



PARENTS, HOSPITALS & ORGANIZATIONS

What is Starbright World?

Starbright World (SBW) is the premier social networking website for seriously ill teens and their siblings. Provided by Starlight Children's Foundation, SBW is an online community where teens can chat, play games, post photos and videos and blogs, and make friends with peers who understand.

Who can join Starbright World?

If you're between the ages of 13 and 20 and have a serious, chronic, or life-threatening medical condition, SBW is the place for you. If you're a teen with a brother or sister who's sick, you're also welcome to join.

What kinds of illnesses qualify?

Medical conditions that require frequent hospitalizations, ongoing procedures or long-term treatments qualify for SBW membership, as do serious chronic conditions. Some of our members have cancer, some have Crohn's or colitis, some have cystic fibrosis. Sickle cell disease, kidney disease, autoimmune disorders, cerebral palsy, burn injuries...an exhaustive list would be too long to post here.

Because of the fast-paced nature of an online community, SBW may not be the most appropriate place for teens with developmental/emotional/behavioral conditions. If there is a primary medical condition present as well, we may make an exception, with input and guidance from a parent or healthcare provider.

If you have a question about whether your teen qualifies for SBW membership, contact us via the "Report an Issue" link on the bottom of the Starbright World home page.

Why should hospitals use Starbright World?

Being a teen is overwhelming enough without the added stress of serious illness. Frequent hospitalizations and procedures can cause feelings of isolation, loneliness, being left out of "normal" teen social activities and school events....

Not all healing is medical. SBW's tight-knit community of seriously ill teens provides peer support. It's a place for teens to express themselves, develop communication skills, find encouragement, talk about their fears, process their feelings, "celebrate and commiserate" with other teens who are going through similar experiences.

And best of all, it's just a place to hang out, make friends and have fun!

Why should I allow my son or daughter to use Starbright World? Is it safe?

We do our best to keep the SBW community safe and secure, a place where parents can feel comfortable letting their teens interact. Our 13-20 age requirement is due to our being in compliance with the federal Child Online Privacy Protection Act (COPPA). Parental consent is required for membership, and our chat rooms are monitored at all times by trained, paid adult staff.

I want to see what Starbright World is like before I let my teen register. Can I have my own account?

In order to keep SBW a safe place for teens (where they also won't feel like there are moms, dads and docs looking over their shoulders), we don't allow adults access to the site. However, we have created this online video demo (*coming soon!*) for parents and healthcare providers who would like to see what their teens will experience on SBW.

Has research ever been conducted on Starbright World?

Yes. Research studies conducted at institutions across North America have found that children using Starbright World experienced significantly less pain, anxiety, loneliness and withdrawn behavior; improved self esteem, communication, parent and caregiver relationships, peer support; and an increased willingness to return for treatment.