

Introduction

- Children may view the hospital as a scary, unfamiliar place which can cause them to be overcome by anxiety. However, CCLS can provide specific resources such as play, education techniques, games, and more to help patients and their families cope with their hospitalization. What most people will view as play CCLS view as providing normalcy for patients. So, what is a Child Life Specialist?
- Certified Child Life Specialists (CCLS) are healthcare workers who provide developmentally appropriate interventions such as play, procedural preparation, and effective teaching that help children to reduce the fears and anxieties that the hospital may bring.
- The goal of this literature synthesis is to examine how CCLS help children and families overcome their hospital stay by providing age-appropriate interventions to help minimize the negative effects of hospitalization.



Figure 1. Lindsay Smith '14 reads with a patient at Children's of Alabama, where the Auburn University alumna is a Child Life Specialist.. Adapted from, Auburn University (2017).

Coverage

- Literature research through the Tennessee Technology University Vlope Library

Key Terms:

Therapeutic Play: therapeutic play refers to specialized activities that are developmentally supportive and facilitate the emotional well-being of a pediatric patient (Brown & Chitkara, 2014).

Preparation Using conversation, photographs and/or play to explain medical procedures or surgery in a way that makes sense to your child, that allow questions to be asked and coping strategies to be learned. (LeBlanc, Naugler, Morison, Parker, & Chambers, 2014).

Methodology

- Through a research synthesis, reviewing an online database and using keywords directed me to eight existing research articles that provided an understanding of what services Certified Child Life Specialists provide along with an understanding of the effectiveness of having a CCLS present throughout the child and family's hospital stay.

Results

Throughout literature, there is evidence of positive effects a child life specialist can have on a child's hospitalization.

Research findings suggest these common trends:

- Certified Child Life Specialist are a useful resource throughout a patient and family's stay because they ensure the family's needs are being met.
- Child Life Interventions are needed and beneficial for a patient and family's visit.
- There was a high satisfaction rate from patients and their family when Child Life services were present.



Figure 3. Kate Denlinger, certified child life specialist meets with patient Kaitlyn Teeter, 5, prior to a procedure she regularly receives at Penn State Hershey Children's Hospital. Adapted from Penn State Hershey Children's Hospital, 2015, <http://bit.ly/1BKe9nn.

Significance

- **Certified Child Life Specialists are an important part of the healthcare team because of the following reasons:**
- Many children will experience a hospital visit at least once throughout their lifetime, however, many families do not know how to navigate through their time of hospitalization. Child Life services help guide children and families into this challenging and scary time.
- Certified Child Life Specialists advocate for patients and their families to ensure their needs are being met.
- Having a Child Life Specialist present reduces both parent and child anxiety.
- CCLS empower children as they may enter an unfamiliar environment, such as the hospital, providing play opportunities and effective resources, patients are able to gain a sense of normalcy.



Figure 2. Meney Richards, 5, meets with Kate Denlinger, a certified child life specialist at Penn State Hershey Children's Hospital. Adapted from, Penn State Hershey Children's Hospital (2015). <http://bit.ly/1BKe9nn.

Conclusion

- There is significant evidence of how Child Life services are effective to patients and their family.
- The transition into the hospital can be challenging for most families. Being guided by child life services through the use of play, preparation, intervention, coping techniques, and resources help children and families throughout their hospital stay.

References

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