

Patient information

Play Services Information Leaflet

What is a health play specialist?

Health Play Specialists are trained members of staff who use therapeutic and specialised play to help support children in hospital and healthcare settings. A Health Play Specialist can use preparation, distraction and post-procedural play to give children a positive experience.

Why is play important?

Play helps children and young people communicate and understand what is happening to them. It can help them cope with procedures and relieve any fears and anxieties. Being in hospital can be a frightening experience, play can make being in hospital a more enjoyable experience.



What can a health play specialist offer?

- Normalising and developmental play to encourage and help child meet their developmental milestones.
- Prepare children and young people for hospital procedures, treatments using specialised play techniques.
- Help children explore unfamiliar equipment and procedures such as MRI or CT scans.
- Help children develop coping strategies, this can help with pain management.



- Provide distraction techniques through play during procedures such as blood tests.
- To provide play plans to assist with procedures to ensure the child or young person's preferences and choices are considered and to meet their developmental needs.

- To provide stimulating and therapeutic activities to alleviate stress and encourage engagement.
- Post Procedural Play gives the child or young person the opportunity to discuss how they found their treatment or procedure and help alleviate any misconceptions.

Accident and Emergency

There is a Registered Play Specialist working in Accident and Emergency; supporting the children and young people who attend, whether that be at the start of their hospital journey or a reattendance.

Offering the same support and therapeutic play as the ward-based Play Specialist, working across the week and including some weekends.

Rainbow Ward

Our Children's ward currently has one Registered Play Specialist available during the week to support the children and young people who attend. This may be for planned procedures or emergency care.

On the ward we have a playroom and balcony area for children and their families to use. There is also a teenage room linked with the school room for our young people to enjoy, including the use of a PlayStation and Xbox. We also have a portable sensory unit that can create a sensory space at the bedside, including fiberoptic lights, hurricane tube, a projector and music.



PAT Dogs currently visit the ward on a regular basis along with our POD entertainer.

How to access our services

Inpatient

During a visit to the Paediatric Emergency Dept or Rainbow ward please ask a member of staff if you would like to see the Health Play Specialist.

Outpatient

If your child is an outpatient please speak to their clinician who can refer to the Health Play Specialist service via E-Care message centre.

If you would like any information regarding access to the West Suffolk Hospital and its facilities please visit the website for AccessAble (formerly DisabledGo)
<https://www.accessable.co.uk>

