

# My Plan for Needles

When you put all four pieces of this puzzle together, you will have your very own needle plan. Take this with you next time you get shots or blood drawn, to teach others about your plan.

Numbing cream absorbs into the skin to reduce the pain of the needle. One may feel pressure or soreness in the muscle during and after an immunization.

For the best pain relief:

- LMX-4® needs to be put on the skin at least 20-30 minutes before the needle stick and can stay in place for 60 minutes.
- EMLA® needs to be put on the skin at least 60 minutes before the needle stick and can stay in place for 90 minutes.

While it's happening, I want to:

- Watch and learn. I will
  - Hear all of the steps right before they happen.
  - Just watch and not hear what is going to happen.
  - Ask if there is a job I can help with.
- Not watch. Instead I will
  - Look away.
  - Read a book, tell a story, or sing a song.
  - Imagine I am somewhere else doing something I like.
  - Take slow, deep breaths, and "blow" away feelings I don't like.
- Have \_\_\_\_\_ hold my hand.
- \_\_\_\_\_

## My Jobs

- Keeping still to help it go more smoothly— and more quickly!
- Afterwards, I will talk about how it went. Maybe I will have a new idea for another time.

## My Parent's Jobs

- Do not tell your child "it won't hurt."
- Learn your child's coping style and match your support to their style.

Getting ready for the needle, I want to:

- Sit up by myself
- Sit in \_\_\_\_\_'s lap/arms.

# My Child's Plan for Needles

## Why worry about needle pain?

Needles are often needed in children's medical care. They are used for immunizations, blood draws, starting IV (intravenous) lines, and stitches. Many children and adults are fearful (anxious) of needles. Fear of needles is caused by a combination of pain and anxiety. If your child is anxious it can make the blood vessels narrow. This narrowing makes blood draws and IV line starts more difficult. Even one minor negative experience may lead to "pain memories." These memories can affect coping and lead to avoidance later on.

On the other side of this paper is your child's plan for needles. Take this with you when getting shots. These strategies come from studies in which children and families taught us how to improve the quality of the experience.

### Some things you might hear

"It's time for the shot. Lay your child down on their back on the exam table."

"Our policy is to not show the child the needle or tell them what we are doing."

"Numbing cream is not needed because it is just a needle and it will be over with quickly."

"We don't have time for that."

"We're halfway done. If you keep kicking and screaming it will only make it harder. Hold still and be brave, and it will be over soon."

### Some things you might say

"I am aware that the best position for my child is sitting up/in my arms."

"My child does best when they watch and learn. Please talk about each step, including the smell, feeling, and how my child can be involved."

"Numbing cream is an easy way to take away the pain of the needle, and that counts for today's shots, and shots to come."

"I have the numbing cream ready. Please point to where you will be giving the shot so that I can put it on and it will be ready before the end of the appointment."

"Time out! Let's pause and figure out a new plan. This isn't working for my child."

### To Learn More

- Call Children's Operator 206-987-2000 and

Ask to speak to: \_\_\_\_\_  
(provider name)

- [seattlechildrens.org/clinics-programs/pain-medicine/](http://seattlechildrens.org/clinics-programs/pain-medicine/)

### Free Interpreter Services

- In the hospital, ask your child's nurse.
- From outside the hospital, call the toll-free Family Interpreting Line, 1-866-583-1527. Tell the interpreter the name or extension you need.

Seattle Children's offers interpreter services for Deaf, hard of hearing or non-English speaking patients, family members and legal representatives free of charge. Seattle Children's will make this information available in alternate formats upon request. Call the Family Resource Center at 206-987-2201.

This handout has been reviewed by clinical staff at Seattle Children's. However, your child's needs are unique. Before you act or rely upon this information, please talk with your child's healthcare provider.

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