

Frequently Asked Questions

1. When do you offer the practicum experience?

We offer our practicum during the summer semester. The exact timeline is dependent on the schedules of the student and supervisor. It will take place between May and July.

2. How many students are accepted for each session?

We typically accept 1–2 students per session.

3. Is volunteering in a hospital the same experience as a practicum?

Volunteering in a hospital is a great way to learn about the environment and daily routines, though unlike completing a Child Life Practicum.

A practicum is a structured learning experience where you:

- Learn more about child development and variables that can impact coping during hospitalization.
- Promote play in the hospital through practicing developmental assessments.
- Observe how the health care team works together to support patients and families.
- Shadow Child Life Specialists while they provide care and interventions.
- Complete journals, readings, and assignments to help you grow.

This experience gives you direct supervision, more hands-on learning, and better preparation for a Child Life internship. It also helps you decide if Child Life is the right career for you.

If you are looking for volunteer opportunities at UC Davis, you can find more information here: [Community Volunteers | Volunteer Services | UC Davis Health](#)

4. Can anyone shadow a Child Life Specialist?

To protect the privacy and confidentiality of patients, UC Davis Health Children's Hospital does not offer shadowing opportunities for non-practicum students.

5. Do I need to know a lot about childhood illnesses and diseases?

You don't need to know a lot about childhood illnesses and diseases. This practicum is an introductory experience. The focus is on:

- Child development
- Children's emotional responses to hospitalization
- The role of play in healthcare settings

6. Who will supervise me?

You'll be supervised by at least two Certified Child Life Specialists throughout your experience.

7. What populations and settings will I be exposed to?

Rotations, ages, diagnoses, and diverse populations vary each cycle. Rotations may include the Emergency Department, General Pediatrics, Pediatric Intensive Care Unit, Neonatal Intensive Care Unit, Children's Surgery Center, Pediatric Infusion Room, and Radiology.

8. What does the Practicum Clinical Coordinator do?

The coordinator will:

- Create your schedule and set deadlines.
- Lead orientation and oversee practicum details.
- Meet with you regularly to check on your progress.
- Provide feedback (both written and verbal) on your assignments and experiences.

9. What happens after I submit my application?

- A committee of Child Life Specialists will review applications.
- Applicants will be notified by email of the decision. Selected students will be invited to interview via Zoom.
- After interviews, students will receive written notifications regarding acceptance.

Thank you for your interest in the UC Davis Health Children's Hospital Child Life Practicum! We look forward to receiving your application.

For more information, contact: childlifepacticumstudents@health.ucdavis.edu.