



2026

# CALL FOR ABSTRACTS

SUBMISSION GUIDELINES



## Overview

Professional development through the Association of Child Life Professionals (ACLP) offers unparalleled educational and networking experiences. These educational opportunities provide ideas on innovative resources and evidence-based practices in child life and related fields.

ACLP invites presentation proposals on issues that relate to child life. Anyone wishing to present at the 2026 Child Life Conference or for an ACLP Webinar in 2026 should submit their abstract through the online Call for Submissions. Submissions via email or fax will not be considered.

## Topic Areas

We welcome submission topics that align with the child life core competencies. Abstracts in the assessment and DEI domains and content geared towards advanced topics are strongly encouraged.

In addition, we are seeking abstract submission on the following topics: innovation in the field of child life, DEI and disability within the field of child life, leadership and topics for seasoned professionals, ethics, student preparation, and intervention strategies (including but not limited to interventions for siblings and those for cardiac patients).

Presenters are encouraged to be collaborative and inclusive with peers, colleagues, and multidisciplinary teams.



# Criteria

Individuals may submit an abstract for the following presentation formats:

- In-person: You can choose to be considered for the following:
  - **Half-day Pre-Conference Workshop (4 hours):** Provides presenter(s) the opportunity to share more in-depth learning goals with attendees, leading invigorating discussions, aiding in change leadership, and practicing skills transferable to their daily work. These are best suited to interactive presentations.
  - **90-minute breakout session:** Recommended for those who have 2+ presenters, allowing presenters to lead discussions and provide more in-depth information for key takeaways for attendees.
  - **60-minute breakout session:** Recommended for 1-2 presenters, allowing presenters to provide an overview of a project, system, or intervention with handouts to supplement takeaways for attendees.
  - **Flash Session:** 20-minute breakout session recommended for 1 presenter to share a specific intervention or topic in a short format to spark new ideas for attendees. This presentation will be grouped with like-presentations (ie: ethics, cancer, children of adult patients).
  - **Poster presentation:** Provide researchers to share their methods and outcomes in poster format, answering questions in a 15-minute presentation

**Webinar:** New content for the Online Learning Center will also be chosen via this submission process. We highly recommend selecting a webinar as an additional presentation types if you would like to be considered for this format along with the in-person format. If desired, you can submit an abstract to be considered only for the on-demand learning webinar.

The following criteria must be followed when submitting an abstract. Failure to adhere to the below will result in the rejection of a submission:

- The number of submissions a person may be named on is three.
- No more than four authors per abstract submission.
- The abstract must be redacted, meaning presentations and institutions must NOT be identified by name or description in the abstract. Please do not use a specific program name that is attributed to your organization. Please use "this author", "this program", and "this hospital" in your submission to avoid naming yourself, your institution, or your program.
- Each submission must be written in the third person (e.g. Child life specialists use play to communicate with children in the medical setting)
- Presentations must not attempt to sell or promote any product or service at any time.





# Steps to Submit an Abstract

1. Create an account or log in to the ACLP Abstract Submission site.
2. Select the "Click here to begin a new abstract."
3. Type in the title of the abstract submission.
4. Presenter Info: The submitter is automatically listed as the first presenter. All possible presenters must be included in the submission. Add or remove presenters as needed. Each profile must have the following required fields: first name, last name, email, title, and credentials.
5. Abstract Information: Select the suggested domain, preferred presentation format, presentation length, target audience, and relevant topic.
6. Full Abstract Details:
  - a. Basic Info:
    - i. Title (50 character limit)
    - ii. Brief Description of your presentation: state the purpose of the session (50-word limit)
    - iii. Introduction: Provide any relevant background information regarding your session content (250-300 word count)
    - iv. Description: Provide a complete description of the session (250-300 word count)
    - v. Outcome: What will attendees learn from this presentation? (250-300 word count)
    - vi. Relevance: How is this topic relevant to child life? (250-300 word count)
    - vii. References: References must include foundational child life works (any date) as well as quality, contemporary research (within the past 5-10 years) to support the abstract's claims. References should be formatted using APA 7th edition style.
7. Learning Objectives: List 3-5 learning objectives that describe what attendees will know or be able to achieve after this presentation
8. Policies Acknowledgement: This section describes the expectations for any accepted abstracts for the Child Life Conference.
9. Select Save Submission.
10. When you are ready to submit, scroll up to the top and hit SUBMIT. Your submission will not be sent until you hit the SUBMIT button. If you have correctly completed the process, you will receive a confirmation email.

**Deadline: Proposals must be submitted through the online submission process, open from July 2 – July 31, 2025. Late submissions will not be accepted.**

[Submit an  
Abstract](#)







## Review Process

The ACLP Call for Submissions is designed to elicit information necessary to review the content and organization of all of the proposed presentations. Members of the Conference Planning Committee and Abstract Reviewers will review the submissions, score them, and recommend which presentations are selected. Selection will also be based on conference program agenda space and the need to curate diversified content.

Each abstract is rated according to:

- Quality of Content - Evaluation of background/literature review, purpose and strength of the objectives; clearly articulated methodology and outcomes as well as relevance to child life practice and appeal to conference attendees
- Originality of Idea – Does the content reflect current trends in the field?
- Quality of References – References are sourced from a variety of sound, current resources while creating a strong foundation of the author's ideas and/or approach
- Quality of Abstract Organization - Abstract is readable and understandable with clearly stated lines of logic from one thought to the next
- Quality of Writing – The submission is written in conformity with APA 7.0 guidelines and follows standard grammatical rules, has clarity, and correct sentence structure
- The reference list, as well as in-text citations, should adhere to the format outlined by APA 7.0





## Notification of Acceptance

Deadline: Proposals must be sent to ACLP through the online submission process, open from July 2 – July 31, 2025. Late submissions will not be accepted.

The primary presenter listed on the submission will be notified via email of the Conference Program Committee's acceptance or declination of each abstract submission in late October or early November. Individuals whose abstracts are accepted will be required to sign a contractual agreement with the Association of Child Life Professionals that confirms each author's commitment to present the content of the session as accepted by the Committee. To create a balanced overall conference program, the Committee may request changes to the presentation format or presentation length of accepted abstracts; the acceptance email will indicate any such changes.

Presenters whose abstracts are accepted and who agree to present must register for the ACLP conference and are committed to present for their session day and time as outlined in their acceptance email. If unforeseen circumstances arise affecting a presenter's ability to attend the conference, an alternate presenter must be identified to convey the content that is detailed in the accepted abstract. Presenters are responsible for all travel, hotel, and related costs. All selected presenters will receive a discount on basic registration and are strongly encouraged to register by the Early Bird deadline.

If you are selected to present live, your abstract may be chosen as part of a bundled virtual education package, the Conference Lightning Pass, offered to attendees and other members. This may require pre-recording of your presentation as a webinar.







## Resources

- [ACLP Writing Guidelines](#)
- [FREE WEBINAR: Submitting a Conference Abstract Webinar](#)
- [APA Style](#)
- [Perdue OWL \(Online Writing Lab\)](#)

Questions? Email [conference@childlife.org](mailto:conference@childlife.org)





## FAQs

### 1. How many abstracts can I submit for 2026?

- a. The number of submissions by the same lead presenter or co-presenter team is limited to three.

### 2. What was the acceptance rate for the 2025 Child Life Conference in Los Angeles?

- a. In 2025, a total of 234 abstracts were submitted for all presentation formats, with a 41.5% acceptance rate.

### 3. Can my abstract be presented as an ACLP on-demand webinar?

- a. Yes! If you would like to present an on-demand session only, please select "Webinar" as your format choice. You will also have the option to be considered for a webinar if you are NOT selected for an in-person presentation.

### 4. Are presenters selected for the conference required to register for the conference?

- a. Yes. All presenters are required to register for the conference at a discounted rate. Presenters are all responsible for all travel costs related to attending and presenting at the conference.

### 5. Is there a maximum number of presenters per abstract submission?

- a. Yes. A maximum of four presenters can be listed on each abstract.

### 6. Are there virtual presentation options for the 2025 Child Life Conference?

- a. The 2026 Child Life Conference is a live, interactive event; therefore, there is no onsite option to present virtually to conference attendees. Pre-recording any author's specific content to be played during the live conference session is not allowed.

