ENGAGING CHILDREN AND FAMILIES IN THE PERIOPERATIVE EXPERIENCE
Team Leaders: Carolyn A. Benigno, MSN, RN, CPN, Clinical Nurse; Margaret Groves, BS, CCLS, Child Life Specialist
Children’s National Medical Center, Washington, DC
Team Members: Mellaknese Coker, BSN, CAPA, CPAN, CPN, Nurse Manager; Haeok Chung, MSN, MHA, BSN, RN, Clinical Supervisor

Background/Problem: Advancing the practice of patient and family-centered care requires creative ideas and solutions to improve the surgical experience for children and their families.

Objective: To engage children and families in fun, interactive perioperative-related activities at the beginning and throughout their surgery day to improve patient satisfaction and to decrease anxiety.

Implementation: Nursing and Child Life Services collaborated on a grant-funded project to create an activity / educational book to prepare children for their surgery, and to provide fun activities for them to make the environment more comfortable. Each child, ages 4 and up, receives an activity book and crayons/pencils at registration or Pre-Op on surgery day. Engaging children and families early helps them understand the surgery process through multi-sensory activities.

Successful Practice: Staff, children, and families have positive feedback on the activity book. The book was edited based on suggestions / feedback from parents and staff from the Perioperative Patient and Family-Centered Care Committee. The book creatively communicates the typical sequence of events on surgery day and engages children and families in the perioperative experience.

Outcomes Achieved: Working with children and their families is one of the core principles of patient and family-centered care. An activity book is a creative idea and solution to decrease anxiety, to provide distraction, and to improve patient satisfaction and the surgical experience.

Implications: Perianesthesia nursing can collaborate with other disciplines, such as Child Life Specialists, to create educational tools to improve the surgical experience for children and their families.