

Child Life Program

Policy Statement Highlights

Adapted from the American Academy of Pediatrics, May, 2014

Play:

- “Play is an essential component of a child life specialist’s role with hospitalized children. Research has shown that medical play and playful activities help to decrease children’s fears/anxieties and decrease physiological negative responses such as: palm sweating, tachycardia, excessive body movement, and hypertension”

Preparation:

- “A recent systematic review of preparation effectiveness concluded that children who were psychologically prepared for surgery with hands-on techniques (i.e. medical play with real medical supplies and or toy like doctor’s kit) vs. verbal preparation alone, were better able to cope with the surgical setting”
- Preparation also decreases the need for sedation which results in less risk for the child, cost savings, and expedites case turn-over in recovery”

Positions of Comfort:

- “Research has demonstrated that children are less fearful and distressed when positioned for medical procedures (anesthesia mask induction) when in a sitting position rather than supine: CCLS’s are often facilitators of the use of comfort holds: techniques for positioning children on a parent’s lap or other comforting face to face positions. The outcomes of comfort positioning are: a safer anesthesia induction and limits the need for multiple staff to hold down a child. This technique is a more humane alternative in most cases”

Reference:

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