



A leading UK children's
healthcare charity
Registered charity no 296295



Providing essential play resources to sick children in hospital across the UK

Our mission

To provide essential play resources to sick children in hospital across the UK. We aim to assist Hospital Play Specialists by supporting the objectives of play therapy in hospital and enhance a child's journey through their hospital experience.

Why play?

When children are admitted to hospital they are at their most vulnerable. A visit to hospital can be not only a challenge, but also frightening and very traumatic, exceptionally so in emergency situations. The children are not only unwell, but they are also separated from their friends, family and familiar surroundings which can lead to increased stress.

Play is vital for any child and within a hospital environment it is often used to fulfil many other purposes.

How play therapy in hospital can help

- ★ Distract a child who is facing a painful or difficult procedure
- ★ Reduce the risk of disturbance to the child by proper preparation
- ★ Increase the child's ability to cope with a hospital admission
- ★ Enhance the children's understanding of their treatment and illness
- ★ Create an environment where stress and anxiety are reduced
- ★ Provide an outlet for feelings and frustrations
- ★ Reassure the child that his/her body is still functioning
- ★ Help children regain confidence, self-esteem and independence
- ★ Allow children to participate in familiar activities
- ★ Assist healing and rehabilitation and minimise regression
- ★ To encourage involvement of families and siblings



Action for Sick Children's charter for children's health services states that **'Every child in hospital shall have full opportunity for play, recreation and education'**. As a charity, we are concerned that due to a lack of funding for play in hospitals around the country, every child in hospital **does not** always have these opportunities despite the efforts of Hospital Play Specialists.

With this in mind, Action for Sick Children conducted a survey amongst Hospital Play Specialists across the UK to investigate what problems they face when trying to support sick children in hospital.

- **EVERY** response highlighted the lack of or no budget for play resources.
- An astounding 94% of participants declared that they spend their **OWN** money to provide some of the basic essentials required to conduct their activities.

One Hospital Play Specialist stated ***'it is like asking a mechanic to mend a car without giving them a toolbox; it makes our job so much more difficult.'*** The NHS provides an excellent medical service but with restricted budget's it sadly leaves minimal funding available for Play Therapy and resources. This fact along with the responses from our survey prompted Action for Sick Children to create 'The Magical Power of Play Appeal'.

The Magical Power of Play Appeal objectives are:

- ★ All children will have an adequate supply of appropriate play resources in hospital to aid their recovery and rehabilitation.
- ★ Children and young people will be empowered to find appropriate play activities and techniques that help them to turn a hospital admission into a positive experience.
- ★ Hospital Play Specialists will receive vital support ensuring that the essential functions of play are built into the fabric of a child's journey through the hospital experience.
- ★ Children, young people and their families will be aided in their understanding of the child's illness, treatment and management of their condition.

To enable us to quantify our outcomes, each setting receiving an award will be requested to complete a resource report and evaluation form, along with case studies detailing the benefits of the play resources awarded to them.

The Magical Power of Play Appeal will distribute Play Resource Boxes to children's hospitals, wards and units across the UK. We have consulted with Hospital Play Specialists across the UK to assist us on the choices for the various play resources being supplied.

The items we supply in the Play Resource Boxes include the following; Baby toys, Medical Preparation Toys, Arts and Crafts, Sensory, Toys and Games and Electronic and Entertainment.

