

Qualified professional occupation to support the development of children in hospital:

A study examining field practices at children's hospitals

入院する子どもの発達を支援する専門職： 小児専門病院での見学実習に関する一考察

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INTRODUCTION

As advances in modern medicine increase infant survival rates and help children with challenging diagnosis live better and longer, the number of medically complex children in hospitals also rises. Numerous patients flow in limited hospitals from areas where medical institutions are short that can accommodate severe infants. A survey conducted on the actual condition of nursing care of severe children in the Tama area reported for children and their families, it is necessary to build a system that can have a “sense of security” (Ozawa, et al., 2010).

No one wants his/her child to have to go into hospital. Often times, hospitalized children become scared, anxious or even angry about their situation. These emotions can complicate communication between a child and their doctor, nurse or even family members. Child-friendly hospitals might recognize that children are not the same as adults. These hospitals might improve the way to care of children from the child's point of view as the important business for childhood and growing up. Some countries have established standards for children's hospital environment and services. As an example, UK Department of Health was published the Children's National Service Framework standard for hospital services in 2000. The standard included in this National Service Framework cover:

- 1) The design and delivery of hospital services around the needs of children and their families.
- 2) The safety of children while they are in hospital.
- 3) The quality of services for children in hospital.
- 4) The suitability of hospital settings for the care children receive.

UK Secretary of State for Health stated “across the country, the dedicated and professional staff who work in the NHS (National Health Service) – especially those who work with children –

are giving their best to get the best care for patients” (Department of Health, 2003).

In this standard, it is described that children visiting or staying in hospital have a basic need for play and recreation in all hospital departments providing a service to children and this applies equally to the siblings of patients, and so is also a consideration for neonatal units. And also described that it has been recommended all children staying in hospital have daily access to a play specialist, so the team should be able to offer a variety of play interventions to support the child at each stage in his or her journey through the hospital system (Occupational Standards are available from the National Association of Health Play Specialists).

As a model of the hospital, Royal Manchester Children’s Hospital in Central Manchester University Hospitals provide one of the largest and most comprehensive hospital play services in the UK and Europe. At this hospital, all play staff are trained childcare practitioners with additional Hospital Play Specialist and other qualifications. The Organisational Relationships are shown in the Figure1 (Central Manchester University Hospitals, 2016).

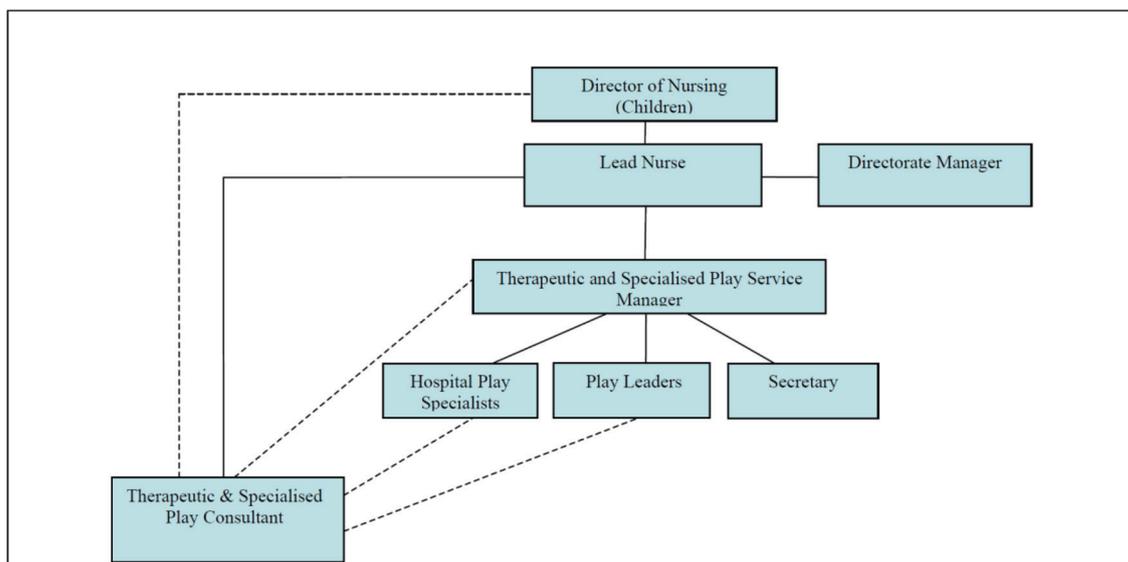


Figure1. Play Services Organisational Chart (Central Manchester University Hospitals)

‘Hospital Play Specialist’ of the predecessor of Health Play Specialist was a title originally coined in the 1970s in recognition of the work of a group of professionals who used play with children in hospital, but were neither play therapists nor simply play leaders. The creation of this title was borne out of the establishment of the first training course for those providing play in hospital setting. This course was run at London’s Chiswick College. Over the 35-year period, the training itself has become recognized more widely in professional terms, notably by becoming the nationally recognized qualification for hospital play specialists in 1992, and by its accreditation to a level four award on the National Qualification Framework in 2004 (Hubbuck, 2009).

The training course started 2008 in Japan, at University of Shizuoka, Junior College, granted by Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology. The students who complete the program are entitled as Hospital Play Specialist Japan by the partnership with Hospital Play Staff

Education Trust. “What Hospital Play Specialist (notation as HPS) offers” are indicated by HPS Japan as follows;

- 1) Provide one-to-one play sessions for sick children to receive thorough treatments.
- 2) Design play programs to meet developmental and emotional needs of children.
- 3) Create safe and child-friendly environment with a lot of play techniques and tools to reduce fears and anxieties (University of Shizuoka, Junior College, 2016).

Those who have completed nursery schooling at the university are entitled to apply for the training courses. Based on the fact that my seminar students had strong interests in the qualification of HPS, it was started to plan seminar students' field tour practices at child specialty hospitals.

This study aimed to clarify the actual recognition of the students department to early childhood care and education to the job functions of HPS, by analyzing observation records of the seminar students at two field tour practices in child specialty hospitals.

METHODS

1. Field tour practices conducted

(1) Tokyo Metropolitan Children's Medical Center

On March 11, 2016, 3rd grade university students (7: male; 1 and female; 6) conducted a one-day field tour practice at hospital. Students were instructed and introduced to the hospital by one HPS. The time to observe the “Preparation” by HPS and the time to actually play with the children in hospital were set. There was also time for question and answer.

(2) Shizuoka Children's Hospital

On September 9, 2016, 4th grade university students (female; 4) and 2nd grade university students (female; 6) conducted a half-day field tour practice at hospital. Students were instructed by one HPS and introduced to the hospital by seven HPSs. The time to observe the environment of each floor and the time to observe the children in hospital were set. There was also time for question and answer.

2. Observation records collected

At field tour practices, students listen to lectures from the HPS, observed the environment of the hospitals, how the HPSs work, how the children live in hospitals and so on. Observation records were made by students and submitted. 7 records and 10 records, all 17 records were collected.

3. Analysis

The observation records were divided into short sentences. From the sentences, I extracted descriptions about the affair of HPS and classified three categories, which indicated by HPS Japan described above, “What HPS offers” 1), 2), 3). The differences of the categories were clarified and recognitions of the students were revealed.

RESULTS

1. Observation records collected

The records were described below. It should be noted the term “Preparation” means to give the child an easy-to-understand explanation of the content of treatment, such as injection or blood collection, when carrying out a painful treatment for a child, to give a prospect and prepare for the mind to do.

(1) Tokyo Metropolitan Children’s Medical Center

(A_1) 3rd grade student

As I imagined before practicing, I thought that the HPS work contents were almost unchanged with the nursery teacher in nursery school. However, I realized that actually it is not that easy. HPS carries out devised Preparations to convey various feelings to children who undergo surgery and treatment as much as possible so as to be able to remove anxiety. HPS keeps close to the child and the guardian, thinking how to feel comfortable with peace of mind. HPS is working in cooperation with the other workers. Also, I felt that there might be scenes that think death somewhere in her heart. The field tour practice was a short time but it was impressive that HPS kept working without wasting a little time. For adults who work in hospitals, it may be a similar routine every day, but for children, it may be an important experience one time in his/her life. I realized that I could not be a light feeling to engage in it. I would like to continue to send messages what I felt at the practice to the future.

(B_1) 3rd grade student

Although I have learned about HPS works on journals or books, it was my first time to see the HPS works and the hospital actually, I was very impressed. Knowing their behavior and the intention of HPS such as observing the situation of children well, explaining with perspective and actually touching instruments, I thought the existence of HPS will be very big for children receiving medical treatment. I felt it was a very nice job that can support children facing illness positively. The practical training this time was an experience to feel close to HPS and to feel like to be a medical childcare professional more realistically.

(C_1) 3rd grade student

There were a lot of things that I felt really amazing in the Preparation. I saw that children and parents actually touch the surgical instruments. They would be easy to understand and would not have anxiety about the surgery even if that thing comes. As I do not usually engage in children at hospital, I do not know how to contact them. However, when I talked directly with a child, I gradually became able to play normally. I thought that I could have contacted the children not thinking too deeply because they were doing ordinary play.

(D_1) 3rd grade student

From this practice, in particular, I realized the importance of Preparations for children. I realized that there was a difference in feeling when performing surgery by preparing, and I knew

the importance of HPS. The image of the hospital changed in this practice. When I was a child, I thought why I had to do such an exam, and when I was in the hospital there was always a question in my mind. This time, I was able to understand that the image of treatment will change so much just by preparing it. I entered the surgical ward and read the picture book for a child. It was my first time to read a children's book to a bedridden child. I was puzzled without understanding how to do. I saw that HPS was reading a book, and I tried it in a similar way. Unlike reading a picture book to a sitting child, it was very difficult to match her line of sight. HPS advised me if the child falls asleep, the book might not match his/her line of sight. When I notice that it would be better to change the position of the book.

(E_1) 3rd grade student

I saw the appearance of the HPS actually working at a hospital, and I was able to understand the work more concretely than before going to the practice. I thought the most important thing is to interact with the children through visual, auditory, touch, etc. from the experience actually involved with children. It is often thought that it is difficult to associate with a child living in a hospital, but I realized that if I showed a lot of attitudes involved in children, they would respond me. I still have a lot of uneasy things, but I hope to continue studying towards future goals by taking advantage of this experience.

(F_1) 3rd grade student

I have experienced practical training at nursery schools, kindergartens and child care facilities at university, but practical training at hospital was an experience that have never been before. In the childhood hematology department, I entered the child's playing and I was suggested an idea that communication can be taken from the staff. I practiced interaction with the children. Unlike expectations just before practical training, I was surprised that children are energetic and powerful. In the Q & A session, HPS talked about the fact that the circumstances of children are different for each illness, and the desire of me to deepen their learning became stronger.

(G_1) 3rd grade student

For children, hospitals tend to be recognized as anxiety and scary places because there is a negative image. I think assistance has been made that values the subjectivity of the child, to prepare a toy that seems to be interesting according to the child's eyes, to prepare an environment where children can play freely, to prepare many smells of oxygen mask using surgery children can choose, to prepare some choice of favorite things such as BGM etc. children can choose by themselves and so on, in this hospital. I felt that children are preparing their mind by positively grasping the experiences at a hospital, in the interaction with the hospital's environment and HPS. Although HPS is still not well recognized by society and few recruitment, HPS is indispensable to pursue mental care and communication to children, close to parents and families, remove even a little anxiety and have a sense of security. I think that it is the role of HPS to do so; I felt again that it would be better for HPS to be active in various hospitals where children live.

(2) Shizuoka Children's Hospital

(A_2) 4th grade student

I felt that HPS is required more than the nursery teacher. Since it is often related to many types of occupations, I understood that it is important to make it possible to utilize ideas, to realize children's rights, and to recognize nursery school education guidelines that HPS can express opinions in any situation. For children being hospitalized, it was necessary to supplement by HPS the lacking parts such as slow development compared to children in various ways. There are many processes that must be kept in mind for HPS compared from nursery school teachers, but by doing so, the safety of the sick child is protected. HPS has to send out more messages. I think that if HPS do not do research, showing quantifies or argument, people will not be able to understand the importance of HPS in the future. Although I am also not good at it, I thought that it would be better if people aware the goodness of HPS and that lead to the creation of a more living environment for children. It was really nice to actually hear the story of the HPS. I would like to continue working so that I can cherish my studies at school and improve the quality of childcare.

(B_2) 4th grade student

I felt the wonderful work of HPS again. If I get sick, I will feel like "Why am I ...?" I thought that the presence of HPS would be very encouraging for children even in such a case. HPS would take full advantage of expertise. I felt that HPS would be an indispensable presence for children, their guardians and other professionals. I got a lot of attractive stories and had enough time to visit the hospital.

(C_2) 4th grade student

The words saying that "pathetic" for the ill children, should not the end of the word, sounded very much in my heart. Imagining the time when the children leave the hospital, I considered what kind of support is important during hospitalization. Moreover, we were able to see many points of consideration for children in this visit. Considering that it is a hospital ranges from infants to high school students, a wide variety of play tools and walls are there so did not get tired of any generation. Because it is a child hospital, it is necessary not to put only things for young children, but also for high-school students and others to have fun. I would like to take advantage of what I have learned this time, such as adapting to a wide range of needs, and I will learn thoroughly at school.

(D_2) 4th grade student

I learned the importance of having a solid understanding of children's rights. I also learned that studying not only for young children but also for school age children is necessary. I first learned that the Preparation Book is made suitable for each child. I felt the importance of giving options to children. Children would be more likely to cooperate if they choose themselves. And I knew the importance of praise children at the end of the treatment in any case. I learned the operation of HPS at the hospital. I was taught the importance of children's retrospective play. I also learned that it is also necessary to play at different ages. I felt once again the importance of

communication with other occupations. I understood that it is better to take my current study at the university more carefully. I would like to put on the knowledge while learning at university. Much ingenuity was there everywhere in the ward that children would not be afraid. On walls and ceilings, there were ingenuity such as animals and trains that were bright and children would not be afraid. When I was on the elevator, I felt that children would not be afraid when they go to surgery. For children, hospital is scary, but I felt that we could improve if there were much ingenuity. I felt that it was very child-friendly hospital, also to their family.

(H_2) 2nd grade student

In the decoration of each hospital room, I was amazed at not only entertaining children but decorating cute characters, and having a solid meaning. It is decoration of a locomotive, for example. I thought that following the locomotive, it was connected to various places and was alleviating children's fear. In addition, I was able to know that the child's fear has been alleviated in various decorations and play rooms. I have been interested in HPS for some time so I participated in this visit. I was able to see the actual site, which led to one of the dreams of HPS becoming reality in myself.

(I_2) 2nd grade student

In examination learning, I was thinking only about getting qualifications, such as the ability to work if I get qualifications, the difficulty of conditions when qualifying. However, getting qualification is also important, but I noticed the importance of thinking how to face children and parents, how to eliminate anxiety and how children can approach their normal lives. I was able to know deep contents unique to professionals, such as preparing individual Preparation Books, accurately acting on things that can happen in medical practice such as bleeding. I would like to be a HPS in the future. I took advantage of this visit to review my studies at university and felt that I would make the utmost effort to deepen my understanding. I will live without losing such valuable opportunities.

(J_2) 2nd grade student

It was a very valuable experience to hear stories from those who were active in medical practice. In the story it was very helpful for me to say "Please do not end up poorly to children in hospital. We must think about the future." While we observed the ward, I could see the actual situation of the children and I was able to think about what I wanted to do for the child. While I was observing, I felt very deeply that HPS thinks that children would not only have unpleasant memories of experiences at the hospital. There were thoughtfulness for children at various places, such as window decoration and ceiling mobile, I was really surprised.

(K_2) 2nd grade student

HPS not only explain the children about the treatment by words before, but also teach about treatment while playing and using a doll as a real treatment room. When children disagree with injections, after treatment, a turning back play such as putting paint on the syringe and spraying it on the paper was done, and relaxed disgusting thoughts. I was able to have a precious time

really. In the future, it is not clearly decided what type of childcare course I go, but I was able to think that I would like to consider the job of HPS as a hope.

(L_2) 2nd grade student

This time for the first time, I saw a ward for children. It turned out that a lot of ingenuity was given to children so that they could live at ease. I was surprised that the walls as well as the ceiling and the elevator were decorated. I realized that by giving options to children in treatment or by reviewing after treatment that they must do whether they like or not, HPS can alleviate the feelings of children toward treatment as much as possible. I thought that even a little thing such as give a choices, it is necessary for children not to be deprived of their rights because of their illness. It became clear that basic knowledge as a nursery teacher becomes important also in relation to sick children. I hope to study valuing each lesson in future student life.

(M_2) 2nd grade student

We heard a lot of stories from the nursery teachers actually working HPS at a child hospital. I was able to learn mainly about the importance of preparing space for children, ingenuity to reduce the fear of treatment, and the attitude of the position to be in contact with children as HPS. Especially in making the atmosphere inside the hall, there were things that could actually be drawn by walking around the hospital. For children, it seems that hospitals are subject to fear. But various decorations, such as suspended fishes, are making space that can be relieved. I thought that play was developed depending on age, and it was an environment that children could spend with elongation. Although I summarized it briefly, I could see ingenuity in the hospital that I could not see usually, and I was able to hear valuable stories, so I was full of gratitude. I will absorb what I learned and I would like to make use of it for future learning.

2. Classified descriptions

(1) Tokyo Metropolitan Children's Medical Center

1) Provide one-to-one sessions (n: 9)

(A_1) HPS carries out devised Preparations to convey various feelings to children who undergo surgery and treatment as much as possible so as to be able to remove anxiety

(B_1) Knowing children's behavior well, explaining with perspective and actually touching instruments

(B_1) The existence of HPS will be very big for children receiving medical treatment who can support children facing illness positively

(C_1) To touch the surgical instruments would make the children be easy to understand and not have anxiety about the surgery even if that thing comes

(D_1) There is a difference in feeling when performing surgery by preparing, and the importance of HPS

(D_1) The image of treatment will change so much just by preparing it

(D_1) When HPS read a picture book for a bedridden child, she watches the child closely and take

measures such as changing the position of the book

(F_1) HPS talked about the circumstances of children are different for each illness

(G_1) Children are preparing their mind by positively grasping the experiences at a hospital, in the interaction with HPS

(G_1) HPS is indispensable to pursue mental care and communication to children

2) Design programs to meet developmental and emotional needs (n: 4)

(C_1) The children are doing ordinary play so we can play normally not thinking too deeply

(E_1) To interact with the children through visual, auditory, touch, etc.

(F_1) To enter the child's playing and suggest ideas that communication can be taken

(G_1) To prepare a toy that seems to be interesting according to the child's eyes, to prepare many smells of oxygen mask using surgery children can choose, to prepare some choice of favorite things such as BGM etc. children can choose by themselves and so on

3) Create safe and child-friendly environment (n: 6)

(A_1) HPS keeps close to the child and the guardian, thinking how to feel comfortable with peace of mind

(A_1) HPS is working in cooperation with the other workers

(A_1) We will continue to send messages to the future

(G_1) Children are preparing their mind by positively grasping the experiences at a hospital, in the interaction with the hospital's environment

(G_1) To prepare an environment where children can play freely

(G_1) HPS is indispensable to remove even a little anxiety and have a sense of security to close to parents and families

(2) Shizuoka Children's Hospital

1) Provide one-to-one sessions (n: 10)

(A_2) There are many processes that must be kept in mind for HPS compared from nursery school teachers, but by doing so, the safety of the sick child is protected

(B_2) The presence of HPS would be very encouraging for children in hospital

(D_2) The importance of praise children at the end of the treatment in any case

(D_2) The importance of children's retrospective play

(I_2) The importance of thinking how to face children and parents, how to eliminate anxiety and how children can approach their normal lives

(I_2) Contents unique to professionals, such as preparing individual Preparation Books, accurately acting on things that can happen in medical practice such as bleeding

(I_2) HPS thinks that children would not only have unpleasant memories of experiences at the hospital

(K_2) After treatment, a turning back play such as putting paint on the syringe and spraying it on the paper was done, and relaxed disgusting thoughts

(L_2) By giving options to children in treatment or by reviewing after treatment that they must do

whether they like or not, HPS can alleviate the feelings of children toward treatment as much as possible

(L_2) Even a little thing such as give a choices, it is necessary for children not to be deprived of their rights because of their illness

2) Design programs to meet developmental and emotional needs (n: 10)

(A_2) It was necessary to supplement by HPS the lacking parts such as slow development compared to children in various ways

(C_2) Imagining the time when the children leave the hospital, I considered what kind of support is important during hospitalization

(C_2) HPS is adapting to a wide range of needs

(D_2) Studying not only for young children but also for school age children is necessary

(D_2) The Preparation Book is made suitable for each child

(D_2) The importance of giving options to children

(D_2) Children would be more likely to cooperate if they choose themselves

(D_2) It is also necessary to play at different ages

(K_2) HPS not only explain the children about the treatment by words before, but also teach about treatment while playing and using a doll as a real treatment room

(M_2) Play was developed depending on age

3) Create safe and child-friendly environment (n: 20)

(A_2) It is important to make it possible to utilize ideas, to realize children's rights, and to recognize nursery school education guidelines that HPS can express opinions in any situation

(A_2) HPS has to send out more messages

(A_2) If HPS do not do research, showing quantifies or argument, people will not be able to understand the importance of HPS in the future

(A_2) It would be better if people aware the goodness of HPS and that lead to the creation of a more living environment for children

(B_2) HPS would take full advantage of expertise and be an indispensable presence for children, their guardians and other professionals

(C_2) Because It is a child hospital ranges from infants to high-school students, It is necessary not to put only things for young children, but also for high-school students and others to have fun, so did not get tired of any generation

(D_2) The importance of having a solid understanding of children's rights

(D_2) The importance of communication with other occupations

(D_2) On walls and ceilings, there were ingenuity such as animals and trains that were bright and children would not be afraid

(D_2) It was very child-friendly hospital, also to their family

(H_2) Decoration of each hospital room is not only entertaining children but having a solid meaning

(H_2) Decoration of a locomotive, for example, it is connected to various places and is alleviating

children's fear

(J_2) It is very helpful for me to say "Please do not end up poorly to children in hospital. We must think about the future"

(J_2) There was thoughtfulness for children at various places, such as window decoration and ceiling mobile

(L_2) A lot of ingenuity was given to children so that they could live at ease

(L_2) The walls as well as the ceiling and the elevator are decorated

(M_2) The importance of preparing space for children, ingenuity to reduce the fear of treatment, and the attitude of the position to be in contact with children as HPS

(M_2) Various decorations, such as suspended fishes, are making space that can be relieved

(M_2) It is an environment that children could spend with elongation

(M_2) Ingenuity in the hospital that I cannot see usually

DISCUSSION

Students observed and realized a lot in these field tour practices. The results of classified descriptions showed that students most noticed and recorded about 'providing one-to-one sessions' at practice in Tokyo Metropolitan Children's Medical Center. Compared to it, at practice in Shizuoka Children's Hospital, students most noticed and recorded about 'creating safe and child-friendly environment'. At the first field tour practice, the students saw a Preparation scene for children and guardians offered by HPS at the hospital. After the observation, students visited respective wards and had a time to play with hospitalized children. The next time, at the second field tour practice, the students were guided all 7 wards of the hospital by HPSs and they observed the various environment of the hospital. The difference of the two practice programs might affect the number of descriptions between two hospitals. As a summary, students recognized the job functions of HPS into three categories almost equally.

Students department to early childhood care and education have already understood the meaning of child play. National Association of Health Play Specialists stated that play is an essential component in the child's life. It enables him/her to make sense of the outside world. Communication, tolerance, co-operation, and other life skills are all experienced and developed through play. As well as being good fun, it is a very familiar and emotionally balancing activity (National Association of Health Play Specialists, 2016). Furthermore the influences of normal play in hospital, alongside distraction therapy, preparation for procedures, referrals and home visits, are explored using therapeutic, cognitive and behavioral interventions (Jun-Tai, 2008). Challenges might be needed that other professionals to acknowledge, understand, accept and value the play specialist's role within the multidisciplinary team (Hubbuck, 2009). It might be necessary to inform the public as well. The students might have a possibility to inform the importance of hospital play and a job of HPS toward peoples.

As students documented, it is important that the rights of children are guaranteed in hospital. The UN Convention Rights of the Child is a tool and driver to improve the health and welfare of children and young people and the health services (Webb, et al., 2009). Articles concerning children in hospital which specifically be recognized by students are as follows:

- 1) Article 12 ‘every Child has the right to say what they think in all matters affecting them, and to have their views taken seriously ‘
- 2) Article 13 ‘every child must be free to say what they think and to seek and receive information of any kind as long as it is within the law’
- 3) Article 23 ‘A child with a disability has the right to live a full and decent life in conditions that promote dignity, independence and an active role’
- 4) Article 24 ‘Every child has the right to the best possible health’
- 5) Article 31 ‘Every child has the right to play’ (Evans, 2016)

One important affair of HPS concerning hospitalized children’s human environment, Ronald McDonald House FUCHU was informed as an accommodation for families with sick children at Tokyo Metropolitan Children’s Medical Center. It is the fifteenth Ronald McDonald House in the UK. At a Ronald McDonald House in the world, various projects are also being done, e.g. art activities, the sick children and their siblings recreated the medical experience and dis-played a sense of hope in their play (Burns-Nader, 2016). Similar charity activities for sick children and families should be penetrate from now on in Japan.

Today in UK, qualified, registered play staff hold the professional title of Health Play Specialist (HPS) in order to reflect the broader role of health promotion and maintenance. Play has a special function in the hospital environment and HPS lead playful activities and use play as a therapeutic tool, however, they are neither play therapists nor play leaders.

During the last 40 years, the profession has earned the respect from the medical and nursing staff and is now recognized by government and professional bodies as an essential part of pediatric care (National Association of Health Play Specialists, 2016). The HPS training course in Japan started from 2008, so to be recognized by the medical and nursing staff or government would need a little more time. Students department to early childhood care and education, who have already understood the meaning of child play, might have a possibility to inform the importance of hospital play and a job of HPS toward peoples including the medical and nursing staff.

CONCLUSION

Students department to early childhood care and education acknowledged the values and roles of HPS throughout field tour practices at child specialty hospitals. The students might have a possibility in the near future to realize that qualified and registered play staff would be recognized by government and professional bodies as an essential part of pediatric care in Japan.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to thank HPS Sanae Sugibuchi and HPS Masami Sugiyama for their kindness to accept field tour practices and guide students in children's hospitals. Thanks to Momoe Masuda, Mai Kubota, Natsuki Watai, Honami Sotta, Nobuhiro Hirose, Mayuka Ando, Nanami Matsunaga, Tomoko Hida, Narumi Katsumata, Saori Hiraki, Minori Tago, Miki Mochizuki and Saori Yoshimoto for their interests in HPS and reporting practices.

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