

# A Better Immunization Experience For School Aged Children

## Preparation



Ask your child if they have ideas for how to manage the pain.

When describing how it will feel, use words such as pressure, squeeze, or poke, and tell them it only lasts a few seconds.

Opposite to what you may think, reassuring your child "It will be over soon," or apologizing "I'm sorry you have to go through this," before the immunization may make them think that the injection will be worse than it is.

## Be Calm

Stay calm and use your normal voice.

### Why it works:

If you are calm, and use your normal voice, your child will feel that everything is ok.



## Deep Breathing



Help your child to take deep breaths by having them blow bubbles or take a deep breath in and blow out counting to 5.

### Why it works:

Deep breathing triggers relaxation and also takes their attention away from the procedure.

## Positioning

For older children, ask them to relax their arm and hold it still.

## Numb the Skin

Medications to numb the skin are available without a prescription. Talk to your immunization provider about when and where to put on the cream or patch.



### Why it works:

The active ingredients in these products reduce feelings of pain by blocking pain receptors in the skin.

## Distraction

Focus your child's attention on a distraction immediately before and during the injection (a book, mp3 player, handheld game, talking about something other than the immunization).



### Why it works:

The part of the brain that processes pain is less active when children are distracted during immunizations.

## #1 Recognize the Effort

Keep a positive attitude. Say things like:

"I'm so happy you got the vaccine!"  
and  
"I knew you could do it!"

This helps the child to feel good about the skills they learned from the experience – skills that will help in future difficult situations.