



Tennessee
TECH

School of Human Ecology

Child Life Program Student Handbook

Revised August 2024

Program Director

Cara Sisk, Ph.D., CCLS



Table of Contents

INTRODUCTION	3
CHILD LIFE PROGRAM MISSION, VISION, GOALS, & OUTCOMES	3
ASSOCIATION OF CHILD LIFE PROFESSIONALS UNDERGRADUATE ACADEMIC PROGRAM ENDORSEMENT.....	4
DOCUMENTATION OF EDUCATIONAL REQUIREMENTS	4
ASSESSMENT OF PRIOR LEARNING.....	5
CHILD LIFE PROGRAM COMPLETION REQUIREMENTS	6
PROGRAM COSTS AND EXPENSES.....	6
FORMAL ASSESSMENT OF STUDENT LEARNING	6
CHILD LIFE STUDENT RESPONSIBILITIES.....	7
CHILD LIFE COURSE SEQUENCING & UPPER-DIVISION PREREQUISITES	7
CHILD LIFE PRACTICUM AND INTERNSHIP INFORMATION	7
STEPS TO BECOMING A CERTIFIED CHILD LIFE SPECIALIST (CCLS).....	9
GUIDELINES FOR REQUESTING A RECOMMENDATION LETTER.....	10
SUGGESTIONS FOR OBTAINING A CHILD LIFE PRACTICUM & INTERNSHIP.....	10
STUDENTS NOT OFFERED A CHILD LIFE PRACTICUM OR INTERNSHIP	11
COMMON QUESTIONS ABOUT CHILD LIFE PRACTICUM & INTERNSHIP	11
HUMAN ECOLOGY DEGREE, CHILD LIFE CONCENTRATION CAREERS	13
CAREER OPTIONS FOR THOSE WITHOUT CHILD LIFE CERTIFICATION.....	13
APPENDIX A: ASSOCIATION OF CHILD LIFE PROFESSIONAL’S REQUIREMENTS FOR BECOMING A CERTIFIED CHILD LIFE SPECIALIST	15
APPENDIX B: CHILD LIFE COURSE SEQUENCE PLAN BY SEMESTER	17
APPENDIX C: EMPLOYMENT GRADUATES REPORT OBTAINING.....	18

INTRODUCTION

The Child Life program of study was first offered at Tennessee Technological University in August 2011. Dr. Cara Sisk, a Certified Child Life Specialist, is the Child Life Program Director. She came to TN Tech from St. Jude Children's Research Hospital with eleven years of clinical experience as a Certified Child Life Specialist. Dr. Sisk served children and adolescents with various diagnoses in both inpatient and outpatient health care settings. She 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 the Human Development and Family Sciences academic discipline. Child life education provides the opportunity to learn developmental theory, clinical skills, interdisciplinary teamwork, and professionalism to meet the demands of child life practice 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 academically prepare graduates for 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 child life graduates who are passionate about serving children and families. Provide child life graduates the two academic requirements for successful completion of required coursework and a bachelor's degree for Child Life Certification Eligibility as set by the Association of Child Life Professionals Certification Commission.

Program Goals

1. Educate students to understand holistic child life practice 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

<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 7/1/2025. This endorsement ensures students enrolled in TN Tech's Child Life Program will receive the required coursework to meet ACLP Certification Eligibility Coursework Requirements within the bachelor's degree.

DOCUMENTATION OF EDUCATIONAL REQUIREMENTS

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. The students' certification eligibility process is a summative verification of the three requirements to establish Certification Eligibility to sit for the Child Life Professional Certification Exam:

1. Successfully complete the Required Courses
 - TN Tech's Child Life Program's curriculum contains the Required, Recommended, and additional Child Life Related courses.
2. 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).
3. Successfully complete a 600-hour clinical experience (internship) under the direct supervision of a Certified Child Life Specialist

While items 1 and 2 are within the academic program's role and responsibility, item 3, the clinical experience is the student's responsibility, because the child life profession does not provide academic placements within university faculty's control.

It is recommended that students initiate the ACLP Certification Eligibility process online at childlife.org 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 earned degree verified. Once the 600-hour clinical experience (internship) is completed, the graduate may 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 a form documenting the students' progression through the Coursework Requirements for Certification Eligibility. Some 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 and assignments to provide documentation of course content. The Child Life Director will review these documents and determine course equivalency for HEC Child Life courses. If the Child Life Director is unable to determine course equivalency from the materials provided, the student will be required to enroll in and successfully complete TN Tech's School of Human Ecology's child life courses.

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

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. These students will be expected to complete all requirements for the Child Life program. Transcripts from previous degrees will be reviewed by the Child Life Director to determine whether previous coursework satisfies any of the Child Life program requirements.

All transfer students whether degree seeking, non-degree seeking, with or without a Bachelor's degree must meet all requirements in order to enroll in the Child Life Practicum or Child Life Clinical Experience (internship) supervised by Dr. Sisk, Child Life Director.

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

CHILD LIFE PROGRAM COMPLETION REQUIREMENTS

Students have completed the TN Tech Child Life program when they have:

1. Completed the 120-hour BS Degree Curriculum in Human Ecology–Child Life concentration
2. Maintained a cumulative GPA and HEC major GPA of 3.0 or higher.

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 - \$65 annually
 - b. Child Life Association TN Tech - \$10 per semester
3. Lab Costs
 - a. HEC 3560: Child Life Intervention Strategies (approximately \$15-\$20 billed in tuition)
4. Expenses Related to Field Experiences
 - a. Student Professional Liability and General Liability Insurance
 - i. Practicum approximately \$25
 - ii. Clinical Experience approximately \$25
 - 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 (internship) 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 Child Life program receive verbal and written feedback during each Child Life course to provide opportunities for improvement. Students are encouraged to meet with their Child Life Academic Advisor once per semester in order to discuss progress toward graduation requirements.

CHILD LIFE STUDENT RESPONSIBILITIES

Students enrolled in the TN Tech Child Life 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, completing coursework, and engaging in professional events. 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 COURSE SEQUENCING & UPPER-DIVISION PREREQUISITES

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. See Appendix B for the child life course sequencing, which sets the timeline for completing the child life program of study.

Child life concentration students must meet the following prerequisites for child life courses:

- HEC 3560: Child Life Intervention
 - Grade of C or higher in HEC 3550: Child Life Assessment
- HEC 3570: Child Life Practicum
 - Grade of B or higher in HEC 3560: Child Life Intervention and a 3.0 minimum overall GPA
- HEC 4590: Child Life Clinical Experience (Internship)
 - Senior Standing, HEC 3570, HEC 4550, Minimum 3.0 GPA Overall and in HEC Major

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. 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 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 with some even

higher. **Again, students are responsible to do their own research to fully understand the hours requirement of each hospital.**

Application to a Child Life Practicum

Practicum application is an independent, student-initiated process. 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 more hours 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

Course Requirements

Students must earn a grade of B or higher in HEC 3560: Child Life Intervention and have a 3.0 minimum overall GPA in order to enroll in HEC 3570: Child Life Practicum. The Child Life Practicum may be completed the summer semester after HEC 3560: Child Life Intervention is completed. Students are covered by professional liability insurance the semester they are enrolled in HEC 3570 and this fee will show on the bill that semester.

Practicum Before Internship

Timing of a practicum will determine when students apply for an internship, because the internship application process commonly requires 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.

Practicum Semester	Intern Application Due	Internship Semester
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. If secured, internships are reserved for the final semester of school when 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.

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.

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. Additional requirements for enrolling in HEC 4590 include Senior Standing, HEC 3570, HEC 4550, Minimum 3.0 GPA Overall and in HEC Major.

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

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 enrolled in the child life concentration will be allowed to pursue a clinical practicum and internship. Any student who decides to pursue a child life internship after graduating, must meet all child life program 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

Typical dates for internship application are:

- Fall internship application due by March 15th
- Spring internship application due by September 5th
- Summer internship application due by January 5th

However, dates occasionally change, so students are responsible to check childlife.org for the most current deadlines applicable during their application semester.

The Association of Child Life Professionals has created an Internship Readiness Common Application and a guide and video about the internship process both can be found on the ACLP website at www.childlife.org. While it is the recommended internship application, it may not be universally utilized so students must check with each internship site applying to for details regarding the preferred application form and any additional requirements.

STEPS TO BECOMING A CERTIFIED CHILD LIFE SPECIALIST (CCLS)

The Association of Child Life Professionals (ACLP) sets the certification eligibility requirements for taking the Child Life Professional Certification Exam and becoming professionally certified. Please note that eligibility requirements are subject to change, and 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 are located in Appendix A.

Child Life Professional Certification Exam

There are three 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 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 in Appendix A and on the Certification section of the ACLP's website childlife.org.

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 you and requires a few things of you when making this request including a minimum of 2 weeks' notice 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:

1. 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 I am to give you the letter to include in your application, email or mail it directly to the site
2. A current resume with GPA clearly listed including practicum if completed, volunteer, service work, and work experiences especially highlighting those with children.
 - I recommend you have someone in Career Services look at your resume before submitting to me and this application process.
3. Current student copy of all transcripts from TN Tech and any other
 - colleges or universities attended
4. List of hospitals you are applying to, with practicum/internship coordinator's name and mailing address on the form provided.
 - I also need this form via email from you.
5. Any specific forms for EACH position you are applying to if the institution has a specific form to complete.
 - I must receive the PDF of these forms via email so I can type them.
 - Send your list and these forms in 1 single email.
6. When you come for our meeting to stuff envelopes, bring address labels with the address already printed for each institution you applied to.

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

SUGGESTIONS FOR OBTAINING A CHILD LIFE PRACTICUM & 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 with the 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 students seek guidance for cover letters and resumes 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 minimum GPA of 3.0, but the higher the better 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.

STUDENTS NOT OFFERED A CHILD LIFE PRACTICUM OR INTERNSHIP

Child life concentration students who choose to apply for child life internships and do not receive an offer will complete 12 credit hours of guided coursework to graduate.

COMMON QUESTIONS ABOUT CHILD LIFE PRACTICUM & INTERNSHIP

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

- Yes.

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

- A student who applies for a child life practicum and does not receive an offer will change their concentration within the School of Human Ecology to Human Development & Family Science or may change their major.

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

- A student who receives a child life practicum but does not pass will change their concentration within the School of Human Ecology to Human Development & Family Science or may change their major.

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 may:
 - decide to apply for another hospital's practicum, which will add time to the graduation plan
 - change their concentration within the School of Human Ecology
 - or may change their major.

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

- No, while the child life clinical experience (internship) is a goal of the pathway to the Association of Child Life Professionals' Child Life Certification Eligibility, students may choose not to apply for an internship and take advisor guided coursework to meet graduation requirements.
- As an ACLP Endorsed Academic Program, TN Tech's Child Life program provides all of the courses required for students to meet ACLP's Certification Eligibility requirements.
- 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 academic placements for internships by university faculty. 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 applies for a child life internship but is not accepted for a child life internship will complete 12 credit hours of guided coursework to graduate in the child life concentration. Guidance regarding the 12 credit hours will be given on an individual basis at the discretion and approval of the child life program director.
- The student would then need to secure a child life internship after graduation in order to sit for the Professional Child Life Certification Exam.

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

- A student not passing the internship course will be required to complete 12 credit hours of guided coursework 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, student in this situation may
 - Complete 12 credit hours of advisor guided coursework to graduate in the child life concentration. Guidance regarding the guided coursework will be given on an individual student basis at the discretion and approval of the child life concentration program director.
 - Apply for another hospital's internship understanding this will add time to the graduation timeline.

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

- Completing an internship within the university degree is not a requirement of academic programs. Students may complete the required courses and earn a degree for Certification Eligibility, graduate, and then 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?

- TN Tech Child Life concentration students are qualified for employment within community-based child and family careers beyond the healthcare system.
- While students in the child life concentration are being academically prepared to become Certified Child Life Specialists, the foundational Human Development and Family Sciences 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, childcare facilities, Department of Human Services, and Youth Villages when circumstances prevented them from pursuing a child life career in pediatric healthcare. (Appendix C).

Pursuing a child life internship is the goal for students who wish to sit for the Child Life Professional Certification Exam, 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 perspective, if the internship is not received, students will complete 12 credit hours of advisor guided coursework to ensure students graduate without delay.

- As an ACLP Endorsed Academic Program, TN Tech's Child Life Program is responsible to academically prepare students by providing required courses leading to the degree for students to attain Association of Child Life Professionals' (ACLP) Certification Eligibility at the coursework level.
- Students who receive and complete a child life internship within the degree program have support of the Certified Child Life Specialist faculty and university affiliation that is often required by clinical child life internship sites.
- Completing an internship within the university degree is not a requirement of the academic program for students to earn ACLP's Certification Eligibility. Students may complete the required courses and earn the degree, graduate, and then 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, 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) and *The Role of a Child Life Specialist in Community Settings* (2023).

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 for exam dates and locations.

While students in the child life concentration are being academically prepared to become Certified Child Life Specialists, the foundational Human Development and Family Sciences 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 C).

APPENDIX A: ASSOCIATION OF CHILD LIFE PROFESSIONAL'S REQUIREMENTS FOR BECOMING A CERTIFIED CHILD LIFE SPECIALIST

Retrieved from the ACLP's website childlife.org

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:

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

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.

APPENDIX B: CHILD LIFE COURSE SEQUENCE PLAN BY SEMESTER

Revised March 2022

Child Life Concentration 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.
HEC 2250: Child Life Theory and Practice/HEC 2250	3

Spring Semester _____

Course No.	Cr. Hr.
HEC 2550: Children in Health Care	3

Fall Semester _____

Course No.	Cr. Hr.
HEC 3550: Child Life Assessment of Children Families	3
HEC 3591: Intro to Child Life Clinical Experience	2

Spring Semester _____

Course No.	Cr. Hr.
HEC 3560: Child Life Intervention Strategies	3
HEC 3565: Loss/Bereavement for Children & Families	3
HEC 3570: Child Life Practicum – SUMMER or Guided Elective Spring	1

Fall Semester _____

Course No.	Cr. Hr.
HEC 4550: Research Methods & Prof Aspects of Child Life	3

Spring Semester _____

Course No.	Cr. Hr.
HEC 4590: Clinical Child Life Experience (Internship) OR Guided Electives	12

This is the Child Life Concentration course sequence and deviations from this plan will extend student's graduation date, because child life courses are only taught one semester per academic year.

APPENDIX C: Employment Program Graduates Report Obtaining other than Child Life if Not Certified or Child Life is Not Locally Available

- Department of Human Services
- Montessori teacher
- Child life assistant/activity coordinator
- Special needs agency
- Youth Villages
- Pre-K education
- Applied behavioral assistant
- Children's play non-profit
- Children's museum
- Master's degree in other discipline