

Suggested Language

Language to Avoid	Language to Use
You will be fine; there is nothing to worry about (reassurance)	What did you do in school today? (distraction)
This is going to hurt/this won't hurt (vague; negative focus)	It might feel like a pinch (sensory information)
The nurse is going to take some blood (vague information)	First, the nurse will clean your arm, you will feel the cold alcohol pad, and next... (sensory and procedural information)
You are acting like a baby (criticism)	Let's get your mind off of it; tell me about that movie...(distraction)
It will feel like a bee sting (negative focus)	Tell me how it feels (information)
The procedure will last as long as... (negative focus)	The procedure will be shorter than... (television program or other familiar time for child); (procedural information; positive focus)
The medicine will burn (negative focus)	Some children say they feel a warm feeling (sensory information; positive focus)
Tell me when you are ready (too much control)	When I count to three, blow the feeling away from your body (coaching to cope; distraction limited control)
I am sorry (apologizing)	You are being very brave (praise; encouragement)
Don't cry (negative focus)	That was hard; I am proud of you (praise)
It is over (negative focus)	You did a great job doing the deep breathing, holding still... (labelled praise)