



# Hospital Play News

7300 Days

## Learning from overseas experience

All new things are difficult before they are easy and Playright's hospital play service is no exception. How did we implement the new idea of integrating a play service with the treatment plans of hospitalized children? Twenty years ago, one of the proposals on our agenda was to borrow overseas experience. We began a non-stop journey in 1994 and have visited paediatric hospitals or wards in 11 countries so far, including the United Kingdom, the USA, Australia, New Zealand, Japan and Singapore. Apart from the expansion of our scope and the gain of knowledge, we have acquired much valuable experience and created a professional network. All these serve as a firm cornerstone for Playright's developmental direction which is to expand its service in Hong Kong.

Since the hospital play services in the UK and the USA were the most long-



established and well-developed in the world, they were chosen as the first stop of our journey. We sent our staff there to complete, respectively, a 9-month certified professional course and a 4-month ward internship. They obtained a great deal of professional knowledge of various specialties and laid hands on numerous real-life situations.

Their experience was undoubtedly significant for the launch of the local hospital play services in Queen Elizabeth Hospital and Queen Mary Hospital in 1994 as well as the local professional training programme which we held with the University of Hong Kong, School of Professional and Continuing Education (HKU SPACE) in 1995.

## Gaining knowledge from international conferences

Although we had put our service and training programmes on track, there was still large room for improvement. An international conference is held regularly among many hospital play service associations in the world, such as the Child Life Council Conference in the USA, National Association of Health Play Specialists Conference in the UK, the Hospital Play Specialist Conference in New Zealand, the European Association for Children in Hospital Conference across Europe and the Hospital Play Specialist Symposium in Japan. These summits provide the perfect ground for Playright to search for improvement. They generally last

about four to six days, provide a wealth of content and explore a range of in-depth and specific issues, for example, the latest dominant trend, the empiricism-oriented review on play activities, choosing toys for infants and children, the models for handling unforeseen disasters and the stimulation of the growth of children with chronic illnesses. Some topics are thought-provoking while some aim at giving practical and constructive suggestions.

Since internationalization is one of the themes of the conferences, experts are brought together from different countries such as the USA, Canada, the UK, Ireland, Finland, the

Switzerland as well as Asia-Pacific areas such as New Zealand, Australia, Japan, the Philippines, India and even as far as Kuwait and South Africa. At one conference it was observed that after exchanging views with each other, everyone was happy for the considerable development of hospital play service in the Western developed countries and was delighted by the enthusiasm of the small teams from countries such as India. When we look back to Hong Kong, we notice Hospital Play Specialists are still excluded from the healthcare system while those in the UK and the USA are regarded as an important part of the healthcare team. Nevertheless, given our limited resources, other delegates have often

considered Playright's performance rather satisfactory for being able to organize a local professional training programme and to develop a series of hospital play models for hospitalized children with different illnesses.

The conferences were touching as every delegate was so passionate. The participants were typically from a range of professional backgrounds including doctors, nurses, child psychologists, educators, university

professors, management board members of hospitals, nursing teams and hospital play specialists. Every year, they convene together and work hard for the benefits of hospitalized children. Not only did Playright acquire knowledge and on-the-job learning in these few days, but we also received encouragement to go on the difficult road of promoting hospital play service.



This beautifully-designed and well-made Magnetic Resonance Imaging scan simulation model is the best souvenir that we brought back to Hong Kong from a conference in Japan.

## On-site visits to broaden our horizon

Apart from attending global meetings, Playright has organized a number of

overseas visits to learn more about the operation of paediatric wards and

children's hospitals in the world. We have been to:

Johns Hopkins Children's Center (USA):	Established a century ago, it is the first Children's hospital to cooperate with a university to develop the medical research field in the USA.
The University of Chicago Medicine Comer Children's Hospital (USA):	Set up by the University of Chicago Medicine in 1930, it is now a 6-storey children's hospital.
Children Hospital Colorado (USA):	It was first set up in 1897 and was ranked the sixth best national children's hospital by the U.S. News in 2014.
Royal Manchester Children's Hospital (UK):	It was established in 1581 and has grown into a children's hospital which serves 200,000 children per year.
Great Ormond Street Hospital for Children (UK):	Established in 1852, it has been collaborating with the University College London. It is the only children's hospital which has a biomedical research center in the country. It trains the largest number of nurses and paediatric doctors in the UK.
Starship Children's Health (New Zealand)	Set up in 1991, it is the first hospital for children and teenagers in the country.
Shizuoka General Hospital (Japan):	It is a private general hospital which has the Department of Paediatrics set up and has been in service for over 20 years.
Juntendo University Hospital (Japan):	It is the oldest university hospital in Japan which provides paediatric services.
The Royal Children's Hospital (Australia):	It is the main children's hospital with a history of 140 years in its area. It finished its expansion project in 2011.
Monash Children's Hospital (Australia):	It has been serving children in its area for over 160 years and will finish its expansion project in 2016.
KK Women's and Children's Hospital (Singapore):	It is a famous paediatric medical center which was established over 160 years ago.
National University Hospital (Singapore):	It is a renowned university hospital which has been put into service since 1985.

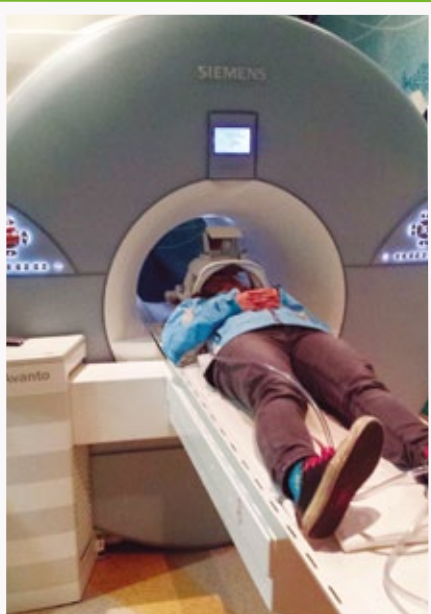
After visiting different children's hospitals and watching the excellent demonstrations of the Western counterparts, one will understand the meaning of 'child-orientation', 'child perspective' and 'listening to children'. The architectural designs of the hospitals including the entrance and lobby are special. Their facilities are family-friendly. Different kinds of illnesses are expressed through the theme of animals. The Magnetic Resonance Imaging scan room is transformed into an adventure

On the door of the isolation ward in the Royal Manchester Children's Hospital, there are pictures of the hospitalized child, his attending doctor and the shirt football team which the child supports. These help create a familiar environment for the child. The doctor is amicable too!



The 6-storey Royal Children's Hospital springs up from the underwater world into the space. This brand new design is based on the children's voting result.





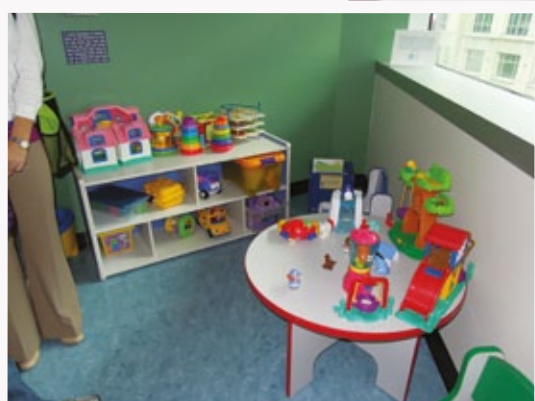
Is it a tree or an interesting direction board?

Some Western hospitals arrange a medical simulation play prior to admission for children who have to do a Magnetic Resonance Imaging scan. It helps the children to understand all the procedures and gain a firsthand experience. The use of sedation is also avoided. Inspired by the idea, Playright actively advocates similar play activities in Hong Kong and the successful results are gradually winning the support of the medical staff.



Paintings created by hospitalized children are displayed all over the lobby, reminding the medical staff to think in the children's mindset.

A playground is the basic facility of a children's hospital.



The uniqueness of this playroom lies in its location — it is built in an operation waiting room.



A mini-cinema is built in the hospital to address the needs of the hospitalized teenagers.

submarine. No one would feel like they are in a hospital. It is not hard to picture how the optimistic and delightful atmosphere turns all the days of hospitalization into good days. Here are some examples.

We fully realize how much longer the road for hospital play services in Hong Kong is after visiting the exemplary

children's hospitals overseas. From the well-known speakers, delegates and experts in the industry as well as the on-site visits we made in past years, we derive our inspirations for service development and learn about the practical operation modes, skills for play activities, the latest research reports, the internal grade structure, the selection criteria of employees and

proposals for training programmes. All these are a crucial reference for Playright to enhance its service. We have also imported many useful reference books, service structures and delicate, quality hospital play tools. After paying overseas visits for so many years, we hope one day we can become the role model for our counterparts in the field!

## Fractured Bones, Stronger Mind



Ling-ling was happy to see the Hospital Play Specialist again

Ling-ling, a 5 year-old girl, enjoys going to the playground just like any other children. One night, when she was climbing the jungle gym

as usual, she accidentally fell and suffered from a fracture which gave her an unforgettable and challenging experience.

### From Uneasiness to Easiness

Ling-ling was diagnosed with a fractured right arm in the Accident and



Heplock Bear, specially made for intravenous injection.

Emergency Department. To ensure normal healing, she had to undergo an operation to fix the fracture with metal K-wires. While Ling-ling and her mum were waiting in the ward in complete bafflement, they met a Hospital Play Specialist.

The specialist took out "Heplock Bear" as soon as she learnt that the first operation procedure for Ling-ling was intravenous injection (or heplock). The moment Ling-ling saw Heplock Bear, which was also wearing a purple gown and a patient bracelet, she started to feel less nervous. The specialist then used the bear to explain the operation procedures to Ling-ling, including details like putting on a gown and an operation cap, and smearing analgesic balm on the back of her hand for intravenous injection. Ling-ling nodded from time to time to show her understanding and even went on to talk about her friends and food she loved. Her mum, who was accompanying her the whole time, eased her worry too when she found out her daughter was relieved from

### Information Centre Fracture healing

Fracture refers to the breaking of a bone, including body parts like the limbs, skull and pelvis, after a serious crash or under huge pressure. Patients must receive treatment as fracture not only causes pain and physical disability, but also disturbs their daily lives.

It is common to use cast to secure the fractured bone of the patient. Cast allows new bone tissue to fill the fracture gap and harden. It also ensures the fractured bone is put back into position for normal healing and the hardness of cast helps prevent further damage to the fracture. The severity of the fracture determines whether the patient is required to undergo an operation to fix the fracture with K-wires before getting a cast.

anxiety and felt at ease.

Having noticed how scary the equipment and the lamp in the operating theatre looked, the specialist immediately played deep breathing game with Ling-ling to distract and soothe her; even the anaesthesiologist praised Ling-ling for her brave and cooperative attitude. He said much time was spent on another child for intravenous injection that day since the child was terrified and did not come across a Hospital Play Specialist.



The slideshow gadget shown in the photo caught the child's attention successfully.



## Cast removal: easy as pie

Ling-ling's fracture healed up nicely after fixation, and she was scheduled to return to the hospital for the removal of the K-wires and cast six weeks later. This time, the Hospital Play Specialist brought a doll which was specially made for children with fractures, and described all the procedures such as sawing, removing and cutting the cast to Ling-ling step by step. After playing with the doll, Ling-ling no longer worried that the cast cutter might cut off her arm. She was so relaxed that the cast removal process went smoothly.

The next challenge was to remove K-wires without anesthesia. The Hospital Play Specialist found that children were often daunted by the wounds and K-wires, resulting in their refusal to cooperate with the doctors.

To avoid scaring Ling-ling, the Hospital



This cast doll will demonstrate the procedures of cast removal beforehand

Play Specialist prepared a slideshow gadget for her to look at, and kept asking questions to sidetrack her. Ling-ling was fascinated by the new



Different toys were used to distract the children during the treatment period.

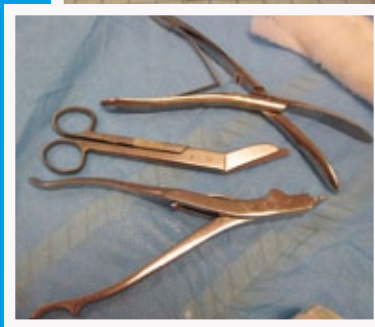
toy and did not even notice that the orthopaedic surgeons were removing the K-wires from her skillfully. Her mother was calmed by what she saw and was surprised that her daughter did not panic or cry at all. The medical staff were amazed too and appreciated the method that the Hospital Play Specialist used to distract Ling-ling.

## For Your Information Cast removal

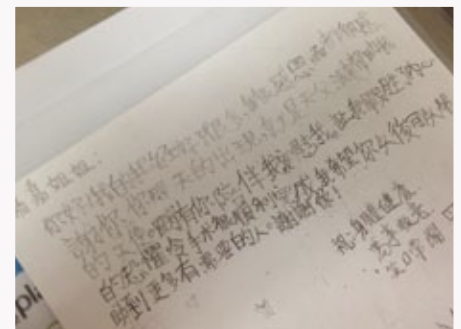
The time for fracture healing differs among different people and takes four to six weeks on average. The cast can be removed once the doctor considers the fracture to be completely healed. Cast removal requires a cast cutter. First, the jigsaw blade will vibrate and saw off the cast; then, another tool will be used for separating the cast. After that, scissors are used to cut the bandage underneath.

The vibration of the cast cutter will generate heat, so the patient will usually feel some warm vibrations. Another equipment, which roams like a vacuum cleaner, is used for clearing the shards of the cast.

Patients who had a K-wire operation have to remove those wires right after the cast removal. The doctor will remove the wire by holding the protruding part of the wire with a pair of tongs and clean the wound afterwards. The removal of K-wire is usually fast, so anesthesia is not needed.



Upper: The 'vacuum cleaner' for cast removal  
Lower: Tools for cast removal



Ling-ling wrote a thank-you card with her left hand to express her gratitude for the Hospital Play Specialist. She remembered every step of the intravenous injection. It seems the hospital play left her a strong impression

## Growing up in challenges

Fracture treatment is not complicated but the steps which adults find easy are like a 'mission impossible' to children. Ling-ling's mother believed that the reason why her daughter could overcome all the obstacles courageously lied at the efforts of the Hospital Play Specialist, who came to offer them help when they were left helpless. The road for a child to grow up is thorny but the specialist taught the can-do spirit to Ling-ling and gave her a positive experience. Ling-ling is much stronger now and learns to show her gratitude to the angel on her shoulder. When she returns to the playground, she is not afraid of fractures anymore and enjoys herself as much as other children.

## An insight into our service

Playright believes that play is an indispensable component of child development. Every child needs play no matter if they are healthy or sick, and they deserve the right to play at home or in school, community and even hospital.

Hospitalized children are no different from their ordinary peers; they are the same in terms of their basic play need. The Hospital Play Specialists provide play activities for every hospitalized child according to their personal interests, age as well as physical and mental development. Not only can the hospitalized children freely explore, learn, create and express various feelings, but they can also enjoy playing as much as other healthy children do. Some Western countries such as the USA and Canada name hospital play service 'Child Life' as they agree that play, art and cultural activities are the vital elements of the life of a hospitalized child and hospitalization should never be the reason of children losing their opportunity and right to play. The same is termed 'Hospital Play' or 'Health Play' in the UK to highlight the specific area of provision and the healing nature of the service.

Apart from the usual play activities, the Hospital Play Specialists have to design in accordance with medical procedure functions because each hospitalized child has different treatment needs. The specially designed activities enable the children to understand their own medical procedures, relieve their stress and

anxiety, and learn to accept the treatments with a positive attitude.

For example, when a child and a teenager are admitted into hospital respectively for fever and end-stage renal failure, their moods and treatment needs are totally different although both of them have fallen ill. The younger child often struggles with having to face dozens of unfamiliar medical staff in an unknown environment while various incomprehensible procedures such as blood test and intravenous injection are carried out making him/her physically uncomfortable. Often emotionally troubled and terrified by pain, he/she might even resist any treatment. Though the teenagers usually familiar with all the procedures, he will still feel exhausted and annoyed in the end after continuously having hemodialysis for several hours in the hospital three times a week. He might even feel lost and upset towards

his physical condition and outlook.

The Hospital Play Specialists maintain close contact with the medical staff based on the special condition of each hospitalized child, so that they can



Hospital Play Specialist uses different plays to distract patients. It helps to facilitate the medical staffs to complete the procedures.



Children can understand their illnesses and the medical treatments more by medical play. Examples are blood taking and Magnetic Resonance Imaging.



learn about the children's situations and treatment plans, and offer help by providing related play activities. The Hospital Play Specialists would walk the children to treatment rooms and enhance the completion of different medical procedures by distracting them with play activities which will make them less nervous and help to create a relaxing atmosphere. The Hospital Play Specialists also use lifelike medical props to role-play with the hospitalized children to explain various procedures such as measuring blood pressure, blood taking and injection.

Since the Hospital Play Specialists is stationed in the wards all the time, they certainly understand the concerns of the patients with chronic illnesses. Especially for long-term stays or chronically ill children, being allowed to choose to participate in or decide on the hospital play activities such as art and crafts either in a group or individually is another angle to hospitalization which can make a great difference to children. Such activities bring them happiness, insight and confidence during the long-term treatment process and can help them nurture an optimistic attitude to fight against the illnesses.



Dolls in purple and green gowns, analgesic balm and inhaling equipment, specially made for operation procedures.



Based on the needs of long-term patients, Hospital Play Specialist will arrange suitable developmental plays for them.

# Heartfelt Gratitude

- The Walt Disney Company generously donated HK\$95,400 and a series of Disney movies. We used the fund to purchase related equipment so that the hospitalized children can enjoy the intriguing animated movies in our 5 service hospitals.



- ItsImagical, a Spanish toy brand, raised HK\$2,075 in December, 2014 for our hospital play service. They also donated quality toys to the hospitalized children.

- Our special thanks goes to Dr. Yvonne Becher for her editorial guidance.

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