

## Tips for Writing a Successful Distinguished Service Award Nomination

1. Make sure to review your final nomination for spelling and grammatical errors. Ask a colleague to review the materials with a fresh set of eyes.
2. Write out the full name of an organization or title before using abbreviations. For example: Association of Child Life Professionals (ACLP)
3. Remember that the terms “child life” and “child life specialist” are not capitalized unless they are used in a title or at the beginning of a sentence. As an established credential, the title “Certified Child Life Specialist” (CCLS) *is* capitalized. For example:
  - “According to the Association of Child Life Professionals website, child life is an established profession that traces its roots back to the early 1900s.”
  - “The child life specialist began her quest for research topics with a review of the established literature.”
  - “After completing her child life internship and spending hours and hours studying for her exam, Jane had finally achieved her dream of becoming a Certified Child Life Specialist.”
4. For more helpful writing tips, please refer to [Writing for ACLP](#).
5. Be sure to clearly describe how the nominee exemplifies excellence in their involvement in the field of child life over their career. Examples of professional experience, contributions to the field, as well as ACLP, ACLP leadership, how their long lasting impact is perceived, their integrity, and vision for the future are encouraged.
6. Remember, the Awards Committee rates a candidate for the Distinguished Service Award based SOLELY on the information you provide in the nomination packet. **Please do not** simply restate the question/criteria or site job description. Also, please only send the required documents. We know you feel passionate about your nominee, and would like to submit letters of support, but the committee will only review the documents requested.
7. When responding to the questions on the endorsement form, please provide detailed examples of the nominee’s work. Clear and thoughtful examples help the Awards Committee to visualize the candidate in her/his work environment, highlighting skills such as decision making, leadership, initiative, innovation communication and collaboration. Case examples with specific behavioral descriptions are best. These examples should outline the issue or situation that was presented, the specific way the nominee dealt with that situation, and how his or her action influenced the outcome.

## SAMPLE RESPONSES

The following are examples adapted from actual nomination submissions over the past two years, shared with the permission of the nominees. They were selected by the Awards Committee based on the high quality and clarity of the content and are intended as a general model of a successful response to one of the criteria outlined in the Distinguished Service Award Endorsement Forms.

***A. Professional experience. Please comment on how the nominee has amassed a body of work consistent with excellence in the profession. (250 word limit)***

Knowing Mary as my internship supervisor, mentor, boss and friend over the past 15 years. I have watched her grow, learn and teach daily through her own practice with patients. She has gained knowledge through reading books & articles, attending conferences, speaking at conferences and daily collaborating with colleagues. She never stops learning and never stops teaching. To me, that is excellence. As her student and employee, I was expected to be a member of the child life council (now ACLP) and strongly encouraged to attend the annual conference. Often she created space in our workdays for us to participate in webinars as a team in order to enhance bonding and growth. She has always been a cheerleader for me through my child life career. In 2011, she started the program she is currently managing as the lone child life specialist supporting the Palliative Care team and many other services throughout the hospital. I was beyond grateful to join her again in 2012 as a child life specialist supporting the children of sick adults and I learned more than ever. She has now grown the Palliative Care Child Life program to seven full-time child life specialists who physically cover seven campuses, provide off-site support to an additional eight campuses, totaling coverage across 15 hospital locations.

Mary always seeks for professional growth opportunities, attending different conferences and academic events for continued education; she is also constantly being approached by different academic and health organizations to be guest speaker and teach/share her knowledge in different parts of the world; being a true child life “Influencer”, she has been contacted by several organizations providing psychosocial services to children in hospitals all over the globe and play-related organizations to work in collaboration with them. Her work and knowledge has benefited children, families and healthcare professionals in different parts of the world.

She is considered an expert on play, especially for the chronically ill or hospitalized child. She has authored chapters, written articles, and developed presentations for children experiencing traumatic events. She has an ability to break down challenging material and create hands-on experiences. She has learned to demonstrate and teach skills by engaging students and attendees in clinical practice and active reflection. By helping participants to internalize the experience and provide authentic and meaningful opportunities, She supports the importance of play.

***B. Contributions to the child life profession and Association of Child Life Professionals (ACLP). Please comment on the nominee's contributions which may include publications, research, presentations at ACLP or other professional conferences, significant work in academia, education of and outreach to others outside the profession (250 word limit)***

*Mary has worked on several different research projects, including one she is working on now on the, Impact of Child Life Care on Same Day Surgery Patients and Parents. She has written or co-written 16 publications and 13 training/educational materials, and has made 37 presentations. She has won awards for outstanding contributions to one's profession, in addition to other honors and awards she has been rewarded with since 1978.*

Mary has published several scientific papers mostly related to play and psychosocial interventions with hospitalized children both in Journals and the Child Life Bulletin. She has also written several book chapters, all of which has been of tremendous help for professionals like myself. Her way of writing the theory and mixing it with her practice has been a big inspiration for colleagues like myself.

She has been so generous to offer her knowledge and supervision to colleagues both in the US and outside of the US. Her support in some of the most challenging patient and family scenarios have made a big difference in my professional practice. She is so insightful and always knows the right intervention for any given situation (trauma, grief, illness, etc.).

She has been an active member of the child life community, on a national and international level for many years. Her commitment to educating and supporting both child life students and professionals is evidenced by her passion for providing learning and teaching opportunities all over the world.

Her contributions in the child life forum are "historic", she is always generous and willing to share her knowledge and experience in benefit of those who need and seek advice through it. I remember that is actually the way I first got in touch with her and met her: I was facing one of the most challenging cases of my career and I was desperate for advice and supervision (which is not easy to find in my country since there are just a few people trained in pediatric psychosocial interventions). Mary advised me back then about the right steps to follow to be able to successfully provide support to that family during a terrible loss. Time passed and Mary has always been there to support me during other difficult scenarios.

**C. Long lasting impact of contributions to child life profession and ACLP. Comments may highlight nominee's development of future professionals/leaders in the field, development of tools or processes emulated by others, willingness to share with others in order to advance the profession, activities which will serve as a legacy within the profession. (250 word limit)**

Mary's work in creating a new department at her hospital is also indicative of her pioneering role in child life. Because she has taken an active role in writing and presenting about child life she is impacting students and colleagues in the field. Her work with the Child Life Council (ACLP) has been of enormous benefit to the profession and will continue to share the message of child life with thousands in the future.

Her child life teaching has been an inspiration for many students and she is a "living legend" on the profession. Everyone is willing to hear a lecture or take a class with globally recognized Mary.

Through her global networking efforts she has been able to spread the child life word in many countries and in collaboration with different organizations and foundations. I have witnessed myself the ability she has to engage big audiences with her "playful and hands-on practice" techniques.

Today many health-care professionals from all over the globe have learned child friendly interventions taught by Mary and are making a difference in hospitals around the world. She has also done enormous efforts to connect international professionals in the psychosocial field, like during the International Child Life Summit during the ACLP annual conference in 2014, and the round table of international experts during the annual ACLP conference in 2016, in which she wanted to show to the child life world the benefits of global networking and share knowledge and experiences globally.

Mary is a staunch advocate for children and families as well as the child life profession. She is a member of several boards and has provided consultation to projects that promote the child life profession and has worked with many organizations, including the Association of Child Life Professionals. The thread that binds these experiences together is Mary's commitment to advocating, promoting and building the child life profession as a necessity not a luxury within the healthcare environment.

**D. Integrity. Please comment on the nominee's reputation inside and outside of the child life community. (250 word limit)**

*Mary has always operated in keeping with the mission of the program. She has been anchored in a life of service, to the profession, to our students, and most importantly to the children and families our students in turn will serve. It was always a pleasure to me to be her "boss" because I always knew I could rely on her integrity, on her intelligence and problem-solving ability, and most especially on her dedication to her work.*

*Mary has represented the true values of the child life profession by always showing her humble self, either from her posts on the ACLP forum or from the respect and her best efforts to adapt to the culture of the places she has visited and taught at.*

*Mary has an impeccable reputation both in the US and in many different countries in which she is well known at. Her ethics, humility and respect for others people culture, ethnic background or way of thinking is truly admirable.*

*Mary has also offered to volunteer with different organizations to help vulnerable children with psychosocial interventions and I've been blessed to partner with her in some of them and directly watched and experienced her love for children and her willingness to help those in need.*

*Mary has devoted her career to educating others. Through presentations, written work, online blogs, and posts she carefully crafts her thoughts to be accessible and articulate. She strives to listen as well as share; her teaching is embedded in research, reflection, observation, and experience. She is devoted to children and families, and the child life profession.*

**E. Visionary. Please comment on the nominee's ability to formulate and motivate a group toward a clear image of the aspired to future, participation in strategic initiatives to advance the profession. (250 word limit)**

*Mary has absolutely been one of the pillars of our child life program Her contributions to the program and its students have been consistent, uplifting, and prescient. For many years she was in charge of internship placement, which not only put her in touch with virtually every student, who all benefited from her support and, sometimes, “tough love,” it also intensified her connection with the far-flung international network of site administrators and child life personnel. She has, almost literally, had her fingers on the pulse of the child life community. She is richly deserving of being honored for her Distinguished Service.*

*Mary has partnered with several national and international organizations that advocate for child & family centered healthcare, hospitalized children's rights, child friendly environments and creating awareness in healthcare professional about children and family needs. Her collaboration with international organizations has widened the scope of the child life profession and she has been an inspiration for many professionals all over the world. Her way of “spreading the child life word and her playful personality” is simply “unique” and everywhere she goes people just want to get more knowledge from her.*

*Mary keeps contributing to the child life profession in different ways: her written contributions through her articles and book chapters that have spread the child life word in many countries that don't have access to local literature on the topic, her contributions has helped many professionals to build playrooms that meet the needs of children and are culturally appropriate, her teaching, conferences and volunteer work make her a true “child life spokesperson”.*

*Mary continues to extend herself to moving the professions forward and is committed to proving education and resources to child life specialists and play advocates the world over. Ever a teacher she never ceases to learn and grow.*