

Working with Children in a Hospital Setting



Why

Communicate directly with the child.

This provides them with a sense of control over a situation where they may feel powerless and afraid.

What

Greet and engage every child.

Decide what information is important for the child to know and what information is only for the parents.

Look to the parents/guardians for guidance.

Where

Anywhere!

Create a kid-friendly space.

Bubbles, stickers, or small toys can calm and distract an anxious child.

How

Greet a child by name and introduce yourself. Sit, if possible, so you are at eye level. Explain, in child-friendly language, what will happen. Engage the child by asking for assistance - this increases their sense of control. Most importantly, be honest and empathetic.

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Conversation Starters

1. Hi, _____, my name is _____. It's nice to meet you and it looks like you brought (parent, caregiver, a toy, etc.)
2. Today we are going to do _____. I'm going to tell you everything that is going to happen before I do it.
3. Do you have any questions for me? If you do, please ask so I can help you better understand what is happening. Do you think your parent/caregiver/toy has any questions?
4. Do you think you can help me?
5. Wow, you are so (helpful, smart, observant, caring, thoughtful)!
6. Some other kids have wondered _____. Other kids find it helpful to _____ while I do this.
7. Tell me your favorite (color, movie, etc.).