

4.2 Planning for medical procedures

Crucial to the success of procedural pain management is for health professionals to anticipate and plan for situations that may create pain and anxiety. Planning to provide effective procedural pain management can be done quickly and with minimal resources.

Step 1: Find out the child's likes and dislikes

Demonstrating that you know something important to the child can facilitate trust between the child, family and health care professional. It takes a small amount of time to ask the child or family some questions about:

- Pets
- Siblings
- Favourite toy
- Favourite TV show or movie
- Favourite place

Step 2: Assess previous procedural experiences

An important component of procedural pain management is assessing the child's developmental level and preferences for procedural information and management [7].

Use the child and family's experiences as a resource. Ask them about previous medical procedures to guide current practice.

Some helpful questions about previous medical experiences might be:

1. What went well previously?
2. What didn't go well?
3. What part of the procedure bothered the child most?
4. How distressed was the child
5. What triggers procedural distress?
6. How did the child respond when informed about the procedure?
7. What are the preferences of child and family for conducting the procedure?

If a child has **no prior experience** with medical procedures then ask the child and their parents about any previous painful experiences. Identify preferred coping mechanisms to plan for interventions that may be appropriate for the child [8, 9].

Step 3: Establish a procedural support plan

Establish a plan that will help the child cope with each stage of the medical procedure. In developing the plan, consider the developmental stage, preferences and individual needs of the child and family:

- Be ready to tailor your practice to the specific needs of the child as they or their parents may articulate. Your preferred way of practice may not be optimal.
- A procedural support checklist that outlines the key stages of preparation and conducting medical procedures outlined in this clinical practice guideline is available on the EMR and on the Comfort Kids website

[Link to Comfort Kids Website: Procedural Support Strategy](http://www.rch.org.au/uploadedFiles/Main/Content/comfortkids/Procedural.Support.Plan2015.pdf)

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Step 4: Communicate the procedural support plan

Document the procedural support plan in the child's medical notes:

- Communicate the child and family preferences with all members of the procedural support team.
- You can print off and fill in the procedural support checklist with the child and their family. Make a copy for the child so they can use it as a tool to advocate for future medical procedures.

Step 5: Refer children at high risk for procedural pain and distress

Refer early to an appropriate procedural support team if the child has a history of:

- Previous high procedural distress
- Developmental delay
- Sensory processing syndromes
- Any special needs that you consider may impact on the child's ability to cope with a medical procedure.

It may also be appropriate to consider a referral for procedural sedation if [10]:

- The child displays significant anticipatory anxiety +/- fear related to the procedure
- The procedure is expected to be lengthy

- The medical procedure is considered to cause severe pain
- The child is expected to be immobile

Step 6: Consult with the appropriate procedural support team

Use the table below to ascertain the appropriate procedural support team to contact for children assessed as requiring additional procedural support.

Procedural sedation support services for children at risk of procedural distress:

Service	Educational Play Therapy	Comfort Kids Program	Comfort First
Referral criteria	Referral service: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In-patient areas • Medical imaging • Pre-admission clinic 	Consultative service: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hospital wide 	Referral service: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Children’s Cancer Centre
Staff	Educational Play Therapists	Clinical Nurse Consultants	Educational Play therapist Allied Health
Contact	59300 Play.therapy@rch.org.au	55776 55772 Pager 7933	56867 55368 55804 Pager 5808
Hours	M-F Business hours	M-F Business hours	M-F Business hours

If a child requires procedural sedation then initially consult the treating medical team. If further support is required refer to the procedure on procedural sedation in ambulatory areas:

Link: Procedural Sedation for Ward and Ambulatory Areas Procedure

http://www.rch.org.au/policy/policies/Procedural_sedation_%E2%80%93_ward_and_ambulatory_areas_%E2%80%93_at_RCH/