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Hospitals lend a playful healing touch to kids

Games, books and cheerful ambience make hospitalisation less painful



Apollo's recreational area is integrated with the hospital's paediatric unit.

VIPIN KUMAR/HT

Rhythm Kaul
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A PURPLE monkey hanging from a tree and a massive, pink Bugs Bunny share space with a Playstation, a DVD player, comic books and board games in what could be the play area of a swish mall or an expensive playschool. Instead, it is the newly opened Fun Centre at Apollo Hospital.

The centre is packed with cuddly toys and Playstation games for child patients. For bedridden children, a bureau-on-wheels delivers toys, comic books, novels and board games to the ward.

"It's a part of creating a child-friendly environment in the hospital. Stress is a big issue with not only parents but also children; they need a break, as their whole day is

quite busy with therapy sessions and all," said Dr Anupam Sibal, Group Medical Director, Apollo Hospital.

Set up in collaboration with Sanofi-Aventis, the recreational area is integrated with the hospital's paediatric unit. Within a week of its launch, the centre is a hit among kids.

"My son doesn't want to come out of this room. Earlier, he used to insist on going back home, but since this centre came up he hasn't shown any sign of homesickness," said Geeta Lakhera, whose three-year-old son Aniket is admitted in the hospital for viral infection.

Colour therapy

Corporate hospitals are now going out of their way to make child patients feel comfortable. So, boring white walls have

given way to colourfully painted ones with popular cartoon characters, flowers, birds and animals drawn on them. The curtains are all in pinks, blues or yellows, and there is a special arrangement to provide children with books, games and toys to keep them entertained throughout their stay.

Hospitals like Max Healthcare have reserved blocks as outpatient departments exclusively for children.

"The OPD for children has been designed keeping in mind their needs. There's a corner where we have kept rocking chairs and rocking horses. The light shades are shaped like butterflies and helicopters. The ambience is soothing, the way children like it," said Dr Dilpreet Brar, Regional Director, South Delhi, Max Healthcare.

Soul food

A lot of thought also goes into choosing the menu and meal presentation. "Our dieticians take special care in preparing a menu that children would like, such as soups and pasta. The food is served in colourful plates and bowls," said Dr Kishan Chugh, Chairperson of the paediatric department at Sir Ganga Ram Hospital.

The hospital has a centre for child care in a separate block.

Each room there is painted in bright colours with themes ranging from cartoon characters to animals and super heroes.

Clearly, hospitals are putting in a lot of effort in making hospital stay enjoyable.