

Dear Applicant:

Thank you for your interest in a child life internship at CHOC Children’s Hospital. Located in beautiful Southern California, CHOC is dedicated to providing the highest quality family-centered primary and specialty care to children. We are a licensed acute care pediatric facility with more than 300 beds. Our services include emergency, radiology, surgical departments, intensive care, acute care, multispecialty, hematology/oncology, cardiac, neuroscience, neonatal intensive care units, and out-patient clinics. CHOC Children’s is ranked among the nation’s best children’s hospitals by U.S. News & World Report, and we are proud to be recognized with a Gold Level CAPE Award, Magnet designation and a Beacon Award for Excellence.

Our child life department staff includes a manager, department assistant, child life supervisor, creative arts supervisor, 25 child life specialists, special events coordinator, clinical educator, media programs coordinator and four music therapists. We provide clinical services in more than 12 departments, oversee six playrooms, and coordinate a variety of programs including Seacrest Studios, pet therapy, support groups, pre-operative tours, school reintegration, Turtle Talk and many others.

Accredited through the Association of Child Life Professionals, we follow its internship guidelines, including an orientation week, six-week rotation in an outpatient setting, two-week mini rotation, and a six-week rotation in an inpatient setting. Interns are exposed to multiple hospital units throughout their experience. Our child life internship is a 16-week, 640-hour full-time program in which candidates are given an opportunity to put classroom theories into practice.

To provide students with the best experience, we are unable to offer weekend or evening hours for internship completion. Our comprehensive program requires flexibility in your schedule. Rotations may begin as early as 5 a.m. in surgery or end as late as 12:30 a.m. in the emergency department.

Follows is the timeline for application deadlines, and offer and acceptance dates:

Internship session	Application deadlines	Initial offer dates	Acceptance dates	Second offer dates
Winter/spring	Sept. 5	Second Tuesday of October	Following Wednesday	Following Thursday
Summer	Jan. 5	Second Tuesday of February	Following Wednesday	Following Thursday
Fall	March 15	First Tuesday of May	Following Wednesday	Following Thursday

To be considered for the internship, you will need the following:

- Child Life Internship Application located on the ACLP [website](#)
- Copy of unofficial transcripts from the schools where you received your undergraduate and graduate degree(s) (Official transcripts may be requested upon acceptance).
- Three common recommendation forms, preferably two from professional sources who have supervised your work with children and one from an academic source, sealed and signed.
- Eligibility assessment -- Applicants must meet the educational requirements of the ACLP (in-progress forms accepted if the class will be complete by the start of the internship) or provide an endorsed program letter from the ACLP.
- Resume and cover letter
- At least 300 hours of child life experience (100 with well children, 100 with hospitalized children and 100 with children in stressful circumstances, e.g. foster care, special needs, grief camps, etc.)
- Child life practicum experience is highly recommended

Please send all materials in one envelope without additional folders or clips. Mail to Christy Campo, Child Life department, CHOC Children's 1201 W. La Veta Ave. Orange, CA 92868

Do not email applications. Applications MUST be postmarked by the deadline date [recommended](#) by the Association of Child Life Professionals.

After the application is reviewed, you may be contacted for an interview. Please note that due to a high volume of applications, you will not be contacted unless you have been selected for an interview. Selection of interns is based on academic preparation, professional experience with children, knowledge of child development, support from recommendation forms, child life experience and interview. We encourage you to apply to multiple internship sites as we only select a maximum of two interns per semester.

Again, we thank you for your interest in the CHOC child life internship program and look forward to receiving your application. Please feel free to email me at ccampo@choc.org if you have any questions.

Sincerely,

Christy Campo, CCLS

Clinical Educator

ccampo@choc.org

714-509-9170

About CHOC Children's

With a mission to nurture, advance, and protect the health and well-being of children, CHOC Children's Hospital is the center of a regional pediatric healthcare system dedicated to serving the medical needs of infants, children and adolescents. The hospital not only provides high-quality care to its patients, but CHOC also promotes the wellness of children by providing primary care services in nearly 20 locations throughout the region, providing pediatric health education, and child health advocacy programs. Our goals are further supported by pediatric research and medical education.

Driven by abiding interest in the care of the whole child, CHOC educates and involves the family in the care delivery process while nurturing the patient's emotional, psychological and physical well-being. CHOC believes well-qualified staff and volunteers working in an efficiently managed and supportive environment best support its commitment to excellence in regional pediatric healthcare. Within the boundaries of financial responsibility and quality performance, care is provided to children from all socio-economic levels without regard to race, creed, national origin, religious preferences or the family's ability to pay.

About child life

The child life department helps meet the emotional, psychosocial and developmental needs of children. The goal is to help children adjust to illness and hospitalization by minimizing stress and anxiety while encouraging positive coping strategies.

The child life department uses play to help children understand, express and develop. Through goal-oriented programs, patients are given the opportunity for socialization, self-expression, physical and emotional growth, creativity, decision-making, increased confidence and independence.

Professionally trained child life specialists evaluate and assess the needs of patients and families to determine the appropriate plan of care. After assessment, child life specialists provide interventions to meet the goals outlined in the plan of care.

Child life services

Medical play and pre-procedural preparation: Medical play enables children to learn through the use of medical equipment and special teaching dolls. It provides an opportunity for patients to express fears and anxieties while demonstrating positive coping techniques.

Multidisciplinary team member: Child life specialists collaborate with many members of the healthcare team to provide optimal care for CHOC patients. Child life joins several teams at CHOC: the pain team, palliative care team, feeding team, and institutional review board, among others.

Hello Hospital: This is a non-threatening way to introduce children to the hospital. The interactive program includes medical play, a question-and-answer session, and a tour of the unit where the child will be staying.

Seacrest Studios: The in-house broadcast media center allows patients the opportunity to engage with celebrities, explore the creative realms of radio and television, and take a break from clinical care to have some fun.

Turtle Talk: CHOC is proud to be the home of an “aquatorium,” a special theater in which Crush from Disney-Pixar’s “Finding Nemo” swims up to and interacts with patients. The twice-daily show allows children the opportunity to ask questions about the sea, turtle life or anything fit to be answered by a sea turtle.

Discovery Arts: This is an organization that brings dance, music, activities and costumes to the patients once a week. This provides an opportunity for the children to socialize, create, imagine, dance, dress up and much more.

Creative/expressive program: Weekly program planning provides activities such as “What’s Cooking” for children to enhance cognitive development, imagination, creativity, fine and gross motor skills, and socialization skills. Specially trained artists and readers are also available to provide group and/or one-on-one interactions with patients.

Teen program: The child life department helps plan and implement teen-oriented activities such as a yearly oncology ball, teen nights, and teen outings. We have a comprehensive Adolescent and Young Adult (AYA) program to meet the unique needs of oncology patients ages 14 to 26.

School program: There are two certified Orange Unified School District teachers available to work with inpatients in a classroom setting and at bedside throughout the calendar school year.

Special community programs/celebrity visits: The Child Life Department hosts a number of community visitors to promote normalization and respite from the busy hospital routine. Programs may be educational, therapeutic or entertaining. Current visitors include athletes, theater groups, science-on-the-go and celebrities.

Pet therapy: CHOC patients are visited by professionally screened pet therapy dogs five times per week. The program offers education, play and normal life experiences, while providing a welcome diversion from the hospital and treatment routine.

Music therapy: Music therapy is an established healthcare profession that uses music to address physical, emotional, cognitive and social needs of individuals of all ages. Music therapy is a component of the interdisciplinary team that uses musical experiences and activities in a skilled manner by a trained and board-certified music therapist to achieve non-musical goals.

Kids Kicking Cancer: This program provides weekly classes for outpatients utilizing mind-body techniques found in the martial arts.

Grief/bereavement support group: This group meets on the first Wednesday of the month, with parents in one area and children in another area. A family meal is provided, and the rest of the session is dedicated to self-expression, coping, memory making and sharing ideas and thoughts related to loss and healing.

Internship rotations

The CHOC internship program will expose candidates to a wide variety of populations. Listed below are the units where interns may have exposure as to receive a comprehensive experience. The child life intern will have a full 40-hour week of orientation to the hospital, be exposed to two core rotations and choose one elective rotation.

Core rotations: six weeks each

Inpatient areas

- The **multispecialty unit** will introduce the child life intern to patient condition reports, diagnosis, volunteer supervision, assessments, documentation, interdisciplinary rounds, procedure distraction and support, playroom responsibilities, and bedside interventions. *Hours: 8 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.*
- The **pediatric intensive care unit (PICU)** and **cardiovascular intensive care unit (CVICU)** will introduce the child life intern to rounding with nursing; working with a multidisciplinary team; providing education, support, and advocacy; and documentation. Topics covered in this unit include providing play to patients of varying abilities, bereavement and optimizing family coping. *Hours: 8:30 a.m. to 5 p.m.*
- The **neuroscience unit** will introduce the child life intern to supporting patients for medical procedures, long-term video electroencephalogram monitoring, patient and family education and support, and providing therapeutic play for extended stays. Topics covered in this unit include preparation, child life challenges, family-centered care, and coping. *Hours: 8:30 a.m. to 5 p.m.*
- The **oncology/hematology unit** will have many of the same intern duties as on a medical unit, but this population has stressors unique from patients dealing with acute illnesses. On this unit, interns will learn how to provide interventions to children coping with chronic illnesses, how to support from procedures particular to hematology/oncology conditions. Interns may have opportunities to conduct medical play, distract for procedures, and to provide new diagnosis education. *Hours: 8 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.*
- The **post-operative unit** will teach the intern how to provide interventions to motivate children to meet medical expectations, cope with post-operative treatment and provide normalization and therapeutic play. *Hours: 8:30 a.m. to 5 p.m.*

Outpatient areas

- In the **pre-operative department**, the intern will learn to assist with our pre-operative Hello Hospital program, learn the various stages of development firsthand, provide bedside therapeutic interventions, and accompany patients to their surgeries until the induction of anesthesia. *Hours 5 a.m. to 1:30 p.m.*
- The **emergency department** will refine assessment skills in this quick-paced, high turnover environment. Duties include preparation for surgery, hospital admission and medical procedures. There is a high demand for diversion and support during procedures, parent and sibling education, and providing play opportunities for children experiencing extended waiting periods. *Hours vary: 12:30 to 9 p.m. or 3:30 p.m. to midnight.*

Elective rotations: two weeks

- In the **radiology/imaging department**, interns will prepare and support patients for MRI, CT scan, VCUG and X-rays. *Hours: 7:30 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.*
- In the **Outpatient Infusion Center**, interns will support patients and families during chemotherapy, IVIG, labs and procedures. *Hours: 8:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.*

We strive to provide our interns with a comprehensive internship experience. In addition to clinical responsibilities, interns also:

- Complete assignments. We follow the guidelines of internship work set forth by the Association of Child Life Professionals.
- Attend professional development opportunities like Grand Rounds, staff meetings, multi-disciplinary meetings, conferences, and patient team meetings.
- Support with special events such as holiday activities, oncology ball, patient excursions, reunion parties, support groups, family night and a variety of other events.
- Assist our volunteers by providing guidance, feedback and recognition.
- Participate in public speaking opportunities regarding educating staff and the community.

Intern duties and responsibilities

- To encourage communication and positive relationships between patients, families, and the healthcare team.
- To recognize ways in which hospitalized children react to and cope with hospitalization, medical procedures and new diagnoses, applying theories of human growth and development.
- To learn the roles of various disciplines in the hospital setting and to develop skills in relating to and working with other professions.
- To be a patient and family advocate while providing family-centered care.
- To be a positive professional in manner and appearance at all times. To follow the Child Life dress code and to be aware of body language, tone of voice, and attitude at all times.
- To be able to set up activities that will provide mental and physical stimulation as well as help create a socially normal atmosphere.
- To assist patients in various craft activities and games regulating content of program according to patient interests, developmental level, and physical ability.
- To assist in the pre-operative program Hello Hospital as an aid in preparing children for hospitalization.
- To assist in medical play sessions to help reduce anxiety levels and to help clarify any misconceptions of medical procedures.
- To learn about medical procedure preparation and diagnosis preparation in order to help educate patients and siblings.
- To study patients' reactions to various activities and report symptoms indicative of progression and/or regression.
- To supervise child life volunteers.
- To conduct patient rounds and delegate assignments to volunteers and co-workers.
- To attend staff meetings, team conferences, multidisciplinary meetings, and relevant education sessions.
- To demonstrate pre-procedural preparations and coping techniques.
- To assist in documentation of patient activity including assessment, plan of care, and interventions.
- To complete weekly internship coursework, journals, evaluations, and readings.
- To understand and apply appropriate medical concepts and terminology during medical play sessions with patients.
- To learn a variety of distraction techniques used for procedural distraction.
- To learn "soft language" as to appropriately prepare children for the hospital experience.
- To understand and follow isolation procedures and infection control techniques.

Frequently Asked Questions

1. How many applicants do you receive? How many interns do you accept?

The number of applicants we receive varies each semester. In the past few years we have received approximately 100 applications for each session. We generally accept two interns for all sessions open.

2. Do you take recommendation letters or the recommendation form?

We accept the Internship Candidate Common Recommendation Form on the common application from the ACLP.

3. Do you take in-progress classes or practicums?

We accept in-progress forms if the class or program will be complete by the start of the internship.

4. Does every applicant receive an interview?

Unfortunately, we are unable to interview each candidate. The application process is competitive. After we review the applications, we offer interviews to only our top candidates.

5. When will I know if I have been selected?

We follow the guidelines set forth by the Association of Child Life Professionals for offer and acceptance dates.

6. Do you take unaffiliated students?

Yes we do. If you are a student affiliated with a university, a contractual agreement between your university and CHOC must be in place prior to the start of the internship. It will be your school's responsibility to return the signed contract to CHOC before the start of your internship.

7. I have volunteered in other settings. Will that count for the 300 child life hours required?

We take all experience with children into consideration. However, to be considered for our internship, applicants must have completed at least 300 hours of child life experience: 100 with well children (preferably in a professional/volunteer setting), 100 with hospitalized children, and 100 with children in stressful circumstances (e.g. foster care, special needs, grief camps, etc.).