



Dear Applicant:

Thank you for your interest in a child life practicum 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 re-integration, Turtle Talk and many others.

Our practicum program is a one-day-a-week program for 15 weeks, totaling 120 hours. The day will remain the same each week, but the hours and shifts may vary. The practicum program has rotations through two to four different units in the hospital in order to see how child life specialists work in a multitude of departments.

Again, we thank you for your interest in the CHOC Children's Child Life Practicum Program, and we look forward to receiving your application. If appropriate, we will contact you to schedule an interview after your application has been reviewed. Once you have completed the information packet, please refer to the website to download and email the completed application to practicum@choc.org. Please note that due to a high volume of applications, you will not be contacted unless you have been selected for an interview.

***Please note that as of Fall 2022 we will only be accepting practicum students from institutions we are already contracted with, including: Azusa Pacific University, Loma Linda University, University of La Verne, and Cal State University, Fullerton. We are unable to take unaffiliated practicum students.**

If you have any questions, please feel free to contact me.

Sincerely,

Christy Campo, CCLS
Clinical educator, child life department
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: This 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.

Child life practicum program overview

- Students will work one eight-hour day once a week. Shift times will vary.
- Shifts will include observing child life specialists in a variety of settings, providing therapeutic bedside interactions with patients ages 0 to 21, supervising playrooms, sanitizing toys/supplies, organizing donations, special child life projects and other child life duties.
- Students will rotate through inpatient and outpatient settings that may include surgery, intensive care, oncology and clinic settings.
- Students will have the opportunity to observe a child life specialist provide preparation and/or support for a medical procedure at least four times.
- Students will increase their knowledge and understanding of child development, the role and responsibility of a child life specialist, how hospitalization impacts children, stressors of children in the hospital, and theories on family-centered care.
- Students are required to complete a weekly journal to be turned in before the next week.
- Written goals will be due to the supervisor at the start of the third week.
- Students are required to complete one project due at the end of the practicum semester. The project can be administrative, playroom-focused or patient-oriented. Details and approval will be discussed with the supervisor.
- Students will be asked to attend one weekend, evening or special event shift.
- Students will be asked to meet with their supervisor bi-monthly to discuss progress and receive feedback.
- Students will be provided with internship preparedness skills.
- If a student is absent, the absence will be made up within three weeks.

Requirements to apply

- 10 classes in education/child development/psychology

- Experience working and/or volunteering with children
- Previous child life volunteer experience is highly recommended

Requirements (upon acceptance into program)

- Practicum student application
- Criminal background check
- Completed Health screening
- Attend child life orientation sessions
- Transcripts may be requested upon acceptance

CHOC Children’s volunteer service description

Position Title: Child Life Practicum Volunteer	Date Approved: 3/14/2016
Cost Center: 2007802	Approved by: Stephanie Chami MS, CCLS Child Life Manager
Reports to: Child Life Practicum Coordinator and Child Life Specialists	Updated:

Summary

The child life practicum volunteer assists with the playrooms and bedside interventions within the child life program. As a primary function of the child life program, the playroom offers an opportunity for patients and families to engage in developmentally appropriate activities, while providing an opportunity for socialization. Play allows freedom of choice, fosters creativity, diverts patients from stress and worry, and normalizes a patient’s environment. Practicum volunteers are utilized to supervise playroom activities, while interacting with patients and families. On occasion, practicum volunteers will assist child life staff with escorting patients to other locations of the hospital for special programming, or perhaps interact with patients at bedside.

**Please see the Child Life Volunteer Handbook for more information on duties and responsibilities.

Essential duties and responsibilities

The practicum volunteer assists the child life staff with the support and play needs of patients on third, fourth and fifth floors as follows:

1. Sets up daily scheduled activity in playrooms
2. Supervises, instructs, encourages and interacts with patients as they participate in recreational activities

3. Monitors safety of children during activities or special programs
4. Greets patients as they come to the playroom
5. Monitors children entering playroom to ensure patient/sibling is not in isolation
6. Alerts child life specialist of any specific fears or concerns expressed by children
7. Assists with toy and general cleaning of the room at the end of each playroom session

Non-essential duties and responsibilities

1. Provides bedside support for children, as directed by child life specialist
2. Escorts patients to the playrooms or other locations with prior approval of the child life staff
3. Straightens games, books, etc. in the playrooms
4. Cleans countertops
5. Refills paints, glue and containers as needed
6. Picks up games and crafts supplies from patient rooms, as assigned by child life staff
7. Checks volunteer list for other daily assignments
8. Checks with child life staff before setting up any VCRs, movies or video game equipment
9. Notes names of patients in playrooms
10. Calls nursing station on intercom when patient's IV pole is beeping, etc.

Required qualifications

- Must be able to carry out practicum volunteers assignments independently
- Be committed to practicum volunteers on a consistent basis
- Must not assume any nursing duties, such as giving patients food or drinks unless directed by a staff person
- Must not give personal number or ask for patient's phone number or address
- Be friendly, courteous and able to relate to all patients who may be under stress
- Must abide by HIPAA laws

Preferred qualifications

Previous experience working with children in formal setting as well as hospital setting of various ages.

Physical demands and work environment

The physical demands and work environment described here are representative of those that must be met by a volunteer to successfully perform the essential functions of this job. Reasonable accommodations may be made to enable individuals with disabilities to perform the essential functions. Ability to stand, walk, stoop, squat/crouch, climb stairs, reach twist/turn, pull, push, lift up to 25 pounds, speak, hear and grasp.

To be signed upon acceptance:

Signature: _____ Date: _____

