An Open Letter to the Sisters & Brothers of our Sunshine Kids,

I want to first start by saying, “thank you” for your patience. COVID-19 has impacted so many things, but we especially know how hard this has been for each of you and how much you miss your sister or brother. I want to use this letter as an opportunity to both say thank you for your patience and provide an update.

As many of you know, we have had an order from New York State on visitation. They make the rules for places like Sunshine. These rules are very strict because they are intended to keep people who live in homes, such as Sunshine, safe. As hard as these rules are, we know that they work and thankfully, all of the children at Sunshine have been kept safe from COVID-19.

We are slowly getting to a point, thankfully, where we can soon open our doors back up, especially for siblings to come visit. This is very exciting and long awaited!

Just recently we have begun visits with your moms and dads. These visits follow all the rules. They are mostly held outdoors where the risk of spreading germs is much lower. It is our hope now that the weather is nicer that each of you can get to visit too. We know this is important to you. As we finalize the plans to begin, I need to just remind each of you that to visit Sunshine, you will need to wear a mask and be extra careful. We must keep all germs (not just COVID-19) away from your siblings. We now have special masks just for you so that your brother/sister can see you smiling at them, but still keep them safe. We hope you like them!

So, stay tuned! Over the next week or so, we will be issuing a new schedule and as long as COVID-19 continues to ease off, we will be able to resume these very important brother and sister visits.

The Sunshine Team can’t wait to see you back!

Sincerely,

Linda

P.S. Thanks Chavie for your letter 😊
Dr. Joe,
My child’s medical condition presents itself in a way that someone would not necessarily see him exhibiting outward signs of pain, discomfort and/or distress, or consistent facial smiles/expressions. As a mom, I worry and wonder what method Sunshine uses to assess pain factors, comfort and if my child is positioned well, as well as what he likes and dislikes. How do you manage his comfort levels?

Dr. Joe Responds:
Every child is assessed for pain. The way pain shows in a child is very individual. Some children can verbalize or cry. Some may show facial changes, such as grimacing. Some children may only show pain/discomfort by change in vital signs, such as heart rate or blood pressure. We constantly monitor all of our children and get to know them well, including when they are not themselves and we can then use these changes as possible indicators of pain.

Do you have an Ask The Doc Question that you would like our medical team to answer and share their insight?
Send your submission to dsternhill@sunshinechildrenshome.org.

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Sunshine's staff is committed to making sure your child is as comfortable as possible during his/her stay with us. While your child is at Sunshine, she/he may have pain so the nursing staff will be regularly checking your child to see if she/he has any pain or discomfort.

If your child is old enough and able to tell you she/he has pain, or becomes grumpy, or has a change in personality, please tell the nurse.

If your child is not able to tell us about her/his pain, the staff will use special pain scales to assess them.

We use a Faces Pain Scale to help identify how your child is feeling. The scale has pictures of faces that range from smiling and happy to frowning and sad. The child is asked to point to the face that shows how he/she is feeling. You can help the staff evaluate where your child is on the scale. For children who are unable to use the pain scale, doctors and nurses will use a specially developed tool to measure their pain called the FLACC scale:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CATEGORIES</th>
<th>0</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>FACE</td>
<td>No particular expression or smile</td>
<td>Occasional grimace or frown, withdrawn, disinterested</td>
<td>Frequent to constant quivering chin, clenched jaw</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LEGS</td>
<td>Normal position or relaxed</td>
<td>Uneasy, restless, tense</td>
<td>Kicking, or legs draw up</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ACTIVITY</td>
<td>Lying quietly, normal position, moves easily</td>
<td>Squirming, shifting back and forth, tense</td>
<td>Arched, rigid or jerking</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CRY</td>
<td>No cry (awake or asleep)</td>
<td>Moans or whimpers; occasional complaint</td>
<td>Crying steadily, screams or sobs, frequent complaints</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CONSOLABILITY</td>
<td>Content, relaxed</td>
<td>Reassured by occasional touching, hugging or being talked</td>
<td>Difficult to console or comfort</td>
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Reminder:
If you receive any mailings from NYS Medicaid or Social Security Administration, please contact your social worker to discuss. SW will assist in preparing reports for eligibility, and continuation of benefits. Parents who maintain the role of Rep Payee for their child must complete the annual Rep Payee Accounting Form.
The Price of a Miracle

True Story

Tess was a precocious eight-year-old when she heard her Mom and Dad talking about her little brother, Andrew. All she knew was that he was very sick and they were completely out of money.

They were moving to an apartment complex next month because Daddy didn’t have the money for the doctor’s bill and our house. Only a very costly surgery could save her brother now and it was looking like there was no one to loan them the money. She heard Daddy say to her tearful Mother with whispered desperation: “Only a miracle can save him now.”

Tess went to her bedroom and pulled a glass jelly jar from its hiding place in the closet. She poured all the change out on the floor and counted it carefully. Three times, even. The total had to be perfect. No chance here for mistakes. Carefully placing the coins back in the jar and twisting on the cap, she slipped out the back door and made her way six blocks to Rexall’s Drug Store with the big red Indian Chief sign above the door. She waited patiently for the pharmacist to give her some attention, but he was too busy. Tess twisted her feet to make a scuffing noise. Nothing. She cleared her throat with the most disgusting sound she could muster. No good.

Finally she took a quarter from her jar and banged it on the glass counter. That did it! “I beg your pardon?” said the pharmacist.

“Well, I want to talk to you about my brother,” Tess answered back in the same annoyed tone. “He’s really, really sick. . . and I want to buy a miracle.”

“Our name is Andrew and he has something bad growing inside his head and my Daddy says only a miracle can save him now. So how much does a miracle cost?”

“We don’t sell miracles here, little girl. I’m sorry but I can’t help you,” the pharmacist said, softening a little.

“Listen, I have the money to pay for it. If it isn’t enough, I will get the rest. Just tell me how much it costs.”

The pharmacist’s brother was a well dressed man. He stooped down and asked the little girl, “What kind of a miracle does your brother need?”

“I don’t know,” Tess replied with her eyes welling up.

“I just know he’s really sick and Mommy says he needs an operation. But, my Daddy can’t pay for it, so I want to use my money.”

“How much do you have,” asked the man from Chicago.

“One dollar and eleven cents,” Tess answered, barely audibly. “And it’s all the money I have, but I can get some more if I need to.”

“Well, what a coincidence,” said the man with a smile. “A dollar and eleven cents is the exact price of a miracle for little brothers.” He took her money in one hand and with the other hand he grasped her mitten and said, “Take me to where you live. I want to see your brother and meet your parents. Let’s see if I have the kind of miracle you need.”

That well dressed man was Dr. Carlton Armstrong, a surgeon, specializing in neurosurgery. The operation was complete without charge and it wasn’t long before Andrew was home again and doing well. Mom and Dad were happily talking about the chain of events that had led them to this place.

“That surgery,” her Mom whispered, “was a real miracle. I wonder how much it would have cost?” Tess smiled. She knew exactly how much a miracle cost. . . one dollar and eleven cents. . . PLUS THE FAITH OF A LITTLE CHILD.

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Our New Home Construction Updates

One of the many things we are excited to bring to our New Home will be an increase in the sub-specialty care services. We know it’s hard for the kids to be transported out to their doctors’ visits off-site. As an example, we are busy making preparations for our new state-of-the-art Sunshine Eye Care Center, which will allow the kids to have their ongoing ophthalmology needs cared for in our very own building!

Spring Boggle Game

BOGGLE GAME WITH SPRING BONUS WORDS

The goal of Boggle is to write down as many words as you can from the random letters in the grid. The letters you use must be touching vertically, horizontally, or diagonally in a chain. You can’t skip or “jump” across letters.

Game participants can fax their answers to (914) 333-7019 by April 15, 2021. Winner will receive a $20 gift card!
Stress Awareness Month

Stress Awareness Month has been recognized every April since 1992, but this year it’s particularly important. Learning to cope with our stress and finding healthy ways to deal with stressful situations can go a long way in living a healthy and positive life.

Affecting More Than Just Your Mind

Long term stress can prove to be more than just a mental issue. From headaches to stomach disorders to depression – even very serious issues like stroke and heart disease can be a result of stress.

When you are placed in a stressful situation, specific stress hormones rush into your bloodstream leading to an increase in heart rate, blood pressure and glucose levels. This is helpful in emergency situations, but having this “rush” for extended periods of time can be dangerous and make you susceptible to the issues mentioned previously.

Learn To Overcome Issues You Cannot Change

Sometimes the stress in our lives is not something we have any power to change. It is during these times of uncertainty, that it’s recommended that you change your approach to situations. Try to . . .

- Recognize when you don’t have control and let it go.
- Avoid getting anxious about situations that you cannot change.
- Take control of your reactions and focus your mind on something that makes you feel calm and in control.
- Develop a vision for healthy living, wellness and personal growth, and set realistic goals to help you realize your vision.

Six Tips For Developing Stress-Resilient Attitudes and Beliefs

1. Promote optimistic thinking with these strategies:
   - View setbacks as temporary
   - Avoid generalizing a problem and applying it to your whole life
   - Don’t dismiss positive events as due to luck
   - Avoid blaming yourself for things beyond your control
   - Practice your attitude of gratitude by focusing on what you have and on positive events from the day. We can all find many positives throughout the course of the day, if we look for them.

2. View change in your life as normal, constant and a challenge instead of a threat. Change is stimulating, healthy and essential for growth and personal development.

3. Develop the attitude that “people need people.” Substantial evidence indicates that people with adequate social support (family, friends, community contacts, social or religious organizations, or even a pet) manage stress better than those who are without this support.

4. Don’t expect perfection or for others to always meet your expectations. When perfection isn’t achieved or the behavior of others doesn’t live up to our expectations, we get angry and frustrated. Be realistic and modify your expectations concerning perfection and the behavior of those around you.

5. Empathy and forgiveness reduce stress. If you follow basic religious and spiritual teachings by forgiving when you feel you have been wronged – and treat others as you would have them treat you -- you will sleep better, and be happier and healthier.

6. Instead of going to bed angry, put your anger in perspective by asking yourself how important an anger-producing situation would be if you only had one week to live. Ask yourself what difference the situation will make next week, next month or next year.

Contributed by a loving Mom

I am the child who cannot talk. You often pity me, I see it in your eyes.

You wonder how much I am aware of. I see that as well. I am aware of much, whether you are happy or sad or fearful, patient or impatient, full of love and desire, or if you are just doing your duty by me. I marvel at your frustration, knowing mine to be far greater, for I cannot express myself or my needs as you do.

You cannot conceive my isolation, so complete it is at times. I do not gift you with clever conversation, cute remarks to be laughed over and repeated. I do not give you answers to your everyday questions, responses over my well-being, sharing my needs, or comments about the world about me. I do not give you rewards as defined by the world’s standards, great strides in development that you can credit yourself; I do not give you understanding as you know it.

What I give you is so much more valuable... I give you instead, opportunities.

Opportunities to discover the depth of your character, not mine; the depth of your love, your commitment, your patience, your abilities; the opportunity to explore your spirit more deeply than you imagined possible. I drive you further than you would ever go on your own, working harder, seeking answers to your many questions with no answers.

I am the child who cannot talk.
I am the child who cannot walk.

The world seems to pass me by. You see the longing in my eyes to get out of my chair, to run and play like other children. There is much you take for granted. I want the toys on the shelf, I need to go to the bathroom, I’ve dropped my fork again. I am dependent on others in these ways. My gift to you is to make you more aware of your great fortune, your healthy back and legs, your ability to do for yourself. Sometimes people appear not to notice me; I always notice them. I feel not so much envy as desire, desire to stand upright, to put one foot in front of the other, to be independent. I give you awareness. I am the child who cannot walk. I am the child who is mentally impaired.

I don’t learn easily, if you judge me by the world’s measuring stick, what I do know is infinite joy in simple things. I am not burdened as you are with the strife and conflicts of a more complicated life. My gift to you is to grant you the freedom to enjoy things as a child, to teach you how much your arms around me mean, to give you love. I give you the gift of simplicity.

I am the child who is physically impaired.
I am the child who is cognitively impaired.

I am the child with a disability.
I am your teacher.

If you allow me, I will teach you what is really important in life. I will give you and teach you unconditional love. I gift you with my innocent trust, my dependency upon you and others. I teach you about how precious this life is and about not taking things for granted. I teach you about forgetting your own needs and desires and dreams. I teach you giving.

Most of all I teach you hope and faith.
I am the child with a disability.