



### **Children's Health COVID-19 Response Fund**

Like most healthcare facilities across the country, Children's Health is already feeling and responding to numerous COVID-19 challenges with the evolving impacts on our providers, patients and their families; rapid depletion of resources crucial for patient care in the medical community; and shifts in how we can and should provide medical services as we, together, try to slow and stop the spread of the virus.

When the pandemic began, the institution formed an internal command center to address these and other issues so that Children's Health could better prepare for the peak of coronavirus infection in North Texas and the toll it takes on healthcare organizations and the health and lives of so many. Already, Children's Health has had to invest in more resources, including additional ventilators and lab equipment, protective gear, more sanitation and disinfectant needs, increased child care options for essential workers, and virtual health capabilities to ensure that our patients can continue to receive clinical care during social distancing.

System operations have also been impacted by limiting pediatric care, delaying the services we routinely provide such as non-essential procedures and appointments, and curtailing community-based programming. The overall long-term impact of these changes to the institution are yet to be fully realized. Accordingly, Children's Medical Center Foundation has established a Children's Health Response Fund intended to offer Children's Health the flexibility to expand capacity, secure additional equipment and supplies, protect and support our frontline healthcare providers, and tend to the ongoing clinical and social needs of our patients and families who still must receive care for their existing array of pediatric conditions, continuing throughout times of local, national and international crisis.

### **Children's Health Indigent Family Assistance Fund**

Many families arrive at Children's Health unprepared for their child's medical journey – whether it's a traumatic injury that brings a child to the Level 1 Trauma Center in our Emergency Department or finding out their child has cancer. Compounding the psychological toll of absorbing and managing a child's medical condition are the logistical and financial complexities that families confront during the course of treatment. Some families face economic hardship due to the cost of medical care or missed work and wages related to their child's illness or injury, and many families in our care struggle financially prior to their child's condition. Additionally, some families must travel far from their hometowns and personal support networks to receive care at our facilities, further adding to the financial and psychological they endure.

Social workers at Children's Health aid families during these times of great stress, providing psychosocial support, resource referrals, and more. To help these families focus more on helping their children heal – rather than the stresses of financial difficulty – the Social Work team at Children's Health also manages the Indigent Family Assistance Fund, which provides financial support for qualified families to obtain necessities, such as meals, clothing, transportation, convenient lodging, car seats, and medical supplies, while their children are in our care. Assistance with these everyday non-medical expenses can make a world of difference to our patient families as they stand alongside their children who bravely battle disease or injury.



# KIDS RULE. SO DO YOU.



## Child Life

When children are ill or injured, the hospital environment can be unfamiliar or overwhelming for them and their families. Whether their visit is relatively short, for minor health concerns, or an extended stay at one of our hospitals, everyday routines are disrupted; there are new diagnoses to understand; and some may experience potential stress and trauma associated with an illness or injury. For every family's unique circumstances, the Child Life department at Children's Health can deliver an array of tailored approaches and amenities to help them cope with these challenges. For more than 40 years, our Child Life department has been there for the ups and downs, every step of the way.

Our credentialed child life specialists and assistants offer support for families and children to minimize the impact of injury, illness, and hospitalization on a child's growth, development, and well-being. Working directly with our young patients, child life staff use evidence-based methods centering on play to help children therapeutically; for distraction; and to better understand their diagnoses in a developmentally appropriate way, such as by watching a teddy bear undergo similar procedures (e.g., vitals check, blood pressure monitoring). Because children are involved in their own care in this way, they feel empowered as agents in their own recovery—which can be vital for these little people who may feel doubly vulnerable as both children and patients.

Every year, child life professionals work with approximately 45,000 children at Children's Health in their hospital rooms or other locations throughout our health system, including in our playrooms. Children of all ages can go to dedicated playrooms to play with developmentally appropriate toys, such as blocks, dolls, and video games. One of our largest playrooms is the The Child Life Zone at Children's Medical Center Dallas, a state-of-the-art, therapeutic space for children to play, learn, laugh, and relax. If a child cannot leave his or her room, child life specialists visit them there and read to them or play with them.

Child Life also coordinates programming and opportunities to help normalize the hospital experience, such as annual holiday tree lightings on both the Plano and Dallas campuses; holiday parties and visits from Santa; and specialized, diagnosis-specific summer camps. For instance, child life specialists help Children's Health patients attend Camp Moss, for children with cardiac disease, and Camp Esperanza, for children with cancer, where they can safely participate in summer camp and don't miss out on this important rite of childhood.

Philanthropy is so critical to the many important aspects of our Child Life program because it is the only external revenue source of support. Philanthropic contributions thus ensure that Child Life services, offered free of charge, remain widely available for children and their families under our care. Contributions can help provide supplies, technology, camp experiences, and toys and games, as well as salary support for our special dedicated Child Life employees.

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