

INTEGRATING RESEARCH INTO CHILD LIFE ACADEMIC PROGRAMS:
IDENTIFYING GRADUATE PROGRAM PROMISING PRACTICES

by

Elizabeth Norton, B.A.

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Committee Members:

Norma J. Perez-Brena, Chair

Edna Alfaro

Vicki Squires

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DEDICATION

I would like to dedicate this project to all current and future child life students. It is my hope that this thesis will inspire discussion of the importance of research within the field of child life. I hope that my experiences conducting research as a child life graduate student will inspire other students to become child life scholars and contribute to the academic growth of the child life profession.

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS.....	v
LIST OF TABLES.....	vii
ABSTRACT.....	viii
CHAPTER	
I. INTRODUCTION.....	1
II. METHOD.....	8
III. RESULTS.....	12
IV. DISCUSSION.....	21
V. PRACTICAL IMPLICATIONS AND CONCLUSIONS.....	28
APPENDIX SECTION.....	34
REFERENCES.....	52

LIST OF TABLES

Table	Page
1. Content Analysis of Child Life Graduate Program Websites	31
2. Themes and Frequencies	32

ABSTRACT

The relatively young field of child life is in need of research on the efficacy of child life services to both validate the field and provide academic growth. Coordinators of nine child life graduate programs in the U.S. participated in a semi-structured interview focusing on the integration of research in their programs. Inductive analysis of the interviews identified five major themes: the *importance of research*, *barriers*, *strategies*, *resources*, and *measures of success*. Overall, child life graduate programs show informal support for research in the child life field. A more formal infrastructure requiring participation and knowledge of research for child life graduate students will allow for the child life field to grow academically and produce the research needed to validate the field.

I. INTRODUCTION

In 2012, 3,197,000 children under 17 years of age were hospitalized overnight in the U.S. (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention [CDC], 2012). Among them, 264,000 children were hospitalized for two or more nights, and 182,000 children were hospitalized for three or more nights (CDC, 2012). Hospitalized children face unfamiliar situations, possibly painful procedures, and separation from their families and routines (Rollins, Bolig, & Mahan, 2005). As a result of the twentieth century movement to humanize healthcare, and the recognized need for play and nurturing of children during hospitalization, the field of child life was born (Bakwin, 1942; Johnson, 2000; Spitz, 1945; Spitz & Wolf, 1946; Wojtasik & White, 2009). Drawing from the fields of developmental psychology, and family and child studies, child life specialists work in pediatric healthcare settings to promote optimal development and coping throughout children's healthcare experience (American Academy of Pediatrics [AAP], 2014). The occupation of child life specialist is relatively new; however, it has grown rapidly since its inception in the mid-twentieth century (Association of Child Life Professionals [ACLP], 2017a). In 1950, there were 10 play programs (early versions of child life programs; Wojtasik & White, 2009) in the U.S., and today there are 476 child life programs in the U.S. and Canada (ACLP, 2017b). Child life programs are mainly in pediatric hospitals, but they are also located in pediatric units in adult hospitals, as well as nontraditional settings such as doctors' offices, dentists' offices, camps, funeral homes, child health and development centers, and even private child life practices (Brown & Backman, 2008; ACLP, 2017a). There is a place for child life wherever children and

families are experiencing stress or trauma (ACLP, 2017c). As the field of child life expands in numbers of Certified Child Life Specialists and child life program locations, there is a great need for research in many areas of the field. Particularly, there is a need for providing evidence-based practices and evidence for the cost-effectiveness of child life practices in both traditional and nontraditional settings (ACLP, 2013). Despite this great need, research is slowly becoming a central focus for the field of child life. This thesis will explore the faculty members' attitudes regarding child life specific research, the perceptions of their graduate students' attitudes regarding child life specific research, as well as the methods used to teach and encourage research among child life graduate students. The ultimate goal of this thesis is to provide recommendations for best practices in graduate programs that aim to promote research activities in their child life programs.

History and Theoretical Foundations of Child Life

The movement for change in pediatric healthcare practices was based in scholarly research, and as the child life field moves forward, there is a need to validate child life practices through scholarly research as well. The field of child life was born as a result of the advent of pediatrics in the late nineteenth century (Abt, 1965; Colón, 1999; Dancis, 1972; Wojtasik & White, 2009), the emersion of the field of developmental psychology in the early to mid-twentieth century (Bowlby, 1952; Freud, 1952; Prugh, Staub, Sands, Kirschbaum, & Lenihan, 1953), and concern for the wellbeing of children and families in healthcare (Robertson, 1953). The first step in the humanization of healthcare occurred when the field of pediatrics was officially established in 1870 by Abraham Jacobi, M.D., the first professor of pediatrics at Columbia University (Abt, 1965; Dancis, 1972; Colón, 1999; Wojtasik & White, 2009). In the early twentieth century, infants were dying at an

alarming rate in hospitals (Wojtasik & White, 2009). This became known as hospitalism, a term for when infants became more sick or did not improve while in the aseptic and non-sensory environment of the hospital, but recovered when they went home (Bakwin, 1942). Researcher René Spitz investigated the cause of hospitalism in the 1940s (Spitz, 1945; Spitz & Wolf, 1946). He discovered that the infants needed play, nurturing, and sensory stimulation to thrive (Spitz, 1945; Spitz & Wolf, 1946). As interest in child psychology grew with the likes of Jean Piaget (Piaget & Inhelder, 1962), and Erik Erikson (Erikson, 1963) investigating the way children think and feel at various developmental stages, it became clear that children who were in the hospital required attention and special care to promote optimal development (Turner & Fralic, 2009). As John Bowlby was beginning to form Attachment Theory (Bowlby, 1982) based on his research on relationships, attachment and separation, fellow scholars James and Joan Robertson provided a fundamental evidence for the fear and stress that children were experiencing in the hospital when they released their film *A Two-Year-Old Goes to the Hospital* in 1953 (Wojtasik & White, 2009). In the film, a two-year-old girl displays mood swings, distress, and relative apathy due to separation from her parents and isolation in a crib (Robertson, 1953; Wojtasik & White, 2009). Erikson's theories of Psychosocial Development, Piaget's theory of Cognitive Development, and Bowlby's theory of Attachment greatly influenced the foundations of the child life field, and are still used extensively in practice today during child life interventions (Erikson, 1963; Piaget & Inhelder, 1962; Wojtasik & White, 2009). Today, child life specialists also use Stress and Coping Theory (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984) and Family Systems Theory (Cox & Paley, 1997) to provide the fundamental aspects of child life services – play,

psychological preparation, and family support (patient and family-centered care; Wojtasik & White, 2009). The application of the developmental and family theories that inform child life practices should be supported through scholarly research in the child life field. Clear scholarly support for the use of child life practices based on foundational theories will further enhance the validity of the child life field through evidence based practices.

The Foundation of Child Life in Practice

The first child life program was founded and directed by Emma Plank in 1955 (Wojtasik & White, 2009; ACLP, 2017d). Plank went on to publish *Working With Children in Hospitals* in 1962, in which she coined the term “child life” (ACLP, 2017d; Wojtasik & White, 2009; Plank, 1962). The Association of Child Life Professionals (ACLP) was formed in 1982 under the umbrella of the Association for the Care of Children in Hospitals (ACCH; formed in 1966), and in 1992, the council was incorporated as a freestanding organization (ACLP, 2017a; Wojtasik & White, 2009). In 2016, the CLC changed its name to the Association of Child Life Professionals (ACLP, 2017a). The ACLP is the certifying organization, and professional and intellectual headquarters for child life specialists in the U.S. and Canada (ACLP, 2017a). Today, there are 26 child life graduate programs in North America (ACLP, 2017e). The formalization of child life as a profession has culminated in the creation of the ACLP (ACLP, 2017a). To further increase the rigor within the child life profession, the ACLP is creating an accreditation process for academic programs in child life with recommendations to increase the use of research methods. Despite 26 child life graduate programs and 474 programs that provide services to children and families in hospitals or

nontraditional settings, there is minimal research conducted on child life issues; creating a need for current and future research conducted by child life specialists on child life practices (AAP, 2014; ACLP, 2013; 2017b; 2017e).

Importance of Research

For emerging fields such as child life, strong foundations in research and evidence based practice is critical to gain respect from other disciplines. The American Academy of Pediatrics' 2014 Statement on Child Life underscores the idea that child life services are a mark of quality pediatric care. Unfortunately, other healthcare workers' perception of the role of child life specialists is that of only play and distraction (Cole, Diener, Wright, & Gaynard, 2001). Research supporting the theoretical purposes and targeted outcomes of child life interventions is necessary to encourage other healthcare workers to see child life as a legitimate part of the healthcare team (Thompson & Snow, 2009).

A momentous research project in the field of child life was conducted at Phoenix Children's Hospital (Wolfer, Gaynard, Goldberger, Laidley, & Thompson, 1988). This study provided evidence that a model child life program, based on theory and relevant scientific literature, was associated with such positive outcomes as children's increased understanding of the reason for their hospitalization and purposes for procedures during the hospitalization, and significantly better adjustment ten days after leaving the hospital (Wolfer et al., 1988). Since, then, a handful of studies have noted the positive effects of child life services in pediatric radiology (Metzger, Mignogna, & Reilly, 2013), pediatric surgery (Brewer, Gleditsch, Syblik, Tietjens, & Vacik, 2006; Dolidze, Smith, & Tchanturia, 2013; Perry, Hooper, & Masiongale, 2012), and burn wound care (Moore, Bennett, Dietrich, & Wells, 2015; Tyson, Bohl, & Blickman, 2014). In addition to

research on the positive impacts of child life in different areas of the hospital, research has also focused on improved service practices. There is a growing base of research on the effectiveness of child life assessments (Koller, 2008), preparation (Li, Lopez, & Lee, 2007; Zelikovsky, Rodrigue, Gidycz, & Davis, 2000), therapeutic play (Ullán et al., 2014), pain anxiety management practices (Bandstra et al., 2008; Hyland et al., 2015; McCarthy et al., 2010), and family-centered care (Smith, Desai, Sira & Engelke, 2014). However, the above referenced body of research is a small dent in the vast need for research in the field.

Current Changes in the Child Life Field

To support the integration of research in child life, the ACLP has incorporated several changes that impact the oversight of the field as a whole, and the certification process for individuals entering the field. First, the ACLP released a position statement emphasizing the importance of evidence-based practices as a way to unify the healthcare team with multidisciplinary coordination (Morris, 2014). Second, the ACLP has released evidence based practice statements on child life assessment, preparation of children and adolescents for medical procedures, and therapeutic play in pediatric health care (ACLP, 2017f). Third, the Research and Scholarship Committee of the ACLP introduced their inaugural research awards in 2015, one for professionals and one for students, to promote research in the field (ACLP, 2017g).

There are also upcoming changes in requirements for eligibility to take the child life certification exam. Currently, a minimum of a bachelor's degree in a related field and one child life course taught by a Certified Child Life Specialist are the academic requirements for certification eligibility (ACLP, 2017h). In 2019, a master's degree in

child life, or a related field, will be required along with specific coursework, including a research course, to be eligible for certification (ACLP, 2017i). A master's degree in child life or a master's degree with a concentration in child life will be required in 2022 for certification eligibility, and a master's in child life from an ACLP accredited program will be required in 2025 (ACLP, 2017j). As the child life field advances toward the 2025 date, when a master's degree in child life is required for certification, it is important to look beyond - to the future need for child life doctoral programs (Thompson & Snow, 2009). There will be a need for child life academics to foster the foundations of the field in both educational and research spheres (Thompson & Snow, 2009). All of these changes supporting research in child life are driven by the ACLP; therefore, it is important to note how graduate programs are acclimating and embracing these proposed changes to fully understand the context that will truly foster the growth of child life research.

Current Study

The purpose of the current study was to explore the attitudes of child life graduate program faculty surrounding research specific to child life, faculty members' perceptions of their students' interest in research, and the methods by which research is taught and encouraged to students in these child life graduate programs. Using a general inductive approach (Thomas, 2006), the data from this exploratory study will inform the creation of themes and ultimately allow the provision of recommendations to child life graduate programs regarding promising practices for encouraging student involvement in research and increasing the amount of research specific to the field of child life produced within these programs.

II. METHOD

Participants

Due to the ACLP's upcoming changes to the requirements for certification as a child life specialist, and the expected 2018 launch of their graduate program accreditation process, child life graduate programs in the U.S. comprised the target sample for this study. The target sample of this study consisted of all of the child life graduate programs in the U.S. (not including Texas State University; $n = 25$).

Of the 25 child life graduate programs in the U.S., nine participated in the current study. The participating programs were located throughout the U.S. and were representative of the initial target sample (Figure 1). Compared to the non-participating programs (Table 1), participating programs were less likely to offer a doctoral degree in a related field (69% vs. 44%), but more likely to require students to complete an undergraduate research method course prior to admission (6% vs. 22%), require a graduate research methods course in the graduate curriculum (86% vs. 100%), and offer students the option to complete a thesis as a part of their graduate degree (19% vs. 55%). Only one program required students to complete a thesis; that program participated in this study. Given this data, it is clear that the participating programs were more supportive of integrating research in their program compared to non-participating schools.

Procedures

Because no sensitive or identifying information would be collected from participants, exemption from a full IRB investigation was granted by Texas State University's Office of Research Integrity and Compliance. Once IRB approval was received, a content analysis was performed using the websites of all 25 child life graduate

programs. This content analysis provided information such as whether or not the program requires its' students to complete a thesis, and a list of the requirements for applying to the program (Appendix A). Following the collection of this background information for each program, two emails describing the study were sent through the ACLP's Academic Professionals email forum, asking for participation separately from both program coordinators and faculty members who teach child life and research courses (Appendix B and Appendix C). Additionally, program coordinators were identified through the ACLP's database of child life academic programs, and were personally and individually contacted through email. The email briefly described the purpose of the study and incentives for participation, and requested to talk to them further about the project (Appendix D). Program coordinators who did not respond to the initial email were emailed an additional two times, and then were contacted by phone three times. Out of twenty-five program coordinators emailed, fifteen program coordinators responded to the invitation. Six of these program coordinators were unable to be reached after their initial responses to schedule and/or complete interviews. Nine of the program coordinators were scheduled for and completed phone interviews. Each program coordinator was asked to complete a semi-structured interview (Appendix E). An appointment was made with each program coordinator that responded to complete the interview by phone, using the software program Audacity to record the phone call. When the interview began, the participant was read an informed consent agreement (Appendix F). Once the participant gave informed consent, the interview continued. Each telephone interview was recorded for transcription. Once the telephone interview was complete, the recordings were stored securely. Participants' names were retracted from the audio file as soon as possible. Each

participant was assigned an identification number and the recording was saved under that identification number. The audio files were saved in an electronic folder that requires a password.¹

Funding from the Department of Family and Consumer Sciences at Texas State University in the amount of four hundred dollars made it possible to provide incentives for the participants in this study. Two participants were randomly selected, one from the program coordinator group and one from the child life and research faculty group, to each receive one Garmin Vivofit HR “smart fitness watch” (\$149.95). Both randomly selected participants were notified through email that they were selected as the recipients of a Garmin Vivofit HR “smart fitness watch. The incentives were shipped directly to the preferred address of the winners.

Measures

The program coordinator interview consisted of 13 questions that addressed the emphasis on research in the academic programs (Appendix D). The semi-structured interview included qualitative questions focusing on the recruitment of child life students, and the integration of research and child life. For example, the program coordinators were asked questions such as “How does your program recruit child life students?” and “What resources and/or opportunities are available within your program for students interested in research?” The semi-structured interview lasted 21 minutes, on average.

¹ Collection of additional quantitative data was attempted through an online survey of faculty members within the child life graduate programs. However, due to non-response, this data was excluded from this thesis.

Analysis

The qualitative data collected from program coordinators and the faculty members that teach child life and research courses was analyzed for thematic content, using a general inductive approach (Thomas, 2006). Audio recordings of the interviews with program coordinators were transcribed verbatim using an online transcription service, “Rev.com.” Each transcribed interview was read two more times to ensure accuracy. To ensure the rigor of the study, both I and an undergraduate research assistant (who was not familiar with the interview questions or data collected), comprised the qualitative coding team. All transcripts were read closely three times and coded for thematic frequencies (Thomas, 2006). The first reading allowed for the identification and definition of themes found in the qualitative data. The second reading ensured saturation (i.e., that all themes were identified), and development of theme definitions. This resulted in the development of a coding scheme. During the third and final reading, both coders read all transcriptions and coded for the presence of each theme. During this process, quotes that characterize a specific code were identified. A coding agreement process (Hill, Thompson, & Williams, 1997) was followed to ensure quality of the final data. A coding agreement process required each coder to read and code the data individually; the coders then discussed any discrepancies in their coding and came to a final agreement on the correct codes and exemplary quotes for each transcript.

III. RESULTS

The general inductive approach to interpret results of the study revealed several major themes and sub-themes. Each of the five major themes present in the interview transcripts contained multiple subthemes, which are detailed in Table 2. The major themes were directly related to the content of the interview questions (Appendix D). The first major theme identified was labeled: *importance of research*. The second, third, and fourth major themes identified were assigned the name: *barriers to integrating research*, *strategies to integrate research*, and *resources for integrating research*. The fifth and final theme identified was: *measures of success*.

Importance of Research

While each participant in the study expressed their opinions and perceptions in their own style and tone, there were multiple subjects on which many of the participants agreed. As identified in the first theme, “importance of research,” all ($n = 9$) interview participants expressed the opinion that the integration of research into child life graduate programs is indeed important. Various terms were used by participants ($n = 8$) to describe the *level of importance* of the integration of research, including, “huge,” “critical,” and, “really, really important.” One participant noted that research is “the most important thing...and then the most neglected thing.” Almost all participants ($n = 8$) expressed that the integration of research into child life graduate programs is important to the field of child life because of the great need for research to be generated in the child life field to validate child life strategies and practices. Participants stated that *validation* of child life specialists’ work in the form of research in the field is needed to provide evidence of the

efficacy of child life services, demonstrate the economic value of child life programs in hospitals, and to promote respect for the child life profession within the medical field.

Many participants (n = 7) mentioned the needed *academic growth* in the child life field. For example, an academic journal focusing on child life specific research, doctoral programs focusing in child life, and “true academics,” PhD level child life specialists, are essential to moving forward and further legitimizing the field of child life. One participant noted the need within the child life field for “independent researchers,” who can create a “style inherent to child life” that would allow the “unique voice” of the child life field to be heard in the academic and medical realms. Another participant mentioned their desire to have an “ongoing research project or lab related to child life” within their department that would provide opportunities for students to “step in and out of” during their time in the program.

Equally as prevalent in the data was the subtheme of the *future of the field*. Many participants (n = 7) also noted that while academic growth is important to the child life field, the main goal of the existing child life graduate programs is to produce child life specialists who can confidently consume, understand, process, and utilize evidence-based-practices. In effect, child life graduate programs’ goal is to produce child life specialists who will successfully “integrate science and practice” in the field. One participant expressed the hope that their students leave their program “appreciating and understanding research,” as well as “willing and even proactive...[regarding] collaboration across disciplines” on research projects.

Barriers to Integrating Research

When asked about barriers to successfully integrate research into child life graduate programs, eight of the participants collectively cited ten different barriers within their programs. Only one participant did not mention any barriers in their program. Of the ten barriers specified, most mentioned was *students' attitudes* ($n = 7$). Participants described students' attitudes towards research that were generally negative or fearful, thereby becoming a barrier to successfully engaging students in research activities or cultivating enthusiasm for consuming or conducting research. Students were described as "petrified" of research because it is "scary," "frightening," "overwhelming," and "intimidating." The stigma attached to conducting research, including the idea of "doing math," was perceived as prevalent among the child life graduate program students by the coordinators who participated in the study.

A lack of time was the second most cited barrier ($n = 5$) to successfully integrating research into child life graduate programs. This *lack of time*, participants stated, was caused by "short degree plans" with limits on students' course hours, and the "brutal" and time-consuming process of applying to and then completing child life clinical experiences, including volunteering, one or more child life practicums, and most importantly, the child life internship.

Child life attitudes ($n = 4$), and the *complicated process* of conducting research ($n = 3$), were the next most cited barriers mentioned by participants. Participants noted that many aspiring child life specialists are focused on practice (rather than research or academics) as their "main priority," and that many of them "want to do the bare minimum" required of them regarding research in their programs. The *complicated*

processes of planning, initiating, conducting, and publishing research can be “daunting” for students and faculty alike. Participants referred to the “paperwork hassle,” “bureaucracy,” and “hoops to jump through,” as “overwhelming” and “frustrating.”

Other barriers mentioned by participants in the study include a *lack of funding* ($n = 2$) that hindered the students’ ability to attend conferences or fund their own research, and a *lack of support* ($n = 2$) from department faculty as there are very few professors who conduct child life focused research, let alone hold the Certified Child Life Specialist credentials. Additionally, a *lack of preparation* for graduate-level writing and scholarship ($n = 2$), a *lack of access* to nearby child life programs or children’s hospitals to conduct research in ($n = 2$), and faculty and students’ *mismatched research interests* due to a lack of researchers conducting child life research ($n = 2$) were presented as barriers to the integration of research by participants. Only one participant voiced concern that a barrier to students engaging in research during the program could be due to the fact that writing a thesis, or other involvement in research activities, was *not required*. The participant noted that the non-thesis degree option, which substitutes creating a professional portfolio for writing a thesis, is overwhelmingly chosen by students.

Strategies to Integrating Research

When asked how they integrate research into their child life graduate program, most participants ($n = 8$) described *integration into coursework*. This interweaving of current and relevant research into child life, child development, family theory, and related courses, and of child life and related topics into research methodology and statistics courses, addresses several barriers within programs. Participants observed that child life graduate students become more comfortable consuming scholarly articles when they are

exposed to current research that is relevant to their field. Participants observed that students become more engaged and comfortable in research courses when they are given child life related examples and assignments. For example, when students choose to write literature reviews or base research projects on child life or child and family focused topics, they become more interested, invested, and enthusiastic. One program's "action-oriented" research course requires their students to conduct research, such as focus groups, in the community, so that they can "directly see the impact of the work that they are doing."

Most participants ($n = 7$) stated that they provide their students with *opportunities for involvement* in research activities. These were frequently presented as graduate research assistantships and informal collaborations in research labs and ongoing research projects. Participants noted that engaging students in research, by asking them to transcribe interviews, collect data, or co-author a paper or presentation allowed students to change their idea of research as "scary and foreign" into a "doable, reachable" activity.

Degree requirements, such as the "action-oriented" research course mentioned previously, were another frequently mentioned strategy employed in child life graduate programs ($n = 7$). Eight out of the nine participating programs require their child life students to take research methods and/or statistics courses to ensure the integration of research into their child life master's programs. Due to past success with their mentorship program for students, one program now requires their students to have a child life specialist from outside the university on their thesis committee. This child life specialist serves as a mentor for the student and as an expert in a child life specialty or topic that enhances the student's research. *Admission criteria* are another way that programs

ensured that their students would be prepared for and more likely to engage in research. While only two of the nine participating child life graduate programs required an undergraduate research course for admission, more than half of the programs ($n = 5$) noted current or changing criteria for in-coming students that reflects the program's focus and commitment to cultivating research and scholarship in the field of child life. For example, one program stated that their students were chosen because of their high level of interest in research, which aligned with the program's heavy research focus.

Resources for Integrating Research

Child life graduate programs have different resources available to them that help to make the integration of research successful. One of the resources mentioned by the most participants was a program's *research focus* ($n = 8$). Participants discussed the benefits of faculty, department, and university being grounded in and valuing research. Programs that are heavily research based identified this commitment to scholarship as an important resource that allows their students to become engaged in and produce research. A program's *students* were mentioned by an equal number of participants ($n = 8$). *Students* who are "highly interested and willing to do research", either before entering the program or cultivated while in the program, and *students* who are "highly motivated," for example, to travel weekly to a children's hospital to collect data, are important resources to programs because they are ready and willing to engage in research in the child life graduate program. *Students'* strong writing skills and prior knowledge of research methodology were mentioned as a resource for the programs, especially in comparison to students who have shown a *lack of preparation* coming into these graduate programs.

Additional resources mentioned by participants were connections within the *community* ($n = 2$) that allow for easy access to collaboration and data collection, *financial* ($n = 2$) resources from the department or university that allow students to receive funding for their own research (e.g., thesis data collection) or to attend conferences and gain research experience. *Passionate faculty* ($n = 2$) members who go above and beyond, who can really “break down [research methods] for students so they can understand it,” and who are “outstanding researchers” who “teach students well through mentoring,” were mentioned by participants as a resource for successfully engaging students in research courses and for encouraging students to complete their own research. A participant described one such *passionate faculty* member who has identified students that have well written papers, and is helping them to develop their work and eventually present at a conference. *Alumni* ($n = 2$) were also mentioned by participants as a resource for engaging students in research. As a growing number of alumni (currently practicing child life specialists) are “sharing stories of their research journeys” in one child life graduate program, “other students are able to see that and think ‘that could be me’.” As one participant noted, “it is one thing to hear it from us as faculty, but to hear it [from recent graduates]...” they are able to see that research is possible for them to complete as students.

Measures of Success

When discussing the resources and strategies that have helped successfully integrating research into their child life graduate programs, a majority of participants ($n = 7$) discussed their perceptions of their *students’ understanding and value* of research. One participant stated, “it is my perception, anyway, that they are more comfortable and

interested in research when they exit the program.” Another noted the perception that from their program, “students are leaving... equipped with the tools to be engaged in research in their professional lives.” Students getting “excited about partnering with faculty” on their research publications and conferences presentations was a sign of successful integration of research into their child life graduate program from another participant’s perspective.

Students’ accomplishments were another measure of success discussed by participants ($n = 6$). One participant attributed the program’s requirement for students to obtain practical research experience by working in research labs within the program; the students are “able to carve out their own work.” Another noted that around 75% of their students choose to complete a thesis, compared to when the students entered the program and only about 50% were going to choose the thesis option. Other participants noted that their students have been recognized for their work; some have presented at local conferences, and others have been published in scholarly journals such as the *Journal of Children’s Health Care* and the *Journal of Pediatric Nursing*, and in the *Child Life Bulletin*.

Alumni accomplishments were identified as measures of success for more than half of the programs ($n = 6$) as well. For example, a student who was not able to finish their thesis while in the child life graduate program was able to complete it after graduation and even present the research at a conference. One participant mentioned a former student who went on to receive a PhD in a related field. According to participants, alumni from these child life graduate programs have presented on evidence-based child life practices to new medical staff, current child life staff, and beyond. One participant

remarked that although research is “still not the main focus of their work,” many graduates from their child life graduate program are “actively engaging” in some sort of research in their careers as leading child life specialists “throughout the country.”

IV. DISCUSSION

The purpose of the current study was to explore the attitudes of child life graduate program faculty surrounding research specific to child life, faculty members' perceptions of their students' interest in research, and the methods by which research is taught and encouraged to students in these child life graduate programs. This thesis utilized in-depth interview data from nine child life graduate programs located across the U.S. A grounded theory (Thomas, 2006) approach, using inductive coding, was used to allow themes to emerge within the data. Based upon the results of this qualitative study and research from related fields, take home messages for the child life *field*, child life graduate *programs*, and child life *students* have been identified.

Child Life Field

Within the interviews, faculty often discussed the success and challenges that the field of child life has experienced when integrating research. First, with regards to the strengths and success of the field, participants noted that the support of the ACLP to increasing the legitimacy of research. As evidenced in the data, an increasing focus on research among ACLP members, ACLP research awards, and other actions by ACLP help legitimize child life field's goal of producing child life specific research. Additionally, it is apparent that the academic leaders in the child life field who participated in this study, and their graduate programs as a whole, value research as a means to legitimize the field as a means to validate the child life profession in settings such as children's hospitals and beyond.

However, some barriers are also evident within the field at this time. Participants noted that the heavy burden of accumulating volunteer hours, completing a child life

practicum, and completing a child life internship leave little room for child life students to engage in research during their time in a child life graduate program. The current lack of a child life academic journal leaves a void within the child life field which otherwise would serve as a medium to promote involvement in and research about child life topics from academic faculty and students. Additionally, a lack of funding opportunities facing child life faculty limited opportunities for students to engage in research while in child life graduate programs. That is, although there was some significant structural support provided by ACLP, additional supports are still needed: research funding, and existence of research based child life journals. One additional structural element was noted as a barrier for integrating research into child life: the heavy burden of accumulating volunteer, practicum, and internship hours before young professionals are eligible for child life certification.

Child Life Programs

Despite some of the challenges facing the field, child life graduate programs across the U.S. are finding ways to engage their students in research. As noted in the content analyses, the majority of child life graduate programs required a graduate research method course, a third offered a thesis options, and at least a fifth of the program required an undergraduate research methods course prior to admission. Further, five of nine participating program s noted that they had increased their research requirements recently. The increasing requirements of undergraduate research, graduate research, and thesis among child life graduate programs continues to legitimize the importance of research in the field. A participant even noted that these programmatic changes are attracting more research-focused students. Participants also noted that program faculty

are supportive of the importance of research to the child life field and are integrating research methodology and scholarly articles into their courses, whatever their focus may be. Additionally, some programs are finding unique ways to engage their child life students in research. For example, some programs provide opportunities for research assistantships and collaborations with faculty on their research. One participant noted that their program invited alumni to give presentations on their research journeys to inspire current students to conduct their own research. Another participant noted that their program required students to take an action-oriented research course and conduct research in the field. Finally, another program had outside child life specialists mentor and assist students with their theses.

The above mentioned tactics helped graduate programs foster interest and comfort in research within their graduate students and align with tactics used by other fields, especially the use of action-oriented classes. Other fields, such as occupational therapy, physical therapy, and music therapy have also faced issues in validating their work and have conducted research on addressing challenges with increasing evidence based practices and changing attitudes towards research (Craik & Rappolt, 2003; Froehlich & Frierson-Campbell, 2012; Nicholas & Gilbert, 1980; Thomas & Law, 2013). A Swedish study showed that occupational and physical therapy students who attended programs that used problem-based learning (similar to action-oriented classes) methods had more positive attitudes towards research and were more interested in pursuing future research than students whose programs used more traditional, lecture-based courses (Kamwendo, & Törnquist, 2001). Developed for use with medical students, problem-based learning methods utilize facilitated problem solving in contrast to traditional educational methods

(Hmelo-Silver, 2004; Hung, Jonassen, & Liu, 2008). The use of problem-based learning has also been studied regarding music therapy graduate students' acquisition of clinical reasoning skills (Baker, 2007), and to reduce statistics anxiety in graduate students of the social sciences (Pan & Tang, 2004; Pan & Tang, 2005). Child life graduate programs can draw on the research conducted in these other fields to inform best practices for teaching and engaging child life graduate students in research (Adam, Zosky, & Unrau, 2004; Cohen & Eckhaus, 2007; Grady, 2010; Hardcastle & Bisman, 2003; Harder, 2010).

Despite all of the methods of incorporating research into their child life graduate programs, participants also noted several challenges faced by child life programs. Five participants noted that shortened degree timelines, in addition to heavy course loads and the implied requirement to volunteer and complete a practicum and internship, left little opportunity for students to engage in research during their master's programs. Standard research methods and statistics courses without opportunities to apply this knowledge to real life and child life related topics added to students' preexisting notion that research was unattainable (mentioned by 7/9 participants). Additionally, two participants noted that because of the minimal funding that exists for child life specific research and the lack of faculty with child life specific research interests, there was a misfit between child life students and research faculty. Because of this misfit, students were not able to see the direct benefits of research in the child life field. Taken together, programmatic structures like graduation timelines, degree requirements, and the lack of faculty that engaged in child life related research was referenced as part of the reasons why students were not engaging in research. Programs should reflect on the manner in which these three

elements are structured in their program to see if there is a way to reduce barriers and more formally promote research engagement.

Child Life Students

Turning to child life students, there are several strengths that students bring to the task of integrating research into the child life field. As some participants noted, the changing program requirements has helped them attract research-focused students. These students will become valuable assets in the field if programs can foster the students' research interest. For those students who may not enter into a program with research goals, programmatic tactics like offering research methods courses, and providing opportunities to conduct research in the field, such as the action-oriented research course, were noted as great tools to increase students' appreciation and enthusiasm for research. Thus faculty noted that they were able to build excitement around research within students after students were enrolled in their program. Additionally, alumni who are engaged in research were noted as great advocates to teach current students about the value and accessibility of research.

Some of the barriers that students may bring to the task of integrating research into child life have already been noted: students' fear of research and over-commitment to completing other degree requirements. There is a solid base of scholarly research on the phenomenon of *research anxiety* in the field of social work (Onwuegbuzie, 2004; Onwuegbuzie, DaRos, & Ryan, 1997; Onwuegbuzie, Slate & Schwartz, 2001; Onwuegbuzie, & Wilson, 2003), which is both relevant and useful for the child life field to learn from to help address child life students' fear and anxiety towards research. In the field of social work, educational changes are being made to address students' research

anxiety. One study showed a significant reduction in research anxiety among social work master's students who took a hybrid online research course that used innovative teaching methods in their first year (Einbinder, 2014). The innovative research course was designed to meet students at their level of interest and background knowledge, addressing research anxiety, using practical, relevant and concrete content, multiple and varying performance assessments, a collaborative learning environment, and review of habits of successful students. This last point supports the experiences of some child life faculty who noted the value of asking alumni to share their success stories.

There is one additional challenge mentioned by the participants: Participants noted that many students entered their program underprepared, lacking the writing skills and knowledge of research and statistics, necessary to engage with research at the graduate level. Some programs noted that they were increasing their admission requirements to offset this challenge. Other programs may consider increasing their admission requirements to ensure students are already proficient in basic research method terms and skills to help graduate students better engage with research activities in and out of school. Additionally, graduate programs may consider working with the undergraduate programs that prepare their incoming graduate students to ensure they receive the writing, research, and statistics training necessary.

Strengths, Limitations, and Future Directions

The qualitative and inductive methodology used in this study has given a deeper insight into the subtleties and complexities of the endeavor of the child life field to integrate research into child life graduate programs. The sample was diverse, with programs participating from across the U.S. and participants noted variation in resources,

strategies, and in student interest and motivation. Although the current study had several methodological strengths, it is not without its limitations. The current sample size was small, and reflected programs that were slightly more supportive and engaged in research than non-participating programs. This may impact the generalizability of the results to other programs. Additionally, only qualitative data was obtained and analyzed. Therefore, cause and effect relationships were not tested. Future research on this subject would benefit from further exploration of the strategies that child life programs are currently using to engage students in research. Further, studies with larger sample sizes and quantitative data would help identify the strongest predictors of success. Finally, evaluation of the efficacy of these strategies would provide insight into strategies that could be used by all child life graduate programs to engage students in research.

V. PRACTICAL IMPLICATIONS AND CONCLUSIONS

Child life graduate programs are increasingly integrating research into their curriculum, engaging students in research, and helping to produce child life specific research to further the child life field. The child life field's growing value of research gives hope for the future of the child life field through academic growth. Within this study, nine child life faculty members shared their hopes, experiences, and insights on how to further integrate research into the child life field. Consistently, participants noted that the integration of research into child life was mostly informally supported while noting several structural barriers (e.g., graduation timelines, heavy volunteer burdens, reduced research-student fit, etc.). For students and faculty, the lack of structural support and larger systemic barriers to engage in and foster research, leaves child life graduate programs dependent on "highly motivated" students and "passionate faculty" who were willing to overcome hurdles with minimal benefits to produce child life research.

The field of child life can look to other fields, such as occupational therapy, physical therapy, music therapy, and social work, for examples of how to address issues with expanding research within their fields. By integrating a more formal support system, such as a scholarly journal that promote child life research, developing funding for child life specific research, and reevaluating graduate program requirements regarding program timelines and research engagement, and using innovative educational methods (i.e., hybrid courses, use of alumni, and action-oriented projects) to effectively engage child life students in research and reduce research anxiety, the production of child life scholars will become more consistent and explicitly valued among child life students, programs, and field. By integrating more research into child life graduate programs, the child life

field will see validation of the practices and theories used by child life specialists, and will gain recognition for the invaluable services it provides to children and families in need.

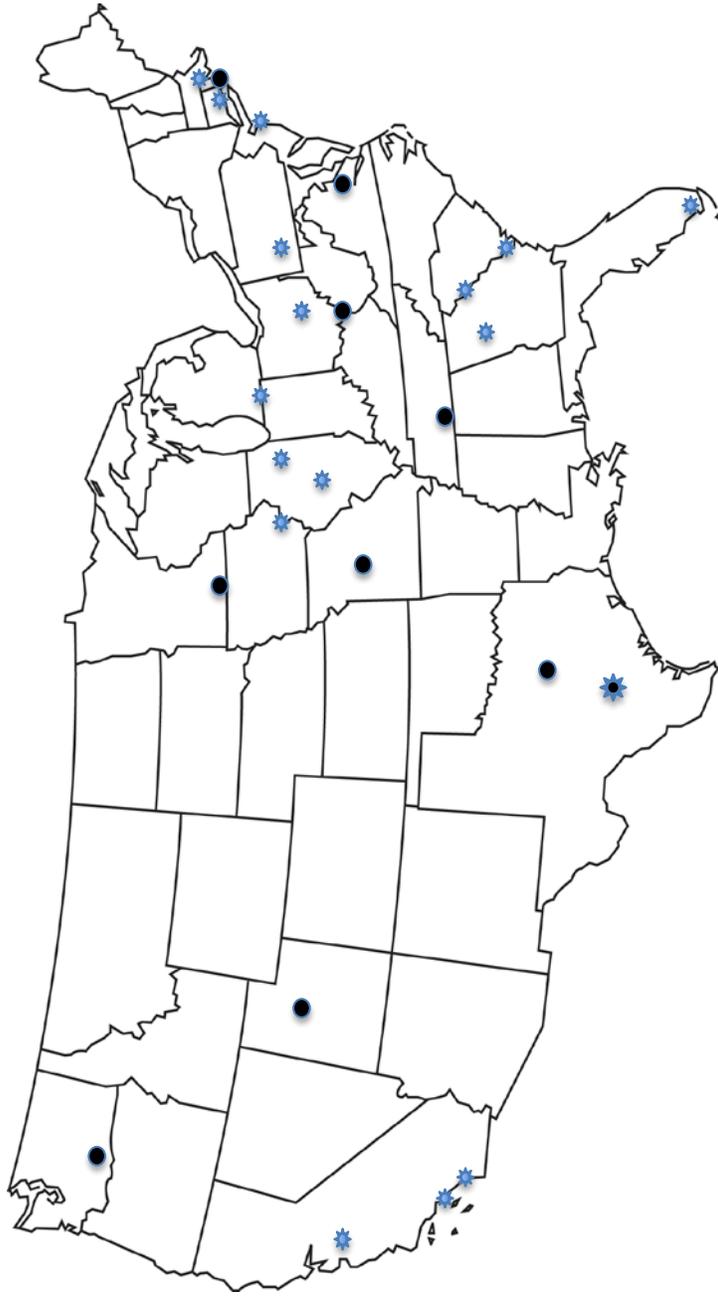


Figure 1. *Child Life Graduate Programs in the U.S.*

Note. The locations of the academic institutions indicated on the map are approximate.

- ★ Indicate locations of child life graduate programs that participated in the study in the semi-structured interview
- Indicate locations of child life graduate programs that did not participate in the study.
- ★ Indicate the location of the Texas State University child life graduate program, which was not included in the study.

Table 1. Content Analysis of Child Life Graduate Program Websites

	All Programs (<i>n</i> = 25)	Non-Participating Programs (<i>n</i> = 16)	Participating Programs (<i>n</i> = 9)	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
Offer PhDs in related fields	15 (60%)	11 (69%)	4 (44%)			X	X		X			
Research course required for admission	3 (12%)	1 (6%)	2 (22%)	X			X					
Graduate Research Courses												
Offer	23 (92%)	14 (88%)	8 (88%)	X	X		X	X	X	X	X	X
Require	21 (91%)	12 (86%)	8 (100%)	X	X		X	X	X	X	X	X
Thesis												
Offer	8 (32%)	3 (19%)	5 (55%)	X	X		X				X	X
Require	1 (3%)	0 (0%)	1 (11%)					X				

Note. The columns numbered 1-9 represent the nine programs that participated in the study. An "X" indicates the characteristics present in each of the participating programs.

Table 2. Themes and Frequencies

Theme	Sub-theme	Detailed Description	n (%)
Importance of Research (<i>n</i> = 45)	Level of Importance	Refers to the importance of research to the child life field.	12 (27%)
	Validation	Refers to the importance of validating the field through child life specific research, evidence based practice, and collaboration on research with other disciplines in the field.	11 (24%)
	Academic Growth	Refers to the academic needs of the CL field for success and growth.	11 (24%)
	Future of the Field	Refers to the desire/need for future CCLS's to understand the research process and be comfortable being involved in research in the field.	11 (24%)
Barriers to Integrating Research (<i>n</i> = 45)	Lack of Time	Refers to the lack of time for students to complete research during their short (2 year) masters programs.	11 (24%)
	Lack of Funding	Refers to the lack of funding for student research and conference travel funds for students.	4 (9%)
	Lack of Support	Refers to a lack of support for student research from faculty, the department, or the program's lack of research focus.	2 (4%)
	Child Life Attitudes	Refers to faculty and/or "the Child Life Council's" focus on "clinical mastery" instead of research.	2 (4%)
	Lack of Preparation	Refers to students' lack of preparation for graduate level work.	4 (9%)
	Students' Attitudes	Refers to students' negative attitudes towards research.	12 (27%)
	Complicated Process	Refers to the complicated process of approval from school and/or hospital IRBs to conduct research.	3 (7%)
	Mismatched Research Interests	Refers to a lack of faculty with child life specific research interests and/or a lack of CCLS faculty.	4 (9%)
	Not Required	Refers to when research is not required for students, in the form of research courses, original research projects, theses, etc.	3 (7%)
Strategies to Integrate Research (<i>n</i> = 53)	Lack of Access	Refers to the lack of access to subjects/data to conduct child life or related research.	2 (4%)
	Admission Requirements	Refers to the prioritization of research knowledge (i.e., undergraduate courses) and interest in research at the graduate level when admitting new students.	7 (13%)
	Degree/Course Requirements	When programs require students to complete an original research project/thesis or requiring research courses/experience as part of curriculum.	14 (26%)

Table 2. Continued

Theme	Sub-theme	Detailed Description	n (%)
	Integration into Coursework	Refers to the integration of child life and research within the coursework of the child life graduate program.	19 (36%)
	Opportunities for Involvement	When students are encouraged to become involved with faculty research/create their own and present at conferences/submit to publications.	13 (25%)
Resources for Integrating Research Successfully (<i>n</i> = 58)	Community	Refers to a program's collaboration with the community (relevant organizations, local hospitals, children's hospitals) to conduct research and allows students to see research in the field firsthand.	9 (16%)
	Financial/Department	Refers to financial resources from the university and/or department to support original student research and/or to fund opportunities for student involvement, including faculty research projects, travel to conferences for research experience.	9 (16%)
	Passionate Faculty	Refers to faculty that are passionate about research and encourage students to participate/go above and beyond (i.e., submit course papers to publications/etc.), as well as faculty whose research labs in the department are open to student involvement, and faculty with relevant (FCS) and/or CL specific research interests/current research projects.	8 (14%)
	Alumni	Refers to alumni as resources for inspiring interest, motivation, and/or confidence of current students to become involved with and/or complete their own research.	4 (7%)
	Research Focus	Refers to the program's strong foundation in research, from the university's research designation to the number of faculty in the department conducting research, and to the various ways the environment is conducive to integrating research.	15 (26%)
	Students	Refers to characteristics of students who are more likely to become involved with faculty/community research and/or complete their own research, including prior knowledge, interest, and motivation.	15 (26%)
Measures of Success (<i>n</i> = 40)	Students	Refers to the demonstration of the program's successful integration of research through students' actions and accomplishments.	21 (53%)
	Perceived Understanding/Value	When faculty (state) perceives those students in or leaving the program (future CCLSs) understand research process and/or how to read articles/use EBP in the field, and/or understand the value research to the field.	11 (28%)
	Alumni	When alumni have either completed their own research or are involved in research activities in the field.	8 (20%)

APPENDIX SECTION

A. CONTENT ANALYSIS ITEMS OF INTEREST35

B. ACLP ACADEMIC PROFESSIONALS FORUM RECRUITMENT EMAIL FOR PROGRAM COORDINATORS36

C. ACLP ACADEMIC PROFESSIONALS FORUM RECRUITMENT EMAIL FOR CHILD LIFE/RESEARCH FACULTY MEMBERS37

D. PROGRAM COORDINATOR RECRUITMENT EMAIL.....38

E. PROGRAM COORDINATOR SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEW39

F. PROGRAM COORDINATOR INFORMED CONSENT AGREEMENT40

G. FACULTY MEMBER RECRUITMENT EMAIL.....41

H. FACULTY MEMBER INFORMED CONSENT AGREEMENT42

I. CHILD LIFE AND RESEARCH FACULTY SURVEYS43

APPENDIX A: CONTENT ANALYSIS ITEMS OF INTEREST

Curriculum

- 1. Does this program grant Ph.D.s?**
2. What are the prerequisites (undergraduate courses) to apply for the program?
- 3. Does the program offer a graduate level course in research methods?**
- 4. Are graduate students in the program required to take a research methods course?**
5. If a research methods course is not required, what percentage of students enroll in this course as an elective?
- 6. Does the program offer a graduate level course in statistics?**
- 7. Are graduate students in the program required to take this course?**
8. If a statistics course is not required, what percentage of students enroll in this course as an elective?
- 9. Does the program require students to complete a thesis?**
10. How many graduate students complete a thesis each year?
11. How many graduate students are awarded Graduate Assistantships in which they assist faculty members with research rather than course-related tasks?
12. How many graduate students have pursued independent research projects on average each year for the last five years?
13. How many graduate students have presented at a research conference on average each year for the last five years?
14. What are the required and elective courses for the child life students in your program?

Faculty and Staff

1. Number of faculty who teach child life specific courses
2. Number of Certified Child Life Specialists (CCLS) who teach child life specific courses
3. Number of CCLS's in faculty with M.A. or M.S. degree
4. Number of CCLS's in faculty with Ph.D. degree
5. Number of faculty who teach research courses
6. Number of faculty who teach both research and child life courses

Note. Although these items were used in the content analysis, the bolded items were the items that were consistently accessible online and thus were used in the final content analysis

APPENDIX B: ACLP ACADEMIC PROFESSIONALS FORUM RECRUITMENT
EMAIL FOR PROGRAM COORDINATORS

Dear Academic Professionals of the Association of Child Life Professionals,

My name is Beth Norton, and I am pursuing a Master's degree in Family and Child Studies with a concentration in Child Life at Texas State University. As a part of my degree, I have chosen to complete a thesis, which will explore the ways in which child life graduate programs in the U.S. are able to successfully engage child life graduate students in research.

I would like to personally invite you to participate in this study to help inform best practices for child life graduate programs to engage students in research.

Specifically, I would like to schedule a 20-minute phone interview with **child life graduate program coordinators** so I can learn more about the programs and the ways that research is taught and embedded in your child life programs. To participate, simply email me with the best times and dates when I can call you to complete this brief **20-minute interview**. For your participation, you will be eligible to be placed in a **drawing to win a Garmin Vivofit HR "smart fitness watch"**.

For further information regarding participating in this study, please respond to this email or contact me directly.

Your contribution to this project will provide great suggestions for best practices in the field so I hope you will participate. Please, let me know if you have any questions or concerns. Thank you in advance for your support and participation!

This study has been approved for exemption by the Texas State University IRB (EXP2016A83362V). If you have any questions about the research or participants' rights, you are free to ask them now. If you have questions later, you can contact me, Beth Norton (210-464-2526); ejn10@txstate.edu) or my thesis advisor, Dr. Norma Perez-Brena (512-245-2414; n_p85@txstate.edu). In addition, you may contact the Texas State University IRB chair, Dr. John Lasser (512-245-3413); lasser@txstate.edu), or Compliance Specialist, Ms. Becky Northcut (512-245-2314).

Sincerely,
Beth Norton
Graduate Research Assistant
Family and Child Development
Texas State University
ejn10@txstate.edu
(210) 464-2526

Norma J. Perez-Brena, PhD
Assistant Professor
Family and Child Development
Texas State University
n_p85@txstate.edu
(512) 245-2414

APPENDIX C: ACLP ACADEMIC PROFESSIONALS FORUM RECRUITMENT
EMAIL FOR CHILD LIFE/RESEARCH FACULTY MEMBERS

Dear Academic Professionals of the Association of Child Life Professionals,

My name is Beth Norton, and I am pursuing a Master's degree in Family and Child Studies with a concentration in Child Life at Texas State University. As a part of my degree, I have chosen to complete a thesis, which will explore the ways in which child life graduate programs in the U.S. are able to successfully engage child life graduate students in research.

I would like to personally invite you to participate in this study to help inform best practices for child life graduate programs to engage students in research.

Specifically, I would like **faculty members who teach child life and/or research** courses to complete a brief 15-minute online survey to learn more about the ways that research is taught and embedded in your child life programs. For your participation, you will be eligible to be placed in a **drawing to win a Garmin Vivofit HR "smart fitness watch"**. To participate, simply click the link below and follow the instructions to complete this **15-minute survey**.

<LINK>

For further information regarding participating in this study, please respond to this email or contact me directly.

Your contribution to this project will provide great suggestions for best practices in the field so I hope you will participate. Please, let me know if you have any questions or concerns. Thank you in advance for your support and participation!

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Graduate Research Assistant
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Texas State University
ejn10@txstate.edu
(210) 464-2526

Norma J. Perez-Brena, PhD
Assistant Professor
Family and Child Development
Texas State University
n_p85@txstate.edu
(512) 245-2414

APPENDIX D: PROGRAM COORDINATOR RECRUITMENT EMAIL

Dear Ms. Program Coordinator,

My name is Beth Norton, and I am pursuing a Master's degree in Family and Child Studies with a Concentration in Child Life at Texas State University. As a part of my degree, I have chosen to complete a thesis. I would like to explore the ways in which child life graduate programs in the U.S. are able to successfully engage child life graduate students in research. To accomplish this, I would like to interview advisors or program coordinators via telephone.

I would like to personally invite you to participate in this study to help inform best practices for child life graduate programs to engage students in research. Specifically, I would like to schedule a **20-minute phone interview** with you so I can learn more about your program and the ways that research is taught and embedded in your child life program. For your participation, you will be eligible to be placed in a **drawing to win a Garmin Vivofit HR "smart fitness watch"**. To participate, **simply email me with the best times and dates when I can call** you to complete this brief 20-minute interview.

Your contribution to this project will provide great suggestions for best practices in the field so I hope you will participate. Please, let me know what time works best for you. Thank you in advance for your support and participation!

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Texas State University
ejn10@txstate.edu
(210) 464-2526

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Texas State University
n_p85@txstate.edu
(512) 245-2414

APPENDIX E: PROGRAM COORDINATOR SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEW

Program Recruitment

1. How does your program recruit child life students?
2. What do you look for (besides requirements) in students applying to your program?
 - a. Are students interested in research given priority or special consideration? Please explain.

Research in Child Life

3. How much child life specific research is generated from your program (faculty and students)?
 - a. Number of recent publications (faculty and students)
 - b. Conferences attended/submitted to/presented at (faculty and students)
4. What resources and/or opportunities are available within your program to students interested in research?
5. In your opinion, how important is the integration of research into child life academic programs to the expansion and success of the child life field?
6. How does your program integrate research and child life?
7. Think about students entering the program.
 - a. What is their level of interest in research?
 - b. In your opinion, how much do your students understand the value of research?
 - i. How did you come about your answers?
 - ii. Can you share a couple of examples of how your students share this information with you?
8. Think about students exiting the program.
 - a. What is their level of interest in research?
 - b. In your opinion, how much do your students understand the value of research?
 - i. How did you come about your answers?
 - ii. Can you share a couple of examples of how your students share this information with you?
9. What would be the top 3 to 5 things that have hindered your programs' success in engaging child life students in research?
10. What would be the top 3 to 5 things that have helped your program be most successful in engaging child life students in research?

APPENDIX F: PROGRAM COORDINATOR INFORMED CONSENT AGREEMENT

You are being asked to participate in a research study about the role of research in child life graduate programs. The purpose of this study is to explore the ways in which child life graduate programs in the U.S. are able to successfully engage child life graduate students in research. In particular, this study will investigate the attitudes of child life graduate program faculty surrounding research specific to child life as well as the faculty members' perceptions of their students' interest in research.

You will be asked to participate in a telephone interview that will last about 20 minutes.

I would like to record this interview so as to make sure that I remember accurately all the information you provide. I will keep these audio files in a secure online file that will be accessed only by me. Results of this study will be used to complete my master's thesis. Your study data will be handled as confidentially as possible. Individual names and other personally identifiable information will not be used.

Your participation in this study does not involve any physical or emotional risk to you beyond that of everyday life.

Taking part in this research study may not benefit you personally, but we may learn new things that will help child life graduate programs be successful in supporting child life research.

To minimize the risks to confidentiality, all participants will be assigned an identification number under which their data will be saved in a Dropbox folder secured by password.

Participation in this study will involve no cost to you. You will not be paid for participating in this study.

Participation in this study is voluntary. If at any time and for any reason, you would prefer not to participate in this study, please tell me. We can take a break, stop and continue at a later date, or stop altogether. You will not be penalized in any way if you decide to stop participation. If you decide to withdraw from this study, the researchers will ask you if the information already collected from you can be used.

This study has been approved for exemption by the Texas State University IRB (EXP2016A83362V). If you have any questions about the research or participants' rights, you are free to ask them now. If you have questions later, you can contact me, Beth Norton (210-464-2526); ejn10@txstate.edu) or my thesis advisor, Dr. Norma Perez-Brena (512-245-2414; n_p85@txstate.edu). In addition, you may contact the Texas State University IRB chair, Dr. John Lasser (512-245-3413); lasser@txstate.edu), or Compliance Specialist, Ms. Becky Northcut (512-245-2314).

APPENDIX G: FACULTY MEMBER RECRUITMENT EMAIL

Ms. Faculty Member,

My name is Beth Norton, and I am pursuing a Master's degree in Family and Child Studies with a Concentration in Child Life at Texas State University. As a part of my degree, I have chosen to complete a thesis. I would like to explore the ways in which child life graduate programs in the U.S. are able to successfully engage child life graduate students in research.

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n_p85@txstate.edu
(512) 245-2414

APPENDIX H: FACULTY INFORMED CONSENT AGREEMENT

You are being asked to participate in a research study about the role of research in child life graduate programs.

The purpose of this study is to explore the ways in which child life graduate programs in the U.S. are able to successfully engage child life graduate students in research. In particular, this study will investigate the attitudes of child life graduate program faculty surrounding research specific to child life as well as the faculty members' perceptions of their students' interest in research.

You will be asked to complete a brief online survey that will last 15 minutes. Results of this study will be used to complete my master's thesis. Your study data will be handled as confidentially as possible. Individual names and other personally identifiable information will not be used.

Your participation in this study does not involve any physical or emotional risk to you beyond that of everyday life.

Taking part in this research study may not benefit you personally, but we may learn new things that will help child life graduate programs be successful in supporting child life research.

To minimize the risks to confidentiality, all participants will be assigned an identification number under which their data will be saved in a Dropbox folder secured by password.

Participation in this study will involve no cost to you. You will not be paid for participating in this study.

Participation in this study is voluntary. If at any time and for any reason, you would prefer not to participate in this study, please feel free to stop. If at any time you would like to stop participating, please tell me. We can take a break, stop and continue at a later date, or stop altogether. You may withdraw from this study at any time, and you will not be penalized in any way for deciding to stop participation. If you decide to withdraw from this study, the researchers will ask you if the information already collected from you can be used.

This study has been approved for exemption by the Texas State University IRB (EXP2016A83362V). If you have any questions about the research or participants' rights, you are free to ask them now. If you have questions later, you can contact me, Beth Norton (210-464-2526); ejn10@txstate.edu) or my thesis advisor, Dr. Norma Perez-Brena (512-245-2414; n_p85@txstate.edu). In addition, you may contact the Texas State University IRB chair, Dr. John Lasser (512-245-3413); lasser@txstate.edu), or Compliance Specialist, Ms. Becky Northcut (512-245-2314).

APPENDIX I: CHILD LIFE AND RESEARCH FACULTY SURVEYS

Preliminary Questions

1. In which child life graduate program do you teach?
<DROP DOWN MENU WITH CHOICES>
2. Which type of courses do you teach?
<CHILD LIFE OR RESEARCH>
<IF CHILD LIFE> Please proceed to the child life faculty survey.
<IF RESEARCH> Please proceed to the child life faculty survey.

Child Life Faculty Survey

1. How much experience do you have working with child life students?
_____ Years
_____ Months
Under what capacity have you worked with them? (Please check all that apply.)
_____ Instructor
_____ Practicum/Internship Supervisor
_____ Volunteer Supervisor
_____ Graduate Advisor
_____ Employer (for Graduate Assistantship)
_____ Mentor
_____ Other <OPEN ENDED>
2. Have you been on a research committee (thesis or independent project) for a child life student?
<YES OR NO>
<IF NO, please note reasons why. (Please check all that apply.)
_____ Haven't been asked
_____ Research projects/thesis not required for students
_____ No time
_____ Not interested
_____ Not eligible
_____ Other <OPEN ENDED>
3. What is your level of involvement in research activities?
<OPEN ENDED>
4. Research is useful for a career in the field of child life.
1 Strongly disagree
2 Disagree
3 Somewhat disagree
4 Neither agree nor disagree
5 Somewhat agree
6 Agree
7 Strongly agree
5. Research is connected to the field of child life.
1 Strongly disagree

- 2 Disagree
 - 3 Somewhat disagree
 - 4 Neither agree nor disagree
 - 5 Somewhat agree
 - 6 Agree
 - 7 Strongly agree
6. Research should be indispensable to child life professional training.
- 1 Strongly disagree
 - 2 Disagree
 - 3 Somewhat disagree
 - 4 Neither agree nor disagree
 - 5 Somewhat agree
 - 6 Agree
 - 7 Strongly agree
7. Research should be taught to all child life students.
- 1 Strongly disagree
 - 2 Disagree
 - 3 Somewhat disagree
 - 4 Neither agree nor disagree
 - 5 Somewhat agree
 - 6 Agree
 - 7 Strongly agree
8. Research is useful to every child life professional.
- 1 Strongly disagree
 - 2 Disagree
 - 3 Somewhat disagree
 - 4 Neither agree nor disagree
 - 5 Somewhat agree
 - 6 Agree
 - 7 Strongly agree
9. Research is very valuable.
- 1 Strongly disagree
 - 2 Disagree
 - 3 Somewhat disagree
 - 4 Neither agree nor disagree
 - 5 Somewhat agree
 - 6 Agree
 - 7 Strongly agree
10. Child life students will employ research approaches as child life professionals.
- 1 Strongly disagree
 - 2 Disagree
 - 3 Somewhat disagree
 - 4 Neither agree nor disagree
 - 5 Somewhat agree
 - 6 Agree
 - 7 Strongly agree

11. The skills child life students acquire in research will be helpful to them in the future.
- 1 Strongly disagree
 - 2 Disagree
 - 3 Somewhat disagree
 - 4 Neither agree nor disagree
 - 5 Somewhat agree
 - 6 Agree
 - 7 Strongly agree
12. Knowledge from research is as useful as writing.
- 1 Strongly disagree
 - 2 Disagree
 - 3 Somewhat disagree
 - 4 Neither agree nor disagree
 - 5 Somewhat agree
 - 6 Agree
 - 7 Strongly agree
13. In your opinion, how important is the integration of research into child life academic programs to the expansion and success of the child life field?
- 1 Not very important
 - 2 Somewhat important
 - 3 Neutral
 - 4 Somewhat important
 - 5 Very important
- 4a. Please explain your answer.
<OPEN ENDED>
14. Please share some strategies that you use to integrate research into the child life course(s) that you teach.
<OPEN ENDED>
15. How often do you integrate research into the child life course(s) that you teach?
- 5 _____ Almost always
 - 4 _____ Sometimes
 - 3 _____ Every once in a while
 - 2 _____ Rarely
 - 1 _____ Never
16. What resources and/or opportunities do you make available to students for involvement in your own research?
<OPEN ENDED>
17. Think about the students who have entered your child life course(s).
- a. Do you feel that these students are interested in research?
 - 5 Very interested
 - 4 Somewhat interested
 - 3 Undecided
 - 2 Not very interested
 - 1 Not at all interested

Please explain your answer.

<OPEN ENDED>

b. Do you feel that these students understand the value of research?

- 5 Strongly agree
- 4 Agree
- 3 Neither agree nor disagree
- 2 Disagree
- 1 Strongly disagree

Please explain your answer.

<OPEN ENDED>

18. Think about the students who have exited your child life course(s).

a. Do you feel that these students are interested in research?

- 5 Very interested
- 4 Somewhat interested
- 3 Undecided
- 2 Not very interested
- 1 Not at all interested

Please explain your answer.

<OPEN ENDED>

b. Do you feel that these students understand the value of research?

- 5 Strongly agree
- 4 Agree
- 3 Neither agree nor disagree
- 2 Disagree
- 1 Strongly disagree

Please explain your answer.

<OPEN ENDED>

19. What would be the top 3 to 5 things that have helped you be most successful in engaging child life students in research?

<OPEN ENDED>

20. What would be the top 3 to 5 things that have hindered your success in engaging child life students in research?

<OPEN ENDED>

Personal Experience

21. What is your gender?

- _____ Male
- _____ Female

22. What is your age?

_____ Years

23. What is your educational background? Please check all that apply to you.

- _____ M.A./M.S.
- _____ Ph.D.
- _____ CCLS
- _____ Other <OPEN ENDED>

<IF M.A./M.S.> What is your master's degree in? <OPEN ENDED>

<IF PH.D.> What is your doctorate degree in? <OPEN ENDED>

<IF CCLS> How long have you been certified?

_____ Years

_____ Months

24. For how long have you taught child life courses at <PROGRAM NAME>?

_____ Years

_____ Months

25. What courses do you teach?

<OPEN ENDED>

26. If you are willing to share, please provide references of recent publications and/or upload a current resume or CV. Please highlight publications in which students have contributed. These documents will be used for research purposes only and will not be shared with anyone.

<FILE UPLOAD OPTION>

27. If you think there is class in which you integrate research well, and are willing to share course materials (i.e., syllabi, handouts, power points) please upload below. These documents will be used for research purposes only and will not be shared with anyone.

<FILE UPLOAD OPTION>

Research Faculty Survey

1. How much experience do you have working with child life students?

_____ Years

_____ Months

Under what capacity have you worked with them? (Please check all that apply.)

_____ Instructor

_____ Practicum/Internship Supervisor

_____ Volunteer Supervisor

_____ Graduate Advisor

_____ Employer (for Graduate Assistantship)

_____ Mentor

_____ Other <OPEN ENDED>

2. Have you been on a research committee (thesis or independent project) for a child life student?

<YES OR NO>

<IF NO, please note reasons why. (Please check all that apply.)

_____ Haven't been asked

_____ Research projects/thesis not required for students

_____ No time

_____ Not interested

_____ Not eligible

_____ Other <OPEN ENDED>

3. What is your level of involvement in research activities?

<OPEN ENDED>

4. Research is useful for a career in the field of child life.

1 Strongly disagree

- 2 Disagree
 - 3 Somewhat disagree
 - 4 Neither agree nor disagree
 - 5 Somewhat agree
 - 6 Agree
 - 7 Strongly agree
5. Research is connected to the field of child life.
- 1 Strongly disagree
 - 2 Disagree
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 - 7 Strongly agree
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 - 2 Somewhat important
 - 3 Neutral
 - 4 Somewhat important
 - 5 Very important
- 4a. Please explain your answer.
<OPEN ENDED>
14. Please share some strategies that you use to integrate child life concepts into the research course(s) that you teach.
<OPEN ENDED>
15. How often do you integrate child life concepts into the research course(s) that you teach?
- 5 _____ Almost always
 - 4 _____ Sometimes
 - 3 _____ Every once in a while
 - 2 _____ Rarely
 - 1 _____ Never
16. What resources and/or opportunities do you make available to students for involvement in your own research?

<OPEN ENDED>

17. Think about the child life students who have entered your research course(s).

a. Do you feel that these students are interested in research?

- 5 Very interested
- 4 Somewhat interested
- 3 Undecided
- 2 Not very interested
- 1 Not at all interested

Please explain your answer.

<OPEN ENDED>

b. Do you feel that these students understand the value of research?

- 5 Strongly agree
- 4 Agree
- 3 Neither agree nor disagree
- 2 Disagree
- 1 Strongly disagree

Please explain your answer.

<OPEN ENDED>

18. Think about the child life students who have exited your research course(s).

a. Do you feel that these students are interested in research?

- 5 Very interested
- 4 Somewhat interested
- 3 Undecided
- 2 Not very interested
- 1 Not at all interested

Please explain your answer.

<OPEN ENDED>

b. Do you feel that these students understand the value of research?

- 5 Strongly agree
- 4 Agree
- 3 Neither agree nor disagree
- 2 Disagree
- 1 Strongly disagree

Please explain your answer.

<OPEN ENDED>

19. What would be the top 3 to 5 things that have helped you be most successful in engaging child life students in research?

<OPEN ENDED>

20. What would be the top 3 to 5 things that have hindered your success in engaging child life students in research?

<OPEN ENDED>

Personal Experience

21. What is your gender?

- Male
- Female

22. What is your age?
 _____ Years
23. What is your educational background? Please check all that apply to you.
 _____ M.A./M.S.
 _____ Ph.D.
 _____ CCLS
 _____ Other <OPEN ENDED>
- <IF M.A./M.S.> What is your master's degree in? <OPEN ENDED>
 <IF PH.D.> What is your doctorate degree in? <OPEN ENDED>
 <IF CCLS> How long have you been certified?
 _____ Years
 _____ Months
24. For how long have you taught research courses at <PROGRAM NAME>?
 _____ Years
 _____ Months
25. What courses do you teach?
 <OPEN ENDED>
26. If you are willing to share, please provide references of recent publications and/or upload a current resume or CV. Please highlight publications in which students have contributed. These documents will be used for research purposes only and will not be shared with anyone.
- <FILE UPLOAD OPTION>
27. If you think there is class in which you integrate child life concepts well, and are willing to share course materials (i.e., syllabi, handouts, power points) please upload below. These documents will be used for research purposes only and will not be shared with anyone.
- <FILE UPLOAD OPTION>

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