An Interview Is:

• An opportunity for you to present your background and skills to an interviewer whose goal is to evaluate your skills and qualifications for the position and “fit” (shared values and common vision) with their hospital/organization.
• An opportunity for you to evaluate a potential supervisor and work environment.

CHILD LIFE FOCUSED INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

Situational Questions:
• You encounter two children in the playroom, one of whom is very shy and withdrawn, while the other is extremely active and, you believe, angry. What approach would you use when dealing with each child?
• A nurse approaches you in the hallway and says that a child in room 201 is screaming uncontrollably so that they cannot start an IV. She asks you to come and help. What would you do?
• What kind of activities would you provide for a five-year-old in traction? A ten-year-old? A fifteen-year-old?
• You begin a conversation with a parent, whom you have known only casually, while her child is in the operating room. She becomes highly emotional, expressing fears for her child’s survival. What do you do?
• A parent asks about another child’s diagnosis. How would you respond?

Basic “Demographic” questions:
• How did you find out about the field of child life?
• What attracted you to the field?
• Describe any field experience you may have had with ill or hospitalized children?
• What was the nature of the population with whom you worked?
• How did that experience prepare you for a career in child life? To work in this program?
• How might a typical child with whom you have worked describe you?
• Have you ever been hospitalized? Has a family member? If so, how did this affect you?

Clinical Skills Questions:
• What do you consider to be the 3 most important child life roles? Why?
• What do you see as the value of play for hospitalized children?
• How do you maintain a professional role in crisis situations (i.e. death of a child)?
• How would you prepare a child for an IV start?
• Have you supervised a staff? Describe what you think is good supervision.
• What do you see as the nature of the relationship between child life and the families of hospitalized children? What can or should Child Life Specialists do for families?
• How do you approach work with parents? What strategies have worked or not worked for you?
• How do you approach a parent you are meeting for the first time?

Common Interview Questions

• Tell me about yourself.
• What interests you about this school/site/organization?
• We are interviewing many candidates for the position. Why should I hire you?
• How would you collaborate with your colleagues?
• How do you see yourself connecting to the community?
• What three words would you choose to describe yourself?
• What are some of your strengths? or Please describe your greatest achievement to date.
• What are some of your challenges/weaknesses?
• How would you describe an ideal supervisor?
• Do you have questions for me?

Questions to Consider Asking

• What types of professional development do you offer?
• What is the timeline for this search? When might I expect to hear from you?
• How does child life collaborate with the interdisciplinary team?
• What resources or supports are available for patients and families (e.g. support groups, etc.)?

Continued on reverse...

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Clinical Skills Questions Continued:
• Have you worked with families from other cultural/ethnic backgrounds? Describe what skills you use to support these families?
• What type of child do you most like to work with? Least like to work with?
• What type of children/families is hardest for you to work with? How have you handled these situations?
• What skills would you most like to develop if you worked here?

General Questions:
• How would you describe your interactions with other staff members within child life? With members of other disciplines (MDs, nurses, social workers, etc.)?
• What do you do to take care of yourself while working in this stressful setting?
• When you are asked by someone who is not familiar with your field, how do you describe child life?
• How do you work in a team? Do you value collaboration?
• What special contributions do you see yourself making to the team here?
• What is your greatest personal accomplishment? Professional accomplishment?

Thank You Note
Follow-up all interviews with a thank you note: This is your opportunity to restate your interest and qualifications. Use the letter to reemphasize your potential value to the organization, correct any misunderstandings, and add forgotten points. Do not forget to reiterate that you are still interested in the position and the organization. Strive to send the letter within 24 hours of your interview. (For additional guidance and a sample thank you note, please see the CCD’s guide to thank you letters.)