



# WELCOME TO THE BOARD ROOM

Dear ACLP Members and Supporters,

Strategic planning sessions are an essential component of association management that provide an opportunity to assess the current state of the association and profession, set future goals, and develop actionable plans. It is my pleasure to share the planning process and highlights from the recently released 2025-2027 ACLP Strategic Plan.

## PRE-PLANNING PHASE

The ACLP Board of Directors began laying the groundwork for the new strategic framework in early 2024. Pre-planning involved identifying

an external facilitator, Lowell Aplebaum, EdD, FASAE, CAE, CPF from [Vista Cova](#). Information was also gathered from 15 in-depth interviews and through a survey which was distributed to ACLP members and non-members. A virtual pre-meeting was also held with session participants including members from the board of directors and senior staff, and key individuals that represented ACLP members across stakeholder groups with various perspectives.

## THE STRATEGIC PLANNING SESSION

The format of the Strategic Planning Session generated an environment where strategic questions, active listening, and engagement from all participants were welcomed. Idea sharing and brainstorming were prompted during large and small group discussions, while also maintaining awareness of the survey data. To ensure all voices were captured, input from participants was documented and reviewed later by ACLP leadership while developing and operationalizing the strategic plan framework.

## MOVING TO ACTION

Following the Strategic Planning Session, the strategic plan framework was reviewed by ACLP staff and specific tasks were created for each key area. At the August 2024 board meeting the 2025-2027 ACLP Strategic Framework was presented for consideration and approved, with subsequent discussion occurring at the November 2024 board meeting where it was finalized.

## THE STRATEGIC FRAMEWORK

Mission, vision, and values statements are an essential component of nonprofit organizations and help explain their purpose, who they serve, what they do, and desired outcomes. Based on input from the Strategic Planning Session, the

core values of ACLP remain unchanged, while the following updates were made to the ACLP Mission and Vision statements.

- **Mission:** To advance the field of child life through continuing education, scientific inquiry, and innovative practice.
- **Vision:** Children and families of every race, identity, and community navigate and cope with challenging life events.

Serving as a roadmap for successfully achieving ACLP's vision, three areas of focus were also identified to outline the most important short- and long-term objectives and will guide resource allocation.

- **Strengthen Identity and Belonging:** Establishing clear and consistent messaging supports enhancing the understanding of ACLP's identity and purview as a membership association who strives to build a culture that actively prioritizes diversity, equity, and inclusion and seeks to increase engagement with its members.
- **Partnerships and Collaborations:** Elevating the visibility of the child life profession and Emotional Safety through collaborative partnerships supports expansion of opportunities for scientific research and data collection that

demonstrates the impact of the profession through evidence-based practices and innovation.

- **Excellence in Professional Practice and Training:** The ACLP aims to advance the expertise of child life professionals across all stakeholder groups by broadening professional education opportunities and leadership development, led by experts and in alignment with the latest research and data.

Lastly, two resonating themes were identified within the strategic framework - Financial Sustainability and Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI). Maintaining the financial health of ACLP is vital, including managing budgets effectively, seeking new revenue streams, and ensuring that financial resources are used strategically. Aiming to ensure long-term stability and growth while concurrently embedding DEI throughout association practices, policies, and processes, and ensuring that membership and leadership reflect diverse backgrounds and perspectives, reinforces ACLP's commitment to our members and community. These themes serve as overarching tenets which will drive ACLP initiatives and play a critical role in responding to the changing needs of child life professionals and those they serve.



**PUTTING THE FRAMEWORK INTO OPERATION**

As ACLP implements this new Framework over the next three years, it must hold steadfast to the course that has been charted and continually measure its progress. In addition to translating the framework for staff and committees, the board of directors will use it as a basis for decision-making, ensuring ACLP meets and anticipates the critical impact our organization will continue to have.

If you have not taken a moment to review the [2025-2027 Strategic Framework](#), I invite you to read through the amazing work done by the Strategic Planning Session participants and

ACLP Board of Directors and staff. Whether you are a frontline practitioner or clinical leader, academician, aspiring professional, or partner who is a champion for child life services and emotional safety, each of you has a very important role in moving ACLP and the profession forward into this next chapter.

With appreciation for your continued support,

**Alisha Saavedra, MA, CCLS**

ACLP Board of Directors,  
Immediate-Past President

# Disabilities Should Not Determine Professional Destinations

**By Kendall Malkin, MS, CCLS and  
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Child life professionals affirm the importance of providing inclusive family-centered care in developing therapeutic relationships. However, there is a substantial need for an increased awareness of the current barriers to the child life field for professionals with disabilities. The National Institute of Health (NIH, 2022) reports that one in four adults in the United States have at least one form of disability, whether it is apparent or invisible. According to NIH (2022), “disabilities can be associated with the mobility, vision, hearing, communication, intellect,

learning, thinking, memory, mental health, or chronic health conditions.” Disabilities can affect individuals uniquely at all life stages, whether it is congenital, permanent, progressive, temporary, or sudden (NIH, 2022). Due to the stark variety of disabilities, challenges arise for workplaces to tailor adaptations to the individual needs of professionals. Disabled individuals are marginalized and underrepresented as employed at 10.9% of the general population, but at 4.8% in the health care workplace (Bulk et al., 2018).

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