**Child Life Specialist:**

**Advantages**- Good salary and does not require graduate school.

**Disadvantages**- EXTREMELY competitive to get a required internship for certification. Will probably have to travel out of state to get an internship as there are only 4 internships offered in Colorado each year with over a hundred applications.

**Advising for Child Life**

* **If you are interested in pursuing Child Life as a career, please contact Dr. Lisa Hagan for advising** [**lkindleb@msudenver.edu**](mailto:lkindleb@msudenver.edu)

**To get a Certification in Child Life**

1. **Earn a bachelor’s degree (any major is fine)**

Human Development and Family Studies Major Recommended

Minor recommendations include Pre-Healthcare, Biology, Individualized Degree Program

1. **Complete 10 Child Life required courses**

* If you are a Human Development and Family Studies major then the 10 required courses can all be completed as part of your major.

**Prerequisite Courses**

* PSY 1001 Introductory Psychology (required before you take any Psychology class)
* PSY 2310 Statistics for the Behavioral Sciences (required before you take the research methods course).
* PSY 3010 Research Methods (required before you take Senior Experience in PSY 4700)

**10 Required Child Life Courses**

* Two Child Development courses
  + PSY 3250 (Child Psychology) and PSY 3260 (Adolescent Psychology)
  + Offered online Fall, Spring, Summer
* Family Systems Course
  + PSY 3580 (Development in the Family Context)
    - Offered online Fall and spring
* Death/Dying course
  + PSY 2270 (Death and Dying)
    - Offered online Summer and Fall online, Spring in-person
* Research Methods Course
  + PSY 4700 (Senior Experience of HDFS)
    - Offered in-person Fall and online Spring
* Child Life Specialist Course
  + PSY 3490 (Child Life Theory and Practice)
    - Offered online Fall
* Play Course
  + PSY 3460 (Psychology of Play)
    - Offered online Fall and Spring
* Three additional courses
  + PSY 3400 (Child Psychopathology)
  + PSY 2210 (Psychology of Human Development)
    - Offered Fall, Spring, Summer online
  + PSY 3340 (Cognitive Development and Learning)
    - Offered Fall, Summer online, Spring in-person

## 150-hour Child Life Practicum

## While it is not “required” to do a practicum, students who get an internship (which is required) ALL do practicums. In fact, many students do 2 practicums. The good news is that you will get course credit for doing a Child Life practicum in the form of signing up for the Internship in Psychology course. Children’s Hospital, the leading Child Life hospital in the nation, accepts 6 students a summer for a 6-week practicum. Last summer, 5 of those students came from out of state but the one in-state student was from MSU! You apply for the practicum in February for the next summer and will need a recommendation letter from your advisor (which will be Dr. Hagan). I would apply to a handful of practicums as they are competitive to get in.

## 4) Complete a 600-Hour Child Life Clinical Internship

* Once you complete the unpaid Child Life Internship, then you are considered a Child Life Specialist. This 600-hour internship is completed in 3-4 months. It is VERY competitive to get an internship! Students who get internships have the following:
  + 4.0 GPA or as close as possible!
  + Volunteer hours with kids both inside and outside of a hospital setting (see below for more information).
  + 1 or 2 Child Life Practicums
  + An outgoing and welcoming personality as you will need to talk to dozens of patients and their parents a day.
  + Some background in the natural sciences. As Child Life Specialists work in hospitals, it is important that they understand medical terminology, anatomy and physiology, and hospital ethics. To fill these requirements, students often minor in pre-health care or even create their own minor (Individualized Degree Program) that is tailored to taking the best courses to prepare for a career in child life.

Additional information can be found at <https://www.childlife.org/> under the tab Certification. The following excerpt below is from that certification page.

