

## Child Life

### What Is Child Life?

Child life specialists help your child feel at ease before and during hospital stays and medical procedures.

When you come to Gillette Children's Specialty Healthcare, you'll collaborate with child life specialists who have extensive knowledge of child development and experience working with children who have thinking and learning, behavioral and communication, and physical challenges. Child life specialists are trained to understand how being in the hospital environment can affect child development as well as how well children cope with stress.

### How Child Life Specialists Can Help

Child life specialists use a variety of techniques to prepare, comfort and distract kids—whether it's the child having the procedure, or an anxious sibling.

Some of the techniques we use most often for emotional support include:

- Activities designed to promote growth and development. These include bedside art, music and play opportunities that reflect your child's abilities and interests. They also include group play opportunities in the evenings and weekends where kids have a chance to play alongside their peers.
- Distraction, including iPads or tablets, bubbles, light, musical toys and books to help children focus on familiar and interesting objects rather than on the procedure itself.
- Educational materials to help you understand your child's diagnosis, whether your child has been recently diagnosed or is entering a new stage of development.
- Guided imagery and deep breathing to help your child cope with difficult procedures and reduce pain.
- **[Hospital tours and education sessions](#)**. You and your child can schedule an individual tour or attend a surgical preparation session to prepare for an upcoming procedure. Tailored to your child's developmental level, these sessions include medical play to help your child become familiar with medical equipment, an explanation of the upcoming surgery, and a tour of the pre-op and inpatient areas.
- Play therapy, using a variety of toys and supplies to encourage your child to express their feelings and concerns.
- Relaxation methods including massage, visualization, deep breathing, and play to help your child relax and manage stress during their hospital stay.

### Integrated Care

We're committed to helping your child—and your family—feel prepared for an upcoming procedure or hospital stay. Child life specialists work with other members of the medical team to provide comprehensive care and promote healing for your family.

## Locations



### St. Paul Campus



### Burnsville Clinic

Make An Appointment [651-290-8707](tel:651-290-8707) Refer a Patient [651-325-2200](tel:651-325-2200)

This information is for educational purposes only. It is not intended to replace the advice of your health care providers. If you have any questions, talk with your doctor or others on your health care team.

If you are a Gillette patient with urgent questions or concerns, please contact Telehealth Nursing at [651-229-3890](tel:651-229-3890).