

## **News Release for the Editor's Desk**

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### **Therapeutic Play Week – A Public Education initiative by the Children's Cancer Foundation (CCF)**

- **Young patients cope better with the stresses of healthcare experience through therapeutic play**

**Singapore (8 March 2007)** – Young cancer patients often have many anxieties and concerns about their bodies, physical condition, and impending healthcare events. These children usually experience distress during and after healthcare experiences. Therapeutic play seeks to help young patients cope with the stresses of healthcare experience by participating actively through play, instead of being passive participants in the threatening healthcare experience. Therapeutic play interventions essentially enhance the children's abilities to cope effectively with and learn from potentially stressful situations. It also aims to promote optimum development of children and their families, to maintain normal living patterns and to minimise psychological trauma.

From 12 to 16 March 2007, CCF will be organising its first ever Therapeutic Play week at its two Family Support Centres at the hospitals (National University Hospital and KK Women's and Children's Hospital).

Noted Mr, Raphael Lim, CCF's Executive Director, "*Therapeutic Play Week is part of CCF's public outreach initiative to recognise the collective worlds of our social work team at both hospitals, to give recognition of the services they provide to cancer patients. Therapeutic play serves a vital role in allowing young patients to approach threatening stimuli and assimilate information provided to them at their own pace. As they express feelings associated with illness and treatment through play activities, their emotional stress can be reduced.*

*Additionally, young patients can better express their feelings and concerns, become familiar and comfortable with medical equipment and procedures, increase their understanding of healthcare experiences and learn and practice new ways of coping with painful and distressing medical procedures."*

Types of therapeutic play include:-

**Medical Play (including pre & post procedural play)**

- Consisting of spontaneous and guided play experiences and interactions that focus on healthcare themes such as fear of pain or mutilation. It prepares the young patients mentally for painful or invasive procedures through familiarisation of the medical equipment and process, and rehearsal of helpful coping behaviour.

**Distraction play**

- Based on the premise that the greater the young patients are absorbed in play and distracted from the medical procedure, the lesser their experience of pain.

**Expressive Play**

- Enables young patients to express complex feelings associated with illness or hospitalisation in an acceptable, enjoyable and constructive manner.

**Developmental-Supportive Play**

- Supports normal childhood development that may otherwise be disrupted as a result of hospitalisation and treatment.

**CCF's Therapeutic Play Week is open to the public on the following dates:**

12 March 2007 – KK Women's and Children's Hospital (Auditorium, Level 1)

16 March 2007 – National University Hospital (Level 4, Main Building, Children's Medical Institute, next to the playground stage area).



*A young patient having fun and learning through Therapeutic Play, with the use of the calico doll*

## **Notes to Editor**

### **About Children's Cancer Foundation**

**Children's Cancer Foundation (CCF)** has helped around 1,300 children and their families since its inception in 1992. CCF is an independent Voluntary Welfare Organisation (VWO) that helps children with cancer below 18 years old. Its mission is to improve the quality of life of children with cancer and their families through enhancing their emotional, social and medical well-being.

Among the free services CCF provides are

- Casework and Counselling
- Therapeutic Play
- Parents Support Programme
- Bereavement Programme
- Financial Assistance
- Childhood Cancer Transplant Programme
- Wishlink
- Back-to-School Programme
- Tuition and Befriending Programme
- Social and Recreational Programmes

CCF has two Family Support Centres (FSCs) where counselling and other related activities take place. The FSCs are located just outside the childhood cancer ward of both the KK Women's & Children's Hospital (KKH) and the National University Hospital (NUH) for easy accessibility by children and their families. CCF also has a playroom located at the National Cancer Centre (Singapore General Hospital) next to the Radiation Oncology department

### **For more information, please contact:**

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