

A Note to Parents and Caregivers:

Your child will be undergoing surgery to stabilize his or her spine curvature. This may be a very stressful time for your child and he or she will need a lot of support during the hospitalization and at home afterwards. This may be your child's first surgical experience and it can be scary for him or her. The spine fusion is a big surgery and having you close by can be helpful and comforting.

It will be very helpful for you to work well with your son or daughter's caregivers. Be sure to communicate your concerns and questions. You know your child best and know how your child reacts to pain and stress. You can guide the staff to interpret how your child is doing. You can also help coach your child through the various tasks needed for your child's care if you understand what is expected. You can help them with relaxation techniques such as deep breathing or distraction when they are moved or have other uncomfortable treatments.

Every child reacts differently to pain and stress. Some want to be left alone and do not want to be bothered. You will need to have your child realize that they will be closely watched to be sure everything goes well after surgery. This will mean that nurses and other staff will need to check on them frequently, even during the night. All of the caregivers will be encouraging your child to turn or change positions. While it may seem that it is difficult and too painful to do, it will be very important for your child's recovery. If you are aware of what is expected of your child during his or her hospital stay, you can help to support them through the recovery process. The care map in this folder can give you an idea of what will occur each day during the hospitalization.

Preparing for your child's return home

It is helpful to plan ahead for your child's return home after discharge from the hospital. Plan to have a family member or friend at home to be available to help your child for the first couple weeks. Many families will have their

child stay in a bedroom that they can easily get into and that is near the bathroom. Sometimes families with bedrooms on the second floor will chose to temporarily set up a bedroom on the main floor to limit the trips up and down the stairs. Let us know if there are challenges with the set-up of your house so we can make suggestions to make things easier.

Planning for School

Most kids need 4 to 6 weeks off from school for surgery, hospitalization and recovery at home. Talk to your child's school to find out if a homebound teacher can be arranged. When your child does return to school, physical education classes will need to be stopped for several weeks. Having a second set of books to keep at home can help to limit the weight carried in the backpack. Let us know if any paperwork is needed from your doctor for any special arrangements.

Planning for Work

Parents often plan to take time off work to be at home to care for their child after surgery. Please provide us with any needed paperwork for your employer well in advance of the scheduled surgery.