



CAROLINA  
CARING

EMBRACING  
TOMORROW WITH  
CAROLINA CARING'S  
**Cardinal Kids Program**

## THE UNSEEN PATH: WE ARE HERE TO LIGHT YOUR WAY

In life, some journeys are chosen with open hearts, while others arrive shrouded in the veils of the unexpected. To the parents and caregivers finding themselves in a situation of uncertainty, grappling with the profound reality of a child's serious illness, Carolina Caring extends our embrace and guidance. We know you did not plan for this; yet within this uncharted journey lies a community ready to guide you. We aim to allow you to be a parent to your child through this unexpected journey, standing by your side through each step.

At Carolina Caring, our mission is to ensure every community member, regardless of age, receives the specialized care they deserve. Through our Cardinal Kids program, we offer unwavering support to children and their families. As one of the only pediatric palliative care programs in the state of North Carolina, Cardinal Kids is a sanctuary of compassionate and comprehensive care for children facing complex and serious illnesses. A team of dedicated professionals works in harmony with the child's primary medical team, weaving a tapestry of holistic and heartfelt care.

This eBook is a beacon of light, illuminating the path through the decisions that lie ahead. It is designed to help you navigate the intricate process of choosing the right direction and understanding the steps you need to take. Within these pages, you will find the clarity and support needed to make informed decisions, ensuring that you and your loved ones are guided through this challenging journey with care and compassion.

- **CHAPTER 1** - The Heartbeat of Cardinal Kids: Our Mission and Those We Serve
- **CHAPTER 2** - Our Pediatric Hospice and Palliative Care Services
- **CHAPTER 3** - Navigating the Path Ahead, Next Steps
- **CHAPTER 4** - Self-Care for Caregivers: Essential Tips for Managing Stress







# CHAPTER 1

## THE HEARTBEAT OF CARDINAL KIDS: OUR MISSION AND THOSE WE SERVE

In the heart of our community, the Cardinal Kids program stands as a beacon of hope and compassion, dedicated to supporting children and their families as they navigate the tumultuous journey of serious illness. This program is a sanctuary of care, guiding families through the complex medical landscape with empathy and understanding.

### WHO WE ARE

Since our inception in 2019 Cardinal Kids is a community-based sanctuary, offering pediatric palliative care, hospice, and prenatal services. Our mission is to provide holistic support, enveloping not just the child, but the entire family—parents, siblings, and caregivers alike. We believe in empowering families to actively engage in decision-making and care planning, ensuring each service is uniquely tailored to their needs and preferences.



### OUR MISSION AND VISION

The mission of Cardinal Kids is to deliver compassionate and comprehensive care, ensuring every child and family feels supported and understood. We aim to enhance the quality of life for our young patients, providing comfort and relief through tailored care plans that reflect their individual needs and desires. Our vision is to be a sanctuary of support, where every family feels empowered and every child receives the care they deserve.





## OUR TEAM

At the core of Cardinal Kids is a dedicated team of professionals, united by a shared commitment to compassionate, family-centered care.

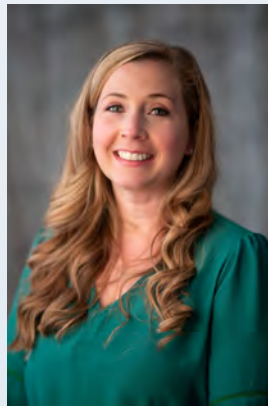
### Our team includes:

- A Pediatric MD
- Pediatric Nurse Practitioners
- Registered Nurses
- A Licensed Pediatric Social Worker
- Volunteers
- A Chaplain



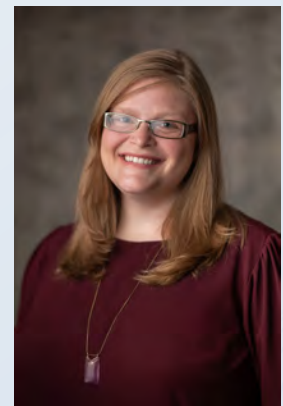
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## WHO DO WE EMBRACE:

- Unborn children facing medical challenges
- Newborns and infants requiring specialized care
- Toddlers and young children with complex medical needs
- Adolescents navigating the challenges of serious illness
- Young adults up to age 21, facing ongoing medical conditions
- Parents/Care givers seeking guidance and support through their child's illness
- Siblings in need of comfort and understanding
- Families needing prenatal care and support for unborn children with medical conditions



## CHAPTER 2

### OUR PEDIATRIC HOSPICE AND PALLIATIVE CARE SERVICES

Cardinal Kids offers a comprehensive range of services designed to support children with serious illnesses and their families. Uniquely combining hospice care with a Concurrent Care approach, we craft highly individualized care plans that allow families to pursue aggressive therapies while still receiving the benefits of hospice care.

#### Services Offered:

**Hospice: A Concurrent Care Approach:** Our unique approach combines traditional hospice care with concurrent care, allowing us to create highly individualized care plans for children with life-limiting illnesses. Families can pursue aggressive therapies while still receiving hospice services, ensuring continuous, comprehensive support for children aged 0-21.

- Personalized care plans
- Collaboration with specialized physicians
- Aggressive therapies alongside hospice care

## EMBRACING TOMORROW WITH CAROLINA CARING'S CARDINAL KIDS PROGRAM

**Palliative Care:** We offer an extra layer of support by coordinating care with all healthcare providers involved, ensuring seamless and holistic care for our patients. Our services aim to provide relief from pain and other distressing symptoms, addressing the psychological and spiritual aspects of care to enhance overall well-being.

- Coordination with healthcare providers
- Emotional and social relief from pain
- Addressing psychological and spiritual needs
- Support for children aged 0-21 with complex conditions

**Prenatal/Perinatal Care:** Our services extend to prenatal care for families facing the diagnosis of complex medical conditions for their unborn child. We offer continuous guidance and support from the very beginning.

- Discussions on goals of care (pre and post-delivery)
- Support visits during and after birth
- Comprehensive guidance through challenging times
- Personalized memory-making experiences for the unborn child

**Memory Making:** Every child enrolled in hospice with Cardinal Kids receives personalized memory-making experiences. These heartwarming activities help families create lasting mementos.

- Recording a child's heartbeat to place inside a stuffed bear
- Creating hand and feet molds
- Counseling and bereavement support
- Psychosocial services for emotional well-being

**Bereavement Support:** Our bereavement team provides individual and group support for families who have lost a child, including grief camps for siblings. This compassionate care helps families navigate their journey of loss with support and understanding.

- Individual and group support
- Grief camps for siblings
- Continuous guidance through the grieving process
- Compassionate and understanding care

Cardinal Kids is dedicated to walking alongside families through every step of their journey, providing the care and compassion they need during these difficult times.



## Testimonial Call out Kerry's Story

The goal of the Cardinal Kids program is to make life for children as happy and memorable as possible while also supporting families. That was certainly the case for Kerry Fleenor and her daughter Emily.



*"I was scared to call Cardinal Kids at first" says Kerry. "It felt like saying my child was not going to survive, but after we began working with Dr. Hata and Dannelle I felt like I had the power to be a voice and an advocate for Emily."*

## Where are services offered?

Cardinal Kids has extended its compassionate embrace to families across a wide expanse. Our services are offered in the following 12 counties, where our unwavering commitment to individualized health care ensures that every child and family feels seen, heard, and cherished:

- Alexander
- Burke
- Cabarrus
- Caldwell
- Catawba
- Cleveland
- Gaston
- Iredell
- Lincoln
- McDowell
- Mecklenburg
- Rowan







## Other Services Offered Through Cardinal Kids

### Nursing Services

- Home visits by pediatric nurses
- Symptom assessment and overall health evaluation
- Creation of tailored care plans
- Equipping parents and caregivers with knowledge and resources to enhance the child's quality of life

### Social Worker Services

- Psychosocial, emotional, and cultural support for every family member
- Counseling for siblings
- Connecting parents with community resources

### Spiritual Services

- Initial assessment of the family's spiritual needs
- Collaboration with team members to promote spiritual well-being
- Support for both the patient and their family

### Volunteer Services

- Comfort and support provided by dedicated volunteers
- Alleviation of stress for families
- Enhanced comprehensive care delivered by our staff

These services, woven together with care and compassion, ensure that each family feels supported and cherished throughout their journey with Cardinal Kids.

## CHAPTER 3

### **NAVIGATING THE PATH AHEAD, NEXT STEPS**

We understand that this is not the path you envisioned, and the weight of this reality can feel overwhelming. The initial shock and wave of emotions can be daunting, but you are not alone. As you step forward, a compassionate team is ready to guide you through the intricacies of palliative and hospice care. Our dedicated professionals will work closely with you to craft a personalized care plan, addressing your child's physical, emotional, and spiritual needs.





# EMBRACING TOMORROW WITH CAROLINA CARING'S CARDINAL KIDS PROGRAM

Navigating the journey of caring for a child with a serious or terminal illness is challenging. It's important to take proactive steps to ensure that your child receives the best care possible. Below, we outline these crucial steps to help you manage this process with clarity and compassion.

## The next steps include:

### Assembling a Support Team

#### ● Identify Key Members:

- Include family members, close friends, and healthcare professionals.
- Consider involving a pediatric specialist, social worker, and spiritual advisor.

#### ● Delegate Responsibilities:

- Assign specific roles to each team member based on their strengths and expertise.
- Ensure clear communication and regular updates among the team.

#### ● Seek Professional Guidance:

- Consult with a care coordinator to help organize and manage the support team.
- Attend family meetings with healthcare providers to align on care plans and responsibilities.

### Exploring Care Options

#### ● Research Available Services:

- Look into hospice and palliative care programs that specialize in pediatric care.
- Consider in-home care versus hospital-based care to determine the best fit for your family.

#### ● Evaluate Facilities and Providers:

- Visit care facilities and meet with potential providers to assess their approach and compatibility with your needs.
- Ask about the specific services they offer, including pain management, emotional support, and respite care.

#### ● Review Financial Considerations:

- Understand what services are covered by insurance, Medicaid, or other financial assistance programs.
- Discuss any out-of-pocket costs and payment plans with care providers.



## Setting Goals that Honor Your Child's Journey

- **Establish Care Priorities:**
  - Define what is most important for your child's comfort and quality of life.
  - Involve your child (if appropriate) and family members in setting these priorities.
- **Create a Personalized Care Plan:**
  - Work with your healthcare team to develop a plan that addresses your child's physical, emotional, and spiritual needs.
  - Ensure the plan includes both short-term and long-term goals.
- **Regularly Review and Adjust Goals:**
  - Schedule regular check-ins with your support team to assess progress and make necessary adjustments.
  - Stay flexible and open to changes as your child's condition and needs evolve.

By following these steps, you can create a supportive, compassionate environment that honors your child's journey and ensures their comfort and well-being.

# CHAPTER 4

## **SELF-CARE FOR CAREGIVERS: ESSENTIAL TIPS FOR MANAGING STRESS**

It's important to remember that more than 60% of parents and caregivers are uncertain about end-of-life preferences for their children. Without the necessary documents, aggressive measures may be taken to prolong your child's life. That is where the Cardinal Kids Team can help!

As a caregiver, we understand that this journey can be incredibly stressful. To take care of your child, you must also take care of yourself. Here are some tips to help you manage:

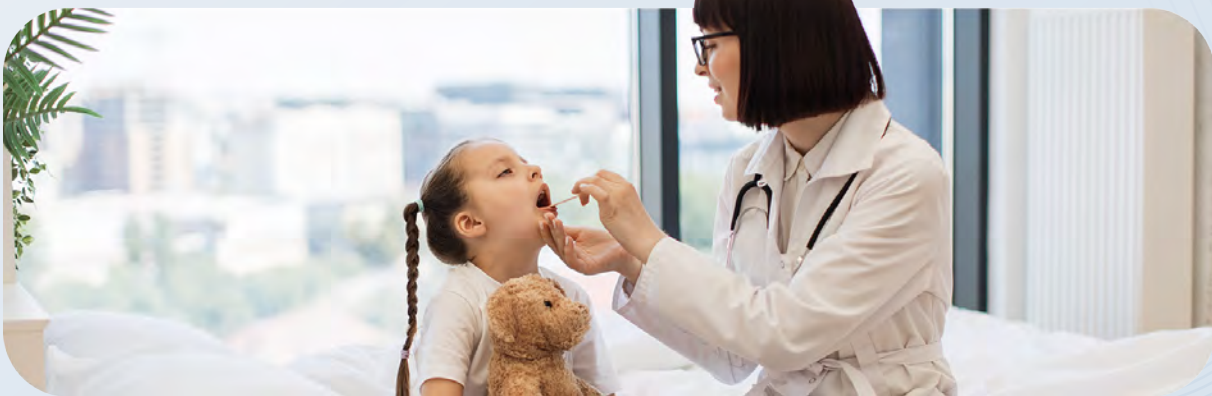






## CARE FOR THE CAREGIVER

- Take care of yourself:
  - Ensure you get enough sleep, eat nutritious meals, and exercise regularly.
  - Schedule regular health check-ups for yourself.
  - Practice relaxation techniques such as deep breathing, meditation, or yoga.
- Ask for and accept help:
  - Reach out to family and friends for assistance with daily tasks.
  - Join a caregiver support group to share experiences and gain support.
  - Utilize respite care services to take breaks and recharge.
- Look for humor:
  - Share funny stories or watch comedies with your loved one to create moments of laughter.
  - Keep a journal of humorous moments to reflect on during tough times.
  - Find lighthearted activities that you and your loved one can enjoy together.
- Get organized and prioritize:
  - Create a daily or weekly schedule to manage tasks efficiently.
  - Use a planner or digital app to keep track of appointments and medications.
  - Delegate non-essential tasks to others to focus on what's most important.
- Make use of community resources:
  - Research local and online resources for caregivers, such as support groups and educational materials.
  - Explore community programs that offer assistance, such as meal delivery or transportation services.
  - Contact local health organizations for information on available caregiving resources and services.



## EMBRACING TOMORROW WITH CAROLINA CARING'S CARDINAL KIDS PROGRAM



At Carolina Caring, we aim to alleviate the stress of the unknown so that your main focus can be on being a parent to your child during this challenging time. Your doctor can arrange a consultation with us, or you can call us directly. If you are in the hospital or another healthcare facility, ask your care team about Carolina Caring's Cardinal Kids Program.

If you find yourself uncertain about where to begin, we are here for you. Call Carolina Caring's Cardinal Kids Program at 828.466.0466 to speak with a compassionate clinician today, or visit our website at [www.carolinacaring.com](http://www.carolinacaring.com) for more information. Let us walk this path together.

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