



LIVE FROM THE SCENE

Create a rainbow in paediatric patients' journey of growth

JUST FOR THE RECORD

Open a digital chapter in hospital play service delivery



IN EVERY STAGE OF PAEDIATRIC PATIENT'S JOURNEY HOSPITAL PLAY SPECIALISTS ARE ALWAYS THE BEST COMPANY

Play is an important element in children's growth. A lot of research has pointed out the benefits and values of play, including physical development, sociability and communication, cognitive thinking, incubating creativity, expressing emotions, nurturing concentration ability, problem solving, self-understanding, taking challenges, building self-confidence etc. As explained in detail in the thesis issued by the International Play Association in 2014, play is crucial in the development and growth of children. The thesis titled "Power of Play" issued by the American Academy of Pediatrics in 2018 also restated the importance of play, and even advised doctors to use "play" as a new prescription to promote children's health.

Hospital play specialists are firm believers in play as an effective contributor in facing and speeding the recovery of illnesses in children. Not only does play console children, but it also provides physical and mental stimulation for bedridden paediatric patients and promotes their healthy development. Moreover, play is a simple approach for paediatric patients to understand more about their medical conditions.

Since its inception in 1994, Playright's Hospital Play Service has continued to develop over the past three decades. Every hospital play specialist is committed to accompanying every paediatric patient in their journey of fighting diseases.

Provision of tailor-made intervention Meeting the psycho-social needs of children at different stages

The treatment that paediatric patients receive varies depending on the kinds of illness they suffer from. Hospital play specialists carefully assess every case and design a unique plan tailored to every child's needs. While delivering the service, we adjust to meet children's physical, psycho-social and therapeutic needs. This is to ensure that in every stage of the patient journey - from being admitted to the hospital, receiving treatment, rehabilitating, and being discharged from hospitals - paediatric patients' physical, mental, and emotional needs are considered when designing a hospital play intervention programme.



Be prepared before getting ill

During childhood, children inevitably receive medical services and some may face complicated medical procedures. Under the impact of the recent COVID-19 pandemic, children also learned about infection control and related medical information. As a result, many children may feel worried, anxious, fearful, and confused. Parents may also be worried and distressed when knowing that their children get ill.

To help children enhance their medical knowledge and reduce the stress caused by illnesses, hospital play specialists spare no effort in visiting schools and communities to help children get prepared through play workshops. In a child-friendly way, appropriate information about diseases and treatment is provided to enhance children's cognitive and psychological preparations and assist children in facing medical-related situations with a positive attitude.



Hospital play specialists visit different campuses to share hospital-related matters.



The medical play experiential box developed by hospital play specialists enables children to understand the basic medical procedures through different play activities.





Admission



The reasons for hospitalization vary among children. Some are admitted to hospitals for casualties or acute diseases; some need follow-up examinations for different treatment and medical plans. Facing unfamiliar people, environments, or situations, children may have negative emotions, such as panic, insecurity, and worry... Hospital play specialists would help children alleviate their negative feelings, receive treatment, and be admitted to hospitals positively.

Hospital play specialists would help children understand the environment of hospitals and basic examination procedures through picture books, medical play etc. When hospital play specialists get the notifications of paediatric patients' appointments for examinations and treatment, we will communicate with healthcare professionals to understand the patients' medical conditions to develop tailor-made play programmes. For example, paediatric patients who must undergo surgeries would be initially acquainted with the procedures through a booklet that provides medical information in a child-friendly way. On the operation day, hospital play specialists would spare time to explain every surgical procedure to paediatric patients in an age-appropriate manner, remind them of dos and don'ts, and guide them to share their feelings through medical simulation play tools. This seeks to let paediatric patients thoroughly understand what they will face, fully express their feelings and positively handle their emotions.



Making use of different medical play tools to talk about different medical examinations and treatment.



Hospital play specialists help children to understand surgical procedures, including intravenous injections through online preparation play programmes.



After listening to an explanation by hospital play specialists, the paediatric patient understands the surgery procedures and covers the doll with a mask to simulate the procedure.



Examinations and treatment



Children may have different emotions and reactions when receiving treatment. Hospital play specialists believe that every child has the right and ability to understand their medical conditions. Hence, we design different hospital play interventions plan upon assessing different situations according to children's age, cognitive abilities, mental and physical conditions.

For a five-year-old child who has to undergo peritoneal dialysis due to renal disease, hospital play specialists would tailor a kind of play, which includes a doll whose belly is connected to a tube, a "miniature" dialysis machine, a picture book and a chess board titled "a laundry factory within the belly," accompanied by children's favourite toy cars and different types of balls. The intervention play programme seeks to let paediatric patients understand related procedures and get psychologically prepared.



Hospital play specialists design a play programme tailored to paediatric patients suffering from renal disease.



Hospital play specialists accompany children to undergo the Magnetic Resonance Imaging examination.

Treatment often causes insecurity or negative emotions. Children also have to overcome pain and discomfort of varying degrees. It is common for children to cry and whine to express their feelings. Hospital play specialists are more inclined to believe that with appropriate support, children can positively express emotions and even develop a way of coping to address their own needs. In addition to explaining the procedures to paediatric patients through medical simulation tools, we accompany them through examinations or treatment. We would also discuss with children how to overcome fears and alleviate pain in a suitable and positive way.

A little boy needed to take 8 eye drops before examining his eyes. But he was terrified when the eye drops were dropped into his eye. Hence, hospital play specialists repeated the simulative procedure of dropping the eye drops into the eye and then discussed with the boy how he could complete the procedure. They agreed that the boy remained in a sitting position, and the hospital play specialist counted from 1 to 3 while the nurse would drop the eye drops on the count of 3. In the end, the boy completed the procedure with a nurse's help and received his eye examination successfully.



The blood-taking doll commonly used in medical simulation play.



Hospitalization



Every child needs to play, and hospitalized children are no exception! Play lets paediatric patients replay the role of children, enjoy the joy and satisfaction of play, and choose whatever play they like and satisfy their needs. Sickesses are beyond the control of paediatric patients. However, they can lead and make decisions during play!

Apart from preparing fun and interesting play activities for paediatric patients, hospital play specialists are always by their side, playing with them at their bedside. The team would design and distribute play packs with different contents. Hospitalized children can use different materials to play whenever they want to play.

Being wrapped in transparent plastic bags, these play packs are specially designed by hospital play specialists, according to children's preference, age groups, and medical conditions. There are different types of play packs, including toys for infants and toddlers, handicrafts, and parent-child play. The play pack may look simple, but all required materials are provided that facilitate children to play whenever they want.



A wide variety of play packs, with ingenious designs and versatile materials, seek to satisfy the needs of children of different ages and with different favourites.



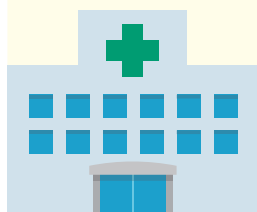
Hospital play specialists celebrate Chinese New Year with hospitalized children.

Birthdays are especially important for children who are hospitalized for a long time. This is because every birthday marks their efforts in fighting their condition or disease and deserves a celebration! Hence, hospital play specialists would hold a unique birthday party with musical and play elements according to the child's favourites. Healthcare professionals are invited, adding to the party's joy and blessings.

Hospital play specialists also emphasize festivals. For children admitted to hospitals for acute illnesses or who have been hospitalized for a long time, the festival brings about exceptional joy and extraordinary experiences. We usually decorate the wards and arrange play activities on festive days, such as Christmas, New Year, Children's Day, etc., to let children experience the meaning of festivals and receive their blessings. Healthcare professionals are also invited to enjoy the festivals to uplift the atmosphere of the wards.



Hospital play specialists hold a birthday party for a paediatric patient, with healthcare professionals.



As for paediatric patients with special needs or relying on medical apparatus, it is sometimes more difficult to experience daily life as they have very few chances to go outside. Through play, hospital play specialists bring them delicate, sensual experiences and stimulation to satisfy the children's needs for growth, adding colors to their regular days.



Cooperate with healthcare professionals, Hospital play specialists arrange flowers viewing in gardens for long-time hospitalized children.



Hospital play specialists celebrate Easter with paediatric patients.

Discharge



It is worthy of a celebration when children are discharged from hospital. However, some paediatric patients may need to continue with on-going treatment or follow-up medical consultations. When paediatric patients are no longer under the close care of healthcare professionals, it is important to ensure that the children continue receiving treatment and remain in good condition. It is also important to make children understand the pros and cons and importance of treatment in a child-friendly way. The intervention of play makes it easier for children to accept treatment and cooperate.

For example, after undergoing fixation surgery due to bone fractures, patients' rehabilitation from wearing a cast to removing takes about 6-8 weeks. During rehabilitation, patients need to take good care of the injured/fractured parts and follow-up consultations. Hence, hospital play specialists worked with orthopaedics doctors to design and produce a localized picture book to explain the procedures of putting on a cast and its removal, as well as the points-to-note of taking care of a cast in an interesting way. We also produce play for children to face and alleviate nervousness. The books encourage paediatric patients, doctors, nurses, hospital play specialists, and families to form a team of guards for caring during this stage.



Paediatric patients work with hospital play specialist to form a team of cast guards.



The picture book "Cast Guards" is a collaboration of hospital play specialists and orthopaedics doctor, from creating the content to designing play ideas and tips for cast caring.

Back to the community



Hospital play specialists also care for paediatric patients suffering from long term diseases, including renal diseases, cancer, diabetes, etc. We accompany the patients through different examinations and treatment until they recover and are discharged from hospital. We even accompany patients in follow-up consultations for a long time. It is common for hospital play specialists to know some patients for over a decade.

Hospital play specialists have witnessed the growth of paediatric patients who have gone through great difficulties. With the hope that every paediatric patient has a positive attitude toward life and is physically and mentally strong, hospital play specialists arrange various leisure activities for the paediatric patients, such as dramas, outdoor play activities, cooking classes, etc. We also organize activities with patient groups to spread play and positive medical experiences and let child patients feel supported in combating diseases.



Paediatric patients with renal diseases and hospital play specialists enjoy painting together.



Hospital play specialists organize a play workshop with the Youth Diabetes Action.

Paediatric patients cannot choose not to get ill. But how to face diseases and interpret the journey of fighting diseases is an open-ended question. Play is the best way to help paediatric patients through the tough times of fighting diseases. Hence, we will continue to play with paediatric patients in the wards and insist that children should play even when they are sick!



Scope of Hospital Play Service



Serving 7 public hospitals in 5 clusters

Hong Kong East

- 1 Pamela Youde Nethersole Eastern Hospital

Kowloon Central

- 2 Hong Kong Children's Hospital

Kowloon East

- 3 Tseung Kwan O Hospital

Kowloon West

- 4 Caritas Medical Centre
- 5 Princess Margaret Hospital
- 6 Yan Chai Hospital

New Territories East

- 7 Prince of Wales Hospital



Service mode



Hybrid model of in-person direct service at the hospital & online programme

Number of beneficiaries
35,000 on average per year



Encountering over 25 types of illnesses /departments Covering 44 wards

- Anaesthesiology and Perioperative Medicine
- Cardiology
- Developmental Behavioral Paediatrics
- Ear Nose and Throat
- Electrographic Diagnostic Unit (EDU)
- Endocrinology
- Haematology
- High Dependency Unit
- Immunology
- Infectious Disease Division
- Metabolic Medicine
- Neonatology
- Nephrology
- Neurology
- Neurosurgery
- Ophthalmology
- Orthopaedics and Traumatology
- Paediatrics and Adolescent Medicine
- Paediatric Intensive Care Unit
- Paediatric Surgery
- Palliative Care
- Radiology
- Respiratory Medicine
- Rheumatology
- Specialist outpatient clinic





Create a rainbow in paediatric patients' journey of growth

One of the strongholds of Playright's hospital play services is the Caritas Medical Centre, where hospital play specialists serve paediatric patients of the Developmental Disabilities Unit (DDU) as well as in the general paediatric wards. Children in the DDU are often residents in the unit as they encounter medically complex conditions which need to be treated with long-term care. They have very few chances to go outside and some of them are in the golden stage of learning and developing social skills. Hence, hospital play specialists cater for their needs for growth through play.

Hospital play specialists used to just arrange outdoor activities for children of the DDU during school holidays in the past. The activities included one-day tours of theme parks or viewing flowers at rehabilitation gardens, where paediatric patients and their parents enjoyed their time together. However, arranging outdoor activities became challenging during the pandemic.

Despite the pandemic-related restrictive circumstances, the hospital play specialists strove to add fun to the lives of paediatric patients at the DDU and create unforgettable moments for them. We organised large-scale events with carnival as the theme inside the hospital, creating extraordinary experiences for paediatric patients as we added elements of sounds, colours, and smells to stimulate all senses. The carnival was fun and exciting, bringing about hilarious and joyous moments for the paediatric patients. Ten-year-old King-hee was among the children who participated in the carnival.

Special play

King-hee was diagnosed with chromosomal abnormality, which has affected her cognitive development and physical abilities. She was admitted to the DDU of the Caritas Medical Centre when she was six years old. When hospital play specialists met King-hee, they arranged suitable play activities for her, such as musical play, water colour painting, etc. She enjoyed the fun of different play activities and got excited whenever she heard the hospital play specialists playing children's songs.

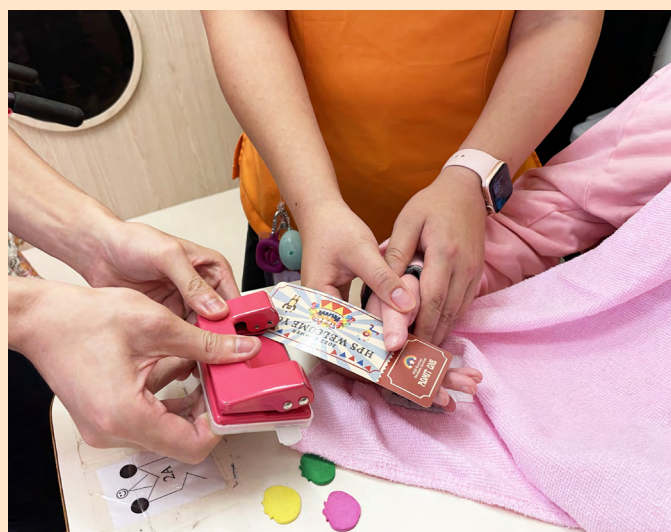
King-hee's mother also actively participated in parent-child activities organised by the hospital play specialists. With their help, she made adorable ornaments for her daughter to wear, hoping to bring joy to King-hee's long-term hospitalization. Accompanied and supported by her mother, King-hee was very uplifted by joining the carnival, with her facial expressions showing how excited and happy she was.

Hilarious carnival

Venue	Rainbow House Playroom
Content	Every booth was ingeniously decorated to spark different sensory stimuli, including sight, sound, touch and smell.
Accessibility	The playroom was specially arranged for paediatric patients to move around in wheelchairs; the height and width of booths were adjusted for the convenience of wheelchair users.

Tickets booth

To make the event look like a carnival in real life, the hospital play specialists designed entry tickets for children and adults. They asked children to punch ticket holes which enhanced their sense of rituals and was an ideal activity for children to use their limbs. It was easy for King-hee to follow suit!



Rainbow shot

King-hee and her mother formed a strong team. They worked together to throw coins in the rainbow toss and win a balloon. King-hee enjoyed touching the silky smooth balloon.



Goldfish scooping

Different animal toys were put in a tray with water and ice, letting the children experience the touch of water, ice and plastic. King-hee touched the tortoise toy with the help of her mother and enjoyed sunbathing near the windows. She also observed vehicles outside the windows and birds on the grassland, engrossed in experiences that differed so much from the wards.



Handicraft booth

The hospital play specialists printed a beautiful photo for King-hee and inserted it in a photo frame as a souvenir.



Lights and shadows

In a booth set with colourful lights and music, the children waved their hands to the rhythm.



Carnival float

In the DDU, some children have to use wheelchairs just as King-hee, and some are on respiratory support. Their abilities to move are restricted, and the space for movement is also limited. As such, the hospital play specialists created a carnival float with exciting elements, touring around the wards to spread joy and happiness. The float also allowed bedridden patients to enjoy the fun of a carnival through delightful music, colourful pops, lights and shadows, and the smell of popcorn.



Heroes behind the scene

The carnival could not be successfully held without the assistance and participation of healthcare professionals. In addition, with the support of intern social workers and student volunteers from the Patient Resources Centre, the atmosphere of the carnival was uplifted as they led the children to be engrossed in play. Our gratitude also goes to the parents who actively joined the event.

On the same occasion, healthcare professionals, student volunteers, and parents witnessed the importance of play for hospitalized children. The smiles on long-term hospitalized children's faces and their responses of curiosity were incredibly precious. The hospital play specialists hope that every stakeholder continues to be concerned about and actively respond to the needs for play of this group of children.



Heartfelt gratitude

I thank the hospital play specialists for their respect and emphasis on children's right to play.

Though my daughter cannot communicate verbally, they observe her facial expressions and reactions to respond to her. They respect my daughter as a "normal" person. Their care and love for children were manifested during the carnival. Knowing that my daughter cannot leave the ward, they hold the carnival inside it.

I hope that more hospital play service will be provided as it is important for the growth of children who are bedridden for a long time.



King-hee's mother

Friends were amazed after seeing the photos taken during the carnival. They thought that life during hospitalization must be boring. I have witnessed the hospital play specialists' detailed mindset of decorating the ward, designing the activities, and making the props. They strive to meet the developmental needs of children and let them have the best carnival experiences.

I thank the hospital play specialists for caring for the children, and I think that the hospital play service is important for children's growth.



A parent

The carnival float made by the hospital play specialists added many colours and laughter to the ward. Their creativity is beyond imagination!



Healthcare professionals

Chromosome Disease

This is a genetic disease which is caused by alteration or mutation of one or more chromosome(s). A chromosome is the part that contains DNA in a DNA cell. Some chromosome diseases may be heritable. However, some paediatric patients do not have any known family history of inheritance. The symptoms of chromosome diseases vary according to different conditions. The general symptoms include the following:

- change of behaviour
- facial variations, including cleft lip and cleft palate
- respiratory problems
- neurological disorder, such as seizures
- developmental delay or learning disability
- height under average or slow growth
- challenges in diet or digestion
- vision or hearing impairment



Open a digital chapter in hospital play service delivery

Playright continuously reviews and renews the hospital play service according to paediatric patients' needs. We strive to help paediatric patients adapt to different medical procedures and establish positive experiences. We constantly communicate with paediatric departments that receive hospital play service to keep abreast of their latest development and what they need emerging from it. For example, the Yan Chai Hospital of the Kowloon West Cluster recently opened a new ward which focuses on handling the cases undergoing the skin prick test of all paediatric departments within the cluster. In the initial stage, there were estimated to be 20 cases per month.

The skin prick test is a simple examination procedure. However, it involves pricking the skin, and patients must wait for the test results. By introducing hospital play intervention, we aim to help these patients face the procedure positively, thereby enhancing the efficiency of the testing process. This initiative was launched at the invitation of healthcare professionals, who recognised the potential benefits of a hospital play service for skin prick test cases.

Service content

Apart from distributing play packs to hospitalised children to enjoy the basic service of "playing while being hospitalised," hospital play specialists create a child-friendly environment in the wards. For example, stickers would be pasted onto the walls to distract paediatric patients' attention and console them when receiving examinations.



For the skin prick test, healthcare professionals will provide a digital tablet to the paediatric patients and their parents on the day of the test. Through the tablets, hospital play specialists brief these families online on the medical procedure and tools using a PowerPoint presentation and medical simulation play.



Hospital play specialists will use medical simulation tools to explain to the paediatric patients the feelings they may encounter when receiving the skin prick test step-by-step in a child-friendly way. The paediatric patients will also be given a doll so that they can try to conduct the test on the doll simultaneously with the hospital play specialist. This can help children gain a deeper understanding of the medical procedure. The doll will also become the companion of the paediatric patients, accompanying them during the actual test and hopefully helping them alleviate their stress.

Steps of developing the service

12 / 2022 & 4 / 2023

Hospital play specialists visited the Yan Chai Hospital twice to meet with the healthcare professional team. The team took a guided tour around the hospital and explained the medical procedures of the skin prick test.



5 / 2023 - 7 / 2023

We took the opportunity to collect children's views about the treatment room and hospital environment through play packs distributed at the Caritas Medical Centre and Princess Margaret Hospital. Based on these invaluable insights, we prepared a draft design of the new environment and sought the input of healthcare professionals. The new environment was expected to change the impression for paediatric patients of the hospital from being cold and barren, to friendly and fun. It can also facilitate the healthcare professional team's efforts to distract the paediatric patients during procedures.



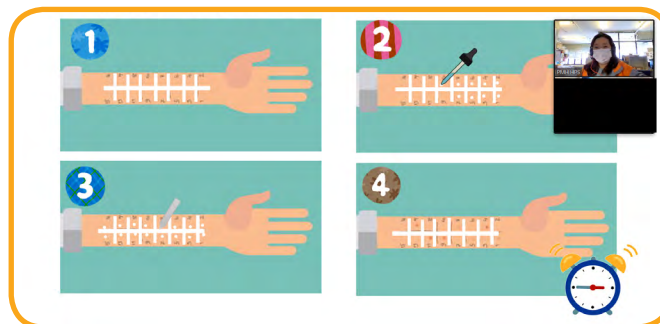
8 / 8 / 2023

Hospital play specialists held a workshop for the Yan Chai Hospital's healthcare professionals. The workshop included skills for communicating with children, the importance of creating a child-friendly environment, tips for conducting treatment procedures, distraction toys and play, medical simulation play for the skin prick test, and procedures for case referral.



21 / 8 / 2023

An online service supporting the skin prick test was launched. Afterwards, we also explained the effectiveness of the service to healthcare professionals who agreed that paediatric patients completed the medical procedure more smoothly with the play intervention. After a trial run and service enhancement, the service formally commenced.



INFORMATION CENTRE

The skin prick test is a commonly used, simple, safe and quick diagnostic method for assessing a paediatric patient's allergic reactions to specific allergens. The procedure involves pricking the patient's skin with a small amount of allergen and observing for any resulting allergic reaction.

During skin prick tests, healthcare professionals mark multiple test points on the paediatric patient's skin, each representing a specific allergen. Then, using a fine needle, they gently prick the skin's surface to introduce a tiny amount of the allergen. If a patient shows a positive reaction to a specific allergen, the corresponding skin will develop redness and swelling within 15-20 minutes. The larger the area of redness and swelling, the higher the likelihood of the patient being allergic to that allergen. If necessary, the doctor may arrange additional blood tests.

A skin prick test is typically performed on the patient's inner forearm or back. However, the test is often conducted on the back for infants with limited arm space. For patients with eczema, the test is performed on unaffected skin. In most cases, the skin prick test is painless or may cause only mild discomfort.



Our heartfelt gratitude



Thanks to the donation of HK\$32,630,000 from the Hong Kong Jockey Club Charities Trust, we have been implementing the 5.5-year “Jockey Club Playright P.L.A.Y. for Child Health” project from February 2019 to July 2024.



The Community Chest of Hong Kong generously donated HK\$1,234,672 to support the provision of hospital play services in the Department of Paediatrics & Adolescent Medicine of the Princess Margaret Hospital in 2023/24.



Thank you to philanthropists Mr and Mrs Lawrence Ho who generously donated HK\$5,000,000 to support our 5-year “Hospital Play Service @ Caritas Medical Centre” project from April 2020 to March 2025. The project will benefit paediatric patients of the Department of Paediatrics and Adolescent Medicine and the Developmental Disabilities Unit of the Caritas Medical Centre.



MINI GT generously donated HK\$297,600 to support hospital play services.



Lichi Charitable Foundation Limited continuously supported paediatric patients from the Department of Paediatrics and Adolescent Medicine of the Pamela Youde Nethersole Eastern Hospital. The donation of HK\$200,000 has sponsored our Hospital Play project from September 2023 to August 2025.



With the matching grant from the Partnership Fund for the Disadvantaged, we have been carrying out the “Play for Wellbeing – Hospital Play Service” project from September 2023 to August 2025 to increase play provision for paediatric patients in the Department of Paediatrics and Adolescent Medicine of the hospital.



The Aberdeen Marina Club generously donated HK\$100,000 to support the provision of hospital play services in the Department of Paediatrics & Adolescent Medicine of the Yan Chai Hospital from April to September 2023.



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