

The role of the Family/Ward Coordinator on an Alliance for Smiles medical mission is to transfer the patient from the pediatric ward to the surgical area and back, to keep the child's mind off the upcoming surgery, and to make sure the family is engaged and involved in the process. It is also expected that the coordinator will collect and share patient stories and photos (make sure to include the patient's name and record number). Optionally, thank you messages written by parents, children, and hospital staff, as well as pictures made by the children, can be collected.

**The main responsibilities of the family/ward coordinator are:**

- 1) Upon the patient entering the surgical area, give them a surgical gown. Instruct them to take off all their clothing except for their underwear and socks. To ensure the patient's privacy, especially with older patients, they should do this in a private area.
- 2) Anyone accompanying the patient should be given a surgical mask, cap, and shoe covers.
- 3) Perform a check of the chart to ensure that the patient's ID band matches the number on the chart. Also make sure the patient's weight is noted. If the weight is not included, escort the patient to a place where it can be taken.
- 4) Before the patient receives an IV, escort them to the bathroom. This eliminates any accidents during surgery.
- 5) In addition, the job of the ward coordinator is to take the patient's mind off the impending surgery. A patient who is relaxed makes the surgical team's job easier. You can bring supplies with you that are useful to help you accomplish this goal such as:
  - Water based paints to be used by the patient on paper or to paint the free hand of the child.
  - Crayons and paper or coloring books
  - Bubbles
  - Soft balls
  - Simple games and puzzles
  - Musical instruments
  - Simple books
  - Magazines for older patients – cars, fashion, sports
  - Pictures from home of pets or family members
- 6) Try to keep the patient amused, especially children. If you try one technique and that doesn't work, try another. Use your imagination. Remember nothing is too stupid or corny if it takes the patient's mind off the impending operation.
- 7) Try to engage the family as much as possible. Let them know that after the surgery doctors and/or nurses will inform them about issues such as feeding/eating issues, surgery recovery time, oral hygiene, etc. You can also train the parents to assemble arm restraints (no –no's) to be worn by their children after surgery to prevent them from interfering with surgical stitches. (Someone who has been on a previous mission can teach you how to make them.)
- 8) Collect several human-interest stories about patients who received surgery. Ask patients to write on our **"Family Story"** document. You can work with the photographer, translators, and other volunteers on this task. Make sure to include the patient's name and record number for future reference. These stories can be used in daily briefings, social media, or other publicity. Please send the stories to the AfS office either during or after the mission, and **send the "Family Story" document back to AfS.**
- 9) You can also ask the patients to draw pictures and write thank you notes. If the patients aren't old enough, ask the families to write notes. Again, note the patient's name and record number.
- 10) Be flexible, and open to helping other members of the team. If you have a spare moment, ask someone if they need help. And have fun!