



**Having a game or toy to play with can take your child's attention away from what's happening. It helps them to stay calm by giving them less opportunity for worry.**

#### **AGE & STAGE APPROPRIATE**

Depending on your child's age, they may not understand why they need the vaccination and they may or may not have questions about it. They might be looking forward to a treat afterwards. They might not be able to understand that something nice can follow something they might not like. Play and relaxation always helps.



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## **HOW TO REASSURE & COMFORT YOUR CHILD DURING VACCINATIONS**



**Starlight's mission is to put play at the heart of every child's healthcare. Play protects children's mental health. It prepares them for their medical procedures and can reduce the pain and trauma of their treatment.**

For children, the only things more important than play are the need to be loved, cared for and nourished. At Starlight, we are passionate about protecting this time of play. We champion its importance. We defend every child's right to play.

Having an injection can be distressing for children. Here are some useful tips to help you minimise any worries or fears your child might have.

#### PLAY CAN BE USED TO:

##### PREPARE

With pictures, dolls, or role-play to help children understand what's happening and its importance.

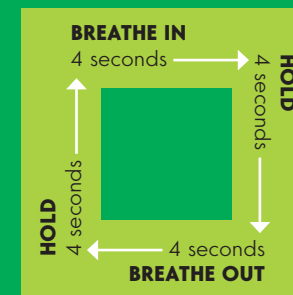
##### DISTRACT

Taking your child's attention away from what is happening to help them remain calm during and after vaccination.

##### REFLECT

Helping your child to make sense of what has happened and express their feelings in a safe and secure environment.

## SETTING THE SCENE FOR YOUR CHILD'S VACCINATION



#### HELPING CHILDREN COPE

**You are so important in helping your child develop ways of coping.**

**Here are some tips and techniques to support them. And, if you're nervous, these practical ways to help them will help you too.**

##### HONESTY

Depending on your child's age they may want to know about what's going to happen. Be ready to answer any questions. Be honest and explain things in a way that is right for them.

Sometimes, we think that it's better to hide difficult things from children. It's always better to give them a little information before to help them prepare.

#### DISTRACTION

Keep your child's mind off things while you're waiting. Talking, playing a game or watching their favourite show is a great way to do this.

A treat always helps. Plan for something nice afterwards. A promise of a trip to the park, a little treat or something else fun they like to do makes a big difference.

#### TOGETHER

If you or your child are anxious or have any worries, speak to the staff at the centre. They are friendly and helpful, and understand what you and your child are going through. They won't mind you asking questions and will help in any way they can.

#### RELAX

You can use breathing techniques to help you both relax.

#### CHOICE

Giving children choices can work really well. During the vaccination, do they want to look, or look away? Would they like a video on? Some music? You can help them build coping skills for now and for the future.

#### LISTEN

Ask them to tell you how they are feeling. And it's very important to let them know that you've heard what they've said.

#### FOCUS ON

**5** things you can see



**4** things you can feel



**3** things you can hear



**2** things you can smell



**1** thing you can taste

