



**Tennessee**  
**TECH**

School of Human Ecology

Child Life Program Student Handbook 2021-2022

Program Director

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## INTRODUCTION

The Child Life (CL) area of study was first offered at Tennessee Technological University in August 2011. Dr. Cara Sisk, a Certified Child Life Specialist, is the CL Program Director.

Dr. Sisk came to TN Tech from St. Jude Children's Research Hospital with eleven years of clinical experience as a Certified Child Life Specialist. She served children and adolescents with various diagnoses in both inpatient and outpatient health care settings. Dr. Sisk is passionate about the child life profession and excited to educate the next generation of child life specialists.

## CHILD LIFE PROGRAM MISSION, VISION, GOALS, & OUTCOMES

Child life is a profession with academic roots in child development, family studies, and play. Child life education provides the opportunity to learn developmental theory, clinical skills, interdisciplinary teamwork, and professionalism to meet the demands of child life work with children and families. The child life curriculum offers an extensive educational experience that fosters critical thinking, problem solving, teamwork, and communication skill development with application to pediatric health care.

### Program Mission Statement

The mission of the Child Life Program is to prepare graduates for successful entry into the child life profession by providing a quality educational experience, which fosters student motivation to positively impact the lives of children and families.

### Program Vision

Produce competent, certification eligible child life graduates who are passionate about serving children and families.

### Program Goals

1. Educate students to understand holistic child life care using assessment and intervention to address the needs of children and families in health care.
2. Prepare graduates capable of providing quality psychosocial care and patient experiences.
3. Create professionals ready to work as productive interdisciplinary team members

### Program Learning Outcomes

1. Supportive and Therapeutic Relationships
  - Share the value of building and maintaining supportive, therapeutic relationships.
2. Advocacy and Education
  - Create advocates for children and families who provide education to meet the needs of those they serve.
3. Intercultural Competency
  - Incorporate diversity and cultural competence in child life practice.

4. Professional Team Member
  - Develop professionalism to be exhibited as an interdisciplinary team member.
5. Assessment of Children and Families
  - Include assessment techniques for gathering information to develop appropriate intervention plans.
6. Intervention
  - Offer psychosocial interventions to support optimal development, coping, and mastery.
7. Professional Responsibility
  - Foster an understanding of professional responsibilities applicable to child life practice.

## **Association of Child Life Professionals Undergraduate Academic Program Endorsement**

Retrieved from <https://www.childlife.org/resources/for-educators-internship-coordinators/undergraduate-endorsement>

The Association of Child Life Professionals (ACLP) defines endorsement of undergraduate academic programs in child life as an assurance that a program meets the standards and requirements set forth in the Standards for Academic and Clinical Preparation Programs found in the most current Official Documents of the ACLP. Endorsement is a voluntary process of self-study and external review intended to evaluate, enhance, and publicly recognize undergraduate academic programs which meet the standards prescribed by ACLP. The endorsement is not intended to prescribe a program's educational goals or the process by which they should be attained. The purpose of this process is to promote the interests of students through improving the quality of teaching, learning, and professional practice.

**Tennessee Tech's Child Life Program is an ACLP Endorsed Academic Program from 7/1/2019 to 7/1/2024. This endorsement ensures students enrolled in TN Tech's Child Life Program will receive the required coursework to meet ACLP Certification Eligibility Coursework Requirements.**

## Association of Child Life Professionals

### Child Life Professional Certification Examination Content Outline

(Effective January 1, 2019) Retrieved from the ACLP's website [childlife.org](http://childlife.org)

#### Domain

##### I. Professional Responsibility

- % of Exam: 20%

##### II. Assessment

- % of Exam: 40%

##### III. Intervention

- % of Exam: 40%

#### Domain I: Professional Responsibility (25)

1. Practice within the scope of professional knowledge and clinical expertise. (8)
  - A. Establish and maintain professional boundaries.
    - Therapeutic relationships with patients, families, and staff.
    - Helping professions (e.g., social work, child life, music therapy, etc.)
  - B. Demonstrate knowledge of confidentiality and privacy laws.
  - C. Adhere to the Code of Ethical Responsibility for child life professionals.
    - Use of social media
      - Identification of conflicts of interest
      - Personal, peer, and professional accountability
      - Continue to seek knowledge and skills related to the healthcare environment
  - D. Advocate for the protection, safety, and rights of the child and family.
    - Mandated reporting
    - Emotional safety
    - Safe environment
    - Consent and assent
  - E. Employ knowledge of cultural fluency and provide individualized and equitable care.
    - Mandated reporting
    - Emotional safety
    - Safe environment
    - Consent and assent
2. Engage continuously in self-reflective and evaluative professional child life practice. (8)
  - A. Integrate self-reflective skills into daily practice (e.g., awareness of biases, projection, transference, etc.)
  - B. Define evidence-based practice and operate under its principles.
  - C. Participate in activities of inquiry and integrate findings into practice.
    - Quality Improvement
    - Research processes (e.g., data collection, evaluation, literature review, knowledge translation, benchmarking, etc.)
  - D. Initiate and seek opportunities for clinical supervision and professional/personal growth.
  - E. Identify methods of self-care to manage the impact of exposure to pediatric illness, injury, and healthcare (e.g., stress management, compassion fatigue, secondary trauma, etc.)

3. Practice within the scope of professional knowledge and clinical expertise. (9)
  - A. Employ clear and objective documentation standards in accordance with workplace policy.
    - Assessment
    - Plan of care
    - Intervention
    - Outcome/Evaluation
  - B. Apply principles of adult learning to represent the child life profession and/or the institution to internal and external audiences.
    - Speaking to individuals and groups (e.g., media, donors, community, higher education, healthcare professionals, and students)
    - Integrate a variety of educational techniques (e.g. lectures, hands-on activities, use of multimedia)
  - C. Educate others about expected reactions and responses to the healthcare experience using child development and family systems theories, and principles of psychosocial care.
  - D. Recognize the strengths of the interdisciplinary team.
    - Identify opportunities for collaboration (e.g., co-treating, research, etc.)
    - Recognize and initiate appropriate referrals (e.g., scope of practice)

## Domain II: Assessment (50)

1. Identify and apply relevant healthcare data to develop a comprehensive assessment and plan of care. (10)
  - A. Consider the impact of diagnosis, procedures, and treatment.
  - B. Anticipate the impacts of illness, injury, and healthcare experiences.
  - C. Predict the impact of healthcare trends, issues, and environment on stress and coping.
2. Identify and apply developmental frameworks to develop a comprehensive assessment and plan of care. (13)
  - A. Assess the physical, cognitive, and social-emotional development of the child.
  - B. Apply developmental theories to anticipate response and reactions to illness, injury, and healthcare experiences.
  - C. Select and apply theories of child development.
    - Stress, trauma, and adverse child experiences
    - Coping
    - Temperament
    - Emotional health
    - Resiliency
    - Attachment
  - D. Identify variables that impact a child's vulnerability to illness, injury, and healthcare experiences (e.g., history of abuse, physical limitations, absence of support system, etc.).
3. Identify and apply knowledge of family systems to develop a comprehensive assessment. (8)
  - A. Examine the families' norms, composition, practices, communication styles, and preferences.
  - B. Demonstrate knowledge of family systems and family stress adaptation theories.
  - C. Identify how children and families interpret and make meaning of health, illness, and loss.
  - D. Identify the strengths and challenges in family dynamics and utilization of supports.
4. Identify and apply cultural and contextual factors to develop a comprehensive assessment. (8)
  - A. Assess and articulate comprehension of sociocultural needs and learning styles.
  - B. Describe and apply philosophies and practices of patient-centered care.
  - C. Consider socioeconomic status, justice, access and equity, etc. when identifying the availability of community resources.

- D. Explore cultural and spiritual values, beliefs, and needs.
- 5. Demonstrate assessment strategies and processes. (11)
  - A. Apply formal and informal techniques to assess patient/family acuity and psychosocial risk.
  - B. Adapt services to meet the patient/family's needs, goals, and preferences.
  - C. Apply the cyclical process of assessment, plan, intervention, and evaluation of services.
  - D. Collect, interpret, and integrate relevant data into psychosocial assessment and plan of care.

### Domain III: Intervention (50)

- 1. Demonstrate comprehensive knowledge and skills in play theories and application. (11)
  - A. Facilitate types of play relevant to illness, injury, and healthcare experiences.
    - Normalizing play
    - Developmental play
    - Healthcare play
    - Therapeutic play
    - Child-directed play
  - B. Prescribe appropriate play practices to facilitate optimal coping (e.g., relationship building, mastery, assessment, education, normalization, etc.).
- 2. Provide education specific to the individual needs of children and families as it applies to illness, injury, and healthcare experiences. (11)
  - A. Assimilate healthcare, family, and child variables to implement a plan of care that supports individualized learning needs.
    - Preparation (e.g., teaching dolls, books, technology, medical equipment, tours, etc.)
    - Diagnostic teaching
    - Coping strategies (e.g., alternative focus, deep breathing, guided imagery, integrative and expressive therapies, etc.)
    - Advocacy for pain management
  - B. Empower children and families to advocate for their needs related to illness, injury, and healthcare experiences.
- 3. Provide coping support for patient and families experiencing loss and/or grief. (12)
  - A. Anticipate the implication of trauma, loss and/or bereavement for children and families.
  - B. Define and distinguish palliative, hospice, and end-of-life care.
  - C. Understand and recognize cultural and spiritual preferences.
  - D. Describe developmental perceptions of and reactions to trauma, loss, and/or bereavement.
  - E. Define and distinguish grief, bereavement, and mourning.
  - F. Articulate types (e.g., anticipatory, complicated, etc.) and theories (e.g., stages and tasks, etc.) of grief experienced by children and families
  - G. Provide support and resources to promote transition.
  - H. Facilitate opportunities for expression of feelings, meaning making, and legacy work.
- 4. Adapt child life skills to support diverse populations (e.g., gender, sexuality, developmental differences, behavioral health, sensory and processing considerations, etc.) (4)
- 5. Apply child life development and family systems theories to provide emotional support within the child life scope. (7)
  - A. Environmental safety (e.g., playroom design, healing environment, sensory stimulation, etc.)
  - B. Emotional safety (e.g., healthcare adherence, impact of the healthcare plan, etc.)



6. Utilize clear and sensitive communication skills that develop trusting relationships across the continuum. (5)

## STEPS TO BECOMING A CERTIFIED CHILD LIFE SPECIALIST (CCLS)

The Association of Child Life Professionals (ACLP) sets the certification eligibility requirements for becoming certified and taking the Child Life Professional Certification Exam. Please note that eligibility requirements are subject to change. It is the student's responsibility to stay informed at the ACLP's website. The current eligibility requirements retrieved from the ACLP's website [childlife.org](http://childlife.org) follow:

Effective January 1, 2019, to establish eligibility for the Child Life Professional Certification Exam, the following will be required of all candidates by the deadline for the exam administration for which they are applying

### 1. Bachelor's Degree Requirements

Applicants must have successfully completed a bachelor's degree (in any field of study) on or before the registration deadline for the exam for which they are applying.

### 2. Coursework

Graduation from an [ACLP-endorsed child life academic program](#) or 10 college courses in the following content areas:

- [Child Life Course Taught by a CCLS](#)
- 2 Child Development Courses
- Family Systems Course
- Play Course
- Loss/Bereavement or Death/Dying Course
- Research Course
- Three Additional Courses

### Important Notes

For each of the 10 required courses, it is recommended that students take a 3-credit course or the equivalent to have an appropriate depth of instruction.

A minimum of one full course must be completed for each of the required areas of study. (A minimum of two courses are required for the child development requirement.)

For a course to count, the required content must be the primary focus.

All points within the [Required Content](#) section of each course must be covered within the course.

Applicants are required to submit university-generated course descriptions when applying for an [Eligibility Assessment](#).

Applicants must be prepared to provide university-generated syllabi if requested.

Each course may satisfy only one of the requirements; none can be applied to meet two or more of these required courses. For example, a child life course that addresses play may not

be used to fulfill both the child life course and the play course requirements. It may be used to meet the child life course OR the play course requirement, but not both.

### 3. 600-Hour Child Life Clinical Internship

Applicants must complete a minimum of 600 hours of a child life clinical internship under the direct supervision of a Certified Child Life Specialist.

#### Supervisor Qualifications

To be eligible to supervise internship hours, a CCLS must:

- Maintain professional child life certification throughout the supervisory period
- Have a minimum of 4,000 hours of paid child life clinical experience prior to the start of the supervisory period
- Take responsibility for the educational development and guidance of the candidate in the clinical setting

**ACLP members can search for an internship/clinical program in the [Internship Directory](#). While not required for certification, if you are interested in becoming a member of ACLP, click [here](#).**

#### Verification of Requirements

All applicants must provide documentation of the successful completion of the eligibility requirements.

## DOCUMENTATION OF EDUCATIONAL REQUIREMENTS

### ACLP Certification Eligibility for Students Enrolled in an ACLP Endorsed Academic Program

Students enrolled in an ACLP Endorsed Academic Program are required to complete the ACLP's Certification Eligibility process in order to apply to sit for the Child Life Professional Certification Exam. Academic Program Endorsement initially shifts the responsibility of verifying ACLP Coursework Requirements from students to the Endorsed Academic Program. This makes the students' certification eligibility process a cumulative verification of the three requirements to establish Certification Eligibility to sit for the Certification Exam:

1. Successfully complete the 7 Required and 3 Additional Courses
  - TN Tech's Child Life Program's curriculum contains both the Recommended courses and some additional Child Life Related courses
2. Successfully complete a 600-hour clinical internship under the direct supervision of a Certified Child Life Specialist
3. Successfully complete a Bachelor's Degree from an accredited academic institution (TN Tech University is accredited by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges).

It is recommended that students initiate the ACLP Certification Eligibility process online at [childlife.org](http://childlife.org) their final semester of classes once the required courses are completed and documented on the transcript. Then, upon graduation, when the degree is conferred students must submit an updated transcript to ACLP's Certification Eligibility system to have the internship hours and the earned degree verified. Once this is done, the graduate will apply to sit for the Child Life Professional Certification Exam.

## **Coursework Verification for Child Life Internship Application**

For students enrolled in an Endorsed Academic Program, the process for accessing verification of coursework requirements, including completed and in-progress courses, for internship applications is done within the Endorsed Academic Program. The Child Life Program Director will provide students applying for internships with an official ACLP Endorsement Letter and an individualized form documenting the students' progression through the Coursework Requirements for Certification Eligibility. Often, Accredited Internship sites require students to have completed all required coursework either at the internship start date or some even earlier at internship application date.

## **Assessment of Prior Learning**

Students with coursework from another institution who wish to have that coursework considered for substitution of TN Tech coursework must submit official transcripts from all institutions attended. In addition, students should be prepared to provide copies of syllabi, assignments and/or exams to provide documentation of course content. The CL Director will review transcripts and determine course equivalency for HEC CL courses. If the CL Director is unable to determine course equivalency from the materials provided, the student will be required to pass a comprehensive examination of the course content in order to justify course equivalency. If the student is unable to pass the comprehensive exam with a B or better they will be required to take the courses at TN Tech.

Students who have earned a Bachelor's degree and want to pursue the CL concentration may apply to enroll in the CL Program at TN Tech. These students must meet all TN Tech and CL program admission requirements in order to be admitted to the upper division program. Transcripts from previous degrees will be reviewed by the CL Director to determine whether previous coursework satisfies any of the CL program requirements, to determine if prerequisites are required, and to advise students of courses necessary to complete the CL requirement. See Appendix B for required courses.

Transfer students must meet TN Tech requirements to earn a Bachelor's of Science degree in Human Ecology since having a bachelor's degree is an ACLP requirement for Certification Eligibility (see Appendix A). These students will be expected to complete all requirements for CL program admission. Transcripts from previous degrees will be reviewed by the CL Director to determine whether previous coursework satisfies any of the CL program requirements.

All transfer students whether degree seeking, non-degree seeking, with or without a Bachelor's degree will be required to apply to the CL Program and meet all requirements in order to enroll in the CL Practicum or CL Clinical Experience (internship) supervised by Dr. Sisk, CL Director (see Appendix C for required courses).

All CL coursework must be completed within five years of admission to the Child Life Program. Students who completed CL courses five or more years ago will be required to retake all of the CL courses in addition to satisfying the program requirements and Certification Eligibility required courses.

## **ADMISSION TO THE CHILD LIFE PROGRAM**

The School of Human Ecology at TN Tech uses a self-managed application process for admission to the upper division undergraduate CL program. It is the student's responsibility to collect and prepare all forms, applications, and requirements; and to submit them at one time in an envelope to the CL Director. Fulfillment of specific requirements does not ensure admission into the program.

### **Program Requirements:**

Students interested in pursuing a degree in Human Ecology: Child Life concentration will be required to complete an application process. Students must have completed ALL of the following requirements in order to be eligible to submit a Child Life Program application:

1. Completed a minimum of 13 credit hours of coursework in HEC including:
  - HEC 1005: Intro to Human Ecology
  - HEC 1010: Life Span Development
  - HEC 2065: Families in Society
  - HEC 2200: Development of the Young Child
  - HEC 2250: Child Life Theory and PracticeEarned a grade of "B" or higher in the above HEC courses.
2. Completed and earned a grade of "C" or higher in:
  - SOC 1010: Intro to Sociology
  - PSY 2010: General Psychology
  - BIOL 2010: Human Anatomy & Physiology I
3. Cumulative GPA of 3.0
4. HEC major GPA of 3.2

Students who wish to transfer to the CL program in the School of Human Ecology at TN Tech must have their transcripts evaluated by the CL Director (at least six weeks prior to application deadlines) in order to determine CL course equivalency. Other university courses will be evaluated for equivalency by the TN Tech Transcript Analyst.

### **Admission Process:**

Submit only complete application packets to the Child Life Program Director; incomplete or late packets will not be considered for admission. All required documentation must be in one legal size manila envelope labeled with the student's name. The student is responsible for ensuring the CL Program Director's receipt of the application packet by deadline if delivered in any form other than in person. The deadline for application submission is March 1<sup>st</sup> of each year for admission into the fall semester upper division courses. Students will be notified by April 2<sup>nd</sup> of admission status.

Application packets must include the following to be reviewed:

1. Completed Child Life Program Application Form

2. A typed, maximum 2-page, double-spaced statement of professional goals and why you have selected Child Life as your program of study. This document should be professionally written and free of grammatical errors.
3. Recommendation forms from two different academic faculty members (from any discipline) submitted in a sealed envelope with your completed application packet. The recommender should sign his or her name across the sealed portion of the envelope.
  - The only alternative to one recommendation letter from an academic faculty member is one letter may be from an on-campus work supervisor if two academic faculty members is not a feasible option due to primary enrollment in large general education courses at time of application.
  - Students who have transferred to TN Tech from another university may ask a previous university academic faculty member for one recommendation.

Please note:

- If you wish to have access to the recommendations, arrange for the recommender to provide you with a copy.
  - The Child Life Program Director is not eligible to complete the recommendation form.
4. Unofficial (student copy) transcripts from all universities attended including TN Tech. Official transcripts from other universities must be received and analyzed by the TN Tech Records office prior to application to the TN Tech Child Life program.

## CL Program Checklist for Eligibility and Application Packet:

- \_\_\_\_active Tennessee Tech student
- \_\_\_\_number of total credit hours completed
- \_\_\_\_number of HEC credit hours completed
- \_\_\_\_completed HEC 1005, 1010, 2065 2200, 2250 (minimum grade of B)
- \_\_\_\_completed SOC 1010 and PSY 2010 (minimum grade of C)
- \_\_\_\_completed BIOL 2010 (min grade: C) with expectation of maintaining a C or better in BIOL 2020; or transfer equivalents
- \_\_\_\_3.0 minimum cumulative GPA
- \_\_\_\_3.2 GPA in HEC major
- \_\_\_\_completed application form
- \_\_\_\_maximum 2 page typed professional goals written in paragraph form
- \_\_\_\_2 sealed recommendation forms
- \_\_\_\_ unofficial transcripts from all universities attended

If you have questions regarding the admission process into the Child Life program, please contact Dr. Cara Sisk, Child Life Program Director at (931) 372-6017 or [csisk@tnitech.edu](mailto:csisk@tnitech.edu)

## CHILD LIFE PROGRAM COMPLETION REQUIREMENTS

Students have completed the TN Tech Child Life program when:

1. They have completed the 120-hour BS Degree Curriculum in Human Ecology – Child Life concentration.
  - Students must earn and successfully complete a CL Practicum in order to graduate with the Child Life concentration
2. Maintained a cumulative GPA of 3.0 or above and HEC major GPA of 3.2 or higher.
3. Earn the Association of Child Life Professionals Course Verification Form by completing the necessary courses taught by a Certified Child Life Specialist.
4. Students should plan to complete the CL requirements within 5 years of admission to the CL program, or plan to retake CL courses if more than five years passes between admission to the CL program and completion of requirements.

## GENERAL TN TECH ACADEMIC POLICIES

### Admission Policies

Tennessee Tech's admission policies may be viewed online.

### Withdrawal and refund of tuition and fees

Please see the TN Tech Bursar's website for current policies regarding refund of tuition and fees: [www.tnTech.edu/bursar/](http://www.tnTech.edu/bursar/)

### Scheduling and Program Calendar

<http://catalog.tnTech.edu/index.php>

TN Tech Undergraduate Catalog: The school year consists of two semesters of approximately fifteen weeks each, and a summer term of ten weeks with some courses offered in two five-week sessions.

The Summer School: The University maintains a summer term with some courses offered in two five-week sessions. Courses are scheduled so a student may complete a semester of course work if enrolled in both summer school sessions. New students and former students not currently enrolled who expect to attend summer school should consult the catalog section entitled "Admission and Expenses." The summer term is considered equivalent to other semesters at Tennessee Technological University in regard to retention. A student on probation in summer is subject to the regular probation stipulations, including load and requirements for removing probation.

### Protection of privacy of student information and access to personal files

The complete policy statement of "Privacy Rights of Students" is available online in the Student Handbook.

### Discipline/Termination/Grievance Procedure

Policies regarding discipline and termination, and student's rights can be found in the TN TECH Undergraduate catalog: <http://www.tnTech.edu/ugcat/Undergrad20082009.pdf>

### Access to Student Support Services

Tennessee Tech provides programs and services, which support the students in their intellectual endeavors as well as in their total development. Student Affairs, through its agencies and activities, provides opportunities for students to realize their development potential as physical, emotional, intellectual, social, and spiritual persons. Student Affairs provides for students' welfare by being available to help them resolve problems which affect their personal well-being or which impede their academic progress. Information about all available student services can be found at: [www.tnTech.edu](http://www.tnTech.edu)

### Academic and Classroom Conduct (0240-3-6.02)

(1) The instructor has the primary responsibility for control over classroom behavior and maintenance of academic integrity, and can order the temporary removal or exclusion from the classroom of any student engaged in disruptive conduct or conduct violative of the general rules and regulations of the institution. Extended or permanent exclusion from the

classroom or further disciplinary action can be affected only through appropriate procedures of the institution.

(2) Plagiarism, cheating, and other forms of academic dishonesty are prohibited. Students guilty of academic misconduct either directly or indirectly through participation or assistance are immediately responsible to the instructor of the class. In addition to other possible disciplinary sanctions which may be imposed through the regular institutional procedures as a result of academic misconduct and subsequent to the due process hearing, if requested by the student, the instructor has the authority to assign an F or a zero for the exercise or examination, or to assign an F in the course.

(3) If the student believes that he or she has been erroneously accused of academic misconduct, and if his or her final grade has been lowered as a result, the student may appeal the case through the appropriate institutional procedures. NOTE: The instructor shall send a copy of the charge to the Office of the Vice President for Student Affairs. The student shall have up to seven (7) days to request a hearing by signing a "Request for Hearing" form in the Office of the Vice President for Student Affairs. The student waives his/her right to a hearing by signing a "Waiver of Hearing" form or by neglecting to sign a "Request for Hearing" form within seven (7) days.

## **PROGRAM COSTS AND EXPENSES**

Please refer to the Tennessee Technological University Bursar's Office website for current tuition costs and expenses. There are different costs for in-state and out-of-state students and Financial Aid is not available to students who do not pursue a degree.

## **ADDITIONAL CHILD LIFE PROGRAM EXPENSES**

1. Transportation expenses may be incurred as part of the following courses.
  - a. HEC 3550: Child Life Assessment of Children and Families
  - b. HEC 3560: Child Life Intervention Strategies
  - c. HEC 3570: Child Life Practicum
  - d. HEC 4590: Child Life Clinical Experience
2. Recommended Membership Fees
  - a. Association of Child Life Professionals Student Membership - \$72 annually
  - b. Child Life Association TN Tech - \$10 per semester
3. Lab Costs
  - a. HEC 3560: Child Life Intervention Strategies (\$15-\$20)
4. Expenses Related to Field Experiences
  - a. Student Professional Liability and General Liability Insurance
    - i. Practicum approximately \$15
    - ii. Clinical Experience approximately \$15
    - iii. Professional and general liability insurance fees are included in registration fees during the semester the course is taken
  - b. Students are responsible for any out of pocket expenses associated with the practicum and clinical experience including but not limited to travel, meals, living expenses, housing, application fees, drug screen fees, background checks, immunizations, application fees, postage fees, etc. Sites for practicum and clinical experiences are most commonly children's hospitals with child life programs and there are many possibilities across the nation.



## **FORMAL ASSESSMENT OF STUDENT LEARNING**

Students in the TN Tech CL program receive verbal and written feedback during each CL course in order to provide opportunities for improvement as needed. Students are encouraged to meet with their Academic Advisor once per semester in order to discuss progress toward graduation requirements.

## **RETENTION REQUIREMENTS FOR CHILD LIFE PROGRAM**

Students will be retained as TN Tech HEC majors in the CL program providing the following retention criteria are met each semester:

- Completion of all required courses as outlined on the 120-hour B.S. Degree Curriculum for Human Ecology: Child Life Concentration.
- Maintenance of a cumulative grade point average of 3.0 each semester, and an overall cumulative GPA of 3.2 in HEC courses.

The CL Director monitors all CL student grades at the end of each semester to verify adherence to program retention requirements. Any student failing to meet retention requirements will be notified by email within ten days of final grade postings. Students are allowed to retake courses that failed to meet retention criteria.

## **ADMISSION/RETENTION/GRIEVANCE POLICY**

Any student denied admission or retention to the TN TECH CL program will be notified in writing by the Program Director. Students are given the opportunity to discuss the rationale of the decision with the Program Director. If a student is not satisfied with the explanation, he/she may request a review of the decision by the Director of the School of Human Ecology. An official request for review must be received by the School Director in writing within 10 business days from the mailing date of the denial letter. Requests for review received later than 10 business days after receipt of the denial letter will not be reviewed by the School Director.

## **DISCIPLINARY/TERMINATION POLICY**

Students falling below the 3.0 cumulative GPA and a 3.2 Human Ecology major GPA will be sent a letter indicating their GPA is below the minimum requirement for retention, and that they are on probation for one semester. Students on probation will be allowed that semester to raise their GPA to meet the cumulative and HEC major requirements. If, by the end of the semester, their GPA does not meet the program's GPA requirements, they will be dismissed from the CL program and required to choose another program of study. Students may re-apply to the CL program one time following a dismissal.

## **CHILD LIFE STUDENT RESPONSIBILITIES**

Students enrolled in the TN Tech CL program must follow appropriate student conduct as outlined in the TN Tech Student Handbook. Additionally, child life students should conduct themselves in a professional manner while on or off campus in the course of attending classes or completing coursework. The ACLP Professional Standards of Practice including

the Code of Ethical Responsibility is the reference document for professional conduct of child life professionals.

## CHILD LIFE PRACTICUM AND INTERNSHIP INFORMATION

There are many practicum and internship opportunities with children's hospitals across the country. Child life students serious about pursuing this career should be willing to apply to multiple internship and practicum sites and go where the opportunities lead. Schedules for practicum and internship experiences vary by institution so carefully do your research to learn about each one.

Students are able to pursue a Child Life practicum and internship at any children's hospital, as long as, they are supervised by a qualified Certified Child Life Specialist. If a contract is required by the internship site, Dr. Sisk must initiate a clinical contract between TN Tech and the hospital once you are accepted into a program. Start dates are based upon contract approval and the initial setup of contracts can take several weeks or months to negotiate. Students will not be allowed to begin a practicum or internship without an approved clinical contract in place.

Students must do their research to fully understand the application process for each program in order to submit a thorough application packet. Due to the competitiveness of the profession, incomplete applications are typically not considered, because this is seen as unprofessional and a reflection of poor work quality. Applications usually require the following: completed form, recommendation forms, written statement of goals or philosophy, and possibly even questions incorporating your academic knowledge with application to your experiences with children.

One requirement of most practicums and internship programs is volunteer experience with children in three different areas: health care settings, stressful situations, and well children. The required number of hours can vary from 50-100 typically and up to 200 hours. **Again, students are responsible to do their own research.**

## APPLICATION TO A CHILD LIFE PRACTICUM

Practicum application is an independent process for each student. Students must research practicum options to ensure there is supervision from a Certified Child Life Specialist. Practicum hours vary by institution. TN Tech's Child Life Program requires a minimum of 100 hours with 120 - 150 being advantageous. This guideline may change if the Association of Child Life Professionals sets a standard requirement and students must stay informed.

While each practicum sets its own application deadline, it is typically safe to work within the Association of Child Life Professionals common application dates for internships as this will put you ahead of some practicum application deadlines and right on time for others. The most current internship application deadlines are listed on the Association of Child Life Professionals' website at [www.childlife.org](http://www.childlife.org)

### Course Requirements

HEC 3570: Child Life Practicum may be completed in the spring semester while taking HEC 3560: Child Life Intervention or the summer semester after it is completed. During

the semester you are enrolled in HEC 3570 you will be covered by professional liability insurance and this fee will show on your bill that semester.

#### Practicum Before Internship

Timing of a practicum will determine when students apply for an internship, because the internship application process will require students to submit written verification showing successful completion of a practicum with a Certified Child Life Specialist.

Typically, dates are as follows; however, it is the student's responsibility to locate current internship deadline dates at [childlife.org](http://childlife.org).

<b>Practicum Semester</b>	<b>Intern Application Due</b>	<b>Internship Semester</b>
Fall	January 5th	Summer
Spring	March 15th	Fall
Summer	September 5th	Spring

### **APPLICATION TO A CHILD LIFE CLINICAL EXPERIENCE - INTERNSHIP**

Internship application is an independent student-initiated process. Internships are reserved for the final semester of school when all coursework is completed. Students cannot take additional courses this final semester as the internship counts for 12 hours of course credit due to the number of clock hours required at the internship site.

Starting in 2019, the internship must be a minimum of 600 hours worked to earn the Association of Child Life Professionals' Clinical Experience Verification Form from the internship supervisor, which is required to earn ACLP Certification Eligibility to sit for the Child Life Certification Exam. Students must ensure a Certified Child Life Specialist with a minimum of 4000 hours paid clinical child life work experience must directly provide supervision during the internship, because this is a requirement from the Association of Child Life Professionals.

Students will be covered by professional liability insurance when enrolled in HEC 4590: Child Life Clinical Experience and this fee will show on your bill that semester.

Any student pursuing a child life practicum or internship must be enrolled in the Child Life Concentration to be affiliated with the university. Only students admitted to the child life program will be allowed to pursue a clinical practicum and internship. Any student who decides to pursue a child life practicum or internship after graduating from another Human Ecology concentration, must meet all child life program admission requirements to enroll in HEC 4590: Clinical Child Life Experience. Students not pursuing a degree will incur out of pocket costs, because financial aid is not provided to students not pursuing a degree.

### **Association of Child Life Professionals Internship Application Due Dates:**

It is the student's responsibility to check [childlife.org](http://childlife.org) for the most current deadlines.

- Fall internship application due by March 15<sup>th</sup>
- Spring internship application due by September 5<sup>th</sup>
- Summer internship application due by January 5<sup>th</sup>

The Association of Child Life Professionals has created a Common Child Life Internship Application and a Guide to the Internship Process both can be found on the ACLP website at [www.childlife.org](http://www.childlife.org). It is not a universally utilized form so check with each institution applying to for details regarding the preferred application form.

## **CERTIFICATION EXAM**

There are 3 eligibility requirements to sit for the Child Life Professional Certification Exam.

1. Minimum of a bachelor's degree
2. Complete 10 College Courses in the Specified Content Areas
  - An Eligibility Assessment must be done by the Association of Child Life Professionals –see [childlife.org](http://childlife.org) for more information.
3. Minimum of 600 hours of clinical child life experience under the direct supervision of a Certified Child Life Specialist who:
  - Maintain professional child life certification throughout the supervisory period.
  - Have a minimum of 4,000 hours of paid child life clinical experience prior to the start of the supervisory period
  - Take responsibility for the educational development and guidance of the candidate in the clinical setting

These may be found on the Certification section of the ACLP's website.

The Child Life Professional Certification Exam is typically given three times per year via computer-based exams at designated testing sites. The most current exam dates, fees, and application process can be found on the Certification section of the ACLP's website.

## **GUIDELINES FOR REQUESTING A RECOMMENDATION LETTER**

Dr. Sisk is willing to write a recommendation for students and requires a few things from students making this request. A minimum of 2 weeks' notice is required to prepare letters of recommendation. Please provide the following materials, neatly presented in one envelope that has your name on it, at the time of your request:

- a. A letter requesting the recommendation, which includes a list of each site applying to and the deadline for each of the recommendation letters
  - Indicate whether Dr. Sisk is to give you the letter to include in your application, email or mail it directly to the site
- b. A current resume with GPA clearly listed including practicum if completed, volunteer, service work, and work experiences especially highlighting those with children.
  - Have someone in TN Tech's Center for Career Development look at your resume before submitting to Dr. Sisk and this application process.
- c. Current student copy of all transcripts from TN Tech and any other colleges or universities attended
- d. List of hospitals you are applying to, with practicum/internship coordinator's name

- and mailing address
- e. Any specific forms for EACH position you are applying to if the institution has a specific form to complete.
    - Please fill in your name on all areas of the form.
    - Links to these forms via email is preferred to type them instead of writing them.
  - f. Email Dr. Sisk the list of addresses to copy and paste into the letters. Please make sure these are as they should be on the envelope for mailing properly.
  - g. When you come for your meeting to stuff envelopes, bring address labels with the addresses already printed for each institution you applied to.

This information assists Dr. Sisk in writing a letter that properly reflects students' current academic standing and extracurricular, service involvement.

## **SUGGESTIONS TO IMPROVE YOUR CHANCE OBTAINING A CHILD LIFE PRACTICUM AND INTERNSHIP**

The child life profession is competitive and there are many applicants to every practicum and internship opportunity. Large programs receive 50-75 applications for 2 or 3 intern positions each semester. Students must share their unique knowledge, skills, talents, passion, abilities, and determination to stand out from the crowd during the review process. One way to do this is to write a cover letter to include in your practicum or internship application packet. Research the purpose of a cover letter and apply it to a practicum and internship. It is highly recommended that you seek guidance for your cover letter and resume from TN Tech's Center for Career Development.

Students most successful in obtaining practicum and internships have a thorough understanding of the child life profession and clinical practice, developmental theory, family-centered care, play, and the needs of children in health care. These students are able to apply their knowledge to their own volunteer and work experiences with children and families. Successful intern candidates have excellent communication skills and a solid GPA to be competitive. Added assets include a genuine, welcoming personality, as well as, the ability to accept and act upon constructive feedback. Professionalism and a willingness to learn are vital.

## **OPTIONS FOR STUDENTS NOT SELECTED TO A CHILD LIFE PRACTICUM**

Students not earning a child life practicum after two application rounds must change their program of study. The School of Human Ecology's Child Development and Family Relations (CDFR) curriculum aligns with the Child Life concentration curriculum. Students who do not earn a child life practicum should meet with a CDFR academic advisor to discuss the courses required for completing an HEC degree in the CDFR concentration.

## OPTIONS FOR STUDENTS NOT SELECTED TO A CHILD LIFE INTERNSHIP

A student who professionally commits herself/himself to the rigorous child life internship application process, but is not accepted for a child life internship despite her/his professional due diligence, will be allowed to complete 12 credit hours in Human Ecology courses to graduate in the child life concentration.

## COMMON QUESTIONS ABOUT CHILD LIFE PRACTICUM & INTERNSHIP

Are child life concentration students required to secure and complete a child life practicum?

- Yes, all students meeting Child Life Program Admission Requirements accepted into the Child Life Program are required to successfully apply for, be accepted into, complete, and pass a Child Life Practicum under the direct supervision of a Certified Child Life Specialist in a pediatric healthcare setting.

What happens if a student does not earn a child life practicum?

- A student may reapply for another practicum, but if after the second application round a practicum is not earned the student will be required to change concentrations, which is in the student's best interest for degree completion.

What if a student does not pass a child life practicum?

- A student who earns a child life practicum, but does not pass the practicum course will be required to change concentrations or degree to graduate.
- Failing a child life practicum prevents the student from meeting the child life program's prerequisite for pursuing the child life clinical experience (internship). Consequently, the student must change concentrations or degree to graduate at TN Tech.

What if a practicum contract is required by the hospital, but fails to be legally negotiated after a student is accepted for the practicum?

- While a student may successfully earn a child life practicum, often healthcare systems require a contract between the university and the hospital offering the practicum.
- Despite the student's professional due diligence, occasionally a contract is not able to be successfully negotiated between the hospital and university legal counsels.
- Students in this situation at the practicum level will be required to apply for another practicum.

Are child life concentration students required to secure and complete a child life internship?

- Yes, it is a goal of the Child Life Program at TN Tech to provide child life concentration students the pathway to the Association of Child Life Professionals' Child Life Certification Eligibility.
- As an ACLP Endorsed Academic Program, TN Tech's Child Life program provides all of the courses required for students to become eligible for the Professional Child Life Certification.
- The 600-hour Child Life Internship is the final requirement for students to meet Association of Child Life Professionals' Certification Eligibility requirements.
  - This is an independent student led application process requiring students to research and apply to child life internships in the hospitals they choose.

- Child life students are NOT provided educational placements for internships. This differs from what nursing does for students' clinicals or education offers for students' residency/student teaching.
- The Child Life internship application process is competitive. It is common for larger children's hospitals to receive 50-75 child life internship applications per semester and accept 2 students.

What if a student does not earn a child life internship?

- A student who professionally commits herself/himself to the rigorous child life internship application process, but is not accepted for a child life internship despite her/his professional due diligence, will be allowed to complete 12 credit hours in Human Ecology courses to graduate in the child life concentration. Guidance regarding the 12 credit hours will be given on an individual student basis at the discretion and approval of the child life concentration academic advisor. The student would then need to secure a child life internship after graduation in order to sit for the Professional Child Life Certification Exam (see below).

What if a student does not pass the child life internship?

- Any student who does not pass the HEC 4590: Child Life Clinical Experience (internship) course will not be allowed to graduate with the Child Life Concentration.
- A student not passing the internship course will be required to change to another program of study to pursue degree completion for graduation.

What if an internship contract is required by the hospital, but fails to be legally negotiated after a student is accepted for the internship?

- Since this student successfully earned a child life internship, yet despite the student's professional due diligence the contract is not able to be successfully negotiated between the hospital and university legal counsels, a student in this situation will be allowed to complete 12 credit hours preferably in Human Ecology courses to graduate in the child life concentration. Guidance regarding the 12 credit hours will be given on an individual student basis at the discretion and approval of the child life concentration academic advisor. The student will be allowed to complete 12 credit hours in courses to graduate in the child life concentration.

What does it mean for a student to graduate without a child life internship?

- While the ideal scenario of completing an internship within the university degree is not a requirement of academic programs for students to earn ACLP's Certification Eligibility, TN Tech has chosen to include this as part of the Human Ecology, Child Life degree requirement.
- Students may earn the required courses for Certification Eligibility, graduate, and apply for child life internships as unaffiliated applicants after graduation.
- TN Tech's Child Life Program graduates pursuing a child life internship after graduation may enroll in HEC 4590: Child Life Clinical Experience (12 credit hours) if the internship site requires interns to be university affiliated.
  - This internship semester will require the alumni to pay for the tuition and fees out of pocket, because students not pursuing a degree are not eligible to receive Financial Aid.

What job opportunities can graduates obtain with a Human Ecology, Child Life concentration without a Child Life Internship?



- While students in the child life concentration are being academically prepared to become Certified Child Life Specialists, the foundational child and family education provided within the Human Ecology degree prepares students to work in various community-based child and family services careers, as well as, the child life profession.
- Previous child life graduates have substantiated this by earning employment in various child and family positions including Montessori school, special needs agencies, child care facilities, Department of Human Services, and Youth Villages when life circumstances prevented them from pursuing a child life career in pediatric healthcare.
- TN Tech Child Life concentration students are qualified for employment within community-based child and family careers beyond the healthcare system.

Pursuing a child life internship is the ultimate goal for each student in TN Tech's Child Life concentration, yet to earn a child life internship requires external healthcare agency decision-making including acceptance into the clinical child life program's internship. Thus, from an academic faculty perspective, there is a need to offer an alternate option to ensure students graduate.

- The Child Life Program at TN Tech requires child life students to do their professional due diligence to apply and interview for child life internships in the fall semester of senior year.
- As an ACLP Endorsed Academic Program, TN Tech's Child Life Program is responsible to academically prepare students by providing the courses required for students to attain Association of Child Life Professionals' (ACLP) Certification Eligibility at the coursework level.
- Ideally, students would complete a child life internship within the degree's program of study to have support of the Certified Child Life Specialist faculty and university affiliation that is often required by clinical child life internship sites.
- However, completing an internship within the university degree is not a requirement of academic programs for students to earn ACLP's Certification Eligibility. Students may earn the required courses for Certification Eligibility, graduate, and apply for child life internships as unaffiliated applicants after graduation.

## **HUMAN ECOLOGY DEGREE, CHILD LIFE CONCENTRATION CAREERS**

The predominant career path for Certified Child Life Specialists is providing psychosocial care to children and families in a healthcare facility. Surprisingly to many, there are entrepreneurial, nontraditional/community-based opportunities for child life specialists to work in pediatric doctor's offices, dental groups, funeral homes, and hospice. Wherever children are experiencing stressful events, there is a place for child life services. For more options from child life specialists with child life work experience outside of the hospital read *Child Life Beyond the Hospital* (2008).

## **CAREER OPTIONS FOR THOSE WITHOUT CHILD LIFE CERTIFICATION**

Students meeting all ACLP Certification Eligibility requirements, but not passing the Child Life Professional Certification Exam may still be eligible for employment as some pediatric healthcare institutions hire new grads with the contingency that they pass the exam within six months to one year of hire. This gives the individual several



opportunities to take the exam, as there are typically three test dates. Check the ACLP website at [www.childlife.org](http://www.childlife.org) for exam dates and locations.

While students in the child life concentration are being academically prepared to become Certified Child Life Specialists, the foundational child and family education provided within the Human Ecology degree prepares students to work in various community-based child and family services careers, as well as, the child life profession. Previous child life graduates have substantiated this by earning employment in various child and family positions including Montessori school, special needs agencies, child care facilities, Department of Human Services, and Youth Villages when life circumstances prevented them from pursuing a child life career in pediatric healthcare. TN Tech Child Life concentration students are qualified for employment within community-based child and family careers beyond the healthcare system.

## **APPENDIX A: DEGREE REQUIREMENTS FOR A BACHELOR'S OF SCIENCE IN HUMAN ECOLOGY WITH CHILD LIFE CONCENTRATION**

Child Life Concentration curriculum requirements may be found at [catalog.tntech.edu](http://catalog.tntech.edu)

## **APPENDIX B: REQUIRED COURSES FOR APPLICATION TO TN TECH'S CHILD LIFE PROGRAM**

HEC Courses (minimum of 13 hours completed) including:

HEC 1005: Intro to Human Ecology  
HEC 1010: Life Span Development  
HEC 2065: Families in Society  
HEC 2200: Development of the Young  
Child HEC 2250: Child Life Theory and Practice

Other Courses:

SOC 1010: Intro to Sociology  
PSY 2010: General Psychology  
BIOL 2010: Human Anatomy and Physiology I

## **APPENDIX C: REQUIRED COURSES FOR ENROLLMENT IN HEC 4590 – Clinical Child Life Experience**

\*Please Note: All courses on the child life curriculum must be successfully completed in order for students to be eligible to enroll in HEC 4590 the final semester.

All courses in Appendix B to meet CL Program Admission guidelines plus the following:

Child Life Courses:

HEC 2550: Children in Health Care  
HEC 3550: Child Life Assessment of Children and Families  
HEC 3560: Child Life Intervention Strategies  
HEC 3565: Loss & Bereavement for Children and Families  
HEC 3570: Child Life Practicum  
HEC 3591: Introduction to Child Life Clinical Experience  
HEC 4550: Research Methods & Professional Aspects of Child Life

HEC Courses:

HEC 2065: Families in Society  
HEC 2220: Medical Terminology for Human Sciences  
HEC 2510: Creative Play  
HEC 3011: Consumer Economics  
HEC 3066: Family Violence across the Lifespan  
HEC 3100: Intercultural Competence  
HEC 3275: Research in Human Ecology  
HEC 3500: Development Middle Child and Adolescent  
HEC 3525: Parent Child Relationships  
HEC 3700: Development Young Adult and Aging

HEC 4600: Family Development and Relationships  
HEC 4610: Families Stress Management

Other Courses:

BIOL 2020: Anatomy & Physiology II  
NURS 3050: Pediatric Diagnosis and Related Care

**APPENDIX D: SUGGESTED ELECTIVES (If Electives are needed.)**

HEC 3290: Nutrition through the Lifespan – 3 credits  
HEC 3660: Interpersonal Relationships – 3 credits  
HEC 4065: Social Policy for Children and Families – 3 credits  
ECSP 4300: Assessment of Young Children – 3 credits

# APPENDIX E: CHILD LIFE SEMESTER-BY-SEMESTER GRADUATION PLAN FORM

Revised June 2019

## Child Life Semester-by-Semester Graduation Plan Form

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Major: \_\_\_\_\_

Expected Graduation Date: \_\_\_\_\_  
Month/Year

Advisor's Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Fall Semester \_\_\_\_\_  
Course No. \_\_\_\_\_ Cr. Hr. \_\_\_\_\_


Spring Semester \_\_\_\_\_  
Course No. \_\_\_\_\_ Cr. Hr. \_\_\_\_\_


Fall Semester \_\_\_\_\_  
Course No. \_\_\_\_\_ Cr. Hr. \_\_\_\_\_

Child Life Theory and Practice/HEC 2250	3

Spring Semester \_\_\_\_\_  
Course No. \_\_\_\_\_ Cr. Hr. \_\_\_\_\_

Children in Health Care/HEC 2550	3

Fall Semester \_\_\_\_\_  
Course No. \_\_\_\_\_ Cr. Hr. \_\_\_\_\_

Child Life Assessment of Children and Families/HEC 3550	3
Intro to Child Life Clinical Experience/HEC 3591	2

Spring Semester \_\_\_\_\_  
Course No. \_\_\_\_\_ Cr. Hr. \_\_\_\_\_

Child Life Intervention Strategies/HEC3560	3
Child Life Practicum/HEC 3570 OR Summer	1
Loss/Bereavement for Children & Families/HEC 3565	3

Fall Semester \_\_\_\_\_  
Course No. \_\_\_\_\_ Cr. Hr. \_\_\_\_\_

Research Methods & Prof Aspects of CL/HEC 4550	3

Spring Semester \_\_\_\_\_  
Course No. \_\_\_\_\_ Cr. Hr. \_\_\_\_\_

HEC 4590: Clinical Child Life Experience	12

*I acknowledge this is the Child Life Concentration course sequence and deviations from this plan will extend my graduation date.  
If I am unable to earn a child life practicum I will be required to change my concentration to graduate.*

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_