



IMPROVING THE EXPERIENCE:

What family and caregivers can say 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 do](#), to find suggestions on ways to promote coping and a more positive experience.

To learn more about CARD, go to CardSystem.ca.



PROVIDE INFORMATION

Provide information about why the procedure is needed, what will happen and what they can do to cope. Some children want more information and others want less. Tailor the amount of information to the needs and preferences of your child so there are no surprises (either too little or too much information).

TRY SAYING THIS

- ✓ “You are getting the procedure to keep you healthy. We can ask the clinician to let you know what they are doing and when. What do you want to know about?” (provides tailored information)

INSTEAD OF THIS

- ✗ “It’s just something you have to do. Come on, let’s get it done. Don’t bug the clinician with questions as there’s a line up.” (doesn’t allow the child to ask for information)

USE NEUTRAL LANGUAGE

Communicate using neutral language. Words that are perceived as threatening can increase fear. Do not use words that elicit fear and do not use repetitive reassurance or dismiss concerns.

TRY SAYING THIS

- ✓ “You are having a needle procedure today.” (neutral language)
- ✓ “What do you want to be doing during the procedure?” (addresses concerns)

INSTEAD OF THIS

- ✗ “You are getting a needle jab today.” (fear-inducing language)
- ✗ “Don’t worry.” (dismisses concerns)

