

A day with the Child Life team



When severe illness or injury brings children to the hospital, the Child Life team is there to help our young patients and their families cope with the stress and anxiety that often accompany these profound healthcare experiences. Here's a behind the scenes look at how this specialized team, together with facility therapy dog Lorenzo, help normalize the hospital experience for children and families through play, positive coping skills, and developmentally appropriate medical education.

8:00 AM - As the operating room opens its doors for the day, Certified Child Life Specialist (CCLS) Sarah Cook blows bubbles through an anesthesia mask to help a nervous 3-year-old girl become familiar with the medical equipment and relax prior to her surgery.

9:00 AM - Ally McLaughlin, CCLS uses pictures, sounds, and a special doll to help an 8-year-old boy know what to expect during his MRI scan. With her help, the boy understands that he needs to stay very still for the entire 65 minutes and completes his scans without the need for sedation. He is proud of himself!

10:00 AM - Kalan Pivoney, CCLS meets with members of different disciplines to discuss and collaborate on their plans for each child currently in the hospital. She learns about a 12-year-old patient recently diagnosed with diabetes and makes plans to help him understand his new way of life. (Spoiler alert—he can still have plenty of fun!)

11:00 AM - Beth Bender, CCLS moves quickly through the emergency room to assist a 17-year-old boy who was just in a car accident. While doctors and nurses work quickly to assess the patient's injuries, Beth stands at the head of the



▲ Leah Woodward, CCLS helps Wade take the blood pressure of a doll during medical play to help him feel more in control.

patient's bed and uses a calm voice to tell the boy what to expect. The boy focuses on Beth's guidance and feels some calm in the chaos.

12:00 PM - Ashley Blackmon, CCLS knows simple distraction won't work on a 7-year-old girl who is about to have an IV placed in her hand. Ashley holds the girl's hand, reminds her to take deep breaths, and uses a seek-and-find book to help the girl focus on pictures rather than the needle.

Continued on reverse



1:00 PM - Leah Woodward, CCLS and therapy dog Lorenzo meet with a 15-year-old boy who recently had surgery. The teenager is reluctant to get out of bed, fearing pain, but he is motivated to move if he can go for a walk with Lorenzo. On their walk, Leah gives the patient a chance to express his worries and provides comfort with a listening ear.

2:00 PM - Jenny Damron, CCLS presents a 12-year-old girl receiving treatment for brain cancer with the latest addition to her Beads of Courage® collection. These special beads symbolize various treatments and procedures, documenting the girl's medical journey and honoring her courage throughout treatment.

3:00 PM - Sarah invites a patient to the playroom for some video games. When they arrive, they meet other patients there. Everyone joins in together and feels "normal" for a little while.

4:00 PM - Ally spends time with two parents creating ink footprints with their baby boy who has just passed away. The baby has two older sisters who are feeling sad and confused. Ally helps the parents find the words to explain to the sisters what happened to their brother and then helps them to process their emotions using art materials, books, and music. Ally then provides recommendations for grief and loss support in the local community.

5:00 PM - Jenny decorates a birthday sign and gathers nurses to sing happy birthday to a 6-year-old boy who has been in the hospital for a whole month. The boy smiles and opens gifts Jenny provided from the donation cabinet.



You can help

The Child Life program at McLane Children's relies heavily on the generosity of our community to fund supplies, activities, and services, all at no cost to the patient. To learn more about how you can help, please contact Lori Luppino at 254-899-3771, or visit [CTXFoundation.BSWHealth.com](https://www.CTXFoundation.BSWHealth.com).

- 1. Sarah Cook, CCLS explains what to expect during Riley's upcoming surgery, demonstrating how doctors will administer anesthesia through her IV. | 2. Ashley Blackmon, CCLS and Lorenzo comfort and distract Taylor in the Emergency Department while nurse Miranda attends to her injury. | 3. Kalan Pivoney, CCLS and Emersyn find a little bit of normalcy blowing bubbles in the Child Life playroom.