

GROUP VISIT GUIDELINES

1. All group visit requests must be submitted for approval by the Child Life Department at least 14 days before the proposed visit date. You will receive a confirmation email or phone call to inform you if your group's visit has been approved. If we are unable to accommodate your request for a group visit, the group representative will receive an email from the Child Life Department.
2. On the day of your group's visit, all members of the group must arrive 5 minutes before the scheduled time. A member of the Child Life team will meet your group near the Chapel in Huntsville Hospital for Women & Children's lobby and remain with your group during your visit. If the group is more than 15 minutes late, we will reschedule your visit for another time.
3. Visiting groups should have no more than 5 people. This helps us to adequately orient group visitors to the hospital, maintain patient privacy and prevent the spread of infection. Group members must be **at least 16 years** of age to visit, and groups must also include at least one adult.
4. All group visits take place in the playroom on the Pediatric Unit and should be limited to 45 minutes. Activities should be appropriate for children ages 3 to 19 years old. Patient room visits are not allowed.
5. Visitors are expected to dress appropriately for the health care setting. The following are not permitted: open-toe shoes; logo t-shirts with inappropriate slogans; tank tops; and low cut tops. If you intend to wear a costume, please include a photo of your costume before your visit. **Costumes must be cleaned prior to hospital visit.**
6. For the safety of our patients, visitors who have a fever, runny nose, sore throat or any flu-like symptoms may not participate in the group visit.
7. Because our patients come from a variety of religious, political and social backgrounds, the content of any presentation or gift **must not include religion or politics.**
8. Because of dietary restrictions and food allergies, **foods/candy may not be distributed** during visits.
9. Only **NEW** toys or gifts approved in advance by Child Life may be given to patients. If your group plans to provide gifts to patients, please be sure you bring enough for each child on the unit. We typically have 35 patients on the floor and 10 patients in the Pediatric ICU. Keep in mind the age range of our patients (newborn to 19 years).
10. Mylar balloons may be given to patients, but latex and rubber balloons are not permitted.
11. Media coverage of an event can produce additional stress for patients so it is not encouraged. If a group wishes to invite media to its visit, it must be approved by the Child Life Department and the hospital's Marketing & Public Relations Department.

THE DAY OF YOUR VISIT

- Because of the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA), we must maintain the confidentiality of each patient. We cannot share diagnosis or personal information. Please refrain from asking the patient or family about their hospitalization or illness. **Photographs of patients are not allowed.**
- When children are ill, their reactions to you may differ from those of healthy children. Expressions of appreciation or affection may be restrained.
- Approach children slowly and bend down to their level, allowing them to decide the extent to which they wish to interact with you. If the child shows any resistance to greeting you, please move away.
- Greet hospitalized children as you would other children. Talk to them about their interests. You also may ask their ages or names. Be sure your comments are positive. **Avoid** questions such as “What happened to you?” “How long have you been here?” “When are you going home?” Comments such as “Get well soon!” or “See you next time” are confusing to children.
- Be prepared to meet children with differences; interact with them as you would any child.
- Groups should be prepared with all items needed for the visit.
- A member of the Child Life team will be with you at all times during your visit and will meet your group in the lobby of Huntsville Hospital for Women and Children beside the chapel.
- Parking is available for \$2 in West Lot (the lot on the left side of the hospital as you enter from Governors Drive).