

# Supporting Children During a Loved One's Hospitalization

## What happens at the hospital?

Your loved one is in the hospital now because they needed a little extra help from doctors and nurses. They are being checked on often by the medical team. They are also able to have stronger medicine that can only be given at the hospital. They are as safe as possible and the medical team is doing everything they can to help your loved one feel better.

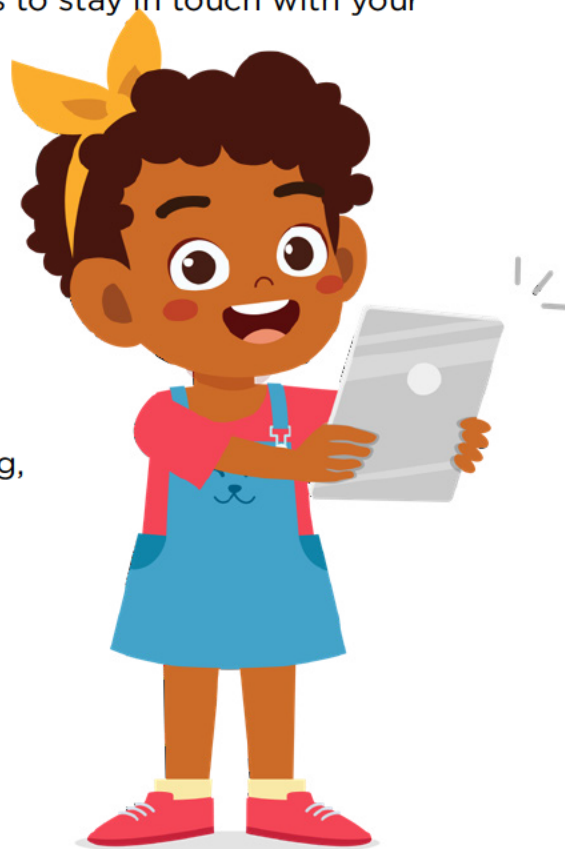
## Ways to support children:

- Take pictures of the hospital room to show the child and help them understand what everything is.
- Play a game over video chat, such as I SPY. This gives children a chance to acclimate to the room and allows care giver to see which items children focus on.
- Include medical staff in the videos so the child can see the nice people helping care for their loved one.

## How can I talk to my loved one while they are in the hospital?

While we follow this rule, here are some ways to stay in touch with your loved one while they are away:

1. Talk on the phone
2. Talk on FaceTime or another video chat
3. Write letters or cards
4. Decorate a sign for their room
5. Send a comfort package
6. Make a YouTube video/video recording on phone (reading a story, singing a song, sharing a favorite memory)



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## Definitions of words you might hear about the hospital:

**High Flow:** Extra air that is given to you through a little tube in your nose. This extra air can help if someone is having a hard time breathing.

**Respiratory Distress/Shortness of Breath/Hypoxia:** When someone is having a hard time breathing.

**Fatigue:** Another word for tired.

**Negative Pressure:** A room that has special air conditioning to get rid of any germs and make sure that the air stays very clean.

**X-ray:** A special picture that lets doctors see your bones and the inside of your body.

**Pulse Ox:** A sticker that is like a Band Aid or plastic clip that with a red light that goes on your finger or toe that tells how much oxygen is in your blood.

**Saturations:** A word that means measuring how much oxygen is in your blood. They measure this with something called a pulse ox.

**Sedation:** A special medicine that doctors give you to make your body sleep. When you are very sick, this can help your body rest.

**Inflammation:** is another word for irritation or swelling. This can be inside or outside your body.

**Oxygen:** Another word for air. When someone says "they are on oxygen" it means doctors and nurses are giving them some extra air. This may be through small tubes that rest under their nose, a clear mask that they wear over their face, or through a tube that is inside their mouth.

**Prone Position:** When doctors and nurses have you lay on your belly in bed. Sometimes this helps people breathe easier.

**Personal Protective Equipment (PPE):** Staff in the hospital wearing mask, gowns, gloves, goggles, face shields and other protective gear to help stop the spread of germs from COVID 19.

**Intubated:** When a tube is placed in your mouth or nose to help you breathe.

**Ventilator:** A machine that helps your body breathe.

**Intensive Care Unit (ICU):** People who are very sick or hurt stay in this part of the hospital. The doctors and nurses are always close by to provide extra care.

**The Floor:** A place where people spend the night when they are in the hospital. They have doctors and nurses who help take care of them.

For more information or to reach a Child Life Specialist, please email [childlife@erlanger.org](mailto:childlife@erlanger.org) or call 423-778-5907.