



PLANNING CHECKLIST:

For health-care providers performing needle procedures in children

Fear of needles is common. In Canada, 2 out of 3 children report they are afraid of needles. This can make needle procedures stressful for children, families and health-care providers. **The CARD system (Comfort, Ask, Relax, Distract)** reduces stress during needle procedures. It provides four categories of science-based activities that health-care providers, children and families can play to have a better experience.

You can also review the [Procedure day checklist](#). To learn more about CARD, go to CardSystem.ca.

CLINIC SET-UP

- Make sure areas are tidy and free of clutter.
- Provide distraction items before, during and after the procedure. Consider using items that can be given away without requiring sanitation (e.g., pipe cleaners, colouring pages, mazes) or visual activities (e.g., [CARD poster for kids](#), [CARD search and find poster](#)).
- Provide seating for a support person in all areas.
- Control room temperature where possible. Allow children to remove excess clothing such as coats to prevent over-heating and to expedite the procedure.
- Minimize visual fear cues by obscuring frightening equipment such as needles (e.g., cover them with a towel or table-top poster). Ensure processes, including dose preparation and injection do not make needles prominent. Arrange seating so that children do not face equipment.
- Minimize auditory fear cues using low-level, calming music or a white noise machine. Control noise levels where possible.
- Provide topical anesthetics for those who want it.
- Allow for privacy during the procedure (i.e., physical barriers).
- Provide comfortable seating during the procedure with the ability for children to lie down (e.g., exam bed, reclining chair).

EDUCATION OF PATIENTS AND CAREGIVERS

- Disseminate information about CARD ahead of time and on the day of the procedure (e.g., via [CARD poster](#)). School-age children can play the [CARD web game](#).
- Allow children to select the coping strategies they will use from the [CARD checklist](#) and support them in their choices.

