

# THE SALLY TEST PÆDIATRIC CENTRE

## Current Work

The Sally Test Pædiatric Centre (STPC) is located in the Moi Teaching and Referral Hospital in Eldoret Kenya. It is the only known Child Life Centre in East Africa and probably whole of Africa. STPC has three primary goals:

1- To provide education and stimulating activities to reduce stress for young patients and their families during hospitalization through building trust, interactive medical play, and a bedside presence as well as in the STPC playroom

2- To give the highest quality care to abandoned infants, toddlers, and all children to provide stimulation and love in order to ensure each child reach his or her developmental potential during our care

3- To be a catalyst for a positive change in attitude toward children, women, and families as important participants in medical decision making within the medical community both locally and nationally

To accomplish these goals the STPC is currently engaged in the following areas:

### 1. Procedural Education for Hospitalized Children

Hospitalization is a stressful process for everyone - especially children. The Sally Test Centre provides a setting for children to endure their hospital experience with minimal stress and anxiety. Sally Test Child Life Workers prepare the children for procedures so they are less frightened of medical personnel and equipment

- (1) by gaining the trust of the child and family
- (2) engaging the child in medical play and explanations of WHY a procedure is required and how it is done
- (3) by providing distractions to divert the child's attention during painful procedures, and
- (4) providing non-pharmacological pain management techniques



Medical play



Distraction during a procedure

## 2. A Safe Place in the Hospital

The STPC play room is a safe place for hospitalized children within the Moi Teaching and Referral Hospital (MTRH) who are able to come and participate in activities that help them grow and develop in an age appropriate way. By providing a poke-free area, children can feel free to explore ideas, dance, and involve themselves in therapeutic play. Children in Moi Teaching and Referral Hospital find participation in the playroom a reason to leave their beds and join other children in play. There children engage in the following activities; dancing, games, puzzles, crafts, schoolwork, reading, medical play and outside activities. Teachers plan and supervise playroom activities.



Playroom Activities

### 3. Abandoned Children

Abandoned children are routinely brought to the hospital by Good Samaritans or the police. Care of these children has become one of the STPC roles. Currently the STPC provides care for these children from 8:30 AM to 4:30 PM daily. The abandoned children are returned to patient wards in the evening until the following morning. Working with the hospital's Social Work Department and the Uasin Gishu District Children's Officer, abandoned children are placed in nearby children's homes; however, the length of each child's stay varies. At times children with difficult medical, physical or developmental needs may spend more than a year in the hospital while awaiting placement. Children with cerebral palsy, hydrocephalus and autism may stay longer. Utilizing minimal funds these children are bathed, massaged, diapered, clothed, formula fed, and provided milk and cereals. Our future hope is to provide children without caretakers around the clock care. This will depend on the availability of funds.



**Bathing Time for Abandoned Children**



**Infant Massage**



Water Play - Abandoned children

#### 4. Education of Parents / Caregivers

Each pediatric patient is expected to come to the hospital with a parent or caregiver. The STPC provides well-organized educational classes twice weekly for caregivers from the wards while the children play outdoors. Topics may include child psychology, medicine, and nutrition. Under the auspices of the STPC twice weekly support sessions for parents of oncology patients have been provided allowing them to share concerns and receive information from the oncology medical team



Parent's Education

## 5. Oncology Follow-Up Calls

Working with the newly formed oncology team from AMPATH (the Academic Model Providing Access to Healthcare), the STPC makes weekly calls to parents in rural areas to remind them of their child's clinic visits or return chemotherapy appointments. If families cannot afford transportation to the hospital, telephone deposits are sent to them. These calls have resulted in a significant increase in returns.

## 6. Ward Activities

Monday through Friday toys, games, puzzles and art activities are taken to the wards to help normalize the hospital environment and occupy bedfast children. Wards are crowded. Beds often have two to three children in them. Medical rounds may run till noon. The task of providing diversion in that setting is a constant but important challenge. This service has ensured that children who cannot come to our playroom receive the same playroom activities at the bedside.



Child Life Health Worker engaging in bedside activity with a burn patient

## 7. Outreach to Rural Clinics

Moi Teaching and Referral Hospital receives patients over much of the Rift Valley and Western Provinces. Its catchment area is approximately 2 million individuals. The STPC is beginning to share its message with families and children once a week at five nearby AMPATH clinics on the days HIV pediatric clinic days.

## 8. Children's Library

The STPC has the only known public children's library in Kenya. Containing approximately 5000 volumes of children's books, the library is a resource for the STPC classroom and a circulating library for employees of MTRH, Moi University School of Medicine, and AMPATH so as to encourage parents to read with their children.

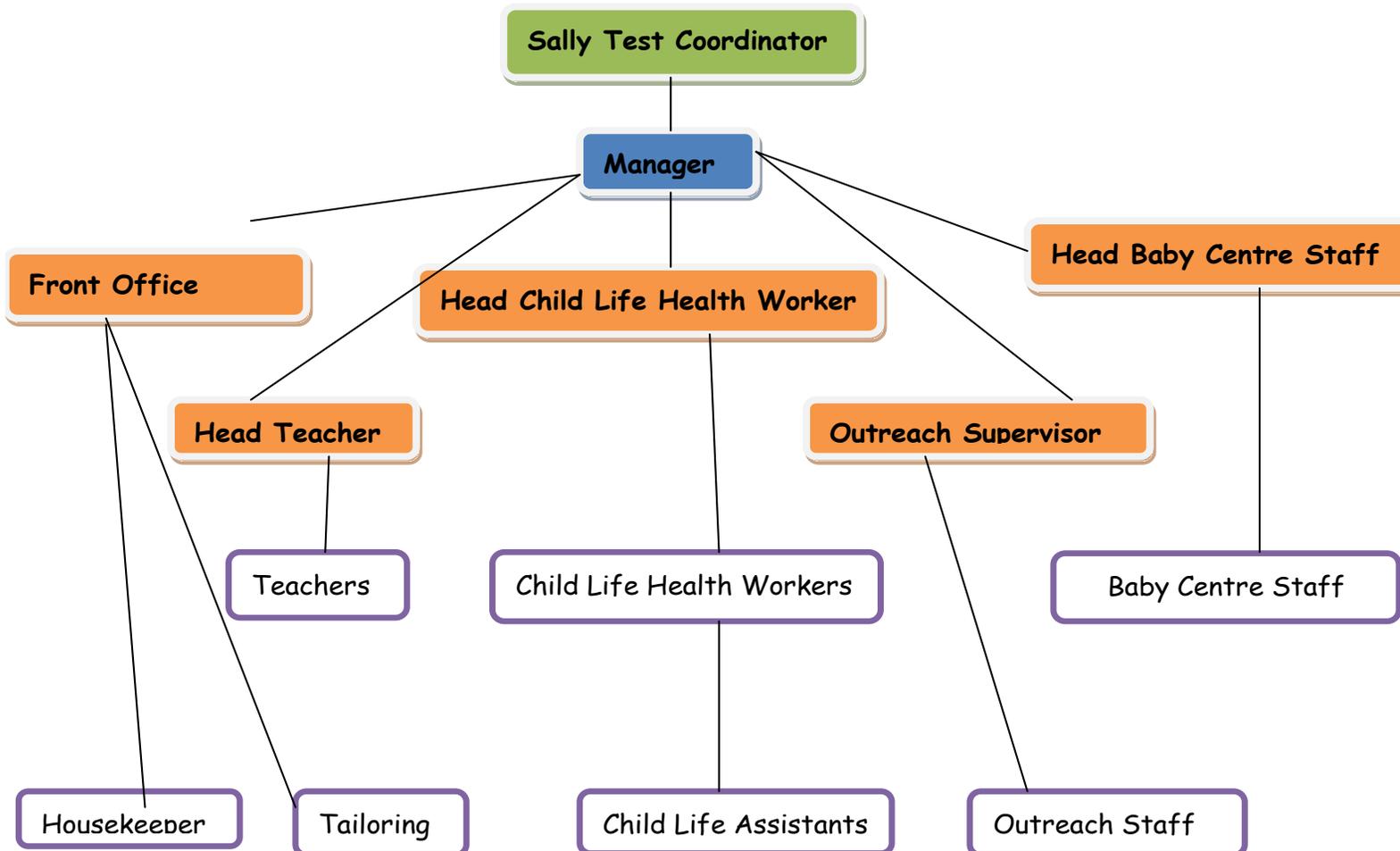
## 9. Parent/Caregivers Projects

While children are engaged in play activities, parents and caregivers are kept busy. We have two sewing machines which the parents can use and learn how to sew. We have a tailoring teacher to supervise and give lessons. The objective of the program is to give knowledge and empower parents/caregivers, mostly women. They are encouraged to use the skills they acquire when they return home. Most families in Kenya earn under one dollar a day.

## 10. Holiday Celebrations.

STPC organizes several holiday celebrations for children and families. During Christmas we also distribute gifts, cookies and drinks to children and parents who are in the hospital.

### ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE



## **STPC Members of staff**

STPC has the following number of staff;

- Coordinator 1
- Manager 1
- Child Life Health Workers 6
- Child Life Assistants 5
- Teachers 4
- Outreach workers 5
- Baby centre staff 3
- House keeper 1
- Tailor 1
- Driver 1
- Front office 1