

Medical Play

Play is one way children can work through fears and anxieties related to hospitalization/illness.

Play allows children to express themselves in a way that is familiar to them. Medical play is a chance for children to work out or “play out” their feelings or fears. At the same time children are able to become more comfortable with medical equipment.

Medical Play Suggestions:

- Allow your child to control his or her own play (let the child direct the play)
- Supervise the various play activities and look for themes in your child’s play
- Listen to your child while he/she is playing~Your presence can support his or her exploration
- Correct any misconceptions your child has about the hospital

Ways to support medical play at each developmental stage:

- **Infant**- familiar caregiver to play peek-a-boo with a doctor’s mask
- **Toddler**- play peek-a-boo, encourage play with medical play kits, read books about health care experiences to child
- **Preschool**- pretend play with medical play kits, medical art activities (syringe painting, band-aid collages, etc.), read books about health care experiences to child
- **School age**- opportunities to play with medical play kits/real medical equipment, medical art activities, read books about health care experiences to child
- **Teen**-opportunities to see/manipulate real medical equipment, encouraging time and space to ask questions

For more information or to request a Child Life Specialist, please call our Child Life Referral Line at (312) 227-3270