

EVALUATION OF THE STARLIGHT EXPRESS ROOM

By Sarah Moeller, Angela Grant & Dr Ralph Hampson

BACKGROUND

Since 1988, the Starlight Children's Foundation has been delivering programs in partnership with health professionals that support the total care of children, young people and their families who are living with a serious illness or a chronic health condition.

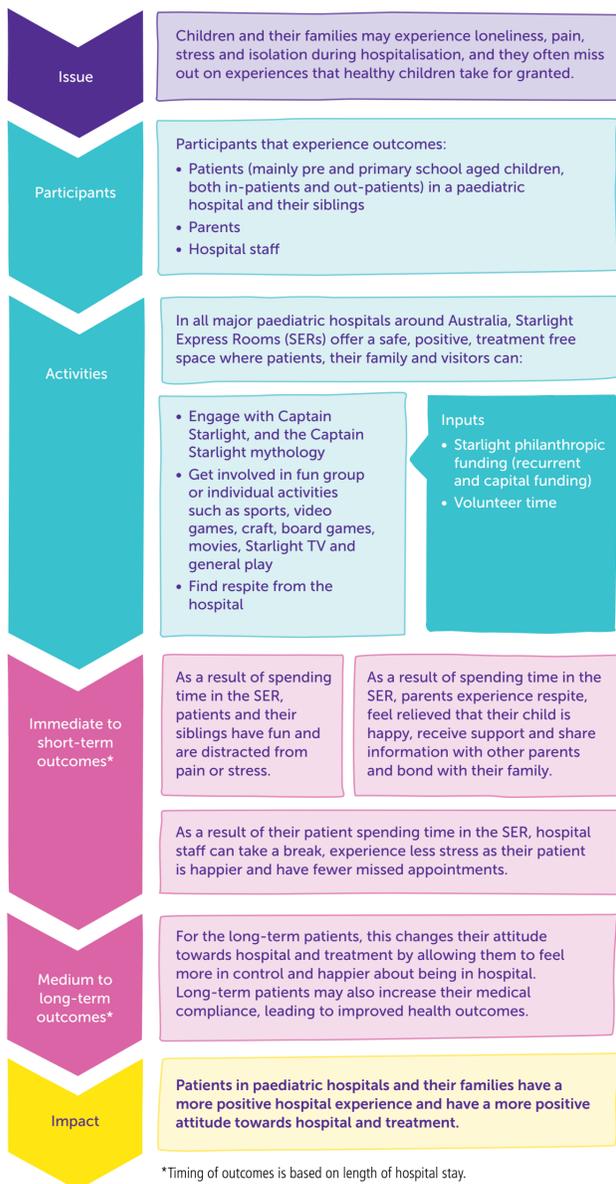
Today, Starlight is the only children's charity with a permanent presence in every paediatric hospital, supporting over 185,000 children, young people and their families each year.

Starlight Express Rooms (SER) are state-of-the-art spaces within paediatric hospitals, designed to provide a medical-free zone where children can escape from the hospital environment. Starlight Express Rooms are where the Captain Starlight and Livewire programs are delivered, providing a range of creative and engaging experiences for hospitalised children and their families.

Today, Starlight has Starlight Express Rooms located at:

- ★ Children's Hospital at Westmead, Sydney
- ★ Sydney Children's Hospital
- ★ John Hunter Children's Hospital, Newcastle
- ★ The Royal Children's Hospital, Melbourne
- ★ Lady Cilento Children's Hospital, Brisbane
- ★ Princess Margaret Hospital, Perth
- ★ Women and Children's Hospital, Adelaide
- ★ Royal Darwin Hospital (opening in 2016)
- ★ Monash Children's Hospital, Melbourne (opening in 2017)

PROGRAM LOGIC



THE EVALUATION

How did we approach the Evaluation?

In 2015, Starlight undertook an evaluation of all Starlight Express Rooms. The evaluation was based on the Starlight Express Room standards. This review of the Starlight Express Rooms was the most comprehensive undertaken to date.



Figure 1: Flowchart of SER Evaluation



EVALUATION STANDARDS

Twenty-five service standards were used as the basis for the evaluation, covering all aspects of the Starlight Express Rooms including:

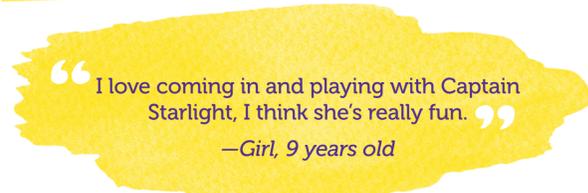
- ★ The visitor experience
- ★ The physical space
- ★ Reach and awareness
- ★ Hospital relationships
- ★ Program operations (e.g. compliance with policies, reporting etc.)

Whilst the standards had been in existence for some time, this evaluation saw them documented for the first time with examples of what a positive Starlight experience is and what it isn't.

Evaluation standard: The SER provides a choice of engaging activities for children of a wide range of ages, abilities and interests.

What a positive Starlight experience is: Captain Starlight and children are engaged in activities that activate a child's imagination to provide distraction to the child.

What a positive Starlight experience isn't: The same activities every day with little or no involvement of Captain Starlight.



RESULTS

This is what the evaluation found:

High child and parent satisfaction ratings	Over 300 children and 312 parents were interviewed by an independent evaluator. Overall, 94% of children rated the SER as 4 or more stars out of 5 and 96% of parents rated the SERs as 4 or more stars.
SERs foster social connections	The SERs excel at fostering social connections and they are an engaging space where both parents and children feel a sense of connection and belonging with each other and with other families.
SERs are an integral part of the hospital	Health professionals rated the SERs at an average of 8.8 out of 10 and added their support for the non-medical space, Starlight's positive relationship management and their appreciation of Captain Starlight mythology.
Captain Starlights	Captain Starlights are central to the delivery of the SER program and have an enormous positive impact within the SER.
The new SER design	Over the last two years Starlight has built new SERs and updated the design of existing SERs, including the SER at the Royal Children's in Melbourne, the Women's and Children's in Adelaide and Lady Cilento Children's Hospital in Brisbane. The design of the new SERs has been welcomed by parents and health professionals. At the older style SERs health professionals highlighted that the SER needed to be updated to a more modern design. In order to address this need, Starlight has undertaken a refurbishment of the SER at the Children's Hospital at Westmead with Sydney Children's Hospital and John Hunter Children's Hospital upgrades planned to coincide with upcoming hospital building projects.
Outpatient clinics	Up to 50% of children who attended the SERs during the evaluation were attending outpatient appointments. Health professionals and parents also highlighted the opportunities for the SER to support families attending clinics.
Noise-levels	The high level of noise was a common theme raised across all SERs by parents, children, health professionals and observers and how this could impact negatively on a child or parent's experience. This feedback has been incorporated into action plans.
Signage to the SER	Both parents and the independent observer, who entered the hospital as a brand new visitor asking for directions at the front desk, reported that a lack of clear signage to SERs made it difficult for families to find SERs.

FUTURE DIRECTIONS

Following on from the evaluation, action plans have been developed for each Starlight Express Room to make the improvements identified, such as improving signage to the Starlight Express Room, as well as opportunities such as increasing access to Starlight programs for children attending outpatient appointments.

In 2016, Starlight also plans to continue collecting family feedback nationally on the experience of children and parents in the Starlight Express Room. Additionally, a full evaluation will be undertaken of the Starlight Express Room program on a three yearly basis.

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