



# PREPARING YOUR CHILD FOR IMMUNIZATION

*(These are some of the DO's and DON'TS that you as a parent may find helpful)*

- **DO** explain to your child where the injection will be given, that it may hurt and that you will be there to hold him/her. Rehearse before hand by "pretending". For example, roll up sleeve, wipe skin with Q-tip, show where the injection will be given, etc. Take turns being nurse and child.
- **DO** tell him/her that it may hurt for a little while and then it will stop hurting. Give lots of reassurance that you will be there.
- **DO** expect your child to be distressed in some way. This may be a frightening, uncomfortable experience and children may feel threatened and powerless.
- **DON'T** conceal the facts from your child hoping it may diminish pain or apprehension.
- **DON'T** emphasize the fact that he/she must not cry.
- **DON'T** feel embarrassed or angry if your child cries or acts out in fright. Nurses do expect crying and reactions of pain and fear from children.
- **DO** put yourself in your child's place and imagine how you would feel in this situation. (He/she may see the nurse as threatening, overpowering and inflicting pain.)
- **DO** make it a special occasion if you wish, but not as a reward, e.g, "Let's celebrate Josh having his immunization".
- **DO** encourage your child to talk about his/her fear before and after. Read stories about nurses/doctors. Plan this a few days before the day of immunization. **TOO** much preparation too far in advance may build apprehension.
- **DON'T** discuss being "good or bad".
- **DON'T** use bribes e.g. "If you're good we'll go to \_\_\_\_\_ for a treat."
- **DO** dress your child in a short-sleeved top and remove coat/jacket well beforehand to prevent "struggles" at the time of immunization.
- **DO** talk to the nurse before the clinic if you feel your child is particularly apprehensive. You might arrange to have the injection given at a later date in a more private setting. Your child may need more time for preparation and the nurse can help you with this.
- **DO be aware of your own feelings. If parents are fearful or apprehensive children will usually reflect your feelings.**