



Information for Nursing Students

Child Life 101

Child Life

Certified Child Life Specialists (CLS) are trained to help children and their families cope with difficult health care experiences. The goal of Child Life is to decrease fear and anxiety.

Child Life helps families with:

Procedural preparation- Using child friendly teaching tools and medical play activities, Child Life Specialists educate children about what to expect from medical procedures. Specialists constantly assess the child's emotional reactions and adjust teaching to match the child's tolerance. This is also a good time to teach and practice coping skills and create a comfort plan.

Procedural support- Child Life Specialists support children through medical procedures when needed, guiding the child using continual assessment, offering appropriate choices and supporting coping practices.

Emotional support- Children in the hospital face stressors they are not accustomed to. Child Life Specialists are able to offer a supportive, safe environment for children.

Group activities- Designed to improve socialization, decrease feelings of isolation and promote emotional well-being, group activities are a special time for children to step away from medical experiences. Medical professionals should allow children time to enjoy their group activity time without interruption whenever possible.

Bedside activities- Toys and activities, found in the Playroom, are available for use in patient rooms. When finished with toys, they can be returned to the soiled utility room for cleaning.

Non-pharmacological pain management- Child Life can help with relaxation techniques and distraction.

Music Therapy

The **Board Certified Music Therapist** is typically available Monday, Tuesday, Thursday and Friday. Consult Music therapy by stopping into the Recreation Room for: a child who:

- Is having difficulty coping
- Is experiencing pain
- Is anxious
- Likes music and may need procedural support

School Program

The **Certified Teacher** is typically available Monday, Wednesday, Friday for chronic or long-term patients needing school support or tutoring. Group school is three times per week at 11 am in the Garden.

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Gift Giving:

Please let Child Life know if there is a birthday or a major achievement (last chemo, significant procedure). CLS will ensure an appropriate gift is wrapped and given to the child.

Please DO NOT give gifts when:

- The child is admitted or discharged
- You first meet a child
- You have bribed them to behave or act a certain way
 - Work on building a trusting relationship prior to medical procedures
 - Consult child life before medical procedures for preparation
- The child is bored
 - borrow toys from playroom or crafts from recreation room
 - spend time with the child
- The child is sad or lonely
 - spend time engaging with the child
- You feel sorry for the child or don't know what to do
- You like the child or want the child to like you

Often more than one staff member will ask for gifts for the same child. Speak with a Child Life Specialist before giving gifts.

Child Life specialists are typically available 7 days a week. Check signs on the Recreation room door for more information.



