



## How to Help...Your Child in the Hospital

When your child must be hospitalized, this experience can prove to be stressful on your child as well as the entire family. We, as staff at UC Davis Children's Hospital, recognize that the hospital is a difficult environment for children to be in. While we cannot take away all the stress, we do want to help your child to cope as best as possible. The following are some suggestions to help your child while here.

- o Play as often as possible. No matter the age of your child, having down time to just be a kid and participate in favorite activities is always a great way of providing an appropriate distraction.
- o Encourage your child to maintain connections to other siblings and friends at school. If possible and you feel it is appropriate, have siblings and friends visit.
- o Talk with your child, in an age-appropriate manner, about what to expect while in the hospital. Use simple language and short phrases encouraging your child to ask further questions.
- o Provide time prior to procedures or events so that your child can understand what to expect and can ask questions.
- o If a procedure seems as though it will be taking place in your child's hospital room, ask if it can be done in the Treatment Room instead. This room in Pediatrics was created because we recognize it can be difficult for children to relax and sleep at in the same space in which procedures take place.
- o If your child will be hospitalized for an extended period of time, ask for a daily schedule to write in your child's cares, treatments, therapies, and playtimes (or down time) so that they can know what to expect throughout the day.
- o If you must leave your child's bedside, always let your child know before you leave. Share what time you are leaving and when you will be returning.
- o If you cannot be with your child at all times while hospitalized, make a plan about when you will call to talk with your child.
- o Child Life Specialists, whom are educated in the effects of hospitalization on children, are available Monday through Friday to provide resources to help your child to cope more with hospitalization. Some of the resources available include: procedural preparation picture books, medical play equipment, children's books about coping with hospitalization, and specialized distraction and diversion activities for coping with procedures.