

Child Life Specialist

What do they do?

Child Life Specialists educate young patients and their families about medical diagnosis, treatments and coping. Child Life Specialists educate by playing games, role playing and engaging the patient in other age appropriate activities. Child Life Specialists often take the language of the medical provider and break it down into more simple language so that their young patient understands, step-by-step, what is happening.

Where do they work?

Child Life Specialists work in large pediatric hospitals or smaller inpatient units. They also work in emergency departments, surgical and intensive care units, and outpatient areas.

Pay:

According to the Child Life Council, the average yearly income for a Child Life Specialist is \$42,720.



Education:

A Bachelors degree is required to be a Child Life Specialist. Bachelors degrees should have a focus on human growth and development, education, psychology, or a related field.

Many Child Life Specialists continue their education to receive a related Master's Degree. This will be required by 2022, and by 2025 the Master's degree must be specific to Child Life.

CLS Training in Madison:

Edgewood College: www.edgewood.edu

High School students interested in becoming a Child Life Specialist should take classes in biology, psychology, child development, communication, health and social sciences.

Accreditation:

Currently, there is no accreditation for Child Life education, aside from that which applies to colleges and universities. The Child Life Council (CLC) is developing an academic endorsement and accreditation process, which are being put into place, on a rolling basis, beginning in 2015.

www.childlife.org

Professional Associations:

The Child Life Council (CLC) is the only international professional organization for the child life profession. Multiple levels of membership are available, from student to retired:

www.childlife.org/Membership



Certification:

Before applying to take the Child Life Professional Certification Examination one must have a bachelors degree as well as completion of 10 accredited Child Life specific college courses. Applicants must also have completed 600 hours of a clinical internship.

www.childlife.org/Certification/CertificationEligibility/2019-2021.cfm

The Child Life Professional Certification measures the candidate's understanding of the body of knowledge and skills required of the profession.

CCLS Certification is maintained by paying an annual \$40.00 maintenance fee, and expires every five years. To recertify, one may choose to re-take the exam or meet the requirement by obtaining 60 Professional Development Units during that 5-year period.

www.childlife.org/Certification/Recertification/TheProfessionalDevelopmentHourPDHOption.cfm

Alternate Work Locations:

- Outpatient health care facilities
- Doctors' offices
- Hospice care
- Specialized camps
- Schools
- Court systems
- Funeral homes

Job Outlook:

According to the Child Life Council, job outlook for Child Life Specialists is growing, but competitive. The need for CLS positions varies depending on the healthcare industry and region.

"There is a growing awareness of the child life profession within the health care community as well as in general public, and we expect to see a corresponding increase in demand for child life specialists."

www.childlife.org/The%20Child%20Life%20Profession/ChildLifeFAQ.cfm

