interested in volunteering with CLCC and making a difference in the certification process, please complete the [Volunteer Interest Form](#) by February 11, 2019.
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Interview with Danielle Babcock, CCLS

We recently had the opportunity to talk about certification with newly Certified Child Life Specialist Danielle Babcock. Danielle graduated with her bachelor's degree from Towson University in May 2017. Her degree program was Family and Human Services with an Introduction to Child Life track. In August 2018 she earned her master's degree in Child Life, Administration and Family Collaboration.

Danielle credits her advisor for being helpful with navigating the process of becoming a child life specialist. She explained, "As soon as I chose to pursue child life during undergrad, my advisor created a graduation plan to include all the necessary course to sit for certification. She outlined each semester to make sure I was enrolled in the

correct courses in the correct order. My advisor made course selection and preparation for coursework review very easy and straightforward.”

Danielle explained that her advisor also met with each student in her cohort multiple times each semester to provide feedback and advice on obtaining volunteer opportunities, practicums and internships. Her advisor also met with her and her classmates “to provide us with the opportunity to complete the coursework review and eligibility assessment together. My advisor would be available for questions and helped walk us through the process.”

With her sights set on a November 7, 2018 exam date, Danielle began studying for the exam, which included weekly study sessions. To help master the exam content, she would answer practice questions and when she got a question wrong, she would research the topic of the question (e.g., research methods) and take notes. Using resources from the ACLP publication list was very helpful. This resource list is found on the ACLP website at <https://www.childlife.org/certification/the-exam/preparing-for-the-exam>.

Taking the child life certification exam can be exhilarating, nerve-wracking and can provide an overwhelming sense of relief all at once, which Danielle certainly found out! Once the exam began, Danielle began to second guess herself. Once she finished the exam, she described the feeling of her heart racing and being, “through the roof as I left the testing room and waited for my results. After I was told that I passed, I remember feeling so relieved and tearful. I couldn’t wait to run outside and call my mom to tell her the exciting news!”

Now that she has passed the certification exam and has had time to reflect on the experience, Danielle has some advice for upcoming exam takers. “I think the best advice that I was given was to go with my gut instinct. I am the type of person to over-think things and second guess myself. It really helped me to stick with the first answer that I chose and try to not go back to previous questions. It was also helpful to remind myself that I knew the exam material. I had been studying child life for 5 years and I was knowledgeable about all of the topics that would be covered. This helped ease my anxiety leading up to the exam and as I sat down to take the exam. Lastly, remember that this test does not make or break your child life career. If the exam results don’t turn out in your favor, there is always the opportunity to re-take the exam and continue pursuing child life.”

Danielle is now in her first job as a Certified Child Life Specialist. She is working full time in the Emergency Department at Golisano Children’s Hospital in Rochester, NY. Danielle summarizes completing her journey to becoming a CCLS as, “having my first job as a Certified Child Life Specialist feels a lot like finishing a marathon. All of my hard work has gotten me to where I am today, and I couldn’t feel more proud and relieved. Finally working as a CCLS is everything I’d hoped for. Although the position is difficult at times, it is beyond rewarding to realize the impact that I have on children’s experiences in the emergency department. I can’t imagine being in any other career field!”

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Certification Update

2019 CLCC Election Results

In January, the Nominating Committee presented a slate of candidates for 2 open positions on the Child Life Certification Commission. With about 64% voting, commission members (volunteers) chose to accept the slate. The approved slate is as follows:

Commissioner/Item Writing Committee Chairperson-Elect

Megan Fisher, CCLS
Children's Hospital Colorado
Denver, CO

Megan currently works as a Program Coordinator child life specialist at Children's Hospital Colorado where she also covers outpatient cardiology. Megan has been a Certified Child Life Specialist for 15 years and has been practicing for the last 11 years. Megan has served on the Child Life Certification Commission since 2014. She first served as an Item Writer for 2 years and then transitioned to Item Reviewer for 1 year. Megan then moved back to Item Writing in 2016 and began serving as an Item Writing Coach. Megan truly loves the process of developing quality items for the Child Life Certification Exam. Megan looks forward to continuing to serve the CLCC by becoming the Item Writing Commissioner-Elect. Megan is most excited to continue the excellent work that the CLCC is doing to further raise the standards of our profession.

Commissioner/Exam Assembly Committee Chairperson-Elect

Caitlin Vazquez, CCLS
Norton Children's Hospital
Gainesville, FL

Caitlin has been a working Certified Child Life Specialist since 2011 and volunteering for the ACLP since 2013. She joined the CLCC in 2015 and has experience in item writing and reviewing, as well as exam assembly. Through serving on the varying subcommittees she has gained the knowledge to take on the position of Chair-elect of Exam Assembly. Caitlin enjoys mentoring future professionals and is excited about the work the CLCC is doing to further the profession.

Congratulations! Megan and Caitlin will assume their new roles in June.

Certification Maintenance

92% of CCLSs who owe the annual certification maintenance fee have paid.

Thank you for maintaining your certification!

The deadline to pay was January 31, 2019; a late fee has been added to the remaining open invoices.

Recertification

Number of CCLSs due to recertify in 2019: 1170

Thank you so much to all of you who have recertified in 2019!

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Certification Program Highlights

Job Analysis

The 2018 Job Analysis is complete, and CLCC has participated in a new podcast on the subject. You will find the podcast [here](#).

For more information about the JA, please click [here](#).

New Verification Forms for Certification Eligibility

The Child Life Certification Commission is pleased to introduce revised versions of the [Clinical Experience Verification Form](#) and the [Child Life Course Verification Form](#).

Clinical Experience Verification Form

The updates to the [Clinical Experience Verification Form](#) align with the [Job Analysis](#) results and the subsequent revised [Exam Content Outline](#). The new [Exam Content Outline](#) should be the foundation for internship curriculum. The form provides greater clarity to the roles of internship supervisors and internship coordinators.

As we transition to the new form, CLCC will continue to accept the previous version of the Clinical Experience Verification Form for those interns placed prior to 2019 (i.e., internships completed during the Spring of 2019 or before). However, all programs must start using the new form for the summer 2019 term.

Child Life Course Verification Form

The new [Child Life Course Verification Form](#) includes information about the new instructor requirements that went into effect with the eligibility changes on January 1, 2019. The form has also been reformatted. Child life courses completed prior to 2019 may be verified using the previous version of the form. Courses completed in 2019 and beyond must use the new Child Life Course Verification Form.

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