

Let's talk about...

U.S. News
"Best Children's
Hospitals" rankings


Ranked among the
nation's best in five
pediatric specialties



Children Visiting the Hospital

Coming to the hospital can be stressful for children. Preparing your child for a visit will help them cope and know what to expect while they are here. Before bringing a child to visit their loved one, please talk with the bedside nurse to see if there are any issues that should be considered.

Some tips to keep in mind:

- Find out what your child already knows and understands about their loved one being in the hospital.
 - To describe what it will be like, use words about the five senses. For example, you can say what the room looks like, what they may smell, and the sounds machines might be making.
 - Ask to have a picture taken of your loved one to share with your child before the visit. That might help answer some questions and prepare them for what they will see.
 - Encourage your child to ask questions and to share how they are feeling.
 - Offer honest information and answers. Know that it is okay to not have all the answers.
 - Give your child permission to touch and talk to their loved one—or not to. That is okay, too.
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- Watch closely for nonverbal cues and body language. For example, if your child is looking away from the patient, backing away, or keeping their arms crossed, they might be uncomfortable or overwhelmed. Agree on a signal your child can use to let you know they are ready to leave the room.
 - Let your child know they can change their mind about visiting at any time.
 - Have a "job" for your child to help with the time spent in the room. Simple tasks like reading or drawing a picture can be helpful. This can even be a reason for your child to step out of the room if they are feeling overwhelmed.
 - Have a follow-up activity in mind for after the visit. This will give your child a chance to release emotion without having to talk. After leaving the hospital, spend some time talking and reflecting about how the visit went.

For more information or to connect with a Child Life Specialist, please visit: <http://ucdavis.health/childlife>