



Needs of Parents a Priority at The National Children's Cancer Society

For parents whose child has just been diagnosed with cancer, the world is suddenly a frightening place. Finding the right doctors, hospitals and treatment protocols while worrying about a very sick child is very stressful. On top of the emotional burden, the logistical and financial problems of accessing and paying for treatment can leave parents feeling completely overwhelmed.

The [National Children's Cancer Society](#) (NCCS) understands the emotional and financial strain on parents who are caring for a child battling pediatric cancer, and provides support programs and services to ease some of their burdens. NCCS is highlighting those resources as part of National Caregivers Month.

"Parents are tremendously in need of support, from the moment their child is diagnosed until that son or daughter is released from treatment," said Julie Komanetsky, a social worker and vice president of Patient and Family Services at the NCCS. "Even then, a parent's role in monitoring their child for problems down the road as a result of the cancer or treatment continues, so caregivers really are in for a lifelong journey with their child's cancer."

The NCCS sponsors numerous services for parents and caregivers. Its [Family Support Program](#) provides a case manager who can walk alongside families during the child's cancer journey. To help ease the economic burden of pediatric cancer, NCCS offers financial assistance with transportation and lodging costs associated with treatment and hospital stays. Additionally, the NCCS has an [emergency assistance fund](#) for families whose child has been hospitalized away from home an extended time. There are also educational resources, including [publications, videos and links to conferences](#), on the NCCS website.

Parents, as well as other caregivers, have specific needs for support, according to the National Cancer Institute at the National Institutes for Health. Since it's natural for parents to put their child's needs before those of their own, it's especially important they learn to identify when they are struggling and be willing to get help. The NCI offers [coping tips for parents](#) on its website.

"Parents' emotions can run the gamut, from fear and anger to sadness, guilt and even loneliness," said Jessica Cook, a social worker and program coordinator for Patient and Family Services at the NCCS. "It's important they find people they can share their feelings with and whom they are willing to ask for help when it's needed. Also, it's especially important they be kind to themselves. Taking care of their own needs will help them take the best possible care of their child."

The mission of The National Children's Cancer Society is to provide emotional, financial and educational support to children with cancer, their families and survivors. To learn more

about the NCCS and its services for children with cancer and their families, visit thenccs.org. For emotional and financial help, visit www.thenccs.org/help. There is also information and resources for parents of survivors, including a Late Affects Assessment Tool and college scholarship opportunities, at beyondthecure.org. Visit the NCCS on Facebook at <https://www.facebook.com/thenccs>.