

Kayla Peña

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Work Experience

DENVER HEALTH MEDICAL CENTER – Denver, Colorado

Certified Child Life Specialist

March 2020 – Present

- Served children in inpatient pediatrics, PICU, pediatric surgery, pediatric emergency room and urgent care, NICU and inpatient ACUTE eating disorders.
- Assessed and implemented developmentally appropriate therapeutic interventions including coping skills, distraction techniques, medical play, procedural support, and diagnosis education.
- Fostered professional relationships with executive staff, donors, patients, and the community.
- Provided presentations and designed flyers for multidisciplinary staff on various subjects relating to child life, hospitalization, pediatric diagnosis, and bereavement support.
- Supervised child life practicum, MC2, HIPP and CSU students by providing child life shadowing and debriefing opportunities, guidance with age-appropriate activities, grading weekly journals and summaries of activities, and promoting independence to students.

Child Life Volunteer Coordinator

November 2021 – December 2023

- Designed and implemented an updated volunteer onboarding process.
- Provided training and management of new and ongoing volunteers both online and in-person.
- Collaboratively worked with hospital-wide Volunteer Coordinator in accepting pediatric volunteers.
- Devise volunteer schedules to coordinate with department needs.
- Provide continuous communication between CCLS and volunteers to ensure safe and quality care to pediatric patients and families.

Child Life Student Coordinator

January 2024 – Present

- Researched and provided updated student curriculums to follow The Association of Child Life Professionals guidelines.
- Provided training and management of all student/student programing.
- Collaboratively work with outside child life departments in ensuring appropriate internship readiness regarding application process, curriculum and supervision of students.
- Supported child life staff entering student supervision throughout standard work and peer guidance.

UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN – STEVEN'S POINT / UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN – EAU CLAIR

Online Child Life Practicum Instructor

January 2022 – February 2023

- Designed engaging and informative lesson plans to be executed to child life practicum students.
- Implemented virtual “hands-on” experience with providing developmentally appropriate preparations on IV, casting, surgery induction, NG placement and sutures.
- Discussed grief and bereavement ideas and ways to support patients and families in the hospital setting.
- Supported students with resume building, cover letters, and interview preparation.

HSHS ST. VINCENT CHILDREN'S HOSPITAL – Green Bay, Wisconsin

Child Life Intern (713 hours)

September 2019 – December 2019

- Implemented child life services to patients and families in the PICU, pediatric inpatient unit, pediatric hematology and oncology, pediatric surgery, diagnosis imaging, and pediatric emergency department.
- Assessed and implemented developmentally appropriate therapeutic interventions including coping skills, distraction techniques, medical play, procedural support and education.

- Advocated and assisted patients and families in coping with the stress of hospitalization, illness, death, and loss.
- Led the initial stages in implementing and utilizing nitrous oxide for port access on patients.
- Supervised daily volunteers, special volunteers, and practicum students.

PENROSE – ST. FRANCIS MEDICAL CENTER – Colorado Springs, Colorado

Child Life Practicum (150 hours)

June 2018

- Observed child life services throughout pediatric inpatient unit, NICU, pediatric surgery, pediatric ED, pediatric GI and radiology.
- Successfully planned and led bedside activities for patients and siblings.
- Observed developmentally appropriate coping strategies and therapeutic activities.
- Gained mastery of rapport building and therapeutic conversations with patients.
- Assisted in planning and leading a SibShop to provide peer support and information to NICU siblings.

WESLEY CHILDREN'S HOSPITAL – Wichita, Kansas

Child Life Volunteer (300+ hours)

December 2017 – June 2019

- Managed the playroom by cleaning and organizing toys while also keeping track of items distributed to patient rooms.
- Creatively facilitated bedside activities for patients to serve as distractions and entertainment in pediatric inpatient units.
- Implemented support to patients and their families to ease the stress of their hospital visit.
- Assisted in planning and executing Halloween Teddy Bear Clinic.
- Provided training and mentorship to new child life volunteers – monthly.

EISENHOWER MIDDLE SCHOOL – Goddard, Kansas

Head Cheer Coach

June 2017 – June 2019

- Developed and implemented comprehensive training programs, resulting in consistent improvement in stunts, tumbling and overall team performance.
- Designed innovative and engaging choreography, showcasing the team's skills and creativity at games and community pep-rallies.
- Mentored and motivated student-athletes, fostering personal growth, self-confidence, and a commitment to academic excellence.
- Led team-building exercises and workshops to strengthen communication, trust, and cohesion among team members.
- Coordinated tryouts for team member and leadership positions, communicating times and audition requirements to members and prospects and soliciting auditions from community.

Substitute Teacher

June 2017 – June 2019

- Provided instruction to classes with average of 25 students from grades 6th – 8th in multiple different subject classrooms.
- Implemented lesson plans designed by teachers.
- Assisted in students following school policies, teacher guidelines and student IEPs to ensure student safety and achieve learning outcomes.
- Provided effective classroom management by incorporating private feedback strategies with misbehaving students to reduce instances of disruptions.

UNITED SCHOOL DISTRICT 457 – Garden City, Kansas

Kansas Reading Roadmap Tutor

February 2017 – July 2017

- Designed literacy lesson plans and interventions to improve the skills of students who struggled with reading from PreK-4th grade.
- Aimed to prevent elementary age children from falling behind in reading by teaching critical reading skills.

- Implemented structured, read-aloud and vocabulary group activities to expose young readers to oral language, model fluency and help develop a love for reading.
- Promoted the Social Emotional Learning Fun program to assist children and their families identify with their feelings and create supportive connections designed to deepen children’s relationships with their parents/guardians and enhance communication skills.

Speech and Language Pathologist Assistant

August 2016 – May 2017

- Organized, prepared, and implemented treatment plans or protocols as directed by speech-language pathologist.
- Treated students with language, phonological, articulation, fluency, Autism Spectrum Disorders, Down Syndrome and other developmental delays.
- Collaborated in incorporating special learning strategies for students with speech and language delays and other developmental delays.
- Conducted evaluations of student’s performance, behavior, social development, speech development and physical health.

Leadership Development

BASE Camp Simulation Conference – Staff	Expected November 2024
Problem Solving: Defining and Stating the Problem	Completed May 2024
Coaching Foundations for Leaders: Building Skills for Success	Completed May 2024
BASE Camp Simulation – Participant	Completed November 2023
LEAN Foundations	Completed October 2022
Workplace Diversity, Equality & Inclusion in Action	Completed September 2022
Navigating Challenging Conversations	Completed April 2022

Education

Texas Woman’s University – Denton, TX
Child Life, MS

Kansas State University – Manhattan, KS
Communication, Sciences & Disorders, BS
Gerontology, Secondary Major

Garden City Community College – Garden City, KS
Music, AA

Awards & Recognitions

Compassionate Care Award x 5
Heroes of the Heart Award x 1
Grand Round Lecturer x 2
Schwartz Round Guest Speaker

Professional Associations & Certifications

Certified Child Life Specialist	Since 2020
Basic Life Support	Since 2022
Association of Child Life Professional	Member since 2016
Mountain West Child Life	Member since 2020