The CCI Pediatric Initiative
• At a time when we were caring for a high number of children undergoing Radiation Therapy (RT) we began re-evaluating our processes.

• The children and their families received tremendous care from our department, but the initial shock of diagnosis and sudden entrance into the RT world could be improved.

• We still have not experienced a break in pediatric patients, but with the small changes we have made so far we are finding the children experience a smoother transition to the Radiation Oncology environment.
Consultation with the Child Life Specialists at the Stollery made us aware that the Rad Onc department is designed for adult visitors and is not very welcoming from the child's perspective.

There are two CLS (Alison and Stephanie) at the Stollery for Oncology who are excellent resources for both our patients and healthcare providers.

Pediatric patients need to have trust built immediately with the health care team. This placates fears, improves compliance and ultimately leads to more successful treatment visits.
• This is made possible by first having the Child Life Specialists provide some teaching on what Radiation therapy looks, sounds, feels, smells, and tastes like.

• CLS at the Stollery will have established trust with the child and are likely the best person to help the child start this transition to care in Radiation Oncology.
• What do I have a choice about in my treatment?
• Get down to the child’s physical level
• Refrain from medical jargon and speak in the child’s terms, using non-threatening language
• Will it hurt?
• Do they need to touch me?
• What does the mask or equipment look, sound, feel, smell, or taste like?
• How many people will there be?
• Will there be similar people everyday?
• Do I need to wear hospital clothes/pajamas and will they fit?
• CLS came for a tour of the RT dept to learn about our processes and environment.

• A video of the RT experience was created to show children at the Stollery.

• Thermoplast samples were given to enable some hands-on learning at the Stollery.

• A Pediatric RT storybook designed at the PMH is available for the children to read through in preparation.
• Whenever possible, the Child Life Specialists prepare children for what to expect during radiation planning and treatments before they get to the CCI.

• Preparation is individualized based on the needs of each child, and can include medical play, viewing the radiation prezi, and handling the materials used for mask/mould making.
The entrance to the Beach, our large staffed playroom at the Stollery Children’s Hospital.
Views of the Beach
Teen Room and 4E3 Playroom
• A pediatric group was formed between the CCI and Stollery to investigate changes that could be made to the current peds process.

• There is often short notice to the Radiation Oncology department once a pediatric patient is referred.

• This results in little opportunity to transition care of the patient and their family to Radiation Oncology.

• The goal is to have a Therapist connect with the child when they first come to the CCI and have that same Therapist be a constant familiar face through treatment.
• A Child Life Specialist from the Stollery accompanies the patient and the family to the CT sim appointment to transfer the care to the RT team.

• In situations where the peds therapist is not going to be on the same treatment unit as the child when they start, we will make the effort to be present during the first week and help transition care to the treatment unit team.

• At the CT sim encounter the peds therapist establishes a relationship with the child and their family.

• The goal is to form a bond and gain trust; building upon the prior teaching that has been given by the CLS.
• Together with the CLS the first priority is to achieve a successful simulation for the child. This may include use of distraction/relaxation techniques to facilitate coping for the child.
• After sim the peds therapist can find out from the patient and family what subject matter he/she likes and offer the various strategies we can use to make daily treatment easier. For example…

• A brief tour of a treatment room that day with some hands on intro if time permits.
• Mask decoration/coloring.
• Count Down Posters made by Bernadette.
• Gifts of Courage reward card program with $10 gift cards given at the half way and end of treatment (for older children).
• Treasure Chest of toys just like at the Stollery.
• Per child coloring books.
• Music options (Ipods, MP3 players, CDs).

• Video options (in discussion, perhaps video goggles to view from a tablet or media device)
• Child friendly waiting rooms with child sized tables and chairs, floor mats, white boards with dry erase markers and magnets.

• Private room used when families need space to themselves.

• Child friendly waiting areas mutually benefit our adult patients who are accompanied by their young families.
Of course each child’s experience as well as which strategies they may access will vary, but the goal is to have a baseline amount of things we can offer.

This affords some standard of expectation for the treatment teams taking care of the child. Anything above and beyond will then be up to the RT team’s imagination.

To that end we have established a basic funds per patient to help with costs for end of treatment celebrations. i.e. $20 - $30 gift cards from Walmart per patient.
• So far the few changes we have made have resulted in a smoother transition for our pediatric patients to our department.

• The child friendly environment improves child’s experience in Radiation Oncology. It also benefits family situations that occur in the department.

• We are basically trying to make our department an extension of the environment they have created at the Stollery. As such we do not need to re-invent the wheel, especially with getting funds for this project.

• Special thanks to the Child Life Specialists, Children’s Wish, Kids with Cancer, the Starlight Foundation, the Volunteer Fund, and Alberta Cancer Foundation who have all stepped in to make this initiative possible!
THANKS.
YOU ARE INCREDIBLE!!