Child life specialists are devoted to meeting the psychosocial needs of children with illness and disabilities and their families. Required coursework focuses on understanding child and family development, effects of stress and crisis on individuals and families, children and family advocacy, ethical and administrative aspects of work in health care settings, and research and evaluation methods. Both thesis (MS) and non-thesis (MA) options are offered but students must gain approval of their advisor and then petition the faculty for permission to write a thesis.

**Child Life MA (Internship) Option**

A. Statistics and research methods (6 hours)
   - HDFS 8200: Research Methods
   - Any advisor-approved statistics course 7000 level or above

B. Core content (21 hours)
   1. Child development and childhood illness (15 hours)
      - HDFS 7100: Children in Health Care Settings
      - HDFS 7110: Child Life Theory and Practice
      - HDFS 7400: Childhood Death and Bereavement
      - HDFS 8440: Social and Emotional Development
   2. Family dynamics and theory (6 hours)
      - HDFS 8012: Family Dynamics and Intervention
      - HDFS 8210: Theories of Human Development OR HDFS 8220: Family Theories

C. Clinical Internship (9 hours)
   - HDFS 8972: Internship

**Child Life “Fast Track” Option**

Students who have undergraduate coursework in child life and have completed an approved child life clinical internship prior to application to our program may enroll in the "Fast-Track" (30 credit-hour) option to obtain either an MA by completing a project, or an MS (requires completion of a thesis). Enrollment in the "Fast Track" program must be approved by the student's advisor.

A. Statistics and research methods (6 hours)
   - HDFS 8200: Research Methods
   - Any advisor-approved statistics course 7000 level or above

B. Core content (18 hours)
   1. Child development and childhood illness (12 hours)
      - HDFS 8440: Social and Emotional Development
      - And two of the following:
        - HDFS 7100: Children in Health Care Settings
        - HDFS 7110: Child Life Theory and Practice
        - HDFS 7400: Childhood Death and Bereavement

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2. Family dynamics and theory (6 hours)
   HDFS 8012: Family Dynamics and Intervention
   HDFS 8210: Theories of Human Development
   HDFS 8220: Family Theories

C. Thesis or other independent effort (6 hours)
   HDFS 8090: Project
   HDFS 8999: Exam*
   HDFS 9090: Thesis

*No course credit is assigned to the exam option