

# FUN SCRUBS = BRIGHT SMILES

A project to improve a child's experience whilst in hospital.

Lexi Davies and Melissa Donnellan  
John Hunter Children's Hospital – Lookout Road, New Lambton NSW 2305



## Introduction

Understanding of the state uniform Policy Directive an Essential of Care project was commenced by nursing staff from the ward of J1 in the JHCH in December 2017, to improve the patients experience by proposing a Fun Scrub Friday. Staff would continue to wear the current navy scrub pants and the nurse in charge will still continue to wear the red scrub top and the fun scrub tops will be completely voluntary for staff to wear and are to be self funded.

## Aim

The aim of this project is to improve patient experience and relationships between the nurse and child and provide distractions for the discomforts associated with medical assessments and procedures by introducing a "Fun Scrubs Friday's".

**“Every smile is precious for these sick children and seeing their faces light up at the bright, happy outfits makes a huge difference”**

(Quote by mother of 8yr leukaemia patient)

## Method

A mixed method design was used for this project. A literature search was performed for supporting evidence and background to the change. Pre and post surveys to the parents of the patients were completed. The surveys were conducted over three units within the JHCH, wards J1, H1 and J2. A comparative analysis of the surveys was undertaken between the Christmas period when staff wore fun scrubs and when the nursing staff returned to the state uniform. Surveys were also distributed to all the nursing staff electronically and parent stories were collected

## Results

Positive results were supported by patient surveys with 74% of parents believing that fun scrubs made hospital less stressful for their child. 99% of parents would like to see staff in fun scrubs.

Staff surveys revealed similar data with 90% of staff believing that wearing fun scrubs improved nurse to patient relationships, had a positive effect and improved outcomes for the patient and staff morale when caring for children particularly, children with a diagnosis of a terminal illness.

Other parent stories indicated common themes such as; distractions of the fun scrubs decreased fears in children from medical procedures and assessments, improved relationships between nurse and patients and provided patients with families with a less clinical feel.

## Conclusion

“Fun Scrubs on a Friday”, has had a significant impact on the children and has uplifted their hospital experience as a whole. “Fun Scrub Fridays” have now been implemented across the JHCH campus which displays transferability and a future direction across the HNELHD Kids network. An action plan with future focus on further evaluations at 6months and 12months within other departments is indicated.



John Hunter  
Children's Hospital



Health  
Hunter New England  
Local Health District

## References

Medvinsky, S. (2012) Children's Responses to Multicolor and Themed Uniforms. All Nurses [online] Available at: <https://allnurses.com/childrens-responses-multicolor-themed-uniforms-t440020/> [accessed 10 December 2018]

## Acknowledgements

Parents who participated, John Hunter Children's Hospital School Room, EOC Coordinators (Stephen Croft and Helen Baines)