



Medical Art Therapy with Children

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www.tracyskids.org

When a child becomes seriously ill or is injured, it usually comes as a bolt out of the blue, disrupting the entire family's sense of security and competence, not to mention their daily routines! Medical art therapy allows patients and families work creatively within the treatment setting, assisting them to mobilize the hope and resilience they need to recover.

- **Art therapists meet people where they are: no artistic skill or experience is expected or required.**
- **Give the child control over his or her art production: what to make, what materials to use, whether to keep their art or throw it away, whether to do art at all that day. A child in the hospital gives up so many everyday freedoms that using art therapeutically creates a valuable arena in which to exercise choice and control.**
- **Create community: by working alongside others, the child and family employ familiar skills and strengths, experiencing themselves as normal, capable people instead of in the passive patient role.**
- **The Art Therapist enters into a creative partnership with the client in the metaphor of artmaking. Finding a creative connection with each individual is the doorway to a healing partnership.**
- **Art therapists may use traditional visual art forms such as painting, sculpture and collage, but they may also help clients explore story, puppet-making, photography, film, fiber-arts, printmaking—whatever avenues catch the imagination of the patient population and is safe, clean and appropriate for the setting.**
- **When art therapists are integrated members of the psychosocial team, they can relay information, assessments and questions from patients and families to medical specialists. Art therapists encourage children to ask questions directly of their doctors and nurses whenever possible, and help facilitate clear communication between patients and their families and care providers.**