

Toy Industry Foundation Nemours Announces Research Partnership

Partnership to Explore Impact of Trauma-Informed Care and Play on Well-Being of Children and Families in Healthcare Settings

\$400,000 grant will fund multi-phase research to develop and implement intervention programs for children and their families

The [Toy Industry Foundation](#) (TIF), the philanthropic arm of the North American toy industry, and [Nemours](#), one of the country's largest pediatric health systems, operating two children's hospitals and more than 40 outpatient facilities with operations in five states, today announced the launch of a year-long research partnership. With the support of a \$400,000 grant from TIF, Nemours will explore the impact of trauma-informed patient care and the role of play in helping children and families heal and cope while in the hospital. Research findings will be used to develop an innovative, high-quality program focused on trauma-informed care, using play materials and related resources designed to support and comfort children experiencing stress reactions due to life-threatening illness, injury or painful medical procedures.

"For well over a decade, the Toy Industry Foundation has been committed to bringing the crucial benefits of play to children in need," said Jean Butler, Executive Director of TIF. "Our groundbreaking partnership with Nemours represents the next step in our journey to expand our reach by bringing the healing power of play to sick children and families living through unbelievably stressful circumstances. We are thrilled to partner with such an esteemed leader in pediatric health care and look forward to exploring how the use of toys, games and other playful 'tools' may bring healing and happiness into these children's lives."

The effort is led by a collaborative team at Nemours — including the Center for Healthcare Delivery Science, KidsHealth and the Child Life Program at Nemours/Alfred I. duPont Hospital for Children — and is being funded by the Toy Industry Foundation. The multi-phase research will gather perspectives of patients/families of diverse backgrounds and healthcare providers regarding the need for, and best ways to deliver, trauma-informed pediatric patient care — an approach that incorporates awareness of the potentially traumatic nature of medical events and aims to reduce or prevent traumatic stress reactions in children. Researchers will then develop a pilot intervention program that facilitates individualized, trauma-informed care and includes a kit with play interventions to aid in the healing and coping process in children.

"We know that many children and their caregivers can experience illness and injury as traumatic events, especially when the illness or injury is potentially life-threatening," said Anne E. Kazak, PhD, of Nemours. "Responses to traumatic stress often persist and can impact quality of life for the child and family over time." Dr. Kazak explained that trauma-informed healthcare settings strive to prevent or reduce traumatic stress reactions. "However," she said, "we need more information about how patients and families respond to trauma-informed interventions and we must include the 'family voice' in their design and development."

Once approved, the intervention program will first be implemented at Nemours/Alfred I. duPont Hospital for Children in Wilmington, Delaware and Nemours Children's Hospital, in Orlando, Florida, with the goal of expanding to additional Nemours facilities and children's hospitals nationwide.

Nemours Senior Vice President and Chief Clinical Officer Stephen T. Lawless, MD, MBA, said, "Every child and family reacts differently to the stress of illness, injury and hospitalization. There are both short term and long term effects. We always strive to deliver optimal care and that means understanding the psychological impact of being or having a seriously ill child." Lawless went on to say that by working to help mitigate stress in the healthcare setting, Nemours expects to reduce fear, anxiety and emotional trauma for the family. "We are grateful to the Toy Industry Foundation for their support of what we believe is the first project aimed at building a trauma-informed care kit designed by and for families."

The [Toy Industry Foundation](#) (TIF) is a non-profit organization whose mission it is to bring the magic of play to children in need. While other organizations provide food, shelter and support services to children and their families, TIF sees to it that these children have toys and opportunities to play in an attempt to restore both fun and a sense of normalcy to their lives. To date, TIF's signature program, The Toy Bank, has provided more than \$130 million in toys to 19 million children in need around the globe, thanks to its generous toy donors.

Nemours is an internationally recognized children's health system that owns and operates the [Nemours/Alfred I. duPont Hospital for Children](#) in Wilmington, Del., and [Nemours Children's Hospital](#) in Orlando, Fla., along with outpatient facilities in six states, delivering pediatric primary, specialty and urgent care. Nemours also powers the world's most-visited website for information on the health of children and teens, KidsHealth.org and offers on-demand, online video patient visits through Nemours CareConnect.

Established as [The Nemours Foundation](#) through the legacy and philanthropy of Alfred I. duPont, Nemours provides pediatric clinical care, research, education, advocacy, and prevention programs to families in the communities it serves.

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