

Career Profile CHILD LIFE SPECIALIST

What is a Child Life Specialist? – Career Description/Scope

A Child Life Specialist is an unregulated health professional who is specially trained to help children and their families understand and manage challenging life events and stressful healthcare experiences. Child Life Specialists are skilled in providing developmental educational and therapeutic interventions for children and their families under stress. They support growth and development while recognizing family strength and individuality and respecting different methods of coping unique to each child and their family.

Education Requirements to Work in Ontario

Certified Child Life Specialist (CCLS) have earned a Bachelor's or Master's degree with an educational background that includes human growth and development, education, psychology and counseling. They are required to complete an internship and examination.

Child Life Specialist Practice Requirements

Entry to Practice – Certification as a Child Life Specialist is issued by the Child Life Council. Requirements include academics, clinical experience and successfully completing the Child Life Professional Certification Exam.

Ongoing – Recertification is based on proven ongoing accumulation of professional development hours and successfully completing exam every ten years.

How does a Child Life Specialist Practice at TBRHSC?

- Works to scope of practice as outlined by the Child Life Council
- Works on a referral basis as identified by multidisciplinary team members

What does a Child Life Specialist Do?

- Ease children's fears and anxiety relating to hospitalization, and/or medical procedures
- Support child and family cope with their hospital experiences/illness
- Foster an environment that incorporates emotional support, and encourages understanding and co-operation by providing non medical preparation and support for children undergoing tests, surgery and medical procedures
- Encourage and energize children and families through special events and activities
- Support families and consider needs of siblings and others affected by a child's illness
- Advocate for family-centered care
- Provide information and resources for families that relate to development and/or emotional care of their child

Web Resources

- Child Life Council www.childlife.org
- Canadian Association of Child Life Leaders (CACLL) www.cacll.org