

- **Create a connection first.** Introduce yourself, smile, tell a joke, or ask something about the child. Get down to the child's eye level. This helps you build trust and develop a rapport with the patient. For infant collections take the time to explain to the parent what is going to happen. Involve the parent as much as possible. Advise the parent that some bruising may occur at the site of the venipuncture.
- **Explain why the procedure is needed.** i.e. "I need a small sample of your blood because it will act like a clue to help me find out why your stomach is hurting". Use language appropriate for the child.
- **Prepare the child for the procedure.** Let the child know they will feel different things during the procedure and tell them about all the steps in the process. First, I will use the elastic. It's a big squeeze. Then, I will clean. That part feels cool. Finally, I will collect the sample of blood for the doctor to look at. That part can feel like a pinch but looking at a book or squeezing mom's hand really helps. When appropriate, allow the patient to see, touch, and play with medical equipment (e.g. gloves).
- **Use positive rather than negative language.** i.e. "Now is the time I need you to hold your hand very still" rather than "Don't move!"
- **Position the child in a comfortable manner** and they will be less distressed and more cooperative! Remember to keep the patient sitting up, on, or close to the parent whenever possible.
- **Involve parents.** Be specific. (i.e. "Mom, your job is to hold this hand and be a quiet calm voice for your child" or "Dad, you can hug right here and read the book while we do this.")
- **Model appropriate behavior.** i.e. "When I'm feeling scared, I take deep breaths and pretend to blow out birthday candles."
- **Introduce a distraction item** (i.e. bubbles, books, toys, etc.) or a coping strategy (i.e. deep breathing, singing, imagery) for the procedure. Ask the child, "Are you going to slowly count to 10 or are you going to take deep breaths while I put on your bandage?"
- **Reward and encourage positive behavior.** i.e. "Those are great deep breaths that you are taking. Keep it up!"
- **Allow choice when appropriate.** "Which arm should I look at first?"



(Adapted for use from the CHEO – Children's Hospital of Eastern Ontario)

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