

DISTRACTION GUIDE

A BREAK DOWN FOR DIFFERENT AGES



DISTRACTION TIPS FOR PARENTS

Many children will need to have a medical procedure or test at some stage. This may include a blood test, stitches, injection, X-ray, or other type of medical imaging.

As a parent or caregiver, you have an important role in helping your child cope with medical procedures and hospitalizations. You know your child better than anyone else, and can offer comfort to help your child feel less scared and stressed.

WHAT DO I SAY IF MY CHILD ASKS IS IT GOING TO HURT?

It is natural for adults to try to protect and reassure their child by saying that a test or procedure won't hurt or will only hurt a little. However, research has shown that telling a child this is not helpful, and it often makes the event scarier.

Always give your child an honest answer, while trying not to frighten them. For example, an honest alternative to saying "This is going to hurt" is to say, "Some children say it hurts a bit, others are not so bothered".

Reassure your child that there are different things that can be done to reduce their discomfort during the procedure, such as numbing cream, sitting comfortably, distraction with a favourite, toy or video, or concentrating on their breathing.

DISTRACTION IDEAS

Explain to your child that often pain isn't as bad if you aren't concentrating on it too much. Decide ahead of time which distraction techniques your child would like to do during the procedure. You can even practice them before your procedure. Get your relevant toy/book/device ready before the team comes to complete the procedure. Our Comfort Kits have lots of the options suggested in this guide to borrow!

BEFORE AND DURING THE PROCEDURE

- Be honest when answering your child's questions about the procedure and whether it will hurt.
- Numbing cream, distraction and breathing or relaxation techniques are ways to help reduce discomfort during procedures.
- Try to stay with your child during a procedure, or ask someone else your child knows.
- Decide with your child which distraction methods to use during the procedure, and practice some of them at home.
- Children will follow your lead. Try to be calm and model deep, steady breathing.
- Children do well when they know their job. This can be as simple as saying, "holding your hand as still as a statue" or "blow the bubbles, then count them!"
- Avoid phrases like "it's ok" or "don't worry"
- If your child chooses to look, that is okay. For some children it can feel more safe to know what is happening.

AFTER THE PROCEDURE

Stay with your child until they are calm. Babies may like to be cuddled or offered a feed.

Talk to your child about the things they did well. Even if your child was upset, find a positive thing to mention as this can help promote a sense of achievement, e.g. "You did really well with your deep breathing".

10 THINGS YOU CAN SAY OR DO TO CALM AN ANXIOUS CHILD

1. I am here with you
2. You are safe
3. Lets breathe together
4. You're allowed to feel scared
5. I know that this is hard for you.
6. You are doing a great job (holding your arm still...taking deep breaths...having courage...)
7. This feeling won't last forever - it will get better
8. I believe in you
9. You can do hard things!
10. What was helpful last time?

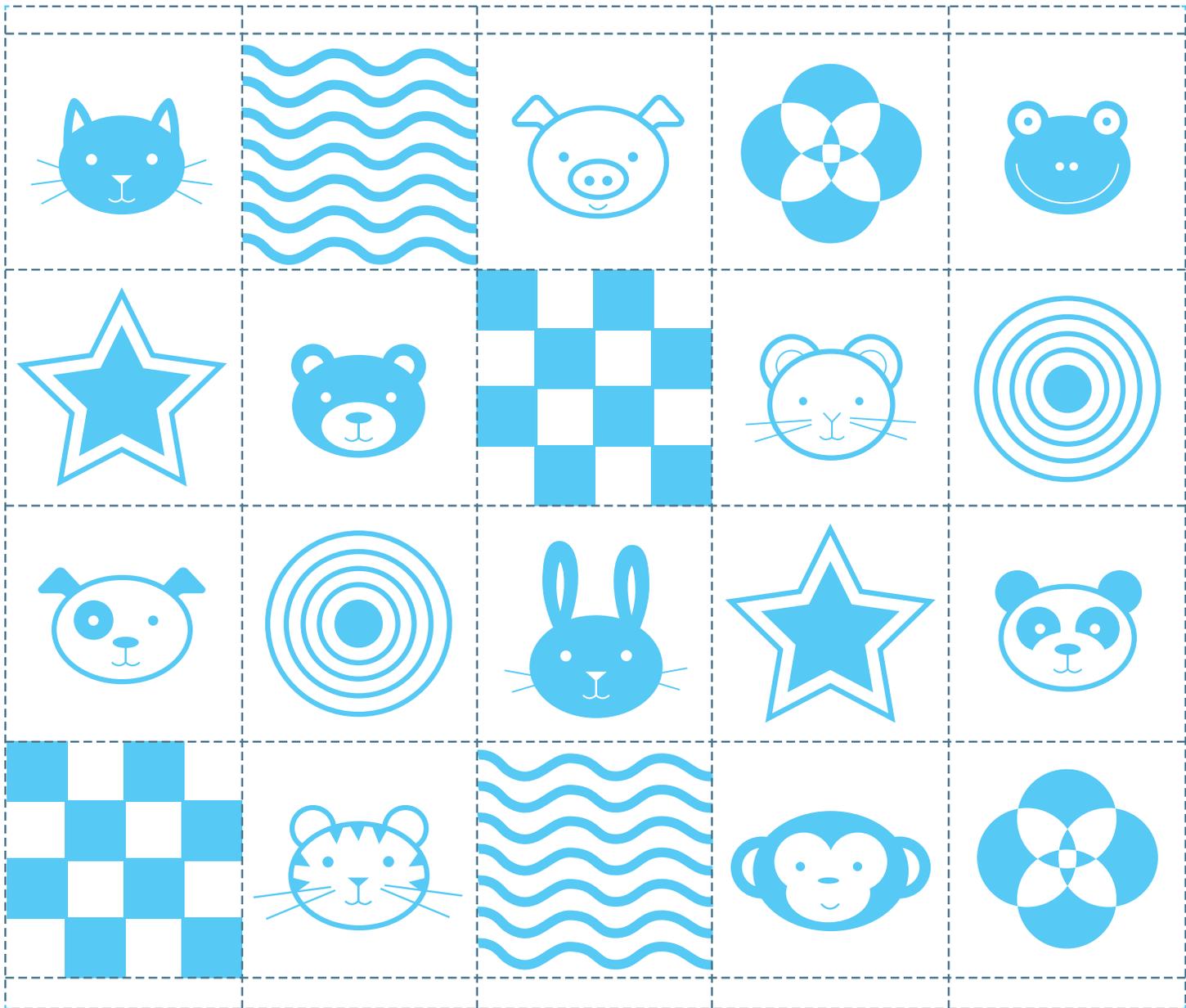


INFANTS

AGES 0-2

DISTRACTION TECHNIQUES FOR INFANTS UNDER SIX MONTHS:

- rocking, stroking their face, gentle patting
- having family present
- rattles or other baby toys
- sucrose and breastfeeding
- singing





LET'S SING A SONG!

ROCK-A-BYE BABY

Rock-a-bye, baby, on the treetop
When the wind blows, the cradle will rock
When the bough breaks, the cradle will fall
And into my arms comes baby and all
From the high rooftops down to the sea
No one's as dear as baby to me
Wee little fingers, eyes wide and bright
Sleep little baby 'til morning light

TWINKLE, TWINKLE, LITTLE STAR

Twinkle, twinkle, little star
How I wonder what you are
Up above the world so high
Like a diamond in the sky
Twinkle, twinkle, little star
How I wonder what you are



TODDLER

AGES 1.5-3

DISTRACTION TECHNIQUES FOR TODDLERS:

- blowing bubbles or a windmill
- toys and books that make noise or with buttons to push
- singing your child's favourite song
- light-up toys
- reading a book



CAN YOU FIND...

- A balloon
- A butterfly
- A slide
- A dog

QUESTIONS...

- What colour is the slide?
- How many Blue Birds can you see?
- How many flowers can you find?



LET'S SING A SONG!

OLD MACDONALD HAD A FARM

Old MacDonald had a farm
E—I—E—I—O
And on that farm he had a cow
E—I—E—I—O
With a moo-moo here
And a moo-moo there
Here a moo, there a moo
Everywhere a moo-moo
Old MacDonald had a farm
E—I—E—I—O
Old MacDonald had a farm
E—I—E—I—O
And on that farm he had a pig
E—I—E—I—O
With an oink-oink here
An oink-oink there
Here an oink, there an oink
Everywhere an oink-oink
Old MacDonald had a farm
E—I—E—I—O

Old MacDonald had a farm
E—I—E—I—O
And on that farm he had a sheep
E—I—E—I—O
With a baa-baa here
A baa-baa there
Here a baa, there a baa
Everywhere a baa-baa
Old MacDonald had a farm
E—I—E—I—O
Old MacDonald had a farm
E—I—E—I—O
And on that farm he had a hen
E—I—E—I—O
With a cluck-cluck here
A cluck-cluck there
Here a cluck, there a cluck
Everywhere a cluck-cluck
Old MacDonald had a farm
E—I—E—I—O

Old MacDonald had a farm
E—I—E—I—O
And on that farm he had a duck
E—I—E—I—O
With a quack-quack here
A quack-quack there
Here a quack, there a quack
Everywhere a quack-quack
Old MacDonald had a farm
E—I—E—I—O
Old MacDonald had a farm
E—I—E—I—O
And on that farm he had a horse
E—I—E—I—O
With a neigh-neigh here
A neigh-neigh there
Here a neigh, there a neigh
Everywhere a neigh-neigh
Old MacDonald had a farm
E—I—E—I—O

Old MacDonald had a farm
E—I—E—I—O
And on that farm he had cat
E—I—E—I—O
With a meow-meow here
A meow-meow there
Here a meow, there a meow
Everywhere a meow-meow
Old MacDonald had a farm
E—I—E—I—O
Old MacDonald had a farm
E—I—E—I—O
And on that farm he had a dog
E—I—E—I—O
With a woof-woof here
A woof-woof there
Here a woof, there a woof
Everywhere a woof-woof
Old MacDonald had a farm
E—I—E—I—O





PRESCHOOL

AGES 3-5

DISTRACTION TECHNIQUES FOR YOUNG CHILDREN:

- big belly breathing, blowing away the scary feelings or blowing away the hurt
- blowing bubbles or a windmill
- counting games
- reading a book, or a search-and-find book
- mind pictures, e.g. think about a favourite sport, family holiday, school game or activity; let your child tell a story or answer questions about what is pictured in their mind



CAN YOU SPOT THE DIFFERENCE?

THERE ARE 10 DIFFERENCES HIDDEN...



STORY TIME!



**TELL US A
STORY BY
LOOKING
AT THIS
PICTURE**



LET'S SING A SONG!



THE ANTS GO MARCHING

The ants go marching one by one
Hurrah, hurrah

The ants go marching one by one
Hurrah, hurrah

The ants go marching one by one
The little one stops to suck his thumb
And they all go marching down to the ground
To get out of the rain
BOOM! BOOM! BOOM!

...two...tie her shoe...
...three...climb a tree...
...four...shut the door...
...five...take a dive...
...six...pick up sticks...
...seven...pray to heaven...
...eight...check the gate...
...nine...check the time...
...ten...say "The End!"



SCHOOL AGE

AGES 5-12

DISTRACTION TECHNIQUES FOR OLDER CHILDREN:

- big belly breathing, blowing away the nervous feelings or blowing away the hurt
- blowing bubbles and counting each one
- counting games
- reading a book, or a search-and-find book
- mind pictures, e.g. think about a favourite sport, family holiday, school game or activity; let your child tell a story or answer questions about what is pictured in their mind



TONGUE TWISTERS

THE BIG BLACK BUG BIT THE BIG BLACK BEAR, BUT THE BIG BLACK BEAR BIT THE BIG BLACK BUG BACK!

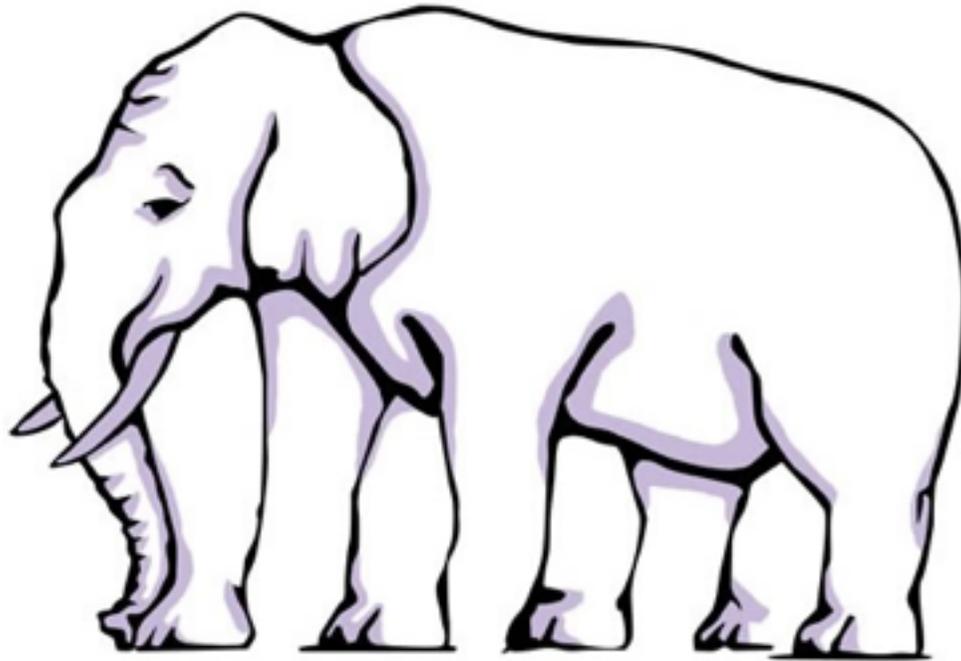
BETTY BOTTER BOUGHT SOME BUTTER, BUT SHE SAID “THIS BUTTER’S BITTER; IF I PUT IT IN MY BATTER, IT WILL MAKE MY BATTER BITTER; BUT A BIT OF BETTER BUTTER, THAT WOULD MAKE MY BATTER BETTER!”

A TUTOR WHO TOOTED A FLUTE TRIED TO TUTOR TWO TOOTERS TO TOOT. SAID THE TWO TO THEIR TUTOR, “IS IT HARDER TO TOOT OR TO TUTOR TO TOOTERS TO TOOT?”



OPTICAL ILLUSION

HOW MANY FEET DOES THE ELEPHANT HAVE?





RIDDLES

QUESTIONS

- A)** You're driving a city bus. At the first stop, three women get on. At the second stop, one woman gets off and a man gets on. At the third stop, two children get on. The bus is blue and it's raining outside in December. What color is the bus driver's hair?
- B)** It's at the center of gravity and you can find it in Venus, but not Mars. What is it?
- C)** A farmer has 19 sheep on his land. One day, a big storm hits and all but seven run away. How many sheep does the farmer have left?
- D)** What five-letter word becomes shorter when you add two letters to it?
- E)** What has cities, but no houses; forests, but no trees; and water, but no fish?

ANSWERS

- A)** Whatever color your hair is. Remember, you're driving the bus!
- B)** The letter "V"
- C)** Seven. The riddle says all but seven run away, meaning there are seven left who didn't.
- D)** Short
- E)** A map



BREATHING EXERCISE

<https://www.medicalnewstoday.com/articles/324417>

DEEP BREATHING SENDS A MESSAGE TO YOUR BRAIN TO HELP YOU RELAX. LET'S GIVE IT A TRY!

- Empty your lungs of air
- Breathe in quietly through your nose for **4 seconds**
- Hold your breath for a count of **7 seconds**
- Exhale forcefully through your mouth, pursing the lips and making a “whoosh” sound, for **8 seconds**
- Repeat the cycle up to 4 times

IF HOLDING YOUR BREATH THAT LONG IS TOO DIFFICULT, TRY THIS EXERCISE INSTEAD!

- Empty your lungs of air
- Breathe in quietly through your nose for **2 seconds**
- Hold your breath for a count of **3.5 seconds**
- Exhale forcefully through your mouth, pursing the lips and making a “whoosh” sound, for **4 seconds**
- Repeat the cycle up to 4 times

GUIDED RELAXATION

Guided Imagery - <https://www.greenchildmagazine.com/free-meditation-guided-relaxation-scripts-kids/>

IF YOU WOULD LIKE TO GUIDE YOUR CHILD THROUGH A BREATHING EXERCISE, READ OVER THIS PASSAGE BEFORE READING IT TO YOUR CHILD.

Close your eyes and take in a very deep breath. Pretend your tummy is a balloon and as you inhale, make that balloon as big as you can.

Now, exhale and release it all.

Let's do that again now... inhale fully and make the balloon any color you want.

Now as you do this, allow your arms and legs to get as floppy as a rag doll. Just let them get heavy and loose... all limp and relaxed. They feel so heavy it's as if you don't even want to move them because they are just so very relaxed! Just allow your body to continue relaxing while we use our imaginations to picture something wonderful!

In your mind, pretend you are pulling, a big magical bubble blower out of your pocket.

It looks like any bubble blower but this one has real magic in it. It has been small in your pocket, but as you pull it out, you realize it becomes enormous! It's a lot bigger than any bubble blower you've ever seen.

Now, in your other hand, imagine you have a big bottle of magic bubble soap. Put the blower into the thick magic bubble liquid... and get it nice and wet.

Now you can start to blow through the bubble blower to make your gigantic bubble. As you do this, I want you to put ANY WORRY or fear you have about anything... into that bubble.

Just put it all in there!

Then continue blowing the bubble until you think it's big enough. Nod your head when you've done that.

(Wait for nod)

As you finish, watch how a very strong friendly wind comes along and carries your worry bubble far, far away... it carries it so far away that you will never have to worry about that again.

It's leaving now. Watch as it goes.

You can blow up as many bubbles as you need to with your magical bubble blower. Put anything in there that is bothering you and watch as the wind carries the bubbles far, far away.

You can use this magic bubble blower whenever you need to... just by imagining it in your mind. I'll be quiet now so you can finish.

Tell me when you're finished, and we can talk about it.



ADOLESCENTS

AGES 12-18

DISTRACTION TECHNIQUES FOR ADOLESCENTS:

- listening to music with headphones
- let them have a choice about parental presence and hand holding
- mind pictures, e.g. think about a favourite sport, family holiday, school game or activity; let them tell a story or answer questions about what is pictured in their mind
- relaxation and breathing techniques
- use humour or talk about something unrelated to their procedure
- watching a favourite movie/show or playing a game on a phone or tablet
- If you have an older child or an adolescent, ask them if they want to know what's happening or if they prefer to focus on an activity instead. Some children want to watch the procedure as it happens



OPTICAL ILLUSION



**STARE CLOSELY AT THIS
LIGHTBULB FOR 25
SECONDS. THEN STARE
AT A WHITE WALL OR
PIECE OF PAPER.**

WHAT DO YOU SEE?

TRIVIA TIME

QUESTIONS

- 1) What Machine Did the Inventor of The Modern Zipper Also Invent?
- 2) What is the Earth's only permanent Natural Satellite?
- 3) How Old is the Great Wall?
- 4) In Which City Were the First Modern Olympics Held?
- 5) When Did The Eiffel Tower Open?
- 6) Which Company Owns Bugatti, Lamborghini, Audi, Porsche, and Ducati?
- 7) What Did Ancient Romans Use To Dye Their Hair?
- 8) The First Hockey Pucks Used In Early Outdoor Hockey Games Were Made of What?
- 9) Who Invented the Bikini?
- 10) What is the colour of a Giraffe's tongue?



TRIVIA TIME

ANSWERS

1) The sewing machine.

Although Elias Howe invented the first model of the zipper in 1851, it wasn't regularly used until Whitcomb L. Judson created a similar design 40 years later.

2) The Moon.

Our moon is the fifth largest of the 190+ moons orbiting planets in our solar system.

3) About 2,700 years old.

The Great Wall of China took 200 years to build and stretches over 3,700 miles.

4) Athens, Greece

The ancient Games were staged in Olympia, Greece, from 776 BC through 393 AD, and it took 1503 years for the Olympics to return in Athens, Greece, in 1896.

5) 1889.

Parisians originally hated the Eiffel Tower with many people sending angry letters to newspapers saying the tower didn't fit into the feel of the city.

6) Volkswagen.

What's interesting is that Volkswagen bought these car brands when they were failing or close to going bankrupt and turned them into successful brands.

7) Bird Poop.

Bird poop was used to dye the hair blonde, which was a very popular hair color among the Romans. Some even sprinkled gold dust in their hair to get a more yellow tint.

8) Frozen Cow Dung.

9) Louis Reard.

The only model willing to show this much skin in a bikini was a 19-year-old nude dancer named Micheline Bernardini. She modeled the first-ever bikini design in 1946.

10) Black.



BRAIN TEASER

**SAY THE COLOUR
OF EACH WORD!**

* (Don't read the word!) *

**HOW FAST CAN
YOU SAY IT?**

black white yellow green red blue
yellow red black green white red
white green red black yellow green
black white yellow green red blue
white green red black yellow green
yellow red black green white red
white green red black yellow green

DISTRACTION ITEMS AND USES BY AGES



BUBBLES



STARLIGHT SPINNER



SUPER LOOPER

INFANT

Blow bubbles and see how many animal noises you can make each time you pop a bubble.

Watch and feel. The vibration pairs well with painful pokes as a secondary sensation our brain must process!

N/A

TODDLER

Have the child blow the bubbles! Count as many as you can.

Watch and feel. The vibration pairs well with painful pokes as a secondary sensation our brain must process!

N/A

SCHOOL AGE

Have the child blow the bubbles! Count as many as you can.

Is it a light spinner? Or a microphone? What is your favourite song?

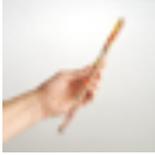
To be worn on the arm for distraction. Slip your hand through the flat rings, let it open and roll along your arm. Pass the Super Looper down to your other arm and then pass it to a caregiver!

ADOLESCENT

Use the bubbles as a tool while giving a directed breathing exercise.

The spinner could be used as a signal for when the patient would like the room to be quiet and concentrated on the procedure at hand.

To be worn on the arm for distraction. Slip your hand through the flat rings, let it open and roll along your arm. Pass the Super Looper down to your other arm and then pass it to a caregiver!



GLITTER WANDS

Grab and hold! Watch the glitter sparkle inside.

Sing a song while the glitter is falling, or use the wand to help reach for bubbles to pop!

Pick pieces of glitter and race! Practice breathing as the glitter falls.

Use the glitter as a distraction while you guide the patient through some soothing breaths.



RAINMAKER

Listen to the soothing sounds of rain!

Listen and watch! Allow the patient to hold and flip.

Guided imagery. Help the patient imagine a calming place while they are listening to the sound.

Guided imagery. Help the patient imagine a calming place while they are listening to the sound.



FIDGET CUBE

N/A

N/A

Have patient manipulate cube. Create patterns (much like "Bop-it") and see if you can pass the cube back and forth creating a longer pattern each pass!

Have patient manipulate cube. Create patterns (much like "Bop-it") and see if you can pass the cube back and forth creating a longer pattern each pass!



PINWHEEL

Blow on the pinwheel or have caregiver blow for the infant to watch.

What a pretty flower! Would you like to blow it a kiss? Did I tell you a story about the garden this came from?

Control our breathing by guided breathing exercises, blowing on the pinwheel.

Control our breathing by guided breathing exercises, blowing on the pinwheel.



PARTY BLOWERS

N/A

Welcome to the party! Show me how you can use your breath to make the blower extend!

Watch my fingers count to three. Every time I reach three, blow on the party blower!

Visual reinforcement when breathing. A good indicator for how well you are following along with guided breathing!

DISTRACTION ITEMS AND USES BY AGES CONTINUED...



HEADPHONES



STRESS STARS



IPAD

DISTRACTION CARDS

	HEADPHONES	STRESS STARS	IPAD	DISTRACTION CARDS
INFANT	N/A	N/A	Nursery rhymes/soothing music from youtube.	Look and find!
TODDLER	N/A	Twinkle twinkle little star, won't you try to squeeze the star?	Music, videos and games.The iPad can be used to strategically block the view of the patient from the procedure, or can be held by the patient.	Look and find! Create stories based on the pictures on the cards.
SCHOOL AGE	Pair with an iPad or personal music device to better concentrate on the distraction.	Where did this star fall from?! Is it a wishing star? What kind of magic wishes would you make on a wishing star?	Music, videos and games.The iPad can be used to strategically block the view of the patient from the procedure, or can be held by the patient.	Have the patient create stories based on the pictures on the cards.
ADOLESCENT	Offer to teens so they have an opportunity to listen to their own music.	Deep breath in, deep squeeze out.	Music, videos and games. The iPad can be used to strategically block the view of the patient from the procedure, or can be held by the patient.	Have the patient create stories based on the pictures on the cards.

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