



**LIVE FROM THE SCENE**

MEDICAL TREATMENT  
NO LONGER FRIGHTENING

**JUST FOR THE RECORD**

EVOLUTION OF UNIFORMS



# HOSPITAL PLAY IN SPECIALIST OUT-PATIENT DEPARTMENT

Children with critical or acute medical conditions would be hospitalized; when their conditions improve or stabilize, they would need follow-up consultations at the specialist out-patient department (SOPD). The five hospitals, where our hospital play specialists are stationed, each has its own specialist out-patient department. Hospital play specialists would regularly provide play service for children receiving treatment at this department.



The logo of Playright signifies the presence of play.



The chairs at the back mark the waiting area of the SOPD at Tseung Kwan O Hospital, and the front part is Playright's play area.



The hospital play specialist arranges play for a girl having received a follow-up consultation at the Orthopaedics & Traumatology out-patient department of the Prince of Wales Hospital.

## Waiting area turns to play area

After children and their caregivers arrive at the SOPD, register and complete the basic body check-up such as measuring body weight, they would have to wait in the waiting area for further instructions from medical staff. In the area, tables and chairs are set up for children by the hospital, while different handicraft materials and play materials are prepared by the hospital play specialists. Children can choose materials according to their abilities, preferences and interests. During the waiting time that may last one to two hours, children would not feel bored but instead feel relaxed and excited thanks to the play provided.

At the SOPD, many children need regular follow-up consultation. The open play area allows the hospital play specialists to follow up cases and intervene and support whenever necessary. For example, if blood-taking is needed, the hospital play specialists would arrange play to divert and distract the children's attention. For different checking and treatment, such as MRI checking and cast removal, the hospital play specialists would demonstrate and rehearse the procedures with the children through simulation play. Where hospitalization is needed, the hospital play specialists would explain to the children the admission procedures and give them a "play pack" in order to sooth the children's potential worries about leaving their families and anxiety of hospitalization.

## What to play?

Although the waiting area is not spacious, it can accommodate different types of play. The hospital play specialists prepare play materials which are suitable for indoor play. They also prepare hospital play tools for different treatment procedures of different specialties to cater for the children's needs, like preparation play for a cast removal procedure.

### Handicraft play

Thematic handicraft play for different seasons or festivals is prepared for children to create artwork or craft by themselves. Since the target served by the department is wide, comprising children of different ages, interests and abilities, the hospital play specialists put in great efforts in designing handicraft that suit the needs of the majority of children.



Play as simple as making handicraft with paper plates can attract children's attention.



## Colouring-in

A simple white drawing paper, or colourful papers, coupled with diversified patterns or cartoon figures, are available for children's selection. Young to old can freely paint their pictures or quietly colour-in.



Pasting coloured papers after colouring-in is the most favourite handicraft for toddlers.



Children enjoy colouring-in using cotton balls and cotton swabs.

## Free play

Facing limited space and relatively stringent safety and hygiene standards, the hospital play specialists try their best to provide play materials for free play, including role play, pretend cooking, constructive play with bricks, ball games, chess games, as well as playing carton board paper and sand.



Bricks are popular among boys and girls.



Playing with flour in the hospital has no limitations!

# Value children, value play



Some people may think that treatment is treatment, why should play be included in the process? Why can't children endure the waiting for a consultation for a while? If children want to play, they should play at home. Why do we turn the hospital into a playground?

Playright always believes in the value of play. Even sick children need to play. More and more cases have proved that play helps in medical treatment, in adapting to the life in hospital, in alleviating negative emotions and understanding medical procedures. More importantly, we believe in treating children in a "child oriented" approach as an act of respecting them. When children feel the effects of our good intentions, they would cooperate more although they are too young to stop pouting or shedding tears.



The true smile on a child's face through play demonstrates the value of play.



# Small play, big effect



In the eyes of children, a SOPD is an unfamiliar place and they would easily feel insecure facing this unfamiliar environment and medical staff. Hence, play, a children's favourite, is used to sooth emotions and distract attention. When doctors conduct check-ups, the children's emotions are stabilized, which helps them to co-operate. For children who constantly need follow-up consultations, the play area becomes just like a magnetic field that attracts them and creates a positive image of medical treatment.

Hong Kong's children have busy schedules. Sick children are no exception. Some children say that they seldom play but finally get the play opportunities when they go to the hospital for their follow-up consultation. In addition, handicraft and drawing seem to be simple, but they bring an unspeakable sense of success and satisfaction to children upon completing an artwork.

To parents, the play area is multi-functional and has many advantages. It is a place where caregivers have time to take a break. Witnessing their child to change from being nervous and insecure to being peaceful and delighted, a parent's emotions can also be pacified. Moreover, the play area is a corner open to people of all ages, where simple play is provided for parents and children to share precious moments together.



Precious time for parents and children to get together. Remarks from parents: invaluable!



Have you ever imaged playing this at the SOPD?

The medical team cannot be overlooked, as they probably most witness the great change in children's attitude – tears are replaced by smiles, and resistance is replaced by acceptance. Hence, the medical team fully understands the impact of play for sick children. Play not only helps the children to cooperate during check-ups, it also helps to stabilize their emotions. That explains why the medical team also considers the hospital play specialists as important partners.

Play brings about laughter and smiling faces, reversing the deeply-rooted boring and cold image of hospitals, and making the atmosphere of SOPD harmonious and its environment more lively. The people-oriented measure has in fact elevated the parents' and patients' satisfaction levels regarding both the arrangement of follow-up consultations and the hospital in general.



# Unforgettable moments



Play makes a SOPD a child-friendly area.



Making friends with a child who regularly needs medical follow-ups.

## Date of play

Some children need a follow-up consultation every three months and are accustomed to their “date” with the hospital play specialists. One day, the play service was temporarily suspended in the SOPD, so one girl and her parent went upstairs to the ward to meet the hospital play specialists, telling them how much they missed them and how thankful they were.

## Quiet

In the early stages of hospital play provision, the nurses of the SOPD always required the hospital play specialists and children to be quiet. When children became so excited during their play that they screamed, the nurses’ facial expression showed their annoyance. However, after three to four months, the staff’s “advice” is no longer heard. It seems that they have accepted the sound of play and the heated atmosphere created by play.

## Compensation

A mother who had to focus on taking care of her long-time bed-ridden child often neglected her other child. The play area at the department provided a place for her to enjoy play time with the “neglected” child so as to compensate. After she played handicraft with her child for the first time, she seemed deeply consoled.

## I am frightened

The basic check-up in a SOPD includes measuring height and weight. In one case, a boy, for unknown reasons, was afraid of the scales, struggling and wailing when his weight was to be measured. The hospital play specialist quickly came along and used toys to distract his attention. Gradually the child stopped crying and played for 15 minutes. Since the boy was calmer and more receptive, the hospital play specialist explained that weighing did not hurt and once completed, he could continue to play. Without another word, the boy nodded and stepped on the scales to measure his weight.

## Come early, leave late

The magical power of play is amazing. Some parents have reflected that their children request to come earlier to the hospital prior to every follow-up consultation and that after the consultation finishes, they are reluctant to leave. All they want is to enjoy more time of play.

## A child’s heart

Never underestimate the power of balloons. They also attracted medical staff to learn the art of balloon twisting. This not only added fun to their daily work, but also proved that professionals wearing smiles on their faces and joining in at the children’s level can be a quick way to a child’s heart.

## Special play

Children aged 10 or above typically would not play in the play area. However, a balloon twisting session attracted even those youngsters’ attention. The hospital play specialists invited everyone to try twisting balloons. The older children practised what they had learned, distributed their twisted balloons to the younger children and felt highly satisfied by helping others.

## The dos and don’ts of hospital play at SOPD

Playright provides the hospital play service at the SOPD of five public hospitals. Children and parents receiving treatment at these departments are welcomed to participate. Here are some dos and don’ts:



## Playright’s Hospital Play Services at hospitals with SOPD

SOPD	Hospital				
	PMH	CMC	TKOH	PWH	PYNEH
Nephrology & Urology Clinic	✓	✓			
Endocrine		✓			
Respiratory Clinic		✓	✓		✓
Orthopaedics & Traumatology				✓	
Dermatology		✓	✓		✓
Neurology Clinic	✓	✓	✓		
Oncology Clinic	✓				
Child Behavioral Clinic		✓			
Developmental Paediatrics Clinic	✓	✓			✓
DOWNS Clinic		✓			

\*Currently, the play service is available once or three times a week and each session lasts two hours. It is subject to change based on human power provision.

# MEDICAL TREATMENT NO LONGER FRIGHTENING

No one likes taking medication, injection or receiving any other form of treatment or investigation. Adults may reluctantly accept and endure medical treatment as they understand its importance. However, children may react differently when facing physical check-ups, taking medication and undergoing medical treatment and investigations. Young ones would often wail, lose their temper and even become uncontrollable. It is time that hospital play specialists take action.

## Different play for different situations

Three-year old Ron was hospitalized due to fever and diarrhoea caused by a Norovirus and pneumonia. A heparin lock had been inserted in each of his hands and his fingers and wrists were stuck onto boards and could not move. He was very bored by the fact that he could only look at but not play with the toy cars on his bed, and that he could not get out of bed.

After assessing Ron's conditions, the hospital play specialist brought a series of musical play activities to Ron according to his age, condition and mobility. The play aimed to let Ron adapt to the environment of the hospital ward as soon as possible and to alleviate his anxiety and worries. As Christmas was approaching at the time, the hospital play specialists, with Santa-Claus hats on their heads, sang Christmas Carols and played games with Ron, together with the other hospitalized children and even the medical staff. Though his hands could not move, Ron was very excited and involved in playing and enjoyed the play very much which put a smile back on his face.



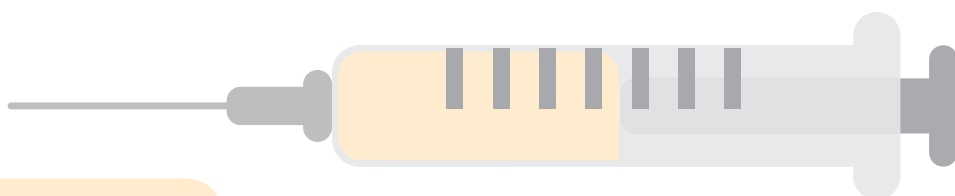
Ron's hands cannot move due to the heparin lock but this cannot stop him from playing.





Ron bursts into tears when the nurse injects medication.

While Ron was immersed in play, a nurse approached him with medication. He immediately burst into tears, crying out loud, “Don’t inject medication!” Seeing this, the hospital play specialist immediately amended the play scenario by taking out “Buzzy”, a pain-soothing little lady bird. Ron became curious and gazed at the lady bird. Since the fast vibrations of the lady bird confuse the nerves around the area where the pain happens, the device can reduce and alleviate pain. On the other hand, the movement of the lady bird also attracts the children’s attention. The double effect enabled the nurse to smoothly finish the procedure of injecting medication.



The hospital play specialist understood further from the nurse that the medication injected in Ron’s body might cause a piercing pain. No wonder Ron resisted the injection so much that he wailed non-stop every time the nurse wanted to conduct the injection. The injection also indirectly made Ron nervous and he resisted other people touching his hands.

In order to let Ron understand the reason for his medication and express his emotions, the hospital play specialist decided to intervene in the process with play by inviting Ron to play the role of a doctor to “heal” a doll. In the process, the hospital play specialist always delivers some positive messages about treatment, for example “An injection is useful for fighting bacteria” and “You can be discharged from the hospital after the bacteria go away”. In addition, the hospital play specialist would let Ron conduct an injection on the doll by simulating the procedure of injecting medication. On the other hand, play can also become a platform for a sick child to express his feelings about having to undergo the medical treatment however unwelcome it might be. Through the platform of expressive play, Ron can express his different emotions, may they be worry, sadness, disgust, boredom or helplessness, thereby helping his coping skills and mental health in the long run.

In addition to enhancing the messages and taking care of Ron’s emotions, the hospital play specialist accompanied Ron while the medication was injected. Play was used to distract his attention to ensure the process was filled with laughter and completed smoothly.



Injecting medication into a doll can help a child understand and become familiar with the procedure and facilitate the sharing of feelings.



Ron is involved in play while the nurse is injecting medication. No wonder he is so happy.

## One checking, multiple play

Apart from diarrhoea, Ron also suffered from severe pneumonia and pleural effusion. After discussion with the hospital play specialist, the attending doctor invited her to provide psychological support to Ron when he underwent ultra-sound check-ups and chest draining.

To a child, the radiology division is another unfamiliar place. When Ron was about to leave the ward, he lost his temper, was scared and cried out “Grandpa”. In response, the hospital play specialist blew air into a glove to make a “bubble patient” and Ron became a doctor to attend to the “patient”. He was so involved in the role that he forgot about where he was going and no longer resisted the doctor’s examination of his lungs.



The doctor's glove becomes a “bubble” patient while Ron becomes its doctor.



The hospital play specialist presses against Ron's chest to let him understand how it feels during the check-up.

While waiting for the ultra-sound check-up, the hospital play specialist demonstrated to Ron the procedure using play. Since Ron was too young to understand the meaning of an ultra-sound check-up, the hospital play specialist changed the focus to the body sensations by pressing the scanner against Ron's chest to let him understand how it felt when undergoing the procedure. This enabled Ron to endure the check-up bravely.

The room turned dark when the check-up started. Ron wailed immediately but the hospital play specialist was well prepared and instantly played an animated video with images and sounds. This successfully distracted Ron's attention and allowed the doctor to conduct the check-up smoothly. After the check-up, the doctor discovered fluid in Ron's lungs and immediately proceeded to conduct the chest drain procedure. When being injected with the anesthetic, Ron said repeatedly, “I don't want it, I don't want to be here.” The hospital play specialist who accompanied Ron all the time patted his eyebrows while playing relaxing music to let him sleep. But Ron was strong-willed and his nervousness and anxiety hindered the effect of the anesthetic. The hospital play specialist continued to console him with her familiar voice. In the end, the doctor successfully extracted the fluid from Ron's lungs.



The doctor deliberately holds the hospital play specialist's mobile phone so as to distract Ron's attention by the animated video.





Ron conducts a check-up on a doll patient.



The doll needs to be given oxygen.



After simulating the oxygen take-in, Ron adapts to the procedure in a relaxing manner.

Ron continued to receive a series of treatment as his condition was quite severe. The hospital play specialist continued to help Ron understand the different medical procedures, express his emotions and exercise the functions of his lungs through play. She thereby created a positive hospitalization experience for Ron and helped him cooperate throughout his stay. Hence, Ron greeted the hospital play specialist with a great smile every time. His Grandpa also had positive feelings about the hospital play service, and said, "I could not hear Ron crying in the operation room. This must be attributed to the efforts of the hospital play specialist."



Before being discharged from the hospital, Ron plays happily in the play room.

Ron finally recovered and was discharged after 15 days of hospitalization. The hospital play specialist celebrated Ron's recovery with different play activities in the play room. A healthy and energetic Ron played excitedly, putting an end to his hospitalization with a happy exclamation mark!

# EVOLUTION OF UNIFORMS

Just as doctors and nurses wear uniforms, hospital play specialists working in hospital wards also wear uniforms. Since the inception of the service in 1994, the uniform of hospital play specialists has evolved a lot.

In the initial stage, hospital play specialists could **freely choose their outfit**. Their clothes exhibited different styles and personalities. Later, it was suggested that a uniform be introduced for the convenience of medical staff and parents to identify hospital play specialists more easily, and also ensure staff's hygiene when working in the hospital wards.



As the setting up of hospital play specialists originated from the mission of promoting children's play, the evolution of uniforms is closely related to the style of the organization. The first generation of uniform was the organization's **deep blue long-sleeved T-shirt**, with the Playright's corporate figures printed on it. Then it evolved to a **light blue round-collared T-shirt** with the name of Playright highlighted on the chest.





Under the corporate branding revamp in 2006, **orange** was adopted as our house colour as it represents a more energetic, lively and younger image. The orange colour was also adopted for the uniform of hospital play specialists.



In 2014, after collecting views from stakeholders, we decided to design a uniform tailored for hospital play specialists when carrying out their duties in the wards. As a result, the current uniform is orange in colour, round-collared and simple in style. The uniform not only exhibits an image of **professional care**, it also brings to the wards a bright, warm and delightful touch of colour. In the eyes of the children, the uniform is also a symbol of kindness, playfulness and friendliness. No wonder the children would call hospital play specialists by the name of “sisters in orange”. The nickname reflects how a suitable uniform can create an outstanding image.

Apart from the basic uniform, a uniform designated for “Playright Channel” which is an interactive TV channel under the hospital play service was also created. The **green uniform with the logo of “Playright Channel”** printed on it allows the children, parents and medical staff to promptly recognize the organizers of the monthly special programmes.



# HEARTFELT GRATITUDE

- The Lichi Charitable Foundation Limited continued its generous support with a donation of HK\$1,188,000 to support our hospital play service for over two years until March 2020. The donation has enabled the provision of more services for sick children in the Paediatrics and Adolescent Medicine Department of the Pamela Youde Nethersole Eastern Hospital.
- At the Playright 30<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Charitable Gala Dinner, we were grateful to the following corporations, organizations and individuals for each making a donation of HK\$4,000. Their donations supported the purchase of “play packs” for sick children to enjoy more play in hospital wards. They include:
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  - ♥ Hong Kong Paediatric Nurses Association Limited
  - ♥ Pop Art Group Limited
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