

Department of Child Life

The Department of Child Life consists of the MS in Child Life (<http://catalog.apu.edu/academics/college-nursing-health-sciences/school-health-sciences/child-life/child-life-ms/>) and the MS in Child Life (Advanced Standing) (<http://catalog.apu.edu/academics/college-nursing-health-sciences/school-health-sciences/child-life/advanced-standing-child-life-ms/>).

Programs

- MS in Child Life (<http://catalog.apu.edu/academics/college-nursing-health-sciences/school-health-sciences/child-life/child-life-ms/>)
- MS in Child Life (Advanced Standing) (<http://catalog.apu.edu/academics/college-nursing-health-sciences/school-health-sciences/child-life/advanced-standing-child-life-ms/>)

Courses

PCLS 501, Advanced Child Development, 3 Units

This course is an in-depth examination of physical, cognitive, emotional, moral, and social development from infancy through adolescence. Content includes developmental theory and practice of early childhood education, as well as assessment of child development and impairments in developmental functioning.

PCLS 502, Applied Child Development and Medical Terminology, 3 Units

This course reviews psychosocial and clinical aspects of disease and injury for the hospitalized and medically fragile child. Course content includes medical terminology, charting, complementary medicine, and physiological, cognitive, social, and emotional impacts of disease and injury on the patient and family.

PCLS 511, Family Systems Theory and Applications, 3 Units

This course explores family systems and therapeutic models with a focus on family psychology. Emphasis is on family-centered care and the effects that terminal illnesses have on the family system. Course content covers parenting medically fragile children, parenting and family relationships with a seriously ill or terminal parent, diversity issues and children with special needs, therapeutic models in family psychology, and integration of Christian faith and theology with family psychology.

PCLS 512, Theories and Practices of Grief and Loss, 3 Units

Students in this course develop understanding of the family-centered care model and explore therapeutic interventions and techniques aimed at benefitting patients and families affected by death and serious illness. Course content focuses on death, grief, and bereavement and their effects on the family system. Each student learns hands-on interventions to guide patients and families through death, grief, loss, and healing.

PCLS 512L, From Grief to Healing: Strategies and Application Lab, 1 Unit

In this lab course, students apply understanding of grief theories and explore practical therapeutic interventions and approaches aimed at benefitting children and families effected by death or serious illness. Focus is on historical and current views on death, grief, bereavement, and the effects on family system. Each student learns hands-on interventions to guide children and families from grief to healing process.

Prerequisite: PCLS 521;

Corequisite: PCLS 512

PCLS 520, Infants and Toddlers: Development and Interventions, 3 Units

This course offers an in-depth exploration of the growth and development of infants and toddlers. Content includes developmental theories and developmentally appropriate interventions, as well as assessment of development and impairments in developmental functioning.

PCLS 521, Introduction to Child Life, 3 Units

This course gives students a broad understanding of the field of child life, including the history and trends of the child life profession, as required by the Association of Child Life Professionals (ACLP). Course content includes: 1) scope of practice in child life, 2) child life documents, 3) impact of illness/injury and health care on patients and families, 4) family-centered care, 5) therapeutic play, and 6) preparation. Additional topics include, but are not limited to, the history of child life, clinical assessment, child life theoretical foundations, development and hospital stressors, and introduction to exceptional and medically challenged children.

PCLS 522, Therapeutic Interventions and Play-Based Techniques, 3 Units

This course is designed for students to develop an understanding of the history and theories of play and play-based therapies. Students gain knowledge of therapeutic play techniques, and explore research and theories on the importance of psychosocial preparation for medical procedures. Post- and preprocedural coping techniques and therapeutic interventions are taught as well. Students create hands-on interventions to prepare patients of all developmental levels for a variety of procedures.

PCLS 523, Coping Strategies for Children Experiencing Stress and Trauma, 3 Units

This course is designed for students to explore the best evidence-based practices in play therapy, with an emphasis on psychosocial and therapeutic interventions for children with special needs (cognitive intellectual and/or pervasive developmental disabilities). This course focuses on the effects traumatic situations have on the patient/client and their family. Students explore a variety of play therapy techniques and therapeutic interventions to help patients and families work through trauma and PTSD.

PCLS 524, Adolescent Development and Interventions, 3 Units

This course is an in-depth examination of the physical, cognitive, emotional, moral, and social development of adolescents. Content includes developmental theory and interventions, as well as assessment of development and impairments in developmental functioning.

PCLS 525, Assessment, Preparation, and Documentation, 3 Units

This course reviews historical and current perspectives on techniques and outcomes of preparing children for healthcare encounters and life-changing events. The emphasis is on students developing proficiency in setting goals during child life assessments to plan developmentally appropriate preparation interventions and gain competencies with documentation. This course also addresses coping strategies for pain management. Achievement of course objectives is addressed through experiential learning, lectures, readings, discussion, and reflection.

PCLS 527, Supporting Children with Special Needs in the Healthcare System, 3 Units

In this course, students explore a variety of developmental conditions and diagnoses, including physical, intellectual, and learning disabilities, psychiatric diagnoses, and behavioral conditions. Child life services with intensive care and rehabilitation populations are a particular focus, alongside supporting the educational needs of hospitalized children. Students become familiar with adaptive technologies, tools, toys, and equipment designed for children with special needs, as well as with legal rights, protections, and accommodations for individuals with disabilities, and gain insight into adapting child life services to the needs of unique populations.

PCLS 531, Ethics, Diversity and Professional Issues, 3 Units

This course covers legal, ethical, moral, cultural, religious and gender issues within a family-centered context. Theories and concepts of culture and cultural diversity are explored. This course also examines issues related to parenting medically fragile children, including legal and ethical considerations. An integration of faith is implemented in the course in regards to professional ethics and multicultural competence.

PCLS 532, Child Life Administration and Leadership, 3 Units

Students gain understanding of child life program development and acquire the leadership skills to manage a child life program. Course content includes outreach and technology in the field of child life; child life administration, supervision, and mentoring; group facilitation skills; leadership skills; and program evaluation.

PCLS 541, Pre Practicum in Child Life, 3 Units

This course is designed to further develop the therapeutic tools of students prior to child life practicum placement. Students focus on developing proficiency in the core goals during crisis assessment and interventions, gain competencies in therapeutic dynamics, gain competencies in communication and listening to be applied when working with a diverse population of patients, families, and members of the multidisciplinary team. Additionally, students are encouraged to begin developing a theoretical and conceptual understanding of working with hospitalized and medically fragile children. Students are also encouraged to address issues regarding the integration of their faith with the practice of child life. These goals are addressed through experiential learning, lecture, readings, discussion, and reflection.

PCLS 542, Practicum in Child Life, 3 Units

This field experience course is taught by a certified child life specialist and is designed and evaluated according to the specific clinical and academic standards set forth by the Association of Child Life Professionals (ACLP). According to the ACLP, "The Child Life Practicum is designed as an introductory experience for individuals interested in pursuing a career in child life. Through experiential learning and observation of Certified Child Life Specialists, child life practicum students begin to increase their knowledge of basic child life skills related to play, developmental assessment, and integration of child life theory into interventions with infants, children, youth and families." All students are required to participate in weekly mentor meetings with the instructor throughout the semester.

PCLS 543, Internship in Child Life, 6 Units

This course and its clinical experiences are facilitated by a certified child life specialist and are designed and evaluated according to the specific clinical and academic standards set forth by the Association of Child Life Professionals (ACLP). According to the ACLP, "The Certified Child Life Specialist (CCLS) credential is the exclusive certification issued by the Association of Child Life Professionals. The CCLS credentialing program is a rigorous, examination-based professional certification credential to increase the proficiency of child life professionals by identifying a body of knowledge; establishing a level of comprehension and performance necessary for certification; and increasing the value of practitioners to their employers." All students are required to participate in mentor/supervision meetings with the instructor throughout the semester. This course is a blend of didactic and experiential learning, combining coursework and required internship hours to integrate theory and application of child life principles and practices.

Prerequisite: Only for those students with a clinical child life internship.

PCLS 545, Internship in Child Life II, 1 Unit

This course and clinical experiences are facilitated by a certified child life specialist and are designed and evaluated according to the specific clinical and academic standards set forth by the Association of Child Life Professionals (ACLP). According to the ACLP, "The Certified Child Life Specialist (CCLS) credential is the exclusive certification issued by the Association of Child Life Professionals. The CCLS credentialing program is a rigorous, examination-based professional certification credential to increase the proficiency of child life professionals by identifying a body of knowledge; establishing a level of comprehension and performance necessary for certification; and increasing the value of practitioners to their employers." All students are required to participate in biweekly mentor meetings with the instructor throughout the semester.

Prerequisite: By permission only and for non-matriculating graduate students of APU's MS Child Life program.

PCLS 551, Research Methods and Statistical Analysis, 3 Units

This course surveys the major social science research methods, preparing students to read, understand, and evaluate psychological research. This course will provide students with the basic knowledge and experience of developing research proposals. Students will also learn to understand survey methods, data collection, and research analysis. This course is designed for students to identify his or her thesis topic and/or project and prepare students for PCLS 552.

PCLS 552, Thesis/Project Seminar, 3 Units

This master's thesis seminar is intended to provide students with a theoretical and methodological foundation necessary for completing their MS thesis/project in Child Life Science within the Psychology Department. The main objective of this seminar course is to help students develop and implement the theoretical foundation and methodological procedures needed to complete a MS graduate thesis or clinical project. CR/NC grading.

PCLS 599, Readings in Child Life Psychology, 1-3 Units

Students may enroll in an independent study for unit credit to investigate subjects and interests that lie beyond regular course offerings, explore topics in greater depth, and/or initiate individual projects. Such requests must be developed in consultation with a sponsoring faculty member and be approved by the graduate program chair and dean. Unit credit varies depending on the scope of the study plan.