



Working with Children in the Hospital Always Remember...

Words/Phrases to Avoid

Hurt	This term is negative, non-descriptive, and subjective.
Big girls/boys don't cry.	Informs children that crying is an inappropriate response to pain. Crying is a coping mechanism, so do not hold the expectation that a child will not cry.
Be a good boy/girl.	This gives the impression that they are bad if they do not cooperate.
I'm only looking. (If you're really about to poke)	Please don't poke a child if you've said, "I'm only looking." Instead say, "I'm looking now to find just the right spot." Then encourage family to provide comfort and alternative focus during the poke.
I'm sorry	Be careful about apologizing. Medical procedures are done in the patient's best interest; apologizing gives the impression that you have done something wrong.
I don't want to do this.	Starting this way can make patients and families feel uncomfortable.
Repetitive speech	Be aware of your words during procedures. Sometimes we say things like, "I'm sorry," or "It's okay" over and over without realizing it.
Medical terminology	Please see the "Simple Explanations for Kids in the Hospital" hand-out for examples of more appropriate descriptions of commonly used medical terms.

