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STONY BROOK UNIVERSITY HOSPITAL Child Life Program

Helping Your Child Through the Pediatric Experience



Stony Brook Children's



Our goal is to make your child feel comfortable and cared for during hospitalization.

At Stony Brook Children's Hospital, our goal is to make your child feel comfortable and cared for during hospitalization. Our Child Life Program can help reduce the stress that pediatric patients and their families may experience when faced with illness, medical procedures and unfamiliar surroundings.

The Child Life Program offers an opportunity for children to engage in everyday childhood activities to help minimize anxiety. The program provides therapeutic, educational and recreational activities to meet the unique emotional and developmental needs of children during their hospital stays.

Certified Child Life Specialists

Certified Child Life Specialists are trained in child development and are equipped to deal with the effects of hospitalization on children. They work closely with the healthcare team to assess and address the individual needs of young patients and their families.

Their goals include:

- Minimizing overall stress and anxiety
- Providing normal play opportunities
- Enhancing normal living patterns and experiences within the hospital environment
- Promoting normal growth and development during hospitalization
- Lessening the emotional impact of illness and hospitalization
- Advocating and supporting the patient's and family's roles in the healthcare team





Child Life Services

Supervised Play and Activities

Child Life Specialists and volunteers provide a variety of activities to patients, including age-appropriate toys and games, arts and crafts, movies and music in designated activity areas and at patient bedsides. Since play is children's "work" and their means of exploration, discovery and conflict resolution, it is the primary tool of the Child Life Program. Child Life staff will provide games, toys and activities at the patient's bedside for those children who require isolation during hospitalization and are unable to visit the playroom.

Medical Play and Preparation

A major component of the Child Life Program is "medical play," which is based on the premise that familiarization with hospital equipment and procedures reduces stress. Facilitated by a Child Life Specialist, children have the opportunity to use real or toy medical equipment in a play and teaching session. Medical play can be individualized for patients experiencing increased stress associated with a certain treatment or who are undergoing particular procedures.

Special Events

To enhance the activities regularly provided to patients and families, the Child Life Program organizes special events in collaboration with various community organizations and businesses. In addition to weekly visits by clowns, music therapists and pet therapy dogs, the Pediatric Unit schedules holiday visitors, musicians, librarians and other entertainers to share a smile with patients and families. Child Life Specialists and staff also make every effort to celebrate birthdays, holidays and other special events with the children in the hospital.

Activity Areas

Activity areas designed specifically for children's different needs are available to patients. Medical procedures are not permitted in any of the activity areas, which are considered to be a child's "safe haven" within the hospital.

The Main Playroom is available to patients of all ages and is equipped with many toys, games, arts and crafts materials, books, music and more. It is open daily at varying hours. The weekly schedule is posted on the playroom door.

A separate playroom is set aside for those children unable to attend activities in the Main Playroom due to reverse isolation. Children who are immunosuppressed can play safely in this smaller playroom and enjoy any of the same activities available in the Main Playroom. For patients who are 12 years and older, a Teen Lounge is designed to meet the needs of the adolescent population. Computers with Internet access and video games are just a few of the highlights. Both of these playrooms are opened as needed.

Hospital Tours

The preadmission tour takes children on a multisensory journey through areas of the hospital that a child may encounter during his or her admission or surgical experience. Being admitted to the hospital or having surgery can be a stressful experience for anyone, but it can be particularly upsetting for children and their families. Helping children to understand procedures and familiarizing them with the different areas and settings can significantly reduce anxiety. On the tour, children can see and touch hospital equipment, meet medical staff and experience the hospital environment in a safe, non-threatening manner. Tours should be taken as close to the hospital visit as possible, and are offered on weekend mornings and weekday evenings. Appointments must be made in advance by calling Child Life Services at (631) 444-3840.

Procedural Support

Invasive and sometimes painful procedures are an unfortunate reality of hospitalization. Child Life Specialists, however, can help reduce a child's anxiety and perception of pain. They prepare the children and introduce a variety of coping techniques including guided imagery, relaxation and diversion. When possible, a Child Life Specialist may accompany a patient to the procedure, for example in the radiology or emergency departments, the pre-operative areas or at Stony Brook University Cancer Center.

For more information about Stony Brook's Child Life Program, call (631) 444-3840, or visit stonybrookchildrens.org/child-life

By making a tax-deductible contribution today, you can help us to enhance and expand the activities and services provided by Stony Brook's Child Life Program.

Please complete and return to:

Stony Brook Medicine, Advancement Office
Stony Brook, NY 11794-8430

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Enclosed is my gift in the amount of \$_____

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My company will match my gift. Enclosed is my company's matching gift form.

All donations are tax deductible to the extent permitted by law. If you have any questions, please call the Advancement Office at (631) 444-2899.

About Stony Brook Children's

Stony Brook Children's, part of Stony Brook Medicine, offers the most advanced pediatric specialty care for infants, children and young adults in the region. With more than 160 pediatric specialists in over 30 specialties, Stony Brook Children's provides a full range of services — from well-baby care to complex surgery and pioneering treatments — in a setting that reflects the unique needs of children at every stage of their life. Our facilities include a dedicated Pediatric Emergency Department, an advanced Level III NICU, minimally invasive pediatric surgery, and one-of-a-kind centers and specialty programs.