

Perianesthesia Nurses and Child Life Specialists Find Synergy in Patient Care

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Abstract Background Information: In a free-standing Proton Therapy Center, pediatric oncology patients (ages 8 months to 18 years) undergo anesthesia daily for multiple treatment sessions. Certified Child Life Specialists (CCLS) work alongside Post Anesthesia Care Unit (PACU) nurses to deliver optimal care by using developmentally appropriate play therapy and distraction techniques. They support patients and coordinate the treatment process between staff, children, and families, further enhancing patient cooperation.

Objectives of Project: Integrate play therapy alongside nursing care to provide emotional, psychological, and age-appropriate educational support to pediatric patients and their families.

Process of Implementation:

- Implement a process of initial pre-anesthesia assessment to include CCLS.
- Utilize Pediatric Anesthesia Emergence Delirium (PAED) scale in conjunction with developmental milestones in both pre and post anesthesia to support the management of patients needs.
- Evaluate and revise the play therapy plan based on patient's disease process.
- Collaborate with CCLS to finalize play therapy plan.
- Nursing staff follows the developed plan and utilize various play therapy tools during pre or post-anesthesia care.
- Implement earlier patient check in time to re-acclimate patient to the environment and play therapy.
- Utilize various tools of play therapy for patients and families in education and emotional support.
- Use role play to assist with family dynamics during treatment.

Statement of Successful Practice: Incorporating play therapy into the daily peri-anesthesia care plan with the CCLS cultivates a healing environment that supports the overall well-being of both patients and their families. A review of post-anesthesia PAED scores revealed that 50% of patients showed improved recovery from their first to last treatment.

Implications for Advancing the Practice of Perianesthesia Nursing: Utilizing play therapy fosters an environment that allows for greater adaptation and acceptance of treatments and improves overall patient and family experience. Collaboration with CCLS enhances the plan and ensures consistency for outpatients returning for multiple treatment sessions.