



Banner Thunderbird
Medical Center

Michael Attard is one of two certified child life specialists at Banner Thunderbird Medical Center

What is a Pre-Op Program?

A pre-op program is a measure put in place that offers children and their families an opportunity to become more familiar with the surgical environment in a safe, non-threatening manner.

How is the Children's Center's Pre-Op Program specifically geared towards kids?

The pre-op program at The Children's Center was created "Through the eyes of a child". Led by Certified Child Life Specialist, Michael Attard, children and their families are prepared for their surgery through the magic of play with theories of child of development in mind.

What does, "through the eyes of a child" mean?

By "through the eyes of a child" we designed everything in the hospital from the perspective of a child, in the best interest of the children we served. A great example would be that we constructed all of the furniture so that it would be easily accessible to the kids. We understood the importance of family to the patient, and strived to provide the best concept of family centered care possible. This is something we are continuing in the pre-op program at Banner Thunderbird.

In what ways can children become more familiar with the "surgical environment"?

When kids and their families attend our pre-op program, we introduce them to an array of medical equipment they'll be interacting with during their surgical experience. I'll give you an example. At our pre-op class we take vitals (check temp, blood pressure, O2 saturation, etc), and show a brief "muppet" surgery preparation video. We also have the kids don surgical attire and head back to the OR room where they'll be having surgery, so that the children can develop a sense of comfort and familiarity.

Give some examples of “play” scenarios that help children prepare for surgery.

We prepare children for surgery in the hospital using playful teaching aids, such as preparation dolls, preparation books, play, etc. You can do a lot of great work at home preparing your child for surgery. Explain things at their level using developmentally appropriate language. Let them ask questions. Let your child lead the way, and refer those questions that are tough to answer to the medical staff. We're always here to help.

How can parents of pediatric patients benefit from the Pre-Op program?

Mom and dad know their kids best. This program gives mom and dad a great opportunity to ask questions and better understand the process from registration to discharge. It's a great time to address a child's fears and clear up any misconceptions.

Are parents ever more frightened about their children having surgery than the kids are?

Yes. This is one of the only times in life a parent may feel a total loss of control over the protection of their child, besides college and marriage. I believe it's reasonable for parents to want to protect their child and look out for them. The great thing about our pre-op program is it's a perfect place to ask questions and prepare themselves for what it will be like the day of surgery. Our Child Life team is trained to provide family centered care and help the entire family unit cope through the surgical experience resulting in a positive outcome.

How often does the Pre-Op Program offer classes to pediatric patients and their families? Where and at what time?

The Pre-Op program is offered bi-weekly from 7-8PM meeting in the East Entrance to Banner Thunderbird.

Who conducts the classes?

Michael Attard, CCLS

Are reservations required to attend a Pre-Op Program class?

Confirmation over voicemail prior to attending would be ideal. What's the contact information? Michael Attard, CCLS (602)865-4645.