

The why & language

Decide upon what your family will call getting a port accessed and normalize this term, such as a "bee kiss" or a "button poke"

Use play or a book/story to initiate conversation in safe setting

Reminding your kid they are getting this to help their body

Reassure them that doctor needs to check their blood or body, or get medicine, and this is not happening because of any of their actions

Practice

Rehearse steps of a port access on a doll or teddy bear at home when child is in a calm state

- modeling for them the steps: now this, then medicine, then this and all done
- Work together to figure out what will work best for the doll
- Allow child to take the lead being the nurse or doctor

Verbalize for them - talk through what is happening "taking medicine"

- Reiterating what the job of the play patient is - "I see the bear holding their body so still and watching the show"

Providing Warning

Let them know they will be getting their port accessed 2-3 days prior, and remind them the morning of the appointment. Talk about the concrete steps for the day and what they will experience:

- where you are going, how you are getting there
- what they can play in the waiting room, what a coping plan is
- reminders of what will happen and cues for "all done"
- what will happen following the event (go home to rest, go pick up sibling from school, go to park)

COPING PLAN

Appropriate Choices

Give a verbal prompt when it is time to begin and provide choices to support in getting the child ready (do you want to get on the bed yourself or do you want me to help you?). The goal is to allow child to come freely to avoid needing to forcing or hold the child down

Provide opportunity for control through choices but not an overwhelming amount

- Which bandaid to use?
- Who counts before poke?
- What distraction they want to participate in?

Position for Comfort

Sitting on parents lap with child facing out - parents giving a big hug

Language to use during procedure

Explain what is happening/reminding of the steps

Remind them of their jobs and reaffirm what they are doing well

- holding body so still, engaging in distraction, taking deep breaths

Remind of cues for done - sticker/bandaid being put on, mask coming off, being turned around for a big hug

Distraction

Blowing bubbles

Interactive book

iPad game/song/video

Light scratching above injection site to confuse block the message of pain being sent to the brain (or the use of Buzzy Bee)

Routine for procedure

Consistency with routine allows for your child to understand the stressor is over through cues and conditioning

- Concrete cues - counting 1, 2, 3 for the poke
- Changing position (picking up child, turning around for hug, sitting them up) when all done to really show all done and allow for feelings of stress to decrease and return to calm state

Activities for After Port Access

Physical soothing touch - Primary caregiver important

Specific positive reinforcement following the completion of the procedure

- "You did a good job of holding on to mom/dad."

This is a very distractible age group - Return to play with child

- change activity right after and they quickly forget
- Bring new activity or favorite toy to transition to play
- Favorite snack (in moderation)
- Favorite song on YouTube

Remember

Crying or struggling does NOT mean the child is not coping - this is a natural response to negative stimuli

Focus on the recovery and positive praise

Talk about the experience after it is over in a positive light - allow for medical play after the experience to help the child process the experience