

Child Life Services Sidra Medicine

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Sidra Medicine Child Life Services

Major interruptions in a child's life can invite dependency and erode self-esteem and may jeopardize the child's growth and development. Through the use of play and other forms of communication, a Child Life Specialist helps reduce the stress and enable children and families to cope with these experiences.

Child Life Specialists at Sidra Medicine recognize that illness, injury, and hospitalization are stressful events in the lives of children and families and that throughout these events attention to psychosocial and developmental needs is essential. The team focuses on the strengths and sense of well-being of children and families while promoting their optimal development and minimizing the adverse effects of medical experiences.

Child life specialists provide expert interventions based in the modalities of therapeutic play, creative expression, and developmentally appropriate preparation and education. Care is individualized, evidence-based, family-centered, culturally-sensitive and part of an interdisciplinary approach, with the aim of promoting positive coping and well-being.



Sidra Child Life Services

Child Life staff are trained and certified in a number of disciplines, including child development, child life/hospital play, art therapy, special education and therapeutic recreation. All child life staff specialize in working with hospitalized children and families and understand the unique stressors that may accompany a visit to a clinic, hospital stay, emergency department, or other health care environment.

Child Life staff are assigned to all pediatric patient care areas to facilitate interdisciplinary working, communication and responsiveness. Therapeutic interventions take place on patient care units, at bedside or in playrooms, during clinic visits and procedures, and in all areas that children and families have the potential for anxiety/stress and are in need of psychosocial support.



Sidra Child Life Team

Staff Position	FTE
Manager	1
Supervisor	2
Child Life Specialist	14
Child Life Assistant	5
Art Therapist	1
Grand Total	23

The services and interventions are provided throughout Sidra including inpatient clinical areas (bedside, playroom, and treatment rooms), ambulatory clinical areas (waiting areas and treatment rooms), the Emergency Department, pre-and post-operative clinical areas, and the Diagnostic Imaging/Radiology Departments.

Child Life Interventions

- Developmentally appropriate preparation (including pre-operative tours) for and explanation of medical procedures and education around illness processes.
- Therapeutic and expressive play interventions to lessen fear and anxiety and enhance coping with and express feelings associated with hospitalization and illness.
- Medical play opportunities to help give children a sense of mastery and control in a threatening environment.
- Developmental play opportunities to support typical cognitive, physical, and social-emotional development while hospitalized.
- Teaching of relaxation, distraction and coping skills before, during, and after medical procedures and to cope with acute and chronic pain.
- Accompaniment to procedures as a non-medical support person to provide distraction and coping techniques.





Child Life Interventions

- Emotional support for patients, siblings, and families during stressful times including support for bereavement, grief, and loss.
- Parent and staff education regarding child development and corresponding responses to hospitalization.
- Initiate behavior modification systems (i.e. rewards/sticker charts, play-based interventions) to encourage success with medical regimens.
- Normalization of the hospital environment through consultation on environmental design and flow, the promotion of child-directed play and the coordination of special events, and celebrations important to children and families.
- Advocacy for child participation and family-centered care to empower children and families to have active input in their own care and to help evaluate and shape hospital processes.

Child Life Interventions

For a child, the increased anxiety and stress related to illness, separation from family during hospitalization, and medical encounters can be emotionally damaging and interfere with the child's response to medical treatment and care.

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