



**McMaster Children's  
Hospital**

# **Mackids Beanstalk Program**

**Growing great kids!**

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Artwork by Hank Nunes

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## Why was the MacKids Beanstalk Program created?

Children who need to stay in the hospital for a long time have many medical needs. As we meet those needs, we must also remember that they are growing children.

All children need to:

- ✓ play
- ✓ learn new ideas and skills
- ✓ interact with family
- ✓ have familiar routines

The MacKids Beanstalk Program helps us support children's growth and development while they are in the hospital. This program helps us provide care that is family-centred.



## Who can take part?

Your child can benefit from the MacKids Beanstalk Program if he or she:

- is under age 5, and
- has a long-term health condition that requires a hospital stay for 3 weeks or longer.

## What are the goals?

The goals of the MacKids Beanstalk Program are to:

Create	<b>Create</b> a space for your child to play safely with toys and equipment that best suit his or her age and stage of development. Play helps your child learn new language, movements and skills.
Communicate	<b>Communicate</b> the plan for your child's development with family and the health care team. Your child will have a binder that shows everyone what activities and exercises your child will enjoy.
Celebrate	<b>Celebrate</b> milestones that are important to your child, such as a birthday, first words, and reaching goals.

## How do we take part?

Taking part in the MacKids Beanstalk Program means working with a team of people to meet your child's developmental needs.

You and your family are the most important members of the team, because you know your child best. By sharing information, you can help us learn:

- your child's strengths
- what your child likes and dislikes
- how to best help your child

You have likely met many of the health care providers on the team.



Each team member contributes to your child's development. We invite you to talk with us about your child's development and ask any questions you may have. The Beanstalk Program makes sure we all work towards the same goals for your child.

We want you, your child and family to have good experiences in child-friendly surroundings. To achieve this, team members will interact with your child and family, encourage your child's interests, celebrate occasions and recognize his or her progress.

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Here are some of the ways that health care providers work together to help your child and family.

### **Playing**

- The Occupational Therapist provides familiar activities and can adapt the situation to help your child move and play.
- To encourage your child's growth and development, the team and volunteers play and interact with your child, using toys and activities that are adapted for his or her needs.

### **Caring**

- Nurses and doctors work with you to make decisions about your child's medical care.
- The team helps you learn about your child's development, condition and care.
- The Child Life Specialist helps your child and his or her siblings talk about their feelings, prepare for tests, cope with treatment, and adapt to change.
- The Social Worker provides support and helps your family deal with changes in their lives. This may include practical help with finances, legal concerns and community referrals.

### **Learning**

- The Speech Language Pathologist helps your child develop speech and language skills. Your child may learn to talk, read, write or use other ways of communication.
  - The Child Life Specialist plans ways for your child to learn through play activities that are fun and helpful.
  - The team will promote and support healthy interaction with your child and his or her play partners.
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### **Growing**

- The Physiotherapist helps your child improve movement, balance and strength. This helps your child explore his or her surroundings and become more independent.
- The Dietitian helps plan a diet that gives your child the right foods and fluids for growth.
- The Occupational Therapist and the team will help your child with feeding skills.
- The team will support the growth and development of your child through proper nutrition, play and interaction.

Your child may meet other health care providers who will help with his or her development.

**The Beanstalk Program helps co-ordinate everyone's efforts to help your child grow and develop.**

To make a donation to the MacKids Beanstalk Program:

- call 905-522-3863
- e-mail [donations@hamiltonhealth.ca](mailto:donations@hamiltonhealth.ca)
- visit [www.hamiltonhealth.ca](http://www.hamiltonhealth.ca)

The Beanstalk Program began at the Hospital for Sick Children in Toronto. We would like to thank their Beanstalk Committee for helping us start this program at McMaster Children's Hospital.