



# TIPS FOR REDUCING TRAUMA IN MEDICAL SETTINGS

Clinic visits, medical procedures, and hospitalization can be traumatizing for young children.



**Yehudis Stokes**, a registered nurse at Children's Hospital of Eastern Ontario and Ph.D. candidate at the University of Ottawa, provides strategies for parents and medical professionals to help make medical experiences less traumatizing for children.

## DEVELOP A SYSTEM OF PREDICTABILITY

When a child enters an unfamiliar environment, such as a medical office, predictability becomes an essential tool for making new experiences less traumatizing. Parents and medical professionals can reduce feelings of stress and anxiety by helping the child know what to expect ahead of time. Explain the reason for the treatment using language the child will understand.



## LET THE CHILD BE IN CONTROL

Children are often subject to trauma in medical settings because they lack control of their environment. Provide children with an opportunity to manage their experiences, such as choosing a particular order of procedures. When children have the opportunity to make choices, they are more trustworthy of the medical staff and are less likely to experience trauma.

## ALWAYS PROVIDE EMOTIONAL SUPPORT

Caregivers and medical professionals should be attentive and responsive to a child's needs. Provide children with emotional support that recognizes and normalizes common fears. Children want to know that everyone experiences fear and anxiety sometimes and that it's okay to feel that way.



Listen to the episode "How Healthcare Providers Can Foster Resilience" to learn more.



**Roadmap to Resilience:**  
Supporting Children Experiencing Stress and Trauma