

All Kids Academy, New Specialized Educational Program for Hospitalized Children Launched by UofM, Le Bonheur Children's Hospital and UTHSC

MEMPHIS, Tenn. — All Kids Academy, an innovative program that delivers specialized schooling to hospitalized children, recently launched at Le Bonheur Children's Hospital, in partnership with the University of Memphis and the University of Tennessee Health Science Center.

All Kids Academy will include semester-long internships to prepare students to teach infants, toddlers and preschoolers with special health and educational needs. Students from the University of Memphis child development and family studies program will gain a comprehensive view of educating young children who have special needs through onsite experience, academic courses, individual and collaborative research projects and educational seminars provided by UTHSC, Le Bonheur and UofM faculty.

The purpose of All Kids Academy is to nurture every child's educational potential, in sickness and in health, by training University of Memphis student teachers to educate Le Bonheur patients aged birth to 5 years who are experiencing prolonged hospitalization. All Kids Academy will also provide developmental screening and referral for hospitalized patients of all ages and connect them with resources for their families.

Once the program is well established, the team plans to expand to hospitalized children in grades K-12, with an emphasis on Science, Technology, Education and Math (STEM) education.

Key outcomes of All Kids Academy will include:

- Early literacy development for children beginning in infancy
- In-hospital support of child-caregiver relationships along with community referral to early care and learning programs
- Graduation of future teachers, educators and healthcare providers who are well-prepared to teach and care for chronically ill children in hospital, clinic and school settings

Experts involved in development of All Kids Academy include:

- Terri Finkel, Le Bonheur/UTHSC Professor and Associate Chair of the Department of Pediatrics
- Sandy Guntharp, UofM Assistant Clinical Professor in Child Development and Family Studies
- Toni Whitaker, Le Bonheur/UTHSC Professor and Division Chief of Developmental Pediatrics
- Jessica Liles, Le Bonheur Director of Volunteer and Family Support
- Danielle Keeton, Le Bonheur Director of Outpatient Rehabilitation and Developmental Services

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