

# Caring for Kids

HASBRO CHILDREN'S • 2026

## From Beating Insurmountable Odds to Thriving, He's Now Hasbro Children's "Champion Child"

When Jasper Casey arrived in August 2018, nothing about his full-term birth hinted at what lay ahead for his parents, Lenka and Craig. Born without a cry, Jasper was whisked away by doctors before Lenka could even hold him. What began as a precautionary course of antibiotics became a 119-day stay in the Neonatal Intensive Care Unit at Women & Infants Hospital, which collaborates with Hasbro Children's on specialized care for newborns.

It also began a medical journey filled with uncertainty.

Jasper was struggling to breathe, retaining dangerous levels of carbon dioxide, and had profound muscle weakness. A battery of tests and full genome sequencing failed to provide answers. Ultimately, Jasper went home with a tracheostomy, ventilators he needed 24/7 to breathe, a gastrostomy tube for feeding, and a litany of other machines. In total, nine pieces of equipment went everywhere Jasper did, whether room to room or out of the house.

The Caseys also went home with the support of 16 Hasbro Children's specialists committed to Jasper's care.

"What we were going through was indescribable—every car trip or risk of a power outage was a literal life and death situation," says Lenka. "But Hasbro Children's gave us more than medical care. They gave us a lifeline."

That lifeline came in many forms, including the Ventilator Integration Program (VIP). Lenka and Craig were meticulously trained to manage every aspect of Jasper's complex care, from cleaning his tracheostomy twice daily to replacing his feeding tube. They monitored lifesaving equipment around the clock. And their living room became

an extension of the NICU, filled with medical supplies and emergency protocols carefully arranged to keep Jasper alive.

All along, the VIP team remained a constant presence. Whether troubleshooting a late night concern, planning care during travel, or adjusting Jasper's medical supports as he grew, they were always accessible.

"There were so many times we were terrified," adds Craig. "Thankfully, we always had someone to call, and they always answered."

Jasper realized a major turning point at age three, undergoing an eight-hour partial airway reconstruction at Hasbro Children's. The surgery became an option once his lungs grew strong to wean off equipment. Doctors took a piece of his rib to reconstruct his trachea and he spent days in a medically induced coma recovering.

Sixteen days later, Jasper returned home, tracheostomy-free. Significant milestones followed.

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**"... Hasbro Children's gave us more than medical care. They gave us a lifeline."**

—Lenka Casey



Newborn Jasper recovers in the NICU after undergoing his tracheostomy



Jasper at home on the move

In 2024, he celebrated living longer without a tracheostomy than with one. In March 2025, he took the stage with his mother at the Hasbro Children’s Heroes Ball—an instant star with his gigantic smile and personality. He loves sports, gaming, and being with friends.

Once tethered to machines, Jasper is now thriving.

At the start of 2026, he added another milestone: being named Hasbro Children’s Champion Child. Having battled

his medical condition with strength and courage, Jasper will spend the year as an ambassador, highlighting the lifesaving impact pediatric hospitals have on children and families.

“What happens within the walls of Hasbro Children’s is beyond words—every single member of our care team is a miracle worker,” says Lenka. “From day one, they treated Jasper like a typical child and not like a medically fragile kid.”

## Hasbro Children’s Named Among America’s Best Children’s Hospitals



Families across Rhode Island and southern New England trust Hasbro Children’s to deliver exceptional care. Now, that trust has earned national recognition. Hasbro Children’s has earned a place on *Newsweek’s* 2025 list of **America’s Best Children’s Hospitals**, a national recognition that reflects the hospital’s commitment to excellence in pediatric care.

The award is presented by *Newsweek* and Statista Inc., a leading market and consumer data portal, and honors hospitals that excel in eight pediatric subspecialties: Cardiology & Cardiac Surgery, Endocrinology, Gastroenterology & Gastrointestinal Surgery, Neonatology, Neurology & Neurosurgery, Oncology, Orthopedics, and Pulmonology. Making the list is no small feat. Rankings are based on expert surveys, hospital quality metrics, and patient satisfaction. For families, this recognition is more than just an accolade; it’s reassurance that their children will receive world-class care close to home. From pioneering fetal surgery to comprehensive diabetes care and behavioral health services, Hasbro Children’s continues to lead in innovation and compassionate care. This recognition underscores what donors make possible: advanced treatments and care, expert clinical teams, pioneering research, and hope for patients and their families. “We are so pleased to make it in this ranking,” says Dr. Phyllis Dennery, pediatrician-in-chief and medical director at Hasbro Children’s. “I am fully committed to see that we stay on it for a very long time.”

## Say “Aloha!” to Comfort Dog Maui



Meet Maui, a six-month old miniature goldendoodle, certified fluffball, and the newest member of Hasbro Children’s care team. Donated through the Dunkin’ Joy in Childhood Foundation’s Dogs for Joy program, Maui is in training to become a therapy dog for the Hasbro ChIPS team (Children’s Integrative Therapies, Pain Management, and Supportive Care). Gentle and playful, Maui is still getting acquainted with the hospital, but she’s already winning hearts behind the scenes. “Maui has an incredible ability to sense when someone needs comfort,” says Tessa Centracchio, NP, Maui’s handler. “She naturally gravitates to people who could use a little extra love.”

# Building on Excellence in Pediatric Endocrinology



Lisa Swartz Topor, MD, MMSc, fellowship program Director of Pediatric Endocrinology

In 2024, Hasbro Children's pediatric endocrinology earned national recognition from *Newsweek*, spotlighting a team known for its leadership in diabetes care and research. One year later, that momentum continues as endocrinology remains one of the hospital's most distinguished and rapidly advancing specialties.

For Jose Bernardo Quintos, MD, Director of the Diabetes Outpatient Education Center and Chief of Pediatric Endocrinology and Diabetes at Hasbro Children's, this sustained recognition reflects meaningful progress.

"Hasbro Children's recognition as one of the nation's best hospitals reinforces the incredible work happening in pediatric endocrinology," says Dr. Quintos.

Over the past year, the team has continued to advance care for children living with Type 1 diabetes. They're not only improving daily management with tools like continuous glucose monitors and insulin pumps—they're also working to prevent the disease.

"Technology has transformed diabetes care," explains Dr. Quintos. "Families now have tools that make management easier and safer, and we're pairing that with research to stop the disease before it starts."

Beyond diabetes, endocrinology continues to grow its expertise in thyroid disorders, growth conditions, and metabolic diseases, meeting rising needs with innovation and compassionate care.

"Looking ahead, we're focused on strengthening the full continuum of care, from diagnosis to education to long-term support, so families feel supported every step of the way," says Dr. Quintos.

# Sisterhood in Action Brings Comfort and Care

The Atlantic Region of Zeta Phi Beta Sorority, Incorporated brought fellowship, generosity, and purpose to Providence for their 61st Regional Leadership Conference & Undergraduate Retreat in October 2025. This historically African American sorority, founded in 1920, chose Hasbro Children's as their charity partner, focusing on the Lawrence A. Aubin, Sr. Child Protection Center.

The Aubin Center, created in 1996, is Rhode Island's only specialized clinic providing trauma-informed evaluations and consultations for suspected cases of child maltreatment, including physical abuse, neglect, and sexual abuse.

Through an online charitable fundraising platform, Zeta members doubled their fundraising goal and raised \$20,680 for the Aubin Center, supporting its resource room and providing comfort items and essentials for families in crisis. They also donated essentials through Amazon wish lists.

"Support like this reminds families that they are not alone," says Christine E. Barron, MD, Director of the Aubin Center. "Zeta Phi Beta's generosity helps us create a safe, welcoming space for children who need specialized care and compassion."



Zeta Phi Beta members volunteer at Hasbro Children's

The Atlantic Region Zetas' commitment didn't stop at fundraising. During their conference, they held a Community Day of ImpACT where more than 30 members toured Hasbro Children's and volunteered decorating family rooms, stocking comfort carts, and sorting donations. Patients were also treated to a lively step demonstration—a percussive, high-energy art form created within African American fraternities and sororities, where the body becomes an instrument through rhythmic footsteps, claps, and spoken word.

"It is amazing what can be accomplished when joining forces to meet the needs of the community," says Corisa C. Myers, Atlantic Region Z-HOPE™ Coordinator, "This partnership highlights our commitment to exemplifying the Extraordinary Power of S.H.E. through our international service platform, Zetas Helping Other People Excel (Z-HOPE™)."

Have an idea for giving back? From community organization service projects to creative fundraisers like game nights, lemonade stands, and bake sales, every effort makes a difference for Hasbro Children's patients and their families. Learn more at [giving.brownhealth.org/hasbro/fundraise](https://giving.brownhealth.org/hasbro/fundraise).

# Where Medicine and Mental Health Meet

When a child has both a serious medical condition and a behavioral health challenge, families often find themselves navigating two separate worlds of care. Thankfully, those worlds come together in one extraordinary place—the Medical Psychiatric Program at Hasbro Children’s.

Founded with the opening of the Hasbro Partial Hospital Program in 1998 as a collaboration between pediatrics and child psychiatry, the Med-Psych Program was built on a groundbreaking idea: treating the whole child, not just a diagnosis. For decades, children with conditions like diabetes, Crohn’s disease, or lupus who also struggled with depression or anxiety were told to “get the medical issue under control first.” But these illnesses are deeply intertwined, and a child who is too depressed to manage insulin or nutrition cannot thrive without integrated care. Hasbro Children’s changed that narrative. Today, Med-Psych includes the Hasbro Partial Hospital Program, Selya 6 Medical/Psychiatric Inpatient Program, Inpatient Psychiatric Consultation/Liaison Service, and a home-based program in partnership with Gateway Healthcare. It is the only of its kind in New England, and among fewer than 10 nationwide, offering inpatient, day treatment, and home-based care for medically complex children with behavioral health needs.

“We’ve become a national resource,” says Matthew D. Willis, MD, Co-Director of Hasbro Children’s Partial Hospital Program. “Hospitals from throughout the country call us for guidance because programs like this are so rare.”

Many families travel great distances for this specialized care. Like Colorado native, Mia, who spent nearly a year on the inpatient unit and several months in partial hospitalization when she was sixteen, while being treated

for functional neurological disorder—a condition that disrupted her ability to talk, walk, tolerate touch, and perform daily activities. Dr. Willis has been part of the program since his residency nearly two decades ago. “I knew early in my training this was where I wanted to be,” he says. “The work is challenging, but the impact is incredible. We see lives restored, and that keeps me motivated every day.”

“Kids only go as far as their parents can support them,” Dr. Willis explains. “That’s why our model is family-focused first. We’re not just treating symptoms; we’re helping families understand the illness and set expectations that empower recovery.” Hasbro Children’s Med-Psych Program serves children with some of the most complex needs in pediatric care. Many have severe medical conditions paired with mental health challenges (like diabetes and

depression); others struggle with restrictive eating disorders; and a third group includes children with somatic symptom disorders, when emotional distress manifests as physical symptoms, like Mia’s condition. For these children, a multidisciplinary team—which consists of pediatricians, child psychiatrists, psychologists, nurses, dietitians, and milieu therapists—works together to tailor treatment plans. Program teachers keep kids connected to schoolwork, and physical, occupational, and speech therapists support recovery. Families attend therapy sessions to learn strategies that balance empathy with expectation.

After treatment, families report improved quality of life and reduced reliance on high-intensity care. Hospitalizations drop, while outpatient visits for nutrition and therapy

increase—all signs of healthier, more sustainable care. Today, Mia is back in Colorado. She returned to school, reconnected with friends, and is rediscovering joy in everyday life. She goes to the gym, has hobbies, and even attended prom.

“Hasbro Children’s gave Mia her future back,” says her mom, Jennifer.



Mia poses with artwork she created while in treatment at Hasbro Children’s

*Caring for Kids*, a publication of the Rhode Island Hospital Foundation, is published for the friends and supporters of Hasbro Children’s. For more information, please contact the Development Office at 401-444-0394.

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