

Emergency Room Tips for Children with Special Needs

Emergency rooms can be overwhelming. A few simple supports can help your child feel safer and help care go more smoothly.

ER Go Bag - Child

- Comfort items (toy, stuffed animal, blanket)
- Favorite cup or water bottle from home
- Familiar snacks (if allowed)
- Noise-canceling headphones
- Tablet or phone with favorite videos
- Communication or sensory supports



ER Go Bag - Parent

- Small pillow or blanket
- Phone charger and power bank
- Water and snacks
- Medication list
- Required medications
- Notepad or notes app
- Checklist of items in the bag



Arrival & Check-In

- Tell staff your child has special needs
- Share sensory sensitivities
- Share communication needs
- Share what helps your child stay calm
- Ask for a quieter waiting area
- Ask about wait-time updates

Sensory Supports

- Ask to dim or turn off lights
- Reduce noise when possible
- Limit people in the room
- Keep comfort items nearby
- Allow movement breaks
- Use headphones or fidgets



Exams and Testing

- Stay with your child whenever possible
- Stand close for comfort
- Ask staff to explain first
- Bring a doll or stuffed animal
- Go step by step
- Take short breaks if needed
- For Surgery situations ask if you can be present for until your child is sedated



IV Line & Blood Draw

- Ask which arm or position works best
- Ask about numbing options
- Ask for extra tape or soft wraps
- Support arm with pillows or blankets
- Use distraction right away
- Redirect hands to a safe item



Parental Requests

- "Can we go one step at a time?"
- "Can you explain before touching?"
- "Can I stay with my child?"
- "Can we take a short break?"
- "Is there a quieter space?"
- "Can this be added to the chart?"



Support Regulation

- Praise coping and effort
- Keep routines familiar
- Offer comfort items often
- Take breaks before overwhelm
- Stay calm and reassuring
- Remember: calm helps care



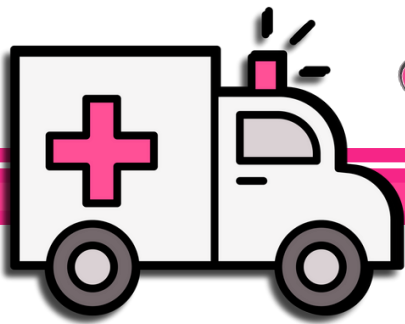
Post-Visit

- Check that you brought home all items in the bag
- Expect fatigue or exhaustion
- Return to familiar routines
- Offer extra comfort
- Allow recovery time
- Watch for stress reactions
- Give yourself grace



Important Reminder

You are not being difficult. You are advocating for your child. Supporting comfort and regulation helps medical care happen **more safely and successfully** for everyone.



Child's Information

For A Successful Trip to the Emergency Room

<p>+ About Me</p> <p>Name:</p> <p>Age:</p> <p>Gender:</p> <p>Preferred name/nickname:</p>	<p>+ Comfort Items</p> <p>Things I enjoy or find calming:</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Tablet <input type="checkbox"/> Music <input type="checkbox"/> Books</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Toys <input type="checkbox"/> Comfort item</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Other:</p> <p>Motivators that help me cooperate:</p>	<p>+ Struggles</p> <p>Sensory sensitivities (check all that apply):</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Loud noises <input type="checkbox"/> Bright lights</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Touch <input type="checkbox"/> Waiting</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> New people</p> <p>Triggers that may increase stress:</p>		
<p>+ Communication</p> <p>I communicate best using:</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Spoken words <input type="checkbox"/> Visuals</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Gestures <input type="checkbox"/> AAC</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Combination</p> <p>When I'm overwhelmed, I may communicate by:</p>	<p>+ Sensory Needs</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Sensory seeking</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Sensory avoidance</p> <p>Supports that help during appointments:</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Noise-Reduction</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Fidget or tactile item</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Comfort item</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Movement breaks</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Calm voice and simple instructions</p>	<p>+ What Helps</p> <p>Helpful strategies:</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Explaining steps before touching</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Showing tools first</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Counting down</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Short instructions</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Praise for effort</p> <p>What helps me stay calm:</p>		
<p>+ Behaviors You May See When I'm Stressed</p> <table border="1"><tr><td data-bbox="71 1883 839 2136"><p>Possible behaviors:</p><p>Early signs I need support:</p><p>Best way to help in those moments:</p></td><td data-bbox="839 1883 1554 2136"><p>Additional Notes:</p></td></tr></table>			<p>Possible behaviors:</p> <p>Early signs I need support:</p> <p>Best way to help in those moments:</p>	<p>Additional Notes:</p>
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