

## **Affiliation**

A contract between the university (on behalf of the intern) and the legal department of the internship site designating who is responsible for certain legal coverage of the students. Hospitals often require this so that the university will provide liability insurance coverage for the student while they are on hospital property and are still students. Many healthcare facilities mandate that an affiliation agreement (or contract) must be in place before accepting a student or before a student begins the child life practicum or internship.

For more details, please see affiliation in the [FAQs](#).

## **Certification**

A child life specialist becomes certified by passing the Child Life Professional Certification Examination. Certification is usually required to work as a child life specialist, although some employers will allow child life specialists to become certified within a certain time frame after they are hired. Child life specialists who have achieved certification may refer to themselves as Certified Child Life Specialists and use the abbreviation for the credential, CCLS.

## **Certified Child Life Specialist (CCLS)**

In both healthcare and community settings, Certified Child Life Specialists help infants, children, youth and families cope with the stress and uncertainty of acute and chronic illness, injury, trauma, disability, loss, and bereavement. They provide evidence-based, developmentally- and psychologically-appropriate interventions including therapeutic play, preparation for procedures, and education to reduce fear, anxiety, and pain.

## **Child Life Assistant/Activity Coordinator**

A child life assistant--sometimes also called an activity coordinator--is someone who is not required to have child life certification, but works alongside child life specialists, typically in a non-clinical role, providing normative and developmental play, and meeting the recreational needs of patients and siblings. Not all child life programs have child life assistants, and those that do have varying roles and responsibilities for assistants.

## **Child Life Exam**

The Child Life Professional Certification Examination is required to become a Certified Child Life Specialist. The exam is comprised of 150 multiple choice questions, and individuals have 4 hours to complete the exam. You must successfully complete the Eligibility Assessment in order to apply to sit for the exam. For more information on how to prepare for the exam, click [here](#). When an individual passes the exam, they become certified for a 5-year period during which there are [requirements to maintain the credential](#).

## **Child Life Practicum**

The child life practicum is designed as an introductory experience for individuals interested in pursuing a career in child life. Through experiential learning and observation of Certified Child Life Specialists, child life practicum students begin to increase their knowledge of evidence-based, developmentally-appropriate interventions including therapeutic play, preparation and

education that provide emotional support as well as reduce fear, anxiety and pain for infants, children, youth and families as they cope with the stress and uncertainty of illness, injury, and treatment. Through these experiences, child life practicum students will enhance their knowledge of the child life profession and investigate the process of applying developmental theory to practice. Though not required by ACLP for certification, many clinical internship programs require students to complete a child life practicum experience prior to securing an internship. To learn more about the recommended standards of a child life practicum, see [here](#).

### **Eligibility Assessment**

The Eligibility Assessment is a process by which prospective child life specialists submit their coursework information and clinical experiences for verification by the ACLP, and is required for the common application, and to sit for the exam. Think of this as a virtual filing cabinet. The Eligibility Assessment is a process that can be done all at once, when everything is complete, or in phases. The cost for the Eligibility Assessment is a one-time\* payment of \$80. There is a webinar outlining this process [here](#).

*\*If the eligibility requirements change before eligibility has been established, applicants may be required to resubmit a fee for a new eligibility assessment.*

### **Endorsed Academic Program**

Endorsement of academic programs in child life is defined by the ACLP as an assurance that a program meets the standards and requirements set forth in the Standards for Academic and Clinical Preparation Programs found in the most current Official Documents of the ACLP. Academic endorsement is a voluntary process of self-study and external review intended to evaluate, enhance, and publicly recognize academic programs which meet the standards prescribed by ACLP. The purpose of this process is to promote the interests of students through improving the quality of teaching, learning, and professional practice. You can find a list of endorsed programs [here](#)

### **Evidence-Based Practice**

Evidence-based practice (EBP) evaluates and considers gathered empirical evidence and incorporates professional expertise to guide clinical decisions and treatment plans. EBP validates child life work and unites the child life professional, while including the interdisciplinary team and ensuring high-quality care. Learn more about the use of EBP in child life practice in the [ACLP Evidence-Based Practice Position Statement](#).

### **Internship**

A child life clinical internship in child life is a 600+ hour experience. The majority of internships are unpaid. Using hands-on experiences, a child life internship provides the student with an opportunity to build on coursework and put theory into practice while working in a variety of hospital and related settings under the direction of a Certified Child Life Specialist (CCLS). A supervising CCLS is required to have a minimum of 4,000 hours of paid child life clinical experience prior to supervising a child life intern. A child life clinical internship is [required for certification](#).

**Internship Accreditation**

Internship accreditation is a voluntary two-step process of self-study and external review intended to evaluate, enhance, and publicly recognize quality child life clinical internship programs, promoting the interests of students and the child life profession as a whole through continuous quality improvement of learning and professional practice. You can view the internship programs that have successfully received accreditation from the ACLP [here](#).

**Recertification**

In addition to paying annual [certification maintenance fees](#), a Certified Child Life Specialist is required to complete a recertification process every five years. Recertification can be done by exam or by submitting professional development units (PDUs) to the ACLP for review. Learn more about the details of the recertification process [here](#).