

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS:

Child Life

I'm interested in being a Certified Child Life Specialist.

Now what?

Awesome! This is a great time to talk to your advisor and a Certified Child Life Specialist at your university/in the community to learn more!

Go to the **Association of Child Life Professionals (ACLP)** webpage at: childlife.org for more specific information on job descriptions, education/internship requirements, and to access the student forum.

What are the requirements to become certified?

1. Ten courses in specific content areas outlined by the ACLP (see details below) OR graduation from an ACLP-endorsed child life academic program
2. Complete a 600-hour child life clinical internship under the direct supervision of a Certified Child Life Specialist.
3. A bachelor's degree (in any field of study) from an academic institution.
4. Pass the child life certification exam

All requirements must be met and documented via the Eligibility Assessment on the ACLP website prior to registering for the exam.

Are there specific classes I need to take?

Yes. The ACLP has 10 required courses for certification. These may or may not be covered with your degree requirements. If the courses are not already offered as a part of your plan of study, you would need to add them. *The 10 classes are:

- 1) Child life course taught by a CCLS
- 2) A minimum of 2 child development courses that cover ages birth -18
- 3) Family systems course
- 4) Play course
- 5) Loss/bereavement or death/dying course
- 6) Research course
- 7) 3 additional courses in related content areas

*Requirements are subject to change. Please check childlife.org for up-to-date eligibility requirements.

All of these courses are currently offered at NDSU. Check with your advisor for details on semester offerings and departments.



FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS:

Child Life

You mentioned an internship, what does that entail?

A 600-hour child life clinical internship is required to become certified. Most child life internships are done in children's hospitals; however, there are may be some other options to explore on the ACLP website.

Most child life internships are unpaid.

As a gentle reminder, child life can be a competitive field. Therefore, it is not uncommon for students to put in multiple applications and/or move for 3-4 months to complete an internship.

When are internships offered?

Each hospital decides when (or if) they will offer an internship (i.e., Fall, Spring, or Summer semester). For example, some hospitals may only take interns during Summer. Therefore, it's important to do research on hospitals you are interested in applying to so you can plan your timeline.

So, when are internship applications due?

Although you may apply to different hospitals, the ACLP sets universal deadlines for all internship application materials. This means regardless of what hospital you apply to, there is a standard deadline for your materials to be submitted (most often 6 months prior to when you would start an internship). The ACLP has a breakdown of specific dates & deadlines here:

<https://www.childlife.org/resources/for-educators-internship-coordinators/internship-deadlines>

I was planning to graduate soon, do I need to postpone graduation for the child life internship?

No. Although you need to be affiliated with a university at the time you complete your child life internship, you can come back to NDSU after graduation as a "non-degree seeking student." This means you would take a 1-credit field experience in order to be affiliated. Make sure to talk to your advisor or Dr. Joel Hektner for more information.

Okay, I need an internship, but is a child life practicum required?

NDSU requires field experience credits (also known as practicum credits) as part of your HDFS degree. A child life practicum can fulfill the requirements for field experience with NDSU; however, a practicum in child life is not required by the ACLP for certification as a child life specialist.

