

Your Healthcare Team: Child Life Specialist

Hello. I'm Dave. This is my astronaut helmet. How do I get this thing off?! Goodbye. See ya.

I want to tell you about someone really special. And I'm going to do it using toys. Let's pretend this is you. You are on a health care visit. We know this can be a scary and confusing place for adults, but even more so for children. Nothing in the hospital is normal for a child. It's like visiting another planet.

Children need someone to help. That person is the child life specialist. They meet the children where they're at.

They help children cope emotionally and physically with their stay. No matter what it entails. How do they do that?

They're part Translator, Storyteller, Play Expert. They help explain treatment to children. A "blood pressure cuff" becomes "space equipment".

A "needle" becomes a "tiny ship on a mission". [rocket ship mouth noises]

They turn scary unknowns into familiar friends. Because getting better is about more than just medicine. They do therapeutic play using toys...

Go, go, go! Games! Blowing bubbles.

Playing music. And sometimes bringing in pets. Oh oh. You want to see a trick? Come on, come on... come on! Yeah. Come on! Yeah. Here, boy! Come on! [sigh] He never listens to me.

But it's all about making a child's experience feel safer, more familiar, fun. That is just some of what a child life specialist does for you.

The good news is that they are just one member of your health care team. No matter what you're going through, you're not alone.

Can I keep the helmet? Hey! [laughter]

[rocket ship mouth noises] I'm out!