

Position Description

Position title	Child Life Therapist
Department / Division	Department of Child Life, Music, Art and Garden Therapies, Division of Allied and Digital Health
Classification	Grade 2 Year 1 – Grade 2 Year 4 PT 671- PT 70
Position reports to	Operational: Manager, Child Life, Music, Art and Garden Therapies Professional: Manager, Child Life, Music, Art and Garden Therapies
No. of direct & indirect reports	N/A
Location	The Royal Children's Hospital, Flemington Road, Parkville
Risk category	Category A - works in a direct patient contact role and has or potential to have exposure to blood or body fluids.

The Royal Children's Hospital

The Royal Children's Hospital's (RCH) vision is *"A world where all kids thrive"*.

RCH is located within the Melbourne Biomedical Precinct, with more than 45 world-class biomedical organisations and more than 50,000 of the brightest minds working together to make the Precinct number one in the Asia Pacific region for health, education, research, and training. Within this, RCH is also a cornerstone member of the Melbourne Children's Campus, partnering with Murdoch Children's Research Institute, The University of Melbourne Department of Paediatrics and The Royal Children's Hospital Foundation. Each organisation contributes to a paediatric academic health centre which is greater than the sum of its parts.

RCH has cared for the children and young people of Victoria for more than 150 years since it was founded in 1870. A full range of paediatric and adolescent health services are provided plus tertiary and quaternary care for the most critically ill and medically complex patients in Victoria, Tasmania, southern NSW and other states around Australia and overseas. The RCH is the only provider of heart transplant services and CAR T-cell therapy for paediatrics in Australia. RCH is an effective advocate for patients and their families with a particular focus on vulnerable children and increasingly, mental health in young people. The hospital also supports many health promotion and prevention programs. The Hospital has more than 6,000 staff, a budget of \$850M, 12 wards and 350 beds. Annually, the RCH has 300,000+ Specialist Clinic appointments, 90,000+ Emergency Department presentations and 20,000 elective surgeries.

We work collaboratively with hospitals to deliver the right care, in the right place, at the right time. The RCH is committed to the Child Safe Standards <https://www.rch.org.au/quality/child-safety/>.

RCH enjoys high employee engagement and is committed to staff safety and a positive culture through enactment of our Compact.

Further information on RCH is available at www.rch.org.au

ROLE CONTEXT

Child Life Therapists provide individualised support to children and young people to promote effective coping and assist in reducing distress and anxiety associated with medical procedures and the hospital environment. The Child Life Therapy department sits within the Allied Health Directorate. The team consists of the Manager of Child Life

Therapy, senior team leaders, stream leaders and clinical Child Life Therapists. Child Life Therapists work across all areas of the hospital to provide excellent clinical services to the RCH community.

ROLE PURPOSE

Child Life Therapists engage children, young people and their families to support their understanding and help them cope with the stress and uncertainty associated with hospitalisation. They educate by using evidence-based, developmentally appropriate interventions including procedural preparation, distraction, medical and therapeutic play to empower children and young people to gain mastery of their hospital experience. The role also contributes to enhancing children's capacity to understand their health care journey providing distraction during procedures and promoting coping strategies in a developmentally appropriate way. This assists in reducing distress and anxiety associated with medical procedures and the hospital environment which in turn increases a child's resilience, wellbeing and ability to participate effectively with their treatment requirements.

KEY ACCOUNTABILITIES

Provision of Care

- Deliver excellent evidence-based practice Child Life Therapy interventions to the Emergency Department and other areas of the hospital as required.
- Maintain clinical documentation, records and data as per discipline specific guidelines and RCH procedures
- Provide clinical handover to required standard
- Actively contribute to continuous improvement
- Support Grade 1-2 staff in their patient management and clinical reasoning with complex patients
- Ensure timely provision of discipline services through appropriate prioritisation of own caseload, that of junior staff as well as patient needs
- Develop and update treatment protocols for areas of own clinical practice.

Lifelong Learning

- Participate in professional development activities to ensure that best clinical practice is maintained
- Identify personal and professional development needs, and plan and implement strategies for achieving them
- Support others to review, reflect on and evaluate their own practice
- Provide effective supervision to junior and less experienced staff

Collaborative practice

- Provide child centred, family focused care through partnership with parents/ families
- Work in collaboration with multidisciplinary teams
- Cooperate and work well with others in the pursuit of team goals
- Actively participate as part of a team to ensure ongoing excellence in service delivery and contribute to continuous improvement

Communication

- Apply well-developed verbal communication and interpersonal skills and attention to detail with the ability to interact with a variety of stakeholders
- Communicate effectively with patients and families to ensure their understanding and that their needs and view are included in plans and actions
- Act to remove personal barriers to effective communication

- Take collective ownership of problems
- Consider different points of view and compromise, where necessary and appropriate, to reach consensus

Continuous Improvement

- Actively contribute, as an individual and as a member of a team, to the continuous improvement of health care quality and patient safety
- Act to reduce error and sources of risk in own practice
- Escalate risk appropriately within the healthcare team
- Achieve and maintain competency in relevant skills in line with departmental requirements relevant to the role

Supervision, Leadership and People Management

- Participate in clinical supervision in accordance with local standard operating procedures and/or the RCH Allied Health Clinical Supervision Guideline which are based on the DHHS Allied Health Clinical Supervision Framework
- Provide clinical supervision to Grade 1 staff and students

Organisation and Planning

- Apply well-developed organisation and planning skills

Research

- Understand the principles of evidence-based practice
- Evaluate current practice with respect to the evidence
- Find, critically review, evaluate & interpret literature and apply to current role/service
- Support research agenda for team or work unit
- Develop methods to keep up to date with evidence related to area of clinical interest or current role
- Share evidence with colleagues within own team and wider service (e.g. special interest groups, journal clubs, department in-services, inter-professional education sessions)

QUALIFICATIONS AND EXPERIENCE

Essential

- Tertiary Qualification or equivalent in Education, Occupational Therapy, Social Work or current Child Life Therapist/Specialist status.
- Uphold the Code of Ethics of appropriate Professional body.
- Current VIT/AHPRA/Professional Association registration.
- Satisfy the ongoing professional development criteria of the relevant Professional body
- A minimum of 2 years continuous and relevant work experience is essential in a relevant discipline.
- Thorough understanding of childhood development between the ages of 0-18 years.
- Demonstrated commitment to work and contribute as part of a team.
- Demonstrated/embedded clinical practice and experience as a Child Life Therapist/Child Life Specialist beyond entry-level

Desirable

- An understanding of the healthcare sector and / or child development

- Demonstrated experience working in an acute tertiary hospital environment.
- Demonstrated experience working in an acute paediatric setting.
- Demonstrated experience in the supervision and training of undergraduate students.
- 3+ years' experience in health or related field

For Social Work applicants only:

- Hold a degree in Social Work from an accredited course/university.
- Be eligible for membership of the AASW.
- Meet AASW accreditation standards for Continuing Professional Education.
- Uphold the AASW Code of Ethics.

For Occupational Therapist applicants only:

- Hold an OT degree qualification or equivalent from an accredited course / university.
- Be registered with AHPRA and as such have satisfied the requirements of continuing professional development and recency of practice.
- Uphold the Code of Ethics, OT Australia.

For teacher applicants only

- Current VIT Registration (registered teacher).

KEY SELECTION CRITERIA

- Excellent professional, interpersonal and self-reflection skills to enable effective work with people of different personalities and backgrounds
- Autonomous behaviour, independence of thought, awareness of own effectiveness and internalised responsibility
- Ability to work flexibly in a fast-paced clinical environment, managing competing demands according to departmental and organisational requirements
- Capacity for effective negotiation, conflict resolution and wide consultation at all levels, to maintain and foster key interpersonal relationships.
- Demonstrated commitment to building professional skills and capacity
- Communication, supervision and education skills of a level suitable for supervision of students, junior staff and Allied Health Assistants
- Demonstrated capacity to work constructively and collaboratively with a range of disciplines towards common goals
- The ability to engage children of different ages and abilities, and to advocate for patients and their families
- Excellent computer literacy skills
- Experience with children and families from diverse backgrounds and with complex needs.
- Demonstrated ability to provide Child Life Therapy/Specialist services to assist infants, children, adolescents, and families from a diverse socioeconomic demographic.
- Thorough understanding of childhood development 0-18 years.

- A flexible and adaptable approach to functioning in a team environment.
- Ability to be calm in stressful situations.

OTHER REQUIREMENTS

- Employees are required to undertake a National Criminal Record Check and a Working with Children Check prior to commencing employment.
- Employees are required to maintain a valid Working with Children Check throughout their employment.
- Employees are required to maintain compliance with RCHs "Staff Immunisation - Prevention of Vaccine Preventable Diseases" procedure.

IMPORTANT INFORMATION

All employees are required to adhere to the Royal Children's Hospital Values:

- Curious - We are creative, playful and collaborative\.
- Courageous - We pursue our goals with determination, ambition and confidence.
- Inclusive - We embrace diversity, communicate well, build connections and celebrate our successes together.
- Kind - We are generous, warm and understanding.

RCH COMPACT

All new and existing employees commit to the RCH Compact to contribute to a strong and respectful culture.

- We do better work caring for children and families when we also care for each other.
- I bring a positive attitude to work – I share, I laugh, I enjoy other's company.
- I take responsibility for my behaviour and its impact on others.
- I am curious and seek out ways to constantly learn and improve.
- I celebrate the good stuff, the small stuff, the big stuff – it all matters.
- I speak up when things aren't right.
- I value the many different roles it takes to deliver great patient care.
- I actively listen because I want to understand others and make better decisions.
- I am inclusive and value diversity.
- When it comes to teamwork, I don't hold back – I'm all in.

QUALITY, SAFETY AND IMPROVEMENT

RCH employees have a responsibility and accountability to contribute to the organisation's commitment to Quality, Safety and Improvement by:

- Acting in accordance and complying with all relevant Safety and Quality policies and procedures.
- Identifying risks, reporting and being actively involved in risk mitigation strategies.
- Participating in and actively contributing to quality improvement programs.
- Complying with the requirements of the National Safety & Quality Health Service Standards.
- Complying with all relevant clinical and/or competency standards.
- Complying with the principles of Patient and Family Centred Care that relate to this position.



The RCH is committed to a diverse and inclusive workforce. We encourage applications from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, people from culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds, all members of the LGBTQI community and people with disability.

Position description last updated

August 2026