

DELAWARE MINIMED

What is Child Life?— Providing Psychosocial Support In the Emergency Room

Presented by: Sarah Brakoh, MS, CCLS and Meredith Krewson, M.Ed, CCLS



About Me! - Sarah Brakoh, MS, CCLS



Education and Experience

- Certified Child Life Specialist for 1 ½ years in the Emergency Department
- B.S in Family and Human Services
- M.S in Child Life, Administration, and Family Collaboration
- Ph.D Candidate focusing on Counseling and Psychological Studies with a focus in Trauma and Crisis Counseling

Personal Stuff!

- Born in Central New Jersey
- Love spending time in Philly trying new restaurants on my free time



2018-2022

- Wanted to be an Education Major
- Then declared social work/sociology major for my freshman year of high school in 2018
- Initially rejected from Towson University but re-applied and majored in Family and Human Services

2020-2023

- Within this time period, I gained all of my clinical experience
- 100 hours of volunteering at Sinai Hospital in Baltimore
 - 100 hour practicum at Kaiser Permanente
 - 600 hour internship at CHOP

2022-2024

Masters Degree course work completed for my masters in Child Life, Administration, and Family Collaboration

My Journey to becoming a CCLS





About Me! - Meredith Krewson, M.Ed, CCLS



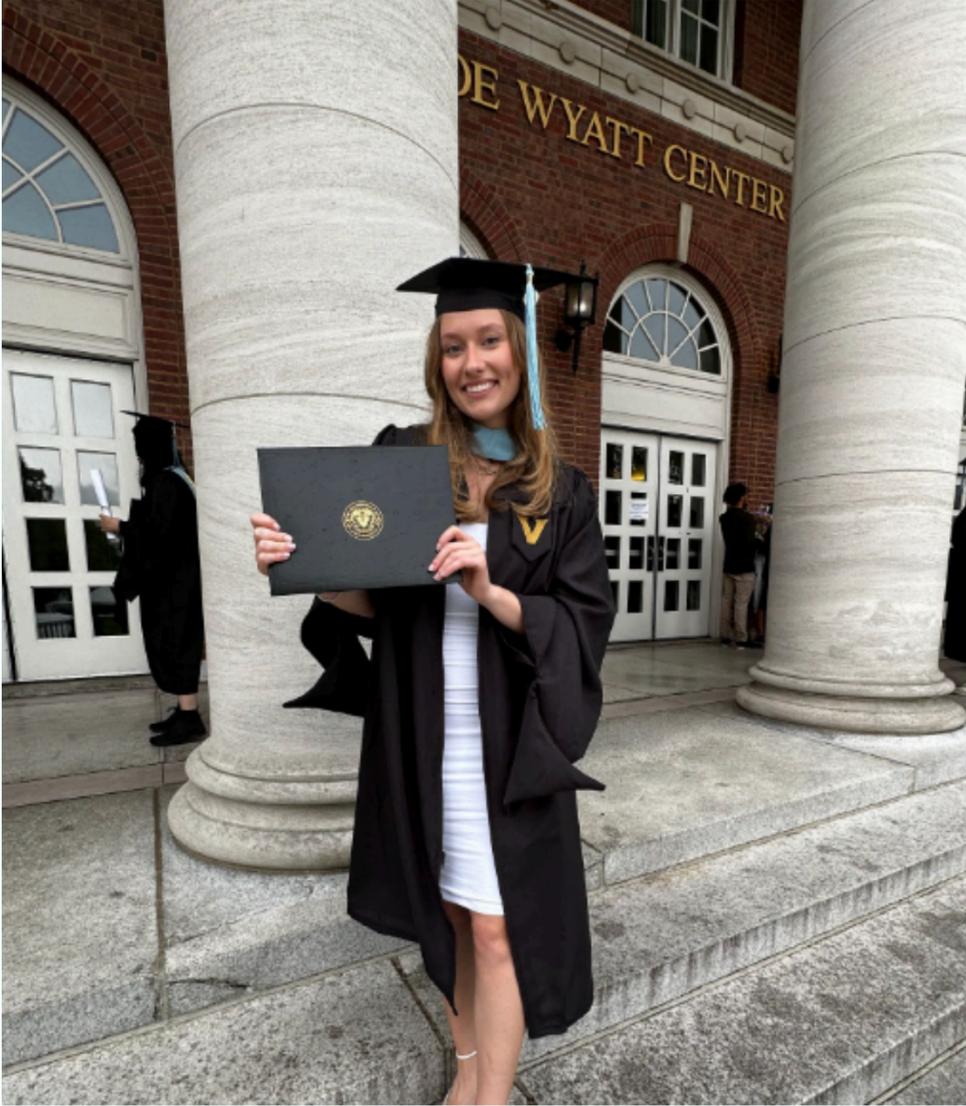
Education and Experience

- Certified Child Life Specialist for 2 years in the Emergency Department
- B.S double major in Biology and Dance
- M.Ed in Child Studies (concentrations in Pediatric Healthcare & Poverty and Intervention)
- Certified Infant Massage Instructor



Personal Stuff!

- Born in Pottsville, PA
- Love going to the beach, reading, traveling to visit friends in my free time





2016 - 2020

- Muhlenberg College: 2016-2020
- Biology and Dance
- Volunteered with Child Life
- Externships/Shadowing
- Doctor/PA/NP



2020: Gap Year

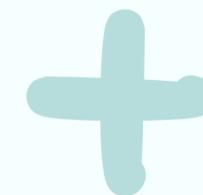
- AmeriCorps City Year
- Individualized and Equitable Service
- Apply to Grad Schools

2021 - 2023

- Child Studies Grad Program
- 2 Years: school, daycare, tutoring, nannying, volunteering
- Practicum: 150 hours Penn State Hershey
- Internship: 600 hours Nemours
- Apply to Jobs



My Journey to becoming a CCLS



History of Child Life Profession

1922:

Mott Children's Hospital, Michigan, established early play programs for children

1955:

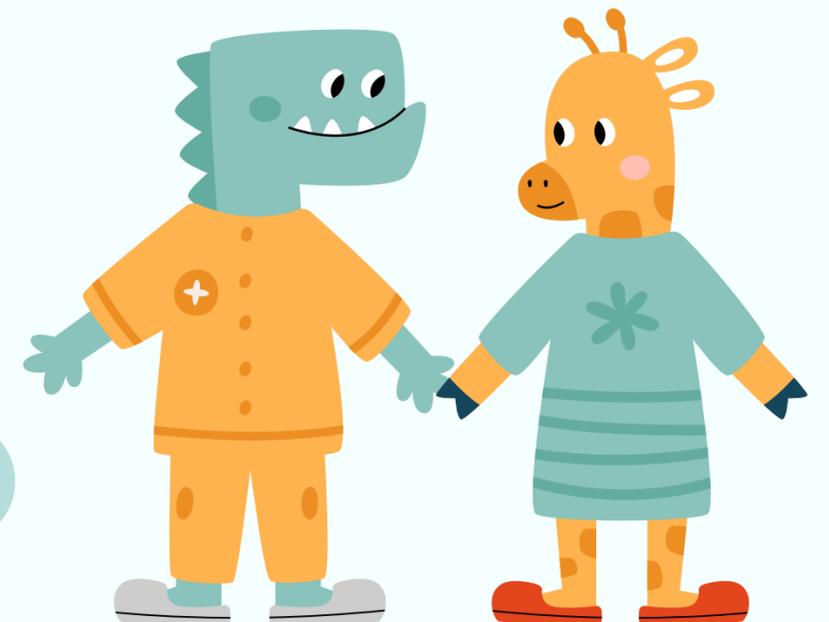
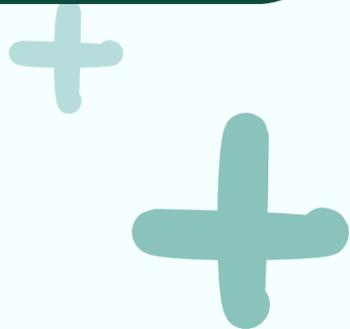
Emma Plank was asked to create a program to address the social, emotional and educational needs of hospitalized children at Cleveland City Hospital.

1970's &
1980's

Child Life movement experienced rapid growth. Many new programs were started.

2005:

CLC membership reached more than 3,000. About 470 documented child life programs in existence.



The Role of a CCLS



Supporting coping and emotional regulation

- Deep breathing and counting techniques to help child feel more in control.



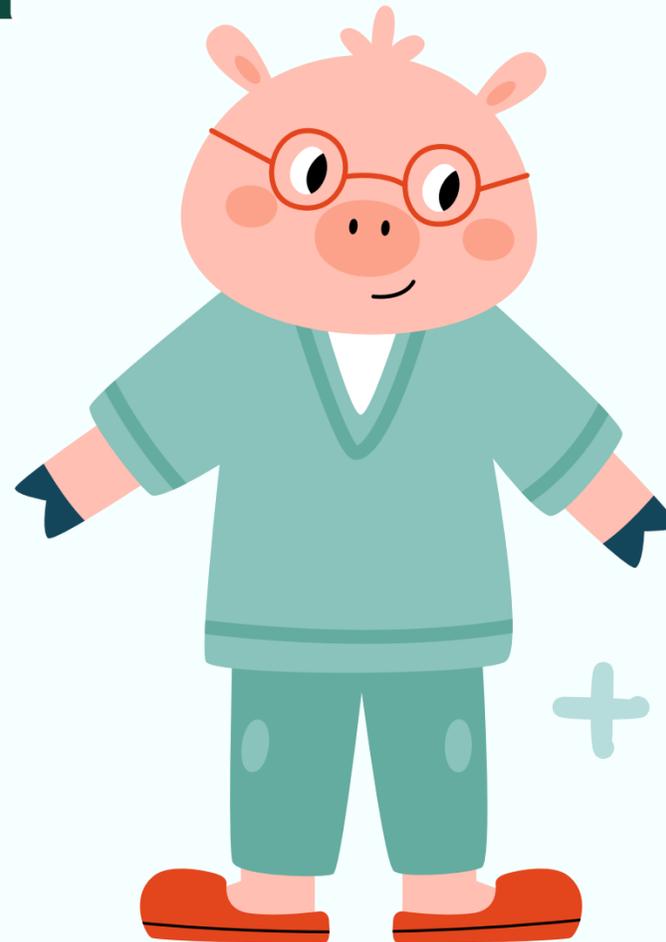
Collaboration with medical team

- Collaborate with the medical team to assess the timing of procedures, comfort positioning, and a better understanding of the procedure.



Procedural Preparation

- Using teaching dolls and real medical equipment to explain procedures to reduce anxiety and address misconceptions.



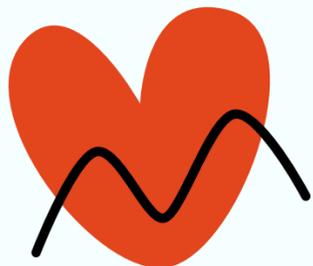
Advocate

- As CCLS's we advocate for the psychosocial needs of the child and family, realizing hospitalization can be scary.

Goals of Child Life



- Normalize the hospital environment
- Address potential fear/anxiety regarding hospitalization through therapeutic and recreational activities
- Facilitate understanding and coping by providing developmentally appropriate education and preparation for procedures, admissions, etc.
- Advocate for family-centered care
- Work as part of the multidisciplinary team and focus on unique psychosocial needs of patients
- Promote mastery and control for hospitalized children by providing choice and opportunity



The Path to Certification

- Education**
BA or BS in Child Life, Child Development, Psychology or related field
Masters degree suggested
- Pre-Internship Experiences**
100 Hour Practicum / Pre-Internship Experience
100 Hours of Volunteering within a hospital
- Internship Experience**
600 Hour Internship
- Certification**
Certification Exam
Continuing Education/Recertify Every 5 Years

01

02

03

04



Option 1:

OPTION 1: OBTAINING SPECIFIC COURSEWORK

Graduating from an ACLP-Endorsed Academic Program

If an individual graduates from an ACLP-Endorsed Academic Program, this will satisfy the academic requirements to apply to take the Child Life Certification Exam.

The purpose of program endorsement is to promote the interests of students through improving the quality of teaching, learning, and professional practice.

[ACLP Endorsed Program Directory](#)

Option 2

OPTION 2

Option 2: Obtaining Specific Coursework

If an individual does not graduate from an ACLP-Endorsed Academic Program, they can obtain the required academic coursework needed to take the Child Life Certification Exam by completing 10 specific college courses.

Those courses are:

- 1 child life course taught by a CCLS
- 2 child development courses
- 1 family systems course
- 1 play course
- 1 loss/bereavement or death/dying course
- 1 research course
- 3 additional courses in related areas

[ACLP Pre-Approved Course List](#)



Preparation / Education



- **Pre-procedural Preparation**

- *Any unfamiliar procedure, surgery, or test*

- **Post-procedural Explanation**

- *After a procedure, surgery or test (sometimes in addition to pre-procedural prep)*

- **General Medical Preparation**

- *Familiarizing children to hospitalization, vitals, isolation materials, staff members, etc.*

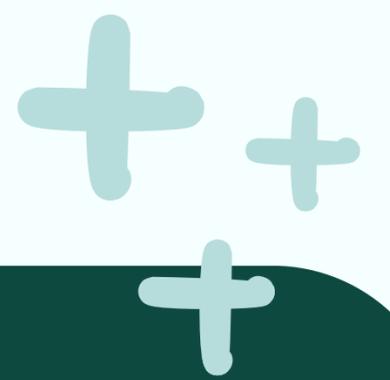
- **Sibling Visits**

- *Preparing siblings for what they will experience when they see their family member in the hospital*





Support



• Diagnosis Education

- *Any new diagnosis: cancer, lupus, diabetes, heart disease, CF, etc.*

• Procedural Support

- *Provide distraction and promote relaxation and positive coping techniques*

• Pain Management

- *Help teach coping techniques to manage pain beyond medicine*

• Psychosocial Support

- *Provide support for adjustment to illness, treatment, and hospitalization*

• Sibling/Family Support

- *Provide advocacy, resources and emotional support during and after hospitalization*

• Bereavement

- *Work with interdisciplinary team to provide comfort and support to patients and families before, during, and after dying process*



Play

Play promotes normalcy, positive coping, and a sense of control.

- **Normative Play**

- Promote developmental growth and milestones
- Provide opportunities for social interaction



- **Medical Play**

- Allows patients/siblings to explore medical equipment in a non-threatening manner and clarify misconceptions
- Can be incorporated into education sessions

taucibus leo. Duis ornare tempus lacus id porta.



- **Therapeutic Play**

- Goal-directed. Allows for verbal and behavioral expression of feelings related to illness/hospitalization.

Language Matters...

Honest but non-threatening

Medical Term	Child Life Language
I.V	Helper Straw
Sutures/Stiches	String Band-Aids
“A Shot”	A “poke and push”
Tegaderm, Leads, Pulse-ox	“Special Stickers”, “Light-up sticker”
Pain-ease	Freezy Spray or Elsa Spray
L.E.T	“Marshmallow” cream
Admission	Sleep-over
CT/MRI	Pictures in a Giant Donut!!!

Day In My Life as an ED CCLS



Morning Huddle and Chart Review

- Review ED Track board to assess patients who may need support during procedures
- Collaborate with the medical team to prioritize care

Patients I saw and Interventions

July 15th 2025

- I saw a total of 10 patients between 8:30-5pm
- I missed one priority patient
- I supported 3 IV procedures
- Supported a Trauma Alert from a MVC
- Provided stress ball for pt as positive coping technique
- Supported one laceration repair
- Checked in on the other 3 families to assess needs.

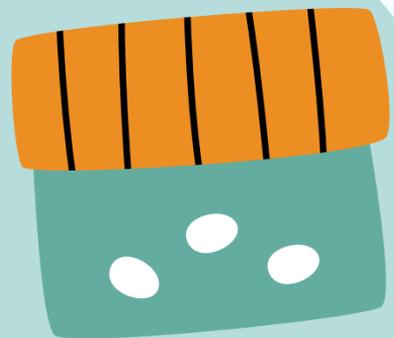


Documentation and Debrief

- Chart on interventions
- Debrief with colleagues (the good and the bad)
- Clean, restock prep tools used.



Day In My Life as an ED CCLS – continued



Handoff from AM CLS and assess trackboard

- Receive handoff from Sarah – patients she saw and patients who need evening support
- Review ED Track board
- Collaborate with the medical team to prioritize care

Patients and Interventions

July 15th 2025

- I saw a total of 12 patients between 1:30pm-12am
- I missed 5 priority patients
- I supported 2 IV procedures
- Supported caregivers during a medical response for an infant seizure
- Reached out to PICU regarding possible EOL support need
- Supported an orthopedic procedure and casting

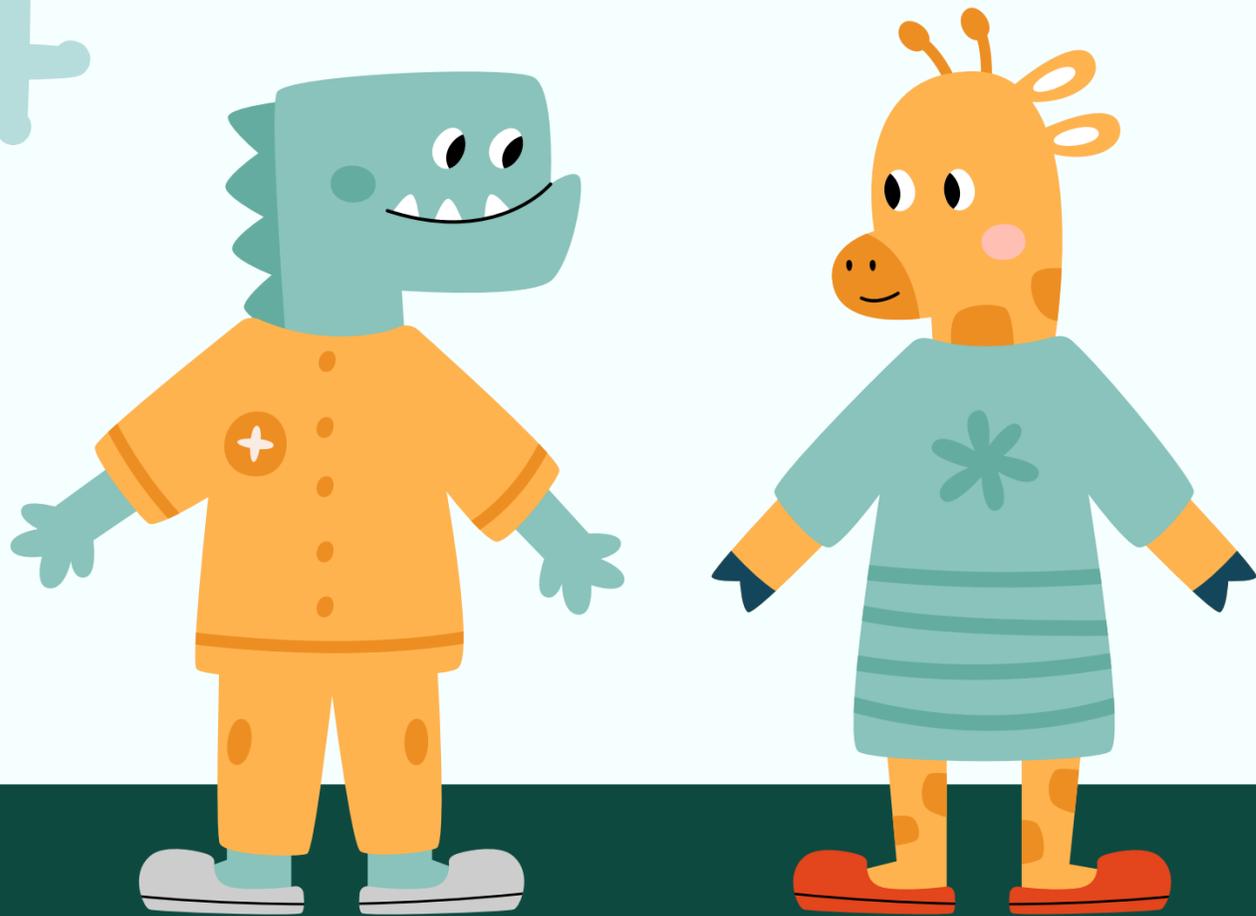
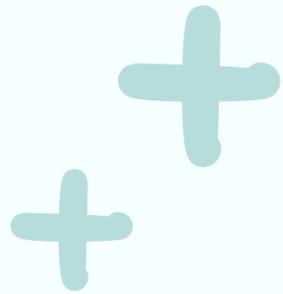
Documentation and iPASS

- Chart on interventions
- Handoff specific patient needs on iPASS document
- Notify dayshift specialists of future patient needs





Questions?



**Thank you
for your
attention**

