



Thank you for your interest in the Student Practicum Program with the Child and Adolescent Life Program at Duke Children's Hospital and Health Center. Our student program is offered two times a year: January – May and August – December. Your completed application must be submitted to our online program by the following dates:

May 13 (Fall Session)

October 16 (Spring Session)

To qualify for the practicum position, students must be:

- Affiliated with an academic institution for the duration of their practicum
- Enrolled in or have already completed one class taught by a Certified Child Life Specialist
- Enrolled in or have already completed two additional classes that would meet the coursework requirements laid out by the [Association of Child Life Professionals required course requirements](#)
- Have at least 50 hours of volunteer experiences with medical fragile children (please document on your resume)
- Have a cumulative 3.0 grade point average or higher

Completed applications require the following documents:

- A completed Duke Practicum Contact Form (personal contact information, university information including expected graduation date, GPA, and advisor and affiliation agreement contact information)
- A 200 – 500 word essay describing your philosophy of Child Life, the strengths you will bring to a practicum, areas in which you would like more growth and how you envision a practicum experience to contribute to your academic and professional goals. This can be submitted through a box page or as a pdf file.
- Two letters of recommendation uploaded by references in pdf form (preferably one from someone who knows your academic qualifications and one from someone who has supervised or observed you in a field experience). Please share the email address to your online folder for submission.
- A pdf copy of your resume, listing your education and field experience to date.
- A pdf copy of your transcript. An official copy of transcript will be requested when an offer is made.
- A cover letter from your academic advisor that clearly states what academic credit you will receive (if any) and any specific academic requirements you will need to accomplish during this experience.

All applications are to be submitted electronically through an online program.

If you are interested in applying to the Duke Child Life student program, please send an email to childlifestudents@dm.duke.edu with “Practicum Application Request” in the subject line. Please also include your full name, school email address, and the semester you are interested in applying in the body of the email. Once we receive your email request we will send you a link within three business days to begin your application. Please allow yourself enough time to gather and submit all of the required documents online prior to the application deadline. It is the applicant's responsibility to solicit the recommendations and letter from academic advisor.

Upon receipt and review of the completed application, the Practicum Coordinator will be in contact with the applicant. Zoom interviews will be conducted following the application review process. Only completed applications with all supporting documentation submitted through the online program will be considered for review. Please do not hesitate to call (919) 668-4205 should you have any questions regarding the practicum or online submission process.

Sincerely,
Robin Hales, CCLS
Student Practicum Program Coordinator



Child and Adolescent Life Program Student Practicum Program

Child Life Specialists strive to meet the psychosocial and emotional needs of pediatric patients and their families while in the health care environment. Specialists promote positive coping related to a child's stress and anxiety as well as promote the normal growth and development before, during and after hospitalization or outpatient clinic visits. These primary goals are achieved through developmentally appropriate therapeutic play opportunities; psychological and emotional preparation related to medical/surgical and diagnostic procedures; advocacy; emotional support for patients, parents, and siblings; and helping to maintain a child and family friendly environment.

The Child & Adolescent Life Program at Duke Children's Hospital was established in 1969. Since then, Child Life Specialists have been working as part of the interdisciplinary health care team collaborating with nurses, doctors, social workers, school teachers, respiratory therapists, physical and occupational therapists, dieticians, chaplains and other technicians providing comprehensive quality patient care.

It is the mission of the Child & Adolescent Life Program to provide all pediatric patients and their families access to Child Life services. We believe all children have the right to understand what is happening to them, be supported by their caregivers and staff, and have opportunities for play and mastery especially in new or unfamiliar medical environments. As Child Life specialists, we are trained in helping children and their families overcome challenging medical events while promoting effective coping through play, preparation, education, and self-expressive activities. The Child & Adolescent Life Program also provides procedural and emotional support for families and encourage opportunities for optimal development of children facing a broad range of challenging experiences.

The Child & Adolescent Life staff consists of 1 part-time and 12 full-time specialists with Bachelor and Master Degrees in a variety of fields including Child Life, Psychology, Education, Child Development, and Counseling. Child Life services are currently provided in areas including:

- 1A (inpatient general surgery, ENT, urology, neurosurgery, organ transplant, & ortho)
- 2A (inpatient mental health, GI, complex care, pulmonology & CF)
- 2B (inpatient Pediatric Intensive Care Unit)
- 3A-3B (inpatient Cardiac Intensive Care and step down)
- 4A (inpatient Pediatric Bone Marrow Transplant and Cellular Therapy)
- 4B (inpatient hematology/oncology, general pediatrics, neurology, mental health)
- Pediatric Outpatient Specialty Clinics
- Surgical and PACU areas
- Procedure Sedation Unit
- Outpatient Hematology/Oncology and Brain Tumor clinic
- Pediatric Emergency Department

Additionally, in 2023, the Duke Child Life team will expand with a Child Life assistant position covering the inpatient areas and activity rooms.



Child and Adolescent Life Program Student Practicum Program

Student Practicum Program Goals and Objectives

The practicum is an introduction to the hospital environment as well as first-hand observations of Child Life support, assessments, and other interventions at work. During the practicum experience we expect students to:

- Observe the role of the Child Life Specialist in various settings
- Develop a personal comfort level and confidence to function in the hospital environment
- Observe and implement group and individual activities for children birth-18 years
- Observe and assist with medical play for individuals and groups of children
- Provide emotional support for patients and families
- Expand your knowledge of medical terminology
- Observe medical procedures when appropriate
- Observe and assist with pre-procedural/preoperative preparation
- Observe interdisciplinary team meetings
- Observe and assist with supervision of volunteers
- Assist in playroom set-up, maintenance and clean up
- Assist in the facilitation of special events, entertainers, visitors
- Attend and participate in weekly student seminars by certified Child Life Specialists

If you have any other questions regarding the Duke Children's Practicum program, please contact:

(919) 668-4205.
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