

## Resources For Parents

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### **Web Page:**

Association of Child Life  
Professionals: Parent Resources  
<http://www.childlife.org/parents>

### **Books about the Hospital:**

- “Franklin Goes To the Hospital”  
By: Paulette Bourgeois and  
Brenda Clark
- “Going to the Hospital”  
By: Sue McMillan

### **Books about Feelings:**

- “Today I Feel Silly: And Other  
Moods That Make My Day”  
By: Jamie Lee Curtis
- “Glad Monster, Sad Monster”  
By: Ed Emberley and Anne Mi-  
randa
- “The Invisible String”  
By: Patrice Karst

## About Child Life

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At Texas Children's Hospital, we understand a visit to the hospital can be challenging for your child and family. Child Life Specialists are available to ease your child's anxiety and help him or her feel more comfortable in the hospital.

They use age-appropriate explanations to help children know what to expect while at the hospital. Child Life Specialists also know that the hospital can bring up different feelings for your child. Therefore, they will work with you to support your child's emotional needs. Child Life Specialists also provide play opportunities to support your child's growth and development.



**Texas Children's  
Hospital**<sup>®</sup>

Contact your child life specialist to learn more about helping your school age child cope with hospitalization.

## A PARENT'S GUIDE TO UNDERSTANDING THE HOSPITALIZED CHILD

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Preschoolers  
(3-5 years old)

## Potential Stressors During Hospitalization

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- May think being in the hospital is punishment for their behaviors
- May feel abandoned or see separation from parents/family as loss of love
- May believe being in the hospital is permanent because of their limited understanding of time
- May not understand the reason for being in the hospital is to help their body be stronger and healthier
- May regress to previous stages of development (thumb sucking, temper tantrums, feeding problems, or bed wetting) due to anxiety

## Foundations of Pre- school Development

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During this stage of development preschool age children are very curious and explore the world around them through play. Preschoolers are working to improve their verbal communication skills and begin to express their thoughts. Preschoolers' thoughts are egocentric, meaning they think all things happen because of their own thoughts, behaviors and wishes. Caregivers being away can cause a preschooler to become upset due to their lack of understanding of time.



## Helping your child cope with hospitalization

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- Continue home routines (such as bed time or nap time)
- Bring items from home (blanket, stuffed animal, clothes, or other security objects) to make the hospital more comfortable
- Be honest about what will hurt. Don't say it won't if it will—focus instead on how it will feel (such as “the medicine may feel like a pinch in your arm”)
- Provide your child with simple and brief details about how things will feel or sound (such as “the blood pressure cuff will feel like a squeeze on your arm”)
- Offer your child support during a procedure by holding hands, looking at your child face to face, and talking gently to your child
- Allow your child opportunities for play
- Provide your child with available choices or appropriate jobs, such as picking what to eat for breakfast or allowing your child to decide what pajamas to wear