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## Zayden's legacy: play for all

A Queensland Children's Hospital patient has left a lasting legacy for other sick kids thanks to an inclusive play program founded by Children's Hospital Foundation.

Zayden passed away in May this year after a four-year battle with a rare genetic condition, and Zayden's Toy Box has been named in his honour – a loans library of switch adapted and sensory toys for children with vision impairment, varying mobility or cognitive abilities and sensory needs.

Zayden was born with a life-limiting ailment called GABRB2 genetic mutation – a condition known to affect that only 15 children internationally.

He lived with multiple disabilities including visual impairment and complete immobility. He also had significant global developmental delay meaning he was unable to communicate using words, speaking to his family using his smile and by flicking open his eyes to say yes.

As regular visitors to Queensland Children's Hospital, Zayden and his older brother Rylan would often use toys provided by Children's Hospital Foundation. The family were asked to share their feedback on the existing toys and what further resources they felt would be helpful to improve inclusivity throughout Foundation services.

Through this, Zayden and his family, including his mum Adele and brother Rylan, were instrumental in building on the developing 'playability' program, with Adele providing invaluable feedback and suggestions.

Adele says the loans library being renamed in Zayden's honour allowed his legacy to live on at his second home – Queensland Children's Hospital.

"Zayden wasn't only born with his condition, but also with a superpower – he could bring so much joy to those around him without every speaking a word," Adele said.

"It's devastating that Zayden's smile is no longer around to light up the world anymore but knowing he will continue to spread joy through Zayden's Toy Box brings us incredible happiness and comfort – as though a small part of him is still here, spreading his infectious smile.

"We learnt within the walls of the hospital that pain and joy can co-exist, and we hope that Zayden's Toy Box can help other families feel joy in painful times," she said.

Children's Hospital Foundation CEO, Rosie Simpson, said the inclusivity that Zayden's Toy Box allows is a very welcome and important addition to the Foundation's support for patients and families.

"The Foundation team were very keen to act on the feedback from families and the pause in many of our services in Queensland Children's Hospital due to Covid-19 gave us the time to really review our existing toys and games loans and realise that they were not inclusive enough for kids of all abilities," Ms Simpson said.

"Thanks to the generosity of our supporters and the support of Zayden and his family, we were able to act on this feedback and broaden our wonderful range of entertainment and distraction to benefit children of all abilities."

"Our team sought advice from the Children's Health Queensland occupational therapy team for recommendations on which types of switch adapted and sensory toys would be most beneficial for patients to loan between physio sessions to help hit key treatment milestones, while also providing entertainment and distraction during their stays in hospital."

For more information on Zayden's Toy Box, or to donate to Children's Hospital Foundation, visit [www.childrens.org.au](http://www.childrens.org.au).

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**About the Children's Hospital Foundation**

The Children's Hospital Foundation works wonders for sick and injured kids by funding vital research, new equipment, and providing entertainment and support for children and their families in hospital. We are committed to making a difference in the fight against childhood illness and injury so every child can grow up as happy and healthy as possible. For more about the Children's Hospital Foundation, visit [www.childrens.org.au](http://www.childrens.org.au)