

STORYBOOK

A Publication of Coastal Kids Home Care

Winter 2022

★ What do kids need today? ★

The world today is an uncertain place for children and teens. In fact, seven-in-ten teenagers report that anxiety and depression are a major problem among their peers. Whether kids are facing trauma over the loss of a family member or anxiety regarding the virus, gun violence or their futures – they need support now more than ever before. Coastal Kids Home Care's mental health counseling program continues to expand to respond their needs. This holiday season we asked our licensed counselors for their expert advice on how to be there for our kids...

"What kids need most is a place where not only do they feel safe – physically and emotionally – but also a place where they can freely express themselves without judgement."

– Kate Hulse, LMFT

"Kids need play. It is well-known in play therapy that play is language and toys are children's words. We need to have a safe place for our children to play and for them to invite us into their play."

– Nefertari Rossell, LMFT

Coastal Kids Home Care offers licensed mental health counseling for children and teens in both English and Spanish.



If you know a child in need of support, call us at 1-800-214-5439

Precious Cargo



Four-year old CJ Fontanilla often sports a superhero backpack. He wears it around the house, to the playground and well, nearly everywhere. Inside his colorful pack is the pump and formula that he requires to survive. CJ was born with Bartter's Syndrome, a rare genetic disorder that affects his kidney function and causes imbalances in electrolyte and fluid concentrations in his growing body.

CJ's delightful laugh, endless energy and superhero personality sometimes disguise his fragile health. Recently, a tough gastrointestinal virus put a strain on his kidneys and resulted in a long hospitalization while doctors rebalanced his system. CJ's rare disorder has affected his parents too. Managing his care has taken a financial, social and emotional toll on his whole family.

Due to his complex condition, CJ qualifies for comprehensive, home-based palliative care services. According to his mom Brooklyn, "Coastal Kids Home Care saved the day when they came in and said we could have a nurse here 9-5, 4 days a week and I could take care of my other child and continue working. Not only do I have nursing care for my son, but we have art therapy, music therapy, and child life as well as counseling for my husband and I. They are a lifesaver."

Kids like CJ require extra equipment (like his pump) to survive and extra care to thrive. Coastal Kids Home Care's home-based palliative care program offers his family the support they need. CJ's social worker, Ron Baker explains, "CJ is a lot like any other kid, but he also has to overcome additional challenges to exist in the same world as other kids his age. You won't keep him down, though. He is always ready to saddle up and ride again." Superhero CJ truly is... precious cargo.

★ Our Mission ★

Meeting the unique needs of medically fragile children in the comfort of their home.



1.800.214 (KIDZ) 5439
coastalkidshomecare.org

Handle With Care

In the tenuous early days of the pandemic the Cornejo Espinoza family faced the devastating loss of their infant son. Matias, who was born with a cleft lip and palate and congenital heart defect, was fragile from the beginning. He required an NG tube for nutrition and spent most of the first months of his life in and out of the hospital with respiratory issues. Each time he came home, his mom Fabiola relied on Coastal Kids Home Care nurses Diana and Robin for support in caring for her delicate baby.

Tragically, at just six months old, Matias passed away after the surgery for his cleft lip repair. Fabiola called both nurses in the scary, last moments of his life and they met her at the hospital just following his death. Robin arranged for Coastal Kids social worker Stephanie to step in to arrange for financial support for Matias' funeral and to offer the family bereavement care.

According to Fabiola, "With Matias, our life was always in and out of the hospital. But Robin, Stephanie, and Coastal Kids were a tremendous help when he was alive and when he passed away. They helped me take care of everything and just made that moment a little easier for me and I appreciate that so much."

Fast forward two years and the Cornejo Espinoza family welcomed another baby boy. Just after his birth they were shocked to discover that Max had the same congenital conditions as Matias. "It was such a hard journey when we found out [Max] had the same thing as his brother," says Fabiola. "Thankfully I knew I could call Robin and she was there to make sure that I had the support I needed even if I just needed to call for reassurance that Max was looking okay."

Despite his surprising beginning, Max is thriving. After a short stay at the hospital and a repair to his heart defect, he's needed limited support from Coastal Kids. Even so, Robin has enjoyed staying in touch, "They are an amazing family. Fabiola is a great mom, she is super strong, Max's dad is really involved, and sister Aaliyah dotes on her littlest brother. After their tragic loss they are doing so well."

At six months old, sweet Max is known for his dazzling smile, wild hair and love for dogs. Max, Aliyah and their parents visit Matias often as well. "I'm so glad I've been able to keep the relationship with Robin," says Fabiola. "I always tell her she is the angel my son left behind for me."



Piecing It Together

In early 2021, Hospice Giving Foundation approached our leadership team with a vision of helping our grieving community. Later that year, with more than \$1.1M in funding we launched Heal Together, a community-wide initiative to bring healing and hope to Monterey County.

Already, Heal Together has trained 141 individuals, many of them licensed counselors, educators, and other frontline professionals in the language of grief. Since that time our program has launched partnerships with Harmony at Home, Alliance on Aging, Center for Community Advocacy, hospitals, skilled nursing facilities, and schools throughout our county. Services range from one-on-one counseling to bereavement groups, grief training and wellness activities like Zumba, yoga, tai-chi, art, music and cooking classes. Heal Together has helped more than 983 individuals in need and our team is excited to continue serving the community through 2023 and beyond. For more information visit www.heal-together.org or follow us on social media @healtogether831.

In 2022, your donation supported these vital programs.

Nurses and therapists traveled more than 100,000 miles to provide in-home medical care to 598 children.

Counselors provided 714 clinic-based or telehealth sessions for 86 individuals with anxiety and other mild to moderate mental health needs.

Families caring for children with medical complexity received over 72,000 hours of shift and respite nursing.

Comprehensive pediatric palliative care services were available to 70 children with life-limiting illness and 11 patients received compassionate end-of-life care at home.

Nearly 1000 individuals coping with grief and loss experienced connection and healing through participating in Heal Together activities.

DONATE TODAY!

www.coastalkidshomecare.org

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