

UPLIFT

Using play, love, inspiration
& friendship as therapy



Play activities at The Lonon Foundation's UPLIFT events can foster more effective and successful expression of emotions. They allow for bereaved children to cope through developmentally and cognitively appropriate play materials and activities that can reduce levels of stress, fear, misconceptions, and anxieties about having a parent with cancer or having to cope with the loss of a parent from cancer.

www.thelononfoundation.org

PLAY IN GENERAL

- Play is a child's language; their play is their words.
- According to Garry Landreth (2012), "Children express themselves more fully and more directly through self-initiated, spontaneous play than they do verbally because they are more comfortable with play".
- Play is a positive measure of a child's development.
- The act of play allows for a child life specialist (CLS) and other play professionals to gain knowledge and understanding of a child in terms of his or her coping abilities, developmental level, and other factors.

THERAPEUTIC PLAY

- The Child Life Council's Evidence Based Play Statement (2008) states that therapeutic play can lead to more emotional expression which can lead to better overall well-being of the child.
- Therapeutic play is an integral part of a child's expression and emotional release that lends to better and more effective coping and more normalized development.
- Therapeutic play activities support development and cognition and facilitates overall well-being of the patient.

BENEFITS OF PLAY

- Play that is child-led and unstructured allows for appropriate emotional release, creative expression, exploration of self and environment.
- Play reveals the child's experiences, wishes, feelings, and reactions to past or present medical experiences.
- Play is a healing modality that promotes effective and successful coping.
- Play can be used in preparing children and parents for upcoming procedures, and parents can also benefit from having their child play, as it may reduce their own anxiety and stress.
- In short, play can provide endless psychosocial and emotional benefits for children.

CHILD LIFE SPECIALISTS

- Child Life Specialists are trained professionals with a background in child development and child psychology
- They help children and their families cope with the stress of illness, trauma, diseases, disability, and bereavement in a pediatric hospital setting.
- They provide developmentally, psychologically, and cognitively appropriate interventions that are evidence-based. These interventions include therapeutic play, medical play, preparation for procedures, and education to reduce fear, anxiety, and pain.