Pediatric Cancer
Insights, Challenges, Strategies and Resources

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Quote from a twelve year old learner diagnosed with leukemia:

“ I know I’m sick, but what about school?”
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Describe significant physical and cognitive side effects from treatment, both long-term and late effects. Do some treatments have the potential to cause different effects than others? What is the timeframe for long-term and late effects?

• Common areas of late effects: growth & endocrine, cardiac, second malignancy, reproductive, psychosocial, cognitive
• Role of normal development in late effect outcomes
• Neurodevelopmental Model: specific treatments—CNS injury—neurocognitive deficits—academic and daily living functions
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What cognitive testing should be done as a baseline for a child in treatment? When should additional testing be done? By whom? Where? What will be covered by insurance?

• Baseline Testing: intelligence, academic, memory/executive functioning
• When student is struggling, then on annual basis
• Neuropsychologist when possible
• Hospital, school district, private practitioners
• Insurance is variable
What questions should be asked of the oncology team about these effects? What information should be provided to the family physician/pediatrician? What medical records should the family keep that may be needed at a later date?

• www.survivorshipguidelines.org
• Develop individualized passport for care, discuss with oncologist and primary care pediatrician
What information should be given to the school/teacher prior to and upon return to school?

- Medical update (physical changes, fatigue issues, infection concerns)
- Side effects or long-term effects to be aware of
- Strategies to help child re-integrate into classroom
- Overall psychosocial & academic functioning
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Does research show that later in life, childhood cancer survivors can regain lost cognitive skills?

• Current intervention research - educational support, cognitive remediation, methyphenidate, compensatory intervention
What information is needed to access services at school?

504 Plans vs. IDEA – Individuals With Disabilities Education Act
- Individualized education programs
- Accommodations and direct service under special education
- ADA – Americans with Disability Act – applies to students at college
What are the common psychosocial challenges (e.g., anxiety, depression) for patients and family members and what kinds of services are available or appropriate?

- Anxiety, depression
- Group, family & individual counseling, medication
- FDA concerns for use of stimulants, SSRIs with children and adolescents
Question and Answer Session

For more information on childhood cancers and other LLS programs, contact an Information Specialist. Toll-free Phone: (800) 955-4572 Email: infocenter@LLS.org