

# Child Life Department

## Helping children cope with a hospital stay

**The Child Life Department helps to provide a positive hospital experience for your child or teen.**

Play is the core of the Child Life Program. It helps children relieve tension, express concerns and fears and experience a sense of control over their environment.

Our Playrooms and Teen Zone provide a place to have fun, safe, supportive play and social interaction. Your child will enjoy activities and entertainment as well as a wide variety of books, toys and crafts.

Child Life Specialists are members of the health care team who work directly with your child and family to help reduce anxiety and adjust to the hospital experience.

This flyer has more information about Child Life Specialists, the Playroom and Teen Zone schedules and the Therapeutic Play programs we offer.

### Child Life Specialists

As professional members of Children's health care team, Certified Child Life Specialists focus on the emotional and developmental needs of hospitalized infants, children and teens.

### What can Child Life Specialists do for my child and family?

- Explain a diagnosis or treatment in words your child or teen can understand
- Create a coping plan for your child to use during a medical test or procedure
- Offer support during and after medical procedures
- Use therapeutic play and medical play to help your child understand medical procedures, provide ways to express feelings and help maintain a sense of control
- Work with medical staff to assess your child's unique needs
- Offer bereavement support to help families and siblings cope with death or loss
- Provide you with information on child development and the effects of health care

### When should I ask for a Child Life Specialist?

When your child or teen:

- Has a medical procedure that is challenging for them
- Shows significant changes in behavior or play
- Experiences long or repeated hospital stays
- Needs help to understand what is going on
- Has a difficult time coping with his or her hospitalization
- Faces a life-altering or life-threatening illness

Ask your nurse if your child might benefit from the services of a Child Life Specialist.

## **Benefits of play**

Play is the core of the Child Life Program. Appropriate play aimed at your child's needs can make it easier for your child to be in the hospital. Play helps with development and makes being in the hospital less disruptive to your child's life. It is especially important during long hospitalizations or when a child has to be isolated for medical reasons.

## **Types of play used by Child Life Specialists**

**Medical play** – Using medical equipment with dolls or teddy bears, patients can act out medical procedures and learn what to expect during their hospital visit.

**Distraction or diversion** – Helping patients focus their attention on a fun activity during an exam or procedure can relieve pain and reduce anxiety and stress.

**Developmental play** – Encouraging play for children of all ages promotes normal development, socialization and fun!

## **Therapeutic play**

These creative and innovative therapeutic play programs focus on meeting social and emotional needs of hospitalized children and their families. These activities help reduce anxiety and stress, encourage expression, complement traditional pain management and help with physical rehabilitation.

## **Art therapy**

Our board-certified art therapist works with children to use many different kinds of art for self-expression, art play and positive interaction.

## **Music therapy**

Our board-certified music therapist uses a wide variety of music (performance, song writing, spontaneous expression) with children of all ages.

## **Animal-assisted activities**

“Pet Partners” are specially trained therapy teams. A dog and handler visit children at the bedside to give them a warm, positive, normal interaction. Our Pet Partners staff and volunteers can also motivate patients and help support rehabilitation goals.

## **Sibshops**

When a child becomes ill, the entire family is affected. Sibshops provide support and guidance to siblings of children with special medical or developmental needs.

Siblings are encouraged to share the challenges and celebrate the joys with brothers and sisters in similar situations during lively, action packed, 3 hour

workshops. Sibshops reflect the belief that siblings have much to offer one another if given a chance.

### Sibling Playroom

- Monday - Friday  
8:30 a.m. to Noon  
1 p.m. to 4 p.m.
- Extension 7-2992

### Sibling Playroom

The Sibling Playroom on the 4th floor of the Ambulatory Care Building is for brothers and sisters of patients having clinic appointments. Children ages 3 to 11 are invited to stay for a 2 hour period while caregivers accompany patients to appointments. Sibling Playroom hours are Monday through Friday, 8:30 a.m. to Noon and 1 p.m. to 4 p.m.

### Playroom and Teen Zone

These are both located on the 2nd floor by the Train elevators.

### Playroom

- Monday - Thursday  
10 a.m. to 8 p.m.
- Friday - Sunday  
10 a.m. to 4 p.m.
- Extension 7-4433

### Playroom

This is a place for kids of all ages to have fun, play games and enjoy activities and entertainment. Volunteers are available to play with your child. The playroom also offers books, toys, crafts and videos that can be checked out and taken to patients' rooms.

The Playroom is open during these hours:

Monday through Thursday    10 a.m. to 8 p.m.  
Friday through Sunday        10 a.m. to 4 p.m.

Please call ext. 7-4433 to request toys, books, crafts and volunteer services.

Special activities and playroom volunteers are scheduled at these times:

|     | 10 a.m. to noon | 2 to 4 p.m.           | 6 to 8 p.m. |
|-----|-----------------|-----------------------|-------------|
| Mon | Open            | Open                  | Open        |
| Tue | Open            | Open - Rock Polishing | Open        |
| Wed | Open            | Open - Origami        | Open        |
| Thu | Open            | Open - Weaving        | Open        |
| Fri | Open            | Open - No volunteers  | Closed      |
| Sat | Open            | Open                  | Closed      |
| Sun | Open            | Open                  | Closed      |

### Teen Zone

- Monday - Thursday  
10 a.m. to 8 p.m.
- Friday - Sunday  
10 a.m. to 4 p.m.
- Extension 7-4433

See weekly schedule for additional activities and events.

### To Learn More

- Child Life  
206-987-2037
- Ask your child's  
healthcare provider
- [www.seattlechildrens.org](http://www.seattlechildrens.org)

### Teen Zone

This is a special place for patients and siblings ages 12 through 21. Parents and visitors may accompany a teen patient or sibling. The Teen Zone has a jukebox, computers, Internet access, X-box and videos. It is open every day and has a weekly schedule of planned activities and events:

Monday through Thursday 10 a.m. to 8 p.m.  
Friday through Sunday 10 a.m. to 4 p.m.

### Free Interpreter Services

- In the hospital, ask your child's nurse.
- From outside the hospital, call the toll-free Family Interpreting Line 1-866-583-1527. Tell the interpreter the name or extension you need.
- For Deaf and hard of hearing callers  
206-987-2280 (TTY)

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Seattle Children's offers interpreter services for Deaf, hard of hearing or non-English speaking patients, family members and legal representatives free of charge. Seattle Children's will make this information available in alternate formats upon request. Call the Family Resource Center at 206-987-2201.

This handout has been reviewed by clinical staff at Seattle Children's. However, your child's needs are unique. Before you act or rely upon this information, please talk with your child's healthcare provider.

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