



Preparing Your Child For Surgery

How Child Life Specialists Can Help

Your child will soon be having a surgery at an Ann & Robert H. Lurie Children's Hospital of Chicago location. We understand that this process can be a stressful time for everyone in your family and we are here to help. Our hope is to work with and empower you and your child to feel as included and supported as possible.

WHO ARE WE?

We are **Certified Child Life Specialists (CCLSs)** which means we are certified clinicians who are trained to focus on a patient and family's **emotional safety** throughout medical experiences. We promote empowerment and understanding, as well as work to reduce the chance of medical trauma.

HOW WE CAN HELP

We will:

- Prepare and educate you and your child by using words, visuals, medical materials, and/or play on the day of surgery. The information we share is based on an assessment of your child and the questions that they ask.
- Discuss and validate of any and all emotions your child is experiencing.
- Advocate for opportunities to choose and control various parts of your surgical experience.
- Collaborate with different teams at the hospital and caregivers to develop a care plan that is both emotionally and medically safe for your child.
- Identify avenues for additional support for patients who are neurodivergent or have additional developmental and/or sensory needs

Everything we do, we have our patients and their family's emotional safety in mind. We believe feelings are for feeling, not for fixing!

TIPS FOR SURGERY DAY

- Please bring any comfort items your child uses from home (e.g., items for sensory needs, tablets or other technology, stuffed animals, blankets, special items, pacifiers/soothers, etc.).
- If there are things that **were** or **were not** helpful in the past during medical experiences, please share that with the team.

Patient and Family Education



- Please keep in mind, we may not be able to complete some requests due to safety.
- If your child asks you a difficult question, it is appropriate and supportive to respond with, "I don't know, but we can find someone who does." Then, save this question for when you have time with someone on your child's healthcare team and ask them about it. This takes the pressure off you to come up with an answer and models a trusting relationship with healthcare staff.
- We all want to work together to provide an emotionally and medically safe care plan. You know your child best, so please feel empowered to ask questions and give information to your child's medical team about your child and how they cope.

RESOURCES

Below are links to resources that may help you and your child feel more prepared for surgery:

Lurie Children's: Preparing for Surgery

<https://www.luriechildrens.org/en/appointments/preparing-for-surgery/>

This site has videos, preparation books, and other resources that can help you and your child get ready for their surgery. If you are having difficulty accessing the link, please type "Lurie Children's Surgery Preparation" into your favorite search engine (like Google or Bing).

Lurie Children's: Child Life Specialists

<https://www.luriechildrens.org/en/patients-visitors/meet-your-care-team/child-life-specialists/>

Learn more about the CCLS role here at Lurie Children's. If you are having difficulty accessing the link, please type "Lurie Children's Child Life" into your favorite search engine (like Google or Bing).

Emotional Safety Initiative Website

<https://emotional-safety.org/about-emotional-safety-initiative/>

Learn more about the Emotional Safety Initiative, and how CCLSs champion this work. If you are having difficulty accessing the link, please type "Emotional Safety Initiative" into your favorite search engine (like Google or Bing).

CONTACT A CHILD LIFE SPECIALIST

If you wish to contact a CCLS regarding your child's upcoming surgery, please use the contact information below. Remember to **include your child's full name and their birthday** when reaching out to us.

Patient and Family Education



***Please note**, since our work is mainly at the bedside with our patients, time spent at our desk is limited. You will receive a reply from a CCLS **2-3 days after your message**.

Hours & Staffing by Location:

MAIN CAMPUS: 225 E. Chicago Ave, Chicago, IL

- **Jessica Van Voorhis** (6:30-3:00 p.m. M-F)

312-227-8189

- **Becca Mitsos** (6:30 a.m.-5:00 p.m. T-F)

312-227-3273

prepforsurgery@luriechildrens.org

WESTCHESTER: 2301 Enterprise Drive, Westchester, IL

- **Lori Esch** (6:00 a.m.-2:30 p.m. M-F)

312-227-7925

lesch@luriechildrens.org

NORTHBROOK: 1131 Techny Road, Northbrook, IL

- **Geanine Hunt** (6:30 a.m.-3:00 p.m. M-F)

312-227-2731

ghunt@luriechildrens.org

Patient and Family Education



Procedural Services: Coping & Comfort Plan*

We want to understand what helps you/your child to be comfortable during your visit. After completing this questionnaire, please share it with your child's healthcare provider the day of their surgery. We will create a coping and comfort plan in your child's medical chart that helps us to know how to support both you and your child each time you visit us.

Please **select all options that apply** for your child (and you, where applicable) below.

As a reminder, we may not be able to accommodate *all* requests, but we will do our best.

My child's preferred name and pronouns are: _____

Environmental accommodations:

- Lowered lighting
- Quiet voices/decreased noise level
- White noise/music
- Limited number of people in our room at once
- Cushioning for bedrails
- Keeping door to room closed
- Keeping door to room open
- Other, please specify: _____

Medical accommodations:

- Communicate each step of the necessary medical care, when able
- Let my child to look at any devices or tools before use, when able
- Hide tools until their use becomes necessary, when able
- Model parts of necessary medical care on trusted adult, when able
- Review and sign consent forms outside of the room
- Discuss medical care outside of room
- Other, please specify: _____

Patient and Family Education



Behavioral accommodations:

- Space to rock back and forth
- Space to flap arms or hands
- Use of a device that helps with fidgeting
- Self-harming behavior precautions and accommodations
- Other, please specify: _____

The following **parts of a physical exam** may be difficult for my child:

- Eye exam
- Ear exam
- Nose exam
- Throat exam
- Belly exam
- Reflex exam
- Other, please specify: _____

The following **parts of their hospital stay**, including assessments before surgery, may be difficult for my child:

- Blood pressure measurement
- A provider listening to their lungs or heart with a stethoscope
- Wearing a hospital gown/shorts
- Wearing an ID band
- Receiving an injection or having an IV placed
- Wearing a pulse oximeter on their finger or toe
- Other, please specify: _____

My child **expresses their needs** or desires by:

- Spoken language
- American Sign Language (ASL)
- Gesturing or pointing
- Electronic communication device
- Leading someone towards what they want/need
- Other, please specify: _____

Patient and Family Education



My child **expresses pain** by:

- Crying
- Screaming
- Spoken language
- Self-injury
- Aggression
- Pointing
- Withdrawing
- Other, please specify: _____

This will **help my child cope** with necessary medical care:

- White noise
- Music
- Counting
- Deep breathing
- Giving them distance or space before/after
- Giving an explanation prior to the procedure
- Giving an explanation during the procedure
- Not giving any explanations
- Tablet/phone
- Sensory tool (e.g., play-doh, stress ball, fidget spinner, etc.)
- Other, please specify: _____

Please feel free to share any additional safety concerns or information we should know to support you and your child during your hospital visit with us on the day of your procedure.

* Adapted from: Kopecky, K., Broder-Fingert, S., Iannuzzi, D., and Connors, S. (2013). The needs of hospitalized patients with autism spectrum disorders: A parent survey. *Clinical Pediatrics*, 52(7), 652- 660. doi: 10.1177/0009922813485974.

The information included in this document is for informational purposes only and is not intended to substitute in any way for medical education, training, treatment, advice, or diagnosis by a healthcare professional. A qualified healthcare professional should always be consulted before making any healthcare-related decision.