

Getting things back to normal

Child: When children learn how to do every day normal kid things, like going to school, completing chores, or being active, *even when hurting*, they will become stronger, confident, and feel that they can take control of their own pain.

Parents: When parents learn how to focus on their child's abilities, *and not on their child's pain*, they are sending out a strong message: **"Pain does not define who my child is or what my child can do"**.

Helping your child live a normal life

Let your child tell you when they hurt.

If you ask your child about pain, they will look for it, they will find it, and they will focus on it.

Parents, please try very hard to *not* ask your child about pain. Even when your child is hurting, it is important to focus on the things that your child can do. Encourage activities, ask about their day, their plans, their friends, the projects they are working on.

Responding differently to pain.

Your child may use different pain behaviors when hurting. They may cry out, wince, groan, or tense up. They may rub the painful area, withdraw, or even become **angry**. All of these behaviors have been shown to just make the pain worse.

Encourage your child to use new pain skills.

When your child is hurting, it important for you to show concern about their pain, but be very careful to not reinforce the pain or dwell on it.

Please remain calm. Do not become emotional and do not over-react. Gently remind your child about the new skills they have learned to manage their pain.

Ask your child:

"What do you think you can do right now to help your pain?"

Focus on the skills your child is using. Praise their actions and efforts: *"I am very proud of you. You are working really hard learning how to deep breathe, relax, etc."*

Important to Remember:

Encourage your child to stay involved in family and school activities, even when they hurt.

Pain wins when it prevents your child from doing the things they enjoy.

Encourage activities even when your child hurts

Discuss your child's physical limitations with our pain management team. Know what your child can safely do.

1. Work with your child to develop a schedule of activities for school and for home. Include meals, a list of chores, playtimes, and bedtime.
2. Physical activity is very important. It improves your child's strength and endurance. Make physical activities part of your family's routine.
3. Plan exciting rewards for accomplishing some of the harder tasks.
4. Ask your child what pain management skills will work best during activities and then practice these skills. Remember: When children stay involved they feel a sense of control over pain.
5. Praise your child for their hard work and effort. Be specific. Share their accomplishments with others.

Parents Be Prepared

Know there will be days when you must *encourage* or *gently push* your child to follow-through.

This isn't always easy but remind yourself that *"Pushing your child is helping your child learn how to take control of their own pain."*

When your child stays home with pain

Attending school for children with chronic pain is hard.

On days when your child stays home: No computer, TV, phone, electronic games, or special privileges, *even if your child says they feel better.*

If your child learns that pain lets them avoid their usual activities, they are more likely to continue to have trouble with pain.

These instructions are only general guidelines. Your health care providers may give you special instructions. If you have any questions or concerns, please call your health care providers.

Helping-Child-Manage-Chronic-Pain

Patient Name

MRN (Medical Record Number)

The healthcare provider talked to me about the information in this handout.

- I know what I need to do.
- I know why doing this is important.
- All my questions have been answered.
- I have a copy of this handout.

Patient, Parent, or Legally Authorized Representative

Printed Name

Signed Name

Your Relationship to the Patient

Date

Time a.m. / p.m.

Healthcare Provider

Printed Name

Signed Name

Date

Time a.m. / p.m.

Interpreter

Printed Name

Signed Name

Interpreter Number

Date

Time a.m. / p.m.

Print or imprint Patient Information

MRN _____

CSN _____

