

# 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 medical providers and break it down into more simple language so that their young patients understand, 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 Association of Child Life Professionals, the average yearly income for a Child Life Specialist is \$42,720.



## Education:

A bachelor's degree is required to be a Child Life Specialist. Bachelor's 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.

### CLS Training in Madison:

Edgewood College: [www.edgewood.edu](http://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 Association of Child Life Professionals (ACLP) is developing an academic endorsement and accreditation process, which are being put into place, on a rolling basis.

[www.childlife.org](http://www.childlife.org)



## Professional Associations:

The Association of Child Life Professionals (ACLP) 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](http://www.childlife.org/Membership)

## Certification:

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

<https://www.childlife.org/certification/students/requirements-after-2019>

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 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.

<https://www.childlife.org/certification/maintaining-certification>

## Alternate Work Locations:

- Outpatient Healthcare Facilities
- Doctors' Offices
- Hospice Care
- Specialized Camps
- Schools
- Court Systems
- Funeral Homes
- Military Bases

## 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."

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