



Helpful Tips when Working with Kids in a Hospital

The best way to support children’s abilities to cope with frightening or confusing hospital routines or procedures is to offer developmentally appropriate information and support.

- Position yourself on the child’s eye level.
- Assess how much each child understands about his or her upcoming procedure and clarify any misunderstandings for them, using as few medical words as possible.
- Give simple and brief explanations.
- Give the child information that relates only to their experience. Too much information can be overwhelming.
- Show children equipment, when possible, with simple, nonthreatening explanations. Remember, each child understands at a different level, adjust accordingly. Repeat explanations to be very clear.
- Use the senses to help the child understand. What will the child feel, touch, taste, hear and smell?
- Talk to each child about how they can stay calm during the procedure, and make a plan with the child to help the procedure go more smoothly for the child.
- Give choices in their care only when choices exist. I.E. Allowing the child to decide whether to watch or not, to count or not, and to sit next to their parent or on their lap.
- Be honest in your answers. For example if something is going to hurt, don’t say it won’t. Be careful in qualifying the pain. Instead say something similar to; “Some kids say (in regards to an IV start), it feels like a pinch and some kids say it feels like a sting, and some kids say it didn’t hurt at all. How about when it’s finished you tell me what it felt like to you?”
- Help parents know what they can do to help their child through the procedure.
 - o Stay calm
 - o Use a comforting voice
 - o Be patient and encouraging
 - o Provide a comfort hold
 - o



child life

