



# IMPROVING THE EXPERIENCE:

## What family and caregivers can do during medical procedures

The words and actions of family and caregivers can influence how children experience medical procedures. Some behaviours can promote coping while others can increase distress. Use this fact sheet and the ones on [how you can act](#) and [what you can say](#), to find suggestions on ways to promote coping and a more positive experience.

To learn more about CARD, go to [CardSystem.ca](http://CardSystem.ca).



## INVITE YOUR CHILD TO PARTICIPATE

Ask about past experiences and preferences for coping. Make sure to offer choices that are reasonable for your child. Let your child know you are there to support them. Do not impose coping strategies.

### TRY SAYING THIS

- ✓ “What CARDS (coping strategies) would you like to play to help you with your procedure today?” (invites participation)
- ✓ “Do you want them to let you know when they do the procedure?” (invites participation, provides reasonable amount of control)
- ✓ “You can watch or look away if you want, it is up to you.” (invites participation)

### INSTEAD OF THIS

- ✗ “You will be okay; there is nothing to worry about.” (vague reassurances, does not invite participation)
- ✗ “Tell me when you want it to be given.” (too much control)
- ✗ “Now look away.” (imposes coping strategy)

## ANSWER QUESTIONS

Acknowledge concerns and provide balanced information. Do not minimize or dismiss your child’s concerns.

### TRY SAYING THIS

- ✓ “Some people say it feels like a pinch or pushing and others say they don’t feel much of anything. Let me know how it feels for you afterward.” (answers questions, provides balanced information)

### INSTEAD OF THIS

- ✗ “This is going to hurt.” OR “This hurts me more than it hurts you.” (fear-inducing language, false suggestion/dishonest)
- ✗ “This won’t hurt.” (negative focus, false suggestion/dishonest, doesn’t address concerns)

