



## MISSION, VALUES, VISION, AND OPERATING PRINCIPLES

### I. Mission Statement

We, as child life professionals, strive to reduce the negative impact of stressful or traumatic life events and situations that affect the development, health and well-being of infants, children, youth and families. We embrace the value of play as a healing modality as we work to enhance the optimal growth and development of infants, children and youth through assessment, intervention, prevention, advocacy, and education.

### II. Values Statements

We, as child life professionals, value:

#### A. Infants, Children, Youth and Families

We recognize the diversity of individual and family strengths and needs, acknowledging their support systems and community links. We promote individual and family integrity, development, and well-being by embracing the concepts of family-centered care.

#### B. Play

Play is an essential, natural part of childhood, important in its own right. Play facilitates healing, coping, mastery, self-expression, creativity, achievement and learning, and is vital to a child's optimal growth and development. Play is an integral aspect of child life practice with infants, children and youth of all ages.

#### C. Therapeutic Relationships

We are committed to relationships built on trust, respect and professional competence which contribute to the development of confidence, resilience, and problem-solving skills that enable individuals and families to deal effectively with challenges to development, health and well-being.

#### D. Communication

Infants, children and youth communicate their needs through words, play and behavior. We are committed to enabling all forms of communication. We accomplish this by observing, listening and facilitating communication with those who may be misunderstood or needing support in order to be heard. Written documentation of child life assessments, interventions and evaluation of outcomes is an essential aspect of our practice.

#### E. Theoretical Foundations of Practice

Knowledge and application of our foundations in theories of child development, play, stress and coping, and family systems are the basis for our professional practices.

#### F. Professional Collaboration

The shared and reciprocal efforts of individuals, disciplines, organizations and communities are an effective means of meeting the diverse needs of infants, children, youth and families. Child life practice includes professional collaboration, as well as commitment to the education, supervision and mentoring of novice child life professionals.

#### G. Professional Standards of Practice

The commitment to excellence and integrity in our professional practices involves lifelong learning, adherence to our code of ethics, and the development and support of educational and training programs based upon defined clinical competencies.

#### H. Research

Research is a fundamental tool of inquiry to guide our practices and interventions, and strengthen and promote our profession. Child life professionals have a responsibility to maintain a current understanding of research findings and participate in research that examines our practices

### III. Vision Statement

The profession of child life will continue to meet the needs of infants, children, youth and families in times of stressful or traumatic life events and situations. The philosophy and practice of child life will be applicable to any health care setting and transferable to other environments or situations in which the potential for infants, children and youth to cope, learn and master is placed at risk. The services provided by the child life profession will be holistic and will utilize applied child development and family systems theory. The objectives of such services will be to minimize the negative impact of situational disruptions while maintaining individual growth and development and family relationships.

### IV. Operating Principles of the Child Life Profession

- We will collaborate, maintain and promote a philosophy and identity that is accepted on an international level.
- We will maintain the highest standards of professional behavior and practices.
- We will be recognized as essential in health care as well as in diverse community settings and will be available to all infants, children, youth and families regardless of ability to pay.
- We will advocate for the rights of infants, children and youth and support appropriate political, legal and ethical responses to their psychosocial needs.
- We will maintain the child life profession through education and training programs that are diverse, inclusive, continuous, and consistent with our philosophy.
- We will initiate research to validate our methodologies and further the practice of child life.
- We will maintain meaningful credentialing for child life practitioners that addresses professional philosophy and knowledge.
- We will attract highly skilled, diverse and committed individuals who are able to demonstrate competence in communication and human services skills.
- We will interface with other disciplines that provide interventions to infants, children, youth and families, and will collaborate with them in the delivery of services.

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