

PREPARING YOUR CHILD FOR SCHOOL ENTRY NEEDLES

Childhood needles are important but they can also be scary for some children. Helping your child to get ready for his or her needle can help reduce that fear. Some ideas to help are:

Give the facts

Let your child know that he is going to have a needle. Tell him that immunizations are needed to help him stay healthy. Tell him most immunizations have to be given by a needle in order to protect him. Answer any questions that he may have truthfully.

Fear is normal

Let your child know that fear is normal and it is OK to be nervous.

Tell them needles hurt a bit

Let her know that the needle will probably hurt a bit but that it will be over very quickly.

Give them some coping strategies

You know your child best. Practice with him before the big day to give him a way to manage his fears about the needle. For example, deep breathing, blowing out a big puff of

air, relaxing his muscles, bringing his own special bandage or singing a song might do the trick.

You'll be there

Make sure she knows that an adult she trusts will be there during the needles.



Vaccines protect your child from disease

Did you know...

Immunizations are also called needles, vaccines and shots.

Your child's school entry needles are due before your child starts Kindergarten.

Most children get two needles at the school entry appointment.

ON NEEDLE DAY

Give notice

Tell your child about an hour before the appointment.

Prepare by

Reminding your child about the coping strategy you practiced.

You are the parent

Remain in control in the clinic room. Don't allow your child to postpone or avoid the injections.

Set reasonable limits

It's OK for kids to be scared or cry but not OK to kick, hide or scream.

Stay calm

The best way for you to help your child is to stay calm yourself. Your child will pick up on your feelings and behaviours.

Eye-level

Communicate with your child at his eye level.

After

Praise your child for what she did well during the needles.

References:

Barclay, L (May, 2007) Recommendations Issued for Reducing Pain of Pediatric Immunizations. Pediatrics. 119 1184-1198. <http://www.medscape.com/viewarticle/556116>

Ives, M. (April 2007) Model Empathy and Respect when Immunizing Children who Fear Needles. The Canadian Nurse, 103(4), 6-7.

Ruttman, C., Rolf, J., Joannes, E., (August 1997) Making Immunizations Easier: A guide for reducing your child's fears. Manhattan, KS: Kansas State University Cooperative Extension Service. http://www.nccc.org/Health/immuniz_ks.html