



University Council

October 13, 2023

UNIVERSITY CURRICULUM COMMITTEE – 2023-2024

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Graduate Student Representative – Kelsey Wohlford

Dear Colleagues:

The attached proposal from the College of Family and Consumer Sciences to offer a new Undergraduate Certificate in Child Life will be an agenda item for the October 20, 2023, Full University Curriculum Committee meeting.

Sincerely,

Susan Sanchez, Chair

cc: Provost S. Jack Hu

Dr. Marisa Pagnattaro

PROPOSAL FOR A CERTIFICATE PROGRAM

Date: March 31, 2023

School/College/Unit: College of Family and Consumer Sciences

Department/Division: Human Development and Family Science

Certificate Title: Undergraduate Certificate in Child Life

CIP: 19070601

Effective Term: Fall 2024

Which campus(es) will offer this certificate? Athens

Level (Undergraduate, Graduate, or Post-Baccalaureate): Undergraduate

Program Abstract:

This certificate will provide in-depth learning about the Child Life field through specialized coursework, including experiential learning. Students who complete the certificate will meet the academic coursework requirements to become a Certified Child Life specialist as determined by the Association of Child Life Professionals.

1. Purpose and Educational Objectives

State the purpose and educational objectives of the program. How does this program complement the mission of the institution?

The purpose of the proposed Undergraduate Certificate in Child life is to prepare undergraduate students to become Certified Child Life Specialists by providing the specialized coursework needed to prepare students for a child life internship. The proposed certificate will provide a structured pathway for undergraduate students to complete the specific coursework required for a child life internship, as determined by the Association of Child Life Professionals. Students who complete the certificate will graduate with all the academic requirements needed to secure and complete the required clinical child life internship. This certificate complements the mission of the institution by providing an additional pathway to prepare students for the child life profession, in addition to the existing Area of Emphasis in Child Life under the major in Human Development and Family Science (B.S.F.C.S.).

2. Need for the Program

Explain why this program is necessary. In addition, provide the following information:

Certified Child Life Specialists (CCLS) are professionals trained in child development who support children, adolescents, and their families in hospitals and other healthcare settings. Becoming a Certified Child Life Specialist requires coursework, experience with children in different settings, and clinical experience through a required child life internship and an optional,

but strongly recommended, child life practicum.

The Undergraduate Certificate in Child Life will provide students with a structured set of courses to prepare them to become a Certified Child Life Specialist. Students who complete the certificate will graduate with all academic requirements for child life certification fulfilled. The certificate will enable the department to track, mentor, and support students who are pursuing child life as a career post-graduation and to share professional learning and volunteer opportunities with students with a demonstrated interest in the child life field.

- Semester/Year of Program Initiation: Fall 2024
- Semester/Year of Full Implementation of Program: Fall 2025
- Semester/Year First Certificates will be awarded: Spring 2025
- Annual Number of Graduates expected (once the program is established): 10-15
- Projected Future Trends for number of students enrolled in the program: 10-15

Faculty have seen a steady increase in students expressing interest in the child life field in the SAGE system since Fall 2019, when tracking first began. Numbers of students with newly identified child life interest are as follows for each academic year:

- 2019-2020: 6 students
- 2020-2021: 13 students
- 2021-2022: 21 students
- Fall 2022: 9 students

Based on these trends, it is anticipated that the number of students enrolled will increase each year for the first five years, as the certificate becomes established and better known on campus.

Nationally, the number of students completing courses to prepare to become a Certified Child Life Specialist has increased steadily over the past ten years, even as certification requirements have become more stringent. It is anticipated that this increased interest in child life will lead to interest in the proposed certificate in child life. The department will track these trends to ensure that adequate faculty and staff resources are in place to support students in the certificate.

3. Student Demand

a. Provide documentation of evidence of student demand for this program, including a student survey.

The Child Life program faculty in the Department of Human Development and Family Science created a survey of undergraduate students interested in becoming a child life specialist. The survey was distributed in March 2023 through department listservs, individual contacts from the undergraduate advisors, and announcements in classes related to child life. A total of 49 students completed the survey. Of the respondents, 33 indicated that they definitely plan to become a child life specialist, 8 indicated that they probably plan to, and 8 indicated that they were undecided.

The large majority of respondents indicated that they would be interested in completing a certificate in child life (96% chose “definitely yes” or “probably yes”). The respondents also indicated that a certificate in child life would appeal to other students interested in becoming a child life specialist (91% chose “definitely yes” or “probably yes”).

Multiple respondents explained why the certificate would be attractive; these comments highlighted issues such as giving them an advantage in a competitive child life field (“Child life is a competitive field, in which not many schools offer a program here in Georgia” and “I think it would appeal to students because there is credit on your scholarship that you have the certificate instead of having to explain it when you are applying”), as well as access to specific courses needed and reducing stress for students pursuing a child life career (“I think it takes one step off the student. Applying to practicums and internships can be very stressful, so I think having a certificate would make getting the required courses easier” and “I think it would make completing the courses less daunting and more clear. I think it would provide students with a direct path when trying to complete Child life courses”). In addition, students commented that having a certificate in child life would make this career path more visible and attract additional students (“it would make child life probably more accessible and well known. When it’s just a child life track within HDFS it’s not as well known and I didn’t know it was an option until I met with an HDFS advisor even though I knew I wanted to do child life before then.”)

b. Provide evidence that demand will be sufficient to sustain reasonable enrollment.

The high level of response to the student survey (including 41 sophomores, juniors, and seniors) is a clear indication of interest in the Undergraduate Certificate in Child Life. In addition, enrollment in courses that are central to the proposed certificate has been consistently high over the past 5 years (e.g., HDFS 4810/6810, Psychosocial Care of Hospitalized Children, had 74 students enrolled in Fall 2022; HDFS 4820/6820, Child Life Interventions for Children and Families in Health Care Settings, had 30 students enrolled in Spring 2023; and HDFS 5130S/7130S, Therapeutic Benefits of Play, had 32 students enrolled in Spring 2023).

c. To what extent will minority student enrollments be greater than, less than, or equivalent to the proportion of minority students in the total student body?

The minority student enrollment in this certificate is expected to be similar to the proportion of minority students currently enrolled in the existing undergraduate major in the Human Development and Family Science (B.S.F.C.S.).

4. Program of Study

The Undergraduate Certificate in Child Life requires 33 credit hours as follows:

- HDFS 2300, The Science of Studying Human Development and Families (3 hours)
- HDFS 3700 or HDFS 3700S, Adolescent Development (3 hours)
- HDFS 3900, Prenatal and Infant Development (3 hours)
- HDFS 3920, Issues in Family Systems (3 hours)
- HDFS 4810/6810, Psychosocial Care of the Hospitalized Child and the Family (3 hours)
(prerequisite for HDFS 4820/6820)
- HDFS 4820/6820, Child Life Interventions for Children and Families in Health Care Settings (3 hours)
- HDFS 4830S/6830S, Grief, Loss, and Bereavement (3 hours)
- HDFS 4910/6910, Early and Middle Childhood Development (3 hours)
- HDFS 5130/7130 or HDFS 5130S/7130S, Therapeutic Benefits of Play (3 hours)

- Any two of the following courses:
 - HDFS 4330, Diversity in Human Development and Family Systems (3 hours)

- HDFS 4860/6860, Parenting and Child Guidance (3 hours)
- HDFS 4900S/6900S, Seminar in Human Development and Family Science (1-3 hours; complete 3 hours) when taken as Benefits of Animal-Assisted Therapy
- HDFS 4140E/6140E, Medical Terminology for the Child Life Profession (3 hours)*

**HDFS 4140E is currently in development. Once approved, it will be listed as a split-level course with HDFS 6140E, which has already been approved. All the remaining courses are existing courses already being offered.*

5. Model Program and Accreditation

a. Identify any model programs, accepted disciplinary standards, and accepted curricular practices against which the proposed program could be judged. Evaluate the extent to which the proposed curriculum is consistent with these external points of reference and provide a rationale for significant inconsistencies and differences that may exist.

The Association of Child Life Professionals (ACLP) is the professional organization for child life and determines academic and clinical requirements for eligibility to take the child life certification exam. The courses included in the proposed certificate meet all of these requirements and are consistent with the specific course content outlines provided by ACLP and included in the attachment. The current ACLP coursework requirements and the specific course(s) in the proposed certificate that meet each requirement are noted in the following table.

ACLP Requirement	UGA Course(s) Meeting Requirement
Child Life Course Taught by a CCLS	HDFS 4820/6820, Child Life Interventions for Children and Families in Health Care Settings
2 Child Development Courses*	HDFS 3900, Prenatal and Infant Development HDFS 3700 or HDFS 3700S, Adolescent Development HDFS 4910/6910, Early and Middle Childhood Development
Family Systems Course	HDFS 3920, Issues in Family Systems
Play Course	HDFS 5130/7130 or HDFS 5130S/7130S, Therapeutic Benefits of Play
Loss/Bereavement or Death/Dying Course	HDFS 4830S/6830S, Grief, Loss, and Bereavement
Research Course	HDFS 2300, The Science of Studying Human Development and Families

Three Additional Courses	Any 3 of the following: HDFS 4330, Diversity in Human Development and Family Systems HDFS 4810/6810, Psychosocial Care of the Hospitalized Child and the Family HDFS 4860/6860, Parenting and Child Guidance HDFS 4900/6900, Seminar in Human Development and Family Science (Specific Topic: Benefits of Animal-Assisted Therapy) HDFS 4140E/6140E, Medical Terminology in Child Life (course in development)
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*The ACLP requires that child development courses cover ages Birth-18. In the current curriculum, students must complete 3 courses to cover this entire age range.

The ACLP recommends that students take a 3-credit hour course or the equivalent for each requirement in order to have an appropriate depth of instruction. All courses in the proposed certificate are 3-credit hour courses.

b. If program accreditation is available, provide an analysis of the ability of the program to satisfy the curricular standards of such specialized accreditation.

Program accreditation is not available for undergraduate child life academic programs at this time.

6. Student Learning Outcomes

Describe the proposed learning outcomes for the certificate program.

These student learning outcomes are adapted from the Association of Child Life Professionals list of Internship Readiness Knowledge, Skills, and Abilities. The full list is available at the end of the document or at <https://www.childlife.org/docs/default-source/certification/internships/ksas-internship-readiness-one-pager.pdf>.

- To demonstrate knowledge of developmental stages, how children respond to hospitalization, assessment of psychosocial stressors at each stage, appropriate psychosocial support measures, and connections to child development and child life theory.
- To demonstrate understanding of child life interventions, such as preparation, coping support, and grief support.
- To demonstrate ability to plan, implement, and evaluate developmentally appropriate normative, therapeutic, and medical play for children of all ages and abilities.
- To demonstrate understanding of therapeutic relationships with children and families and family-centered care.
- To demonstrate the ability to self-reflect on one's learning, goals, openness to feedback, self-care, and professional boundaries and their implications for child life practice.
- To demonstrate awareness of diversity, equity, and inclusion and cultural humility as they relate to hospitalized children and families.

7. Assessment and Admissions

Describe how the learning outcomes for the program will be assessed.

In the Undergraduate Certificate in Child Life, students will demonstrate mastery of student learning outcomes through assignments and exams in specific courses. Examples of assessment of individual student learning outcomes are as follows:

SLO	Examples of Learning Assessments
To demonstrate knowledge of developmental stages, how children respond to hospitalization, assessment of psychosocial stressors at each stage, appropriate psychosocial support measures, and connections to child development and child life theory	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Developmental reports in HDFS 3900 • Detailed developmental chart in HDFS 4810/6810
To demonstrate understanding of child life interventions, such as preparation, coping support, and grief support	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Midterm and final exams in HDFS 4820/6820 • Written report from visit to Children’s Hospital of Georgia in HDFS 4820/6820
To demonstrate ability to plan, implement, and evaluate developmentally appropriate normative, therapeutic, and medical play for children of all ages and abilities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Activity plans in HDFS 5130S/7130S • Video demonstrations of activities in HDFS 5130S/7130S
To demonstrate understanding of therapeutic relationships with children and families and family-centered care	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Midterm exam in HDFS 4820/6820 • Written report from visit to Children’s Hospital of Georgia in HDFS 4820/6820
To demonstrate the ability to self-reflect on one's learning, goals, openness to feedback, self-care, and professional boundaries and their implications for child life practice	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Service-learning reflections in HDFS 4830S/6830S and HDFS 5130S/7130S • Student-led discussion reflections in HDFS 5130S/7130S
To demonstrate awareness of diversity, equity, and inclusion and cultural humility as they relate to hospitalized children and families	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Midterm exam in HDFS 4820/6820 • Reflection on play equity discussion in HDFS 5130S/7130S

Describe the process and criteria for how students will be admitted to and retained in the program.

Students will apply to the certificate program in spring semester of their second year as an undergraduate student. Admission requirements are as follows:

- Completion of the following courses, with a B or higher in each course:
 - HDFS 2100, Dating, Mating, Communicating: Relationships and Families
 - HDFS 2200, Introduction to Life Span Development

- A statement of purpose (approximately 500 words) which addresses the following questions:
 - What is the role of a child life specialist?
 - Why are you interested in the Undergraduate Certificate in Child Life? How did you first become interested in or aware of child life? How have you increase your knowledge/awareness of this profession?
 - What past experiences with children, adolescents, and families have prepared you for the Undergraduate Certificate in Child Life, and how have they prepared you? (Please describe specific experiences; do not just include a list of all experiences with children.)

Applications will be due by March 15 each year. Applications will be reviewed by core faculty members in the child life program. Students will be notified of the status of their application in April.

Once admitted to the program, students will meet with child life program faculty as a group, at least once per semester, to discuss goals, progress, and upcoming milestones. Students will also have opportunities for individual meetings with child life program faculty during each semester they are enrolled in the certificate. These group and one-on-one meetings will help to retain students by ensuring they have information and support needed to be successful.

Awareness

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| 1.01 | Awareness of/growth mindset relating to DEI and cultural humility |
| 1.02 | Awareness of the Child Life Code of Ethics |
| 1.03 | Exposure to how theory and evidence guide child life practice |
| 1.04 | Awareness of child life specialist's role in providing coping support to families experiencing grief and/or loss |
| 1.05 | Exposure to the concept of health disparities and the child life specialist's role in promoting health equity |

Comprehension

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| 2.01 | Knowledge of the scope of child life practice |
| 2.02 | Recognize the value of therapeutic relationships with children and families |
| 2.03 | Recognize the importance of assessing for child, healthcare, psychosocial, and family variables |
| 2.04 | Knowledge of child development and how each developmental stage is impacted by illness, stress, and hospitalization |
| 2.05 | Knowledge of the operations of a healthcare setting |

Application

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|-------------|--|
| 3.01 | Experience with children within and outside of healthcare settings |
| 3.02 | Ability to engage children of all ages and abilities in developmentally appropriate normative play |
| 3.03 | Ability to build rapport and employ effective communication |
| 3.04 | Ability to self-reflect on one's learning, goals, openness to feedback, self-care, and professional boundaries and their implications for practice |
| 3.05 | Demonstrate flexibility and time management skills to adapt to changing situations |

Documentation of Approval and Notification

Proposal: Create a new Undergraduate Certificate in Child Life

College: College of Family and Consumer Sciences

Department: Human Development and Family Science

Proposed Effective Term: Fall 2024

Approvals:

- Human Development and Family Science Department Head, Dr. April Few-Demo, 8/29/2023
- College of Family and Consumer Sciences Dean, Dr. Anisa Zvonkovic, 9/8/2023