

Child Life Philosophy

As I am pursuing the journey to become a certified child life specialist, I am aiming to work with children, youth, siblings, and families in a variety of healthcare settings. When a child and their family come into a medical setting there are many different stressors that can arise in a pediatric health care setting. As an aspiring child life professional I want to be able to help patients and their families understand diagnosis, cope with medical procedures, familiarize the hospital environment, create coping plans, integrate medical play interventions, help advocate and support siblings and caregivers, plan and prepare children for procedures, and ultimately be someone to make their medical experience more pleasant and less traumatic. I want to practice patient and family-centered care and integrate play and activities with children at all different stages of development.

Through pursuing an education in child life I have been able to identify aspects of child life that I want to integrate into my own practice. Therapeutic play is an aspect that I believe truly reaches children of all different development. Therapeutic play, as well as medical play, can allow children and siblings to become more familiar with the equipment and supplies used for certain treatments and diagnoses as well as allow children an outlet for expression of concerns, misconceptions, or anxieties they may have about their medical experience.

Alongside play, I want to also be an advocate for children and their families. I want to encourage and educate families on what is happening and the options they have, whether that be talking to a parent about the importance of being transparent with their child about their diagnosis or participating in memory building with a grieving parent after the death of their child. I want to share what child life is, the services that we provide, how we are integrated into

different settings, and what it ultimately means to address the psychosocial needs of children in medical settings.

Making sure that a child's needs are addressed and they are prepared with transparency as to what is going to happen is another aspect of a child's life I want to practice. I want to provide information, preparation, comfort, validation, distraction, education, and therapeutic play to help children become more formalized with what is going on and encourage them to express their concerns and ask their questions. I want to include parents and siblings in care at the wishes of the patients to make sure everyone's needs are being met, it is important to me to lower pediatric stress levels to avoid traumatic experiences, although no hospital stay is enjoyable, making the experience as pleasant as possible for the patient, siblings, and parents can help lower stress levels and create more positive experiences.

As I child life and what it means to me, I have also been able to identify the importance of following the code of ethics. The list of ethics provided by the ACLP is a guideline to ensure I am performing at my best and following the steps to be a strong worker in the child life field. Improving my professional services by using this list allows me to reflect on my treatment plans and tailor the needs of each individual patient. Patient care always comes first. My needs are not greater than the patients, my opinions on what the parents and patients ask for need to be set aside. With collaborative care from all individuals involved and with the help of therapeutic play. I myself as a child life specialist can help in more ways than I could have imagined. That is the philosophy of my care and why I believe it is very important.