

FAQ: Child Life Internship at Oklahoma Children's Hospital

Our child life department at Oklahoma Children's Hospital at OU Health is dedicated to offering quality programs for the education and training of students. We offer two student programs: practicum and internship. Below are frequently asked questions regarding our child life internship programs here at Oklahoma Children's Hospital.

I am graduating soon and I just heard about child life. I am interested in becoming a child life specialist but don't know where to begin?

Please review the information on becoming a child life specialist on the Association of Child Life Professionals' website www.childlife.org. Complete as much research as possible through the resources available on that website. To become a child life specialist, one has to:

1. Have a minimum of a bachelor's degree in child life or a related field; such as family studies, psychology, child development, etc. The Association of Child Life Professionals requires a minimum of 10 child life related courses. This includes a required child life course focusing on children in the health care environment and must be taught by a Certified Child Life Specialist. The following applied areas of study must be included in the course: child life documents; scope of practice; family-centered care; impact of illness, injury and health care on patients/families; therapeutic play; and preparation.
2. A student must submit coursework for verification, called the Eligibility Assessment, through the Association of Child Life Professionals. Please see ACLP website for related costs.
3. Complete a 600+ hour internship under the direct supervision of a Certified Child Life Specialist, which usually consists of 12-16 weeks of unpaid clinical experience.
 - a. Note: Some hospitals require a practicum to be completed before a student is accepted to their internship program; however, a practicum is not required to become a child life specialist.
4. Upon completion of child life coursework and the internship, the student must pass the child life certification exam.

What's the difference between a child life practicum and a child life internship?

The practicum is specifically designed to introduce students to the field of child life and helps students gain experience in the hospital setting. This experience helps in obtaining a child life internship in a competitive profession. Our practicum is a 150-hour experience, over the course of a specific number of weeks, observing a child life specialist in his or her day-to-day functions. Our practicum is designed to be primarily observation based. All child life practicums are unpaid.

The internship is a clinical experience under the direct supervision of a Certified Child Life Specialist. This experience is designed so students may continue working on clinical skills in order to become competent as a beginning level child life specialist. Our internship consists of 40-hour weeks for 16 weeks, for a total of 600+ hours over a semester. The internship content is based on competencies set forth in the *Official Documents and Standards of the Child Life Council*. All child life internships are unpaid.

For further questions regarding the internship, please contact:
Kortnie Hays, CCLS at Kortnie.Hays@oumedicine.com

Do you require a practicum to be completed prior to the internship?

Yes, the successful completion of a 100-hour child life practicum, under the supervision of a CCLS in a healthcare setting, is required to apply for our internship. If the internship candidate is in the practicum during the time of application, a "Practicum In-Progress" form must be completed.

I completed my practicum at a place that was not in a healthcare setting. Does that count?

We believe these experiences are great and add value to your experiences working with children in stressful situations, however, we require our students to also complete a practicum that is specific to a healthcare setting to gain the experience and exposure to the healthcare world.

When is the internship offered?

Our internship is offered twice a year during spring and fall semesters (January-May and September-December).

How many interns do you accept each session?

We accept up to three students per session depending on availability.

How is the internship structured?

The 16-week internship includes:

Week 1: General orientation to the hospital and child life department

Week 2-7: Unit Rotation 1

Week 8-9: Choice weeks: intern decide what other units they'd like to observe

Week 10-15: Unit Rotation 2

Week 16: Final week, wrap up assignments, continue clinical work

What experiences do you look for in choosing an intern?

We look at relevant experiences working and volunteering with children and families, including well children and children in stressful situations, healthcare settings, and/or programs designed for children with special needs.

Do I have to be affiliated with a college or university to apply for the internship program?

No. A signed contract between a students' university and OU Health must be agreed upon and signed before a student is cleared to begin the program. If a student is not affiliated, the student must be responsible for completing all requirements set forth including obtaining insurance.

Who does your child life department consist of?

Our child life team consists of 23 full and part-time Certified Child Life Specialists, Music Therapy, Child Life Zone and Special Events Coordinator, School Programs Coordinator, and our Paws for Purpose program which includes four full-time facility dogs.

Do you have housing options for any of your student programs?

We do not currently offer housing options for our students, but there are several options close that we are happy to send if selected as our student.

For further questions regarding the internship, please contact:
Kortnie Hays, CCLS at Kortnie.Hays@oumedicine.com