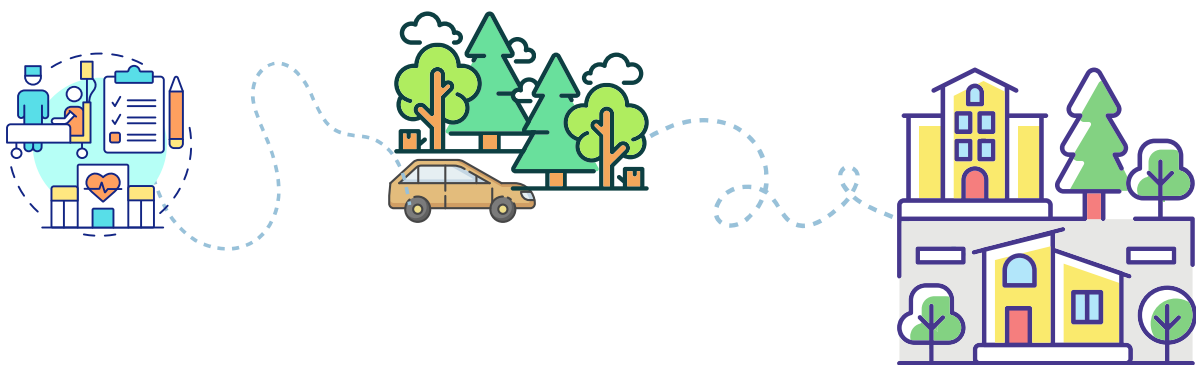


# Readjusting back to life at home

With the transition from hospital to home, it is normal to feel uncertain about supporting your child post-treatment and readjusting back to life at home while being away from the immediate support of your child's multidisciplinary healthcare team. A crucial aspect to re-defining life at home is to know yours and your child's limits, as well as when and where to seek support.

## 1 SUPPORTING YOUR CHILD IN ADJUSTING BACK TO HOME AFTER TREATMENT

- Maintain **regular follow ups with your child's healthcare team** following discharge.
- Help your child **label their emotions** and **understand why they may be feeling certain emotions** during their post-treatment journey.
- If you notice your child experiencing any significant emotional or behavioural difficulties, **seek professional support** such as from your child's school counsellors or psychologists.
- Set **goals** with your child to help them monitor tangible progress and gradually work towards **increasing their levels of activities post-treatment** (e.g. to be able to go for a 10-minute walk downstairs once a week, completing a book in 5 days).
- Collaboratively discuss and set **routines and schedules** with your child to increase predictability and structure at home.
- Use a **timer** to help your child monitor their progress through each part of their schedule.



*Additional strategies for helping your child to cope with their feelings and mood changes:*

- *Theme 1, Issue 2: Helping Your Child to Cope with Their Feelings*
- *Theme 2, Issue 7: Dexamethasone - Coping with mood changes and increase in appetite*

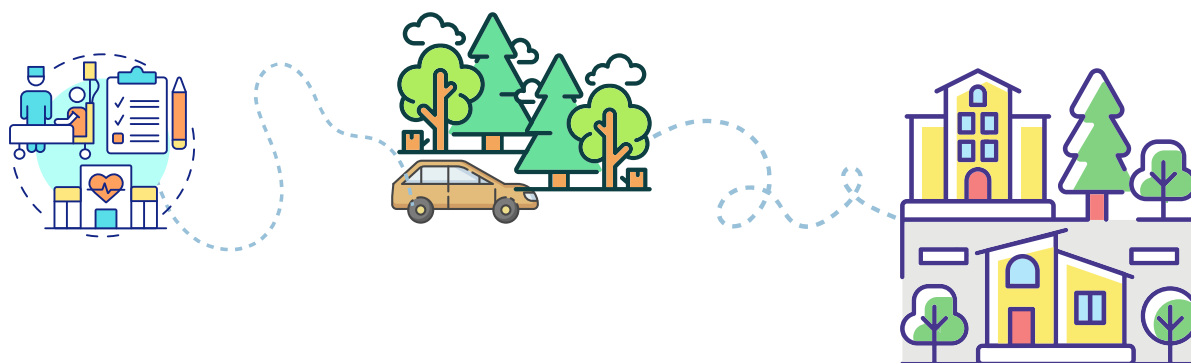


## 1 SUPPORTING YOUR CHILD IN ADJUSTING BACK TO HOME AFTER TREATMENT

- Set and consistently enforce **rules, boundaries, rewards, and consequences at home**. As children grow, so do their perceptions of the world and of their independence. Be open to re-negotiating rules of living with your child according to their needs, environment, ability levels, and growth (e.g. play time with friends, study time, screen use).
- Offer **choices for everyday activities** where possible to increase their sense of autonomy and to mitigate possible reduced sense of control (in view of having to go through medical procedures that the child could not have control over).

> e.g. what they would like to eat or wear, whether they would like to read a book or shower first

- **Gamifying tasks** to introduce new routines and assist your child in building up strength and self-sufficiency – e.g. shooting dirty laundry into the basket from a short distance, racing each other to complete mathematical practices (ducky race, division derby).
- Offer **regular break times to manage their energy and attention levels** should they feel more easily fatigued following treatment.



### Have Patience

- When frustration arises during the adjustment to new routines, **take a moment to recalibrate yourself and your child** to overcome any big emotions, **before reconvening to address the situation that had just occurred**.

*Additional strategies for helping your child to cope with their feelings and mood changes:*

- Theme 1, Issue 2: Helping Your Child to Cope with Their Feelings
- Theme 2, Issue 7: Dexamethasone - Coping with mood changes and increase in appetite



## 2

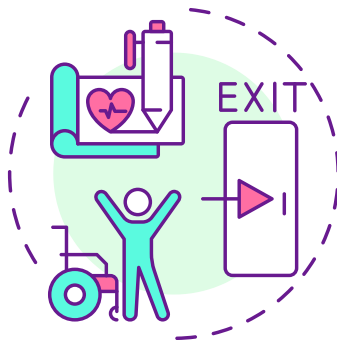
### STRATEGIES TO SUPPORT SIBLINGS AND OTHER FAMILY MEMBERS

**Prepare family members, especially siblings, for any emotional, physical, or routine changes** they may experience when their brother or sister first returns home - such as your child sleeping more in the day, being unable to keep up with more strenuous play, changes to physical appearance due to treatment



Set aside **one-on-one time with your child's siblings** to reinforce to them that you are present to support and care for them too

Before your child's discharge, discuss with other family members regarding **how they can explain your child's condition and recovery to others**



Should you be attending to your child and unable to immediately respond to other family members, try to **acknowledge** other family members' request first and **remember to address it at a later time**

### ③

## CARING FOR YOURSELF

While you may be caught up with looking after your child and the rest of your family members, remember to not neglect yourself and to look after yourself too.

List down **important contacts** (e.g., social workers, nurses, family, and friends who may be able to support with caregiving responsibilities) and dates (e.g. hospital appointments), and keep them in an accessible area



**Communicate regularly and openly with your partner/family members**, share everyday happenings and how you've been managing with the changes – it is okay to express your thoughts, feelings, and emotions, and re-negotiate any boundaries or shared duties

Seek **tangible support** to avoid getting overwhelmed e.g. ordering meals for dinner where possible, applying for school bus services to assist with sending other children to and from school, being open to seeking other family members or friends' help to temporarily look after your children if needed



KK Women's and  
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ACADEMIC MEDICAL CENTRE  
**PAEDIATRICS**



Gold symbolises the precious metal of the highest value, just like how precious our children are, so gold is the international colour to represent childhood cancer awareness. Gold is also the colour of strength, courage and resiliency.



### 3

## CARING FOR YOURSELF

Create a **schedule** amongst the family to roster household and parenting duties, which may also serve as family bonding time



Take **regular self-care breaks** to care for your own physical and mental health

Do not be afraid to seek social, psychological, and emotional support for yourself

> Get **professional help** if you notice that:

1. You are no longer taking care of yourself
2. You feel perpetually tired and drained of energy
3. Your mood is consistently low
4. You cry a lot or are easily angered/irritable
5. You experience changes in your appetite
6. You experience sleep difficulties

