



We strive to help patients and families understand and cope with their hospital stay, and their overall health care experience.

Child Life Program

The Child Life Department at Children’s Hospital of Pittsburgh of UPMC provides developmental, social, and emotional support to children of all ages.



A special events calendar is posted in each activity center and in the Family Resource Center / Library on the 6th floor. Events are also advertised on the information screens throughout the hospital. Please ask your Child Life Staff about any upcoming events or activities.

The Child Life Specialist for your unit is:

The Child Life Assistant for your unit is:



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The Child Life Program



Play enhances learning, comfort, and normalization.



Benefits of Play

- Play is the language of children!
- Play is a familiar day-to-day activity.
- Play enhances learning, comfort, and normalization.
- Play provides an outlet for expression.
- Play creates a sense of security in a strange environment and provides a diversion from pain or hospital experiences.
- Child Life Staff help children process new information through play.

Activity Centers

- Medical-Free Zone — Medical discussions and/or procedures are NOT allowed.
- Supervised group and individualized play sessions are provided daily.
- Bedside activities are available for children who are unable to attend the activity center.
- Patients 12 and older can participate in activities in the Teen Lounge on 9A.
- Siblings of patients can enjoy the Lemieux Sibling Center located on Floor 1 adjacent to the lobby.

Additional Services

- Music Therapy
- Art Therapy
- Pet Friend Dog Visitation Program
- Hospital School Program
- School Reentry Program
- Lemieux Sibling Center
- Surgery Preparation Tour
- Discovery Program — a community outreach program teaching kids about the hospital

When to call your CLS?

- Preparation for a procedure
- Difficulty coping with a procedure
- Child or his / her sibling expresses specific fears or concerns to staff
- Child is having difficulty taking medication
- New diagnosis of a chronic illness
- Injuries resulting from a traumatic accident
- Coping techniques for experiences related to hospitalization

Child Life Staff

Child Life Specialists (CLS)

- Prepare children and families for medical experiences
- Teach techniques to help reduce stress and anxiety
- Provide emotional support to children and their families
- Provide medical play opportunities using real and pretend medical equipment
- Give information regarding sibling support
- Support children and families through various types of grief
- Hold master's degrees in Child Development or related fields and certified by the Child Life Council

Child Life Assistants

- Implement age-appropriate, individualized and group activities
- Assess children's development and behavior
- Support children during play activities and events
- Guide volunteers in their effort to support patients and families

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