

Dear Applicant,

Thank you for your interest in our Child Life Practicum program. This packet is designed to give you a comprehensive overview of our Child Life department, practicum expectations, and commonly asked questions. Our goal is to help you determine whether our program aligns with your learning style and professional goals as a student. We take great care in selecting students who are the best fit for our program's structure and size, ensuring a meaningful and supportive experience for everyone involved.

About the Child Life Department

- Oldest Child Life program in Texas and celebrated 50 years in 2024
- Among the largest Child Life programs in the country (66 CLS at Dallas)
- The child life department includes child life specialists, child life assistants, music therapists, a technology specialist, adaptive care program, and facility dogs
- There are 6 playrooms hospital wide and a therapeutic arts room at Dallas
- The child life department helps support programming and special visitors through the Seacrest Studios, which is an in-house radio/broadcasting station

Practicum / Pre-Internship Overview

- We offer practicum opportunities during the fall, spring, and summer semesters.
- All rotations take place at our Dallas campus.
- The practicum includes **160 hours** of experience, with the structure varying by semester:
 - **Spring and Fall:** 10 weeks, 2 consistent days per week
 - **Summer:** 5 weeks, 4 consistent days per week
- While the practicum is primarily observational, students will also have hands-on learning opportunities, such as:
 - Planning and leading therapeutic activities in the playroom or at the bedside
 - Introducing Child Life services and building rapport with patients and families, when appropriate
- Students will participate in active learning sessions, complete weekly assignments, and engage in reflective journaling.
- Larger projects include:
 - Individual stress potential assessments
 - Census prioritization exercises
 - Evidence-Based Practice (EBP) article reviews
 - A final portfolio presentation

Application Overview

- There is **no fee** to apply or participate in our practicum/pre-internship program.
- We use the **Southern Association of Child Life Professionals (SACLP)** Common Application, Reference Forms, and Course in Progress Form(s).

Application Details

- To access the official application and required documents, please visit www.childrens.com and search **“Child Life Practicum.”**
- Application deadlines follow the **Association of Child Life Professionals (ACLP)** internship timeline: [Clinical Internship](#)
 - **Summer 2026:** January 9, 2026
 - **Fall 2026:** March 13, 2026
 - **Spring 2027:** September 4, 2026
- Applicants must be **currently affiliated with a university** at the time of application and throughout the practicum.
 - *Note: We are unable to establish new university affiliations at this time. Please refer to our website for a list of current partner schools.*
- Applicants must have experience working with children, which may be in-person or virtual, and can include volunteer or paid roles.
- A minimum GPA of 3.0 in your major is required.
- Two **recommendation forms** must be submitted:
 - One academic reference
 - One from someone who has directly observed your work with children
- Unofficial transcripts from all universities attended must be included.
- Applicants must have completed at least 15 hours of related coursework.
 - You must list **3 of the 5 required courses** on your application.
 - These courses align with ACLP’s certification exam eligibility requirements effective January 1, 2019. More details are available in the “2019 Eligibility Details” document on the ACLP website.
 - Courses may be **in progress** at the time of application but must be completed before the practicum begins.
 - If courses are in progress, you must submit the SACL P Course in Progress Form, available on the application website.

Core Coursework:

Min. classes required	Subject	Additional notes/requirements
1	Child Life	Must be taught by a CCLS who meets all ACLP requirements
2	Child Development	Birth-18 years old
1	Family Systems	
1	Play	
1	Loss/Bereavement or Death/Dying	
1	Research	
3	Additional courses in child life or related content areas	Recommended: Human Anatomy/Physiology, Medical Terminology, Ethics

Application Deadlines:

Children's Health follows the recommended application deadlines and offer dates as agreed upon by other hospitals in the state of Texas, as listed below:

Practicum/Pre-internship Session	Application Deadlines	Initial Offer Dates	Acceptance Dates
Summer 2026	January 9, 2026	February 17, 2026	February 18, 2026
Fall 2026	March 13, 2026	May 5, 2026	May 6, 2026
Winter/Spring 2027	September 4, 2026	October 6, 2026	October 7, 2026

Your application will not be reviewed if:

- It is incomplete
- It is received later than the required deadline date as listed below
- You fail to meet one of the requirements listed above (affiliation, GPA minimum, experience with children and/or incomplete coursework)
- The applicant is not and will not be affiliated with a university on the list on our website that we currently have an affiliation.
- Additional items are included other than what is required for the application
- Please do not put photos on your resumes or documents

Application Review:

- **Initial Review:** Applications are first reviewed by the Education Coordinator to ensure they are complete and meet the basic eligibility requirements.
- **Committee Review:** Applications that meet the criteria are then thoughtfully read by members of the student programming committee, using a consistent review guide.
- **Next Steps:** All applicants who advance in the process will receive an email outlining the next steps. Depending on the semester, this may include either a brief phone conversation or an invitation to participate in a formal interview.
- **Interview Invitations:** Based on the phone conversations and application materials, the practicum committee and Education Coordinator will invite up to 10 applicants to participate in the formal interview process.
- **Offer Timeline:** After interviews are completed, offers will be extended according to the dates and process outlined in the chart above.
- **Feedback Opportunity:** Applicants who do not receive an offer are welcome to reach out to the Education Coordinator to request feedback and guidance for future opportunities.

Interview Process: multi-mini-interviews (MMI)

- **Interview Format:** Children's Health uses a Multiple Mini Interview (MMI) format.
- **Scheduling:** Interviews are held from one to two weeks before the offer date. Annual interview dates are posted on the website each January, giving candidates plenty of time to plan ahead.
- **Interview Style:** All interviews take place virtually on the scheduled date listed on the website.
- **Time Slot Selection:** Candidates may choose either a morning or afternoon time slot on the interview day.
- **Group Size:** Each time slot includes up to five candidates.
- **Interview Experience:** Candidates will rotate through a series of virtual rooms, participating in short, timed conversations with members of the intern committee. The session wraps up with a virtual tour and program overview led by the Education Coordinator, followed by a Q&A.
- **Interview Topics:** Questions will focus on child development and theory, experience working with children in various settings, teamwork, problem-solving, and scenario-based situations.
- **Pre-Interview Information:** A detailed email will be sent to candidates ahead of their interview date, outlining instructions and what to expect during the session.
- **Selection Process:** Candidates will be reviewed using a consistent set of guidelines. Offers will be extended to those who best align with the goals and values of the program.

Frequently Asked Questions:

1. **Can I still apply for a practicum/pre-internship if I already have a degree?** Yes, but you must be affiliated (and ability to enroll) with a university
2. **I will graduate before the practicum/ pre-internship starts, so I will not be affiliated with a university. Is this okay?** No, all candidates must be affiliated
3. **I want to do my practicum or pre-internship experience at Children's, but will I still be eligible for an internship at Children's?** Yes! At this time, students can complete both their practicum/pre-internship experience *and* an internship at Children's
4. **I am interested in gaining more volunteer experience, what can I do?** We recommend volunteering at camps, day care centers, children's hospitals, babysitting, etc.
5. **I completed a practicum at my university child development center; will this suffice for the child life practicum?** No, a practicum must be conducted under the supervision of a Certified Child Life Specialist

Application check list:

- Completed online Practicum Application from the SACLP:
 - [SACLP+Practicum+Application_2023+Updated.pdf \(squarespace.com\)](#)
- Download the application
- Submit completed application via email to practicumapplications@childrens.com
 - This also includes attaching your ONE PAGE resume (do not submit more than one page), PDF of the SACLP application, unofficial University transcripts, and any course in progress forms
- For your completed reference forms, use the required SACLP form- reference forms must be emailed directly by the person completing the reference by the due dates listed above.

Again, we thank you for your interest in our practicum/pre-internship and wish you nothing but the best of luck on this journey to becoming a Certified Child Life Specialist!

Best,

Lizzy Peterson, MA, CCLS

Program Coordinator - Education

For more information or additional questions, contact:

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Visit websites for current and updated information

www.childlife.org and www.childrens.com