CONTINUED...

A FEW OF OUR FAVORITE TOOLS & TECHNIQUES

DISTRACTION

Changing the focus of attention changes the way the body processes pain and anxiety.



HOW

Let them choose! Choice is power, so offer options when possible. Allowing kids to choose what they want to use for distraction gives them a sense of control over the experience.

- Encourage distraction before and during the poke. It can keep anticipatory anxiety at bay during any wait.
- Comment on distraction choices ("I love superheroes, too!"). It builds rapport and trust.
- Types of distraction vary by age and child preference. Jokes, singing, music, books, videos, and so on are all good options for distraction.
- Involve parents when possible. For example, have mom hold the iPad while it plays a movie. Giving parents a productive to-do can lower parental anxiety (which impacts the child's anxiety).
- Some kids feel the need to be polite and focus on you (or another grownup) as "the adult." This diminishes the impact of distraction. Give kids permission to focus on what they want and ignore you, their parents, or anything else if that is their wish. And, if a child wants to watch the procedure, let them. Watching can help kids feel in control Praise their choices either way.



Handy downloadable checklist →

WORDS MATTER:

"I can tell you really love watching that video/checking out that book/playing with that toy. That's fantastic. That is so much more fun to focus on than anything I'm doing right now. Pay attention to what you want to pay attention to right now, and don't worry about me. You are doing a great job taking care of yourself!"

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