

A day with the Child Life team



Introducing the Child Life team at Baylor Scott & White McLane Children's Medical Center: Tina, Sara, Melissa, Kimberly, Shanira, Francesca, Samantha, Melanie, Leah (and facility dog Lorenzo). These are experts in child development who help normalize the hospital experience for children and families through play, positive coping skills, and developmentally appropriate medical education. Here's a quick look at a typical day in the life of the Child Life team.

8:00 AM

As the operating room opens its doors for the day, Tina blows bubbles through an anesthesia mask to help a nervous 3-year-old girl become familiar with the medical equipment and relax prior to her surgery.

9:00 AM

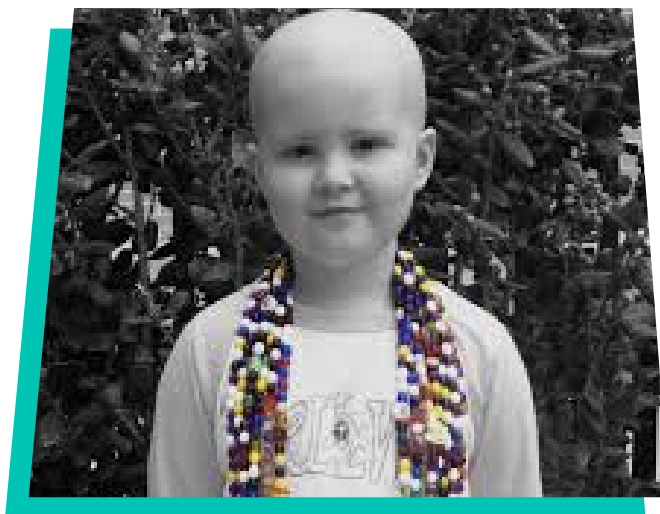
Sara uses pictures, sounds, and a special doll to help an 8-year-old boy know what to expect during his MRI scan. He understands that he needs to stay very still for the entire 65 minutes and completes his scans without the need for sedation. He is proud of himself!

10:00 AM

Melissa meets with members of different disciplines to discuss and collaborate on their plans for each child currently in the hospital. She learns about a 12-year-old patient recently diagnosed with diabetes and makes plans to teach him how to understand his new way of life. (Spoiler alert—he can still have plenty of fun!)

11:00 AM

A 12-year-old girl receiving treatment for brain cancer meets with Kimberly to receive her Beads of Courage®. These special beads symbolize various treatments and procedures, documenting the girl's medical journey and honoring her courage throughout treatment.



Continued on reverse

12:00 PM

Shanira moves quickly through the emergency room to assist a 17-year-old boy who was just in a car accident. While doctors and nurses work quickly to assess the patient's injuries, Shanira stands at the head of the patient's bed and uses a calm voice to tell the boy what to expect. The boy focuses on Shanira's guidance and feels so calm in the chaos.

1:00 PM

Francesca knows simple distraction won't work on this 7-year-old girl who is about to have an IV placed in her hand. Francesca holds the girl's hand, reminds her to take deep breaths, and uses a seek-and-find book so that the patient is focused on pictures instead of looking at the needle.



2:00 PM

Leah and therapy dog Lorenzo meet with a 15-year-old boy who recently had surgery. The teenager is reluctant to get out of bed, but he is motivated to move if he can go for a walk with Lorenzo. On their walk, Leah gives the patient a chance to express his worries and provides comfort with a listening ear.



3:00 PM

Samantha invites a patient to the playroom for some video games. When they arrive, they meet other patients there. Everyone joins in together and feels "normal" for a little while.

4:00 PM

Melanie spends time with two parents creating ink footprints with their baby boy who has passed away. The baby has two older sisters who are feeling sad and confused. Melanie helps the parents find the words to explain to the sisters what happened to their brother and then helps them to process their emotions using art materials, books, and music. Melanie then provides recommendations for grief and loss support in the local community.

5:00 PM

Tina decorates a birthday sign and gathers nurses to sing happy birthday to a 6-year-old boy who has been in the hospital for a whole month. The boy smiles and opens gifts Tina provided from the donation cabinet.

The child life team ends their day of work that looks a lot like play but means a whole lot more.