

# Sarah Gluck, B.Ed., CCLS

BACHELORS IN EDUCATION

2 YEARS EXPERIENCE

*“Helping one person might not change the whole world, but it could change the world for one person.”*

## **Can you tell me a little bit about your hospital and the units you cover?**

I work at a children's hospital within a hospital with 165 beds. Currently I work the evening/weekend shift. Working as an independent CCLS on the evenings/weekends, I cover all the floors in the children's hospital, but primarily provide child life services in the Peds ED.

## **What's your typical unit census and about how many patients do you see per day?**

Depending on the ED census, and other needs throughout the hospital, I typically see about 6-8 patients in the evening during the week. On weekends, I typically see around 10-12 patients.

## **What does your average day look like?**

My hours are 3pm-11:30pm. I spend the first 30 minutes of my shifts checking my email, voice messages, and the track board for the Peds ED. Typically, I spend most of my shift in the Peds ED. Throughout the night, other departments in the hospital (PICU, NICU, burn unit, rehab, etc.) will call for needs. While in the Peds ED, the most common procedures that I prep/educate/provide support for are IV starts, sutures, sedations, splints, X-rays, CT scans, bowel cleanouts, ultrasounds, and sexual assault exams.

## **What is your favorite distraction item and how do you use it?**

My favorite distraction item is music! Almost every child has a favorite song that they enjoy listening too. I also enjoy bubbles to encourage patients to take deep/small breaths during their procedure.

## **What's the best part about your job?**

It's so rewarding to see a child overcome something that they've been scared of and knowing that you played a part in helping them get to that point is one of the best feelings in the world. Throughout my 2 years of experience as a CCLS, I've learned how important it is to treat each child as an individual, knowing that coping styles aren't cookie cutter.

## **What's the hardest part in doing your job?**

One of the hardest parts of my job is working independently in the evenings/on weekends. More often than not, there's more than one procedure going on at the same time. I'm constantly having to quickly triage and assess the needs of patients. Unfortunately, there are a lot of needs that go unmet due to me being the only CCLS available for the entire children's hospital. For example, one night I was in the burn unit for two hours providing support to a patient during a dressing change. During those two hours, 2 peds traumas came in over the page. Because I was already involved in a procedure, I was not able to make it to those patients.

## **What's a facet of your job that people wouldn't expect?**

While I spend a lot of time advocating for patients and their families within the medical team, I also have to do a lot of advocating for myself and the role of child life specialists. I'm constantly referred to as the iPad lady, the distraction specialist, and the prize lady.

## **What's something you wish you knew when you started on this unit?**

After starting my job, I quickly realized how important self-care is. Our jobs as child life specialists can be very grueling and difficult at times. I believe that in order to take care of the patients and families you see, you must take care of yourself first. You can't pour from an empty cup!

## **Do you have anything else you'd like to share about your job, tips for students, or thoughts?**

Don't compare your child life journey to others! And never give up. This field is very competitive and it's very easy to compare yourself to others, especially when trying to land a practicum and/or an internship. For example, during the end of my internship I had people tell me that I shouldn't bother looking for a job until I was certified because no one would hire me until I was certified. I had a job offer one week out of my internship at the end of May in 2017, then I took and passed the child life exam that August.

