THINGS TO KNOW ABOUT CHILD LIFE --
WITHIN APPLIED DEVELOPMENTAL PSYCHOLOGY (ADP) AT THE UNIVERSITY OF PITTSBURGH

FAST FACTS AND FAQS ABOUT CHILD LIFE & INTERNSHIPS IN ADP:

### What is Applied Developmental Psychology (ADP)?
- ADP is a “positive psychology” perspective to study the strengths, assets, and needs of children, youth, families, and programs in real-life contexts of education, health, and human service agencies in order to plan, implement, and evaluate prevention and intervention programs and supports.
- ADP training promotes a “psychologist-first” professional identity as the foundation for forging a specialist identity.
- 36 credits of core and specialty courses lead to a MS degree in ADP in 2 years of full-time study.

### What is the Child Life (CL) Specialization?
- The Children with Special Health Care Needs (CShCN) specialization with the Child Life (CL) option prepares students for direct work with families and children who have special health care needs in interdisciplinary settings such as children’s hospitals, outpatient clinics, transitional programs (i.e. “step down” programs), and community-based allied health organizations.
- Students in the CShCN specialization are trained in developmental healthcare prevention and intervention supports to meet children’s social, emotional, and behavioral needs in diverse health and allied health settings, but particularly in children’s hospital inpatient settings.
- CL-credentialed adjunct faculty teach specialty courses, advise, and supervise in some instances.
- Students in the CL Specialization graduate in 2 years with or without an official CL internship.

### What is the University’s fundamental and primary responsibility in preparing ADP students in the Child Life Specialization?
- The University’s primary and essential role is to provide the required plan of studies and coursework for the CL specialization within the Applied Developmental Psychology program.
- The University is not responsible for finding and providing an official CL internship for the student.
- The University’s primary role for CL students is to ensure that the coursework, which totals 36 credits, has met the expected academic course and applied requirements published by the primary national professional organization, The Child Life Council (CLC).
- The CLC controls the required internships, examination, and certification for the CL specialty not Pitt.

### What is the student’s primary responsibility in eventually gaining the Child Life Certification?
- The ADP Masters Student in Child Life owns the sole responsibility for identifying regional, state, and national internships and making official application for those internships.
- The CLC recently developed a new Common Child Life Internship Application (found on the CLC’s website, [https://www.childlife.org](https://www.childlife.org)).
- The common application form is intended to simplify the application process for students.
- Each prospective intern is responsible personally for contacting desired hospital internship programs to determine their acceptance of the CLC’s Common Child Life Internship Application and to learn what additional materials must be submitted with the application.
- Designated ADP faculty advise, guide, and support the student in applying to prospective CL internships.
Designated ADP faculty write letters of support for the student; the ADP Masters coordinator will ensure the development of a University-sanctioned agreement between the University and hospital internship placements.

### What are the primary steps that a University of Pittsburgh ADP Child Life student must follow to gain the National Child Life Specialist Certificate through the CLC?

- Complete 36 credits of CLC-aligned Masters coursework in the signed and approved ADP Plan of Study.
- Apply for, compete against colleague students across the nation through individual interviews, and gain acceptance and admission to a CLC-sanctioned internship at a Children’s Hospital site.
- Complete a 480 hour (1 semester) internship at a national Children’s Hospital under the supervision of a professional who holds the Nationally Certified Child Life Specialist credential and at least 4,000 hours of paid CL clinical experience.
- Document approved clinical experience via an online verification process or a Clinical Experience Verification Form (found on the CLC’s website, [https://www.childlife.org](https://www.childlife.org)) which is signed by a supervisor from the internship or fellowship.
- Gain CLC admittance to take and pass the National Child Life examination.
- This official CL internship with the national examination can occur during or even after the awarding of the Masters degree.

### What are the prominent regional sites for potential Child Life Internships at Children’s Hospitals in the Greater Pittsburgh region?

- Traditional, hospital based internship sites are locally and nationally very competitive. Apply early, making sure that all required materials are submitted by the application deadlines.
- Students are advised to apply to 15 – 20 internship sites.
- There are 224 internship program opportunities in North America (CLC, 2012) and 1,500 student members of CLC, which may further indicate the need for additional child life internship placement.
- In Pennsylvania there are 12 hospitals/agencies listed in the CLC Directory, but only 5 offer internships. Out of those 5 hospitals, a maximum of 11 interns are accepted per term or session. It is not uncommon for the larger hospitals to get 40 -50 applications from students across the country.
- Listed below are hospitals and medical facilities in Pennsylvania and Ohio that offer internships. Contact information can be found in the Directory of Child Life Programs via the CLC’s website, [https://www.childlife.org](https://www.childlife.org)
- Many hospital-based internships require a practicum before applying for the official internship. Some hospitals will not allow a practicum and an internship to be completed at the same site.

#### Pennsylvania Hospitals and Medical Facilities Offering Internship

- Children’s Hospital of Pittsburgh of UPMC
- Janet Weis Children’s Hospital
- Penn State Hershey Children's Hospital
- St. Christopher's Hospital for Children
- The Children’s Hospital of Philadelphia

#### Ohio Hospitals and Medical Facilities Offering Internship

- Akron Children's Hospital
- Cincinnati Children's Hospital Medical Center
- MetroHealth
- Nationwide Children's Hospital
- Rainbow Babies and Children's Hospital
What are the Child Life internship application deadlines for offer, acceptance, and 2nd offer dates (Updated August 2015)

Most hospital based internship sites follow the CLC deadlines below:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Internship Session</th>
<th>Application Deadlines</th>
<th>Initial Offer Dates</th>
<th>Acceptance Dates</th>
<th>2nd Offer Date</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Winter/Spring</td>
<td>September 5</td>
<td>2nd Tuesday of October</td>
<td>Following Wednesday</td>
<td>Following Thursday</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Summer</td>
<td>January 5</td>
<td>2nd Tuesday of February</td>
<td>Following Wednesday</td>
<td>Following Thursday</td>
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<tr>
<td>Fall</td>
<td>March 15</td>
<td>1st Tuesday of May</td>
<td>Following Wednesday</td>
<td>Following Thursday</td>
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</tbody>
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What is the Child Life (CL) practicum and its relationship to the internship?

- CL practica are designed as an introductory experience for individuals interested in CL career.
- The CLC does not require specific protocols for child life practica but offers guidance.
- The CL practicum student will be supervised by a Certified Child Life Specialist (CCLS).
- The CL practicum encompasses a minimum of 100 supervised hours.
- CL practica hours should be completed in an appropriate setting that provides the student with the opportunity to observe and learn from psychosocial interventions that assist infants, children, youth and families experiencing health related or stressful situations.
- Approved settings can include: Hospitals/medical centers; therapeutic; medical or health-related camp settings; hospice; grief; or support centers; and rehabilitation settings.

Are there any alternative Child Life internship options other than the traditional hospital-based internship?

The need for sanctioned alternative CL placements for students in community-based practice has increased as the profession of CL has diversified and become increasingly competitive for training sites and future employment.

- The University of Pittsburgh has a very limited number of internship placements in early childhood intervention settings, public school classrooms, and outpatient clinics through affiliations with community agency partners through contract with the Office of Child Development (www.ocd.pitt.edu).
- Some previous students have gained CLC-approved for their internships in these alternative settings.
- The supervised clinical experience is completed in a community-based environment in which the applicant has direct, daily contact with a certified CL specialist to allow for adequate supervision.
- Students are similarly responsible for directly contacting adjunct faculty member Denise Esposto, MS, CCLS (dae10@pitt.edu) for more information regarding these placements.