



## TIPS FOR ATTENDING MEDICAL APPOINTMENTS & PROCEDURES

Our research has shown that 68% of disabled children find medical appointments and procedures really tough and that parents rated taking their disabled child to these appointments or procedures as 8.5 (on a scale of 0-10 with 10 being extremely challenging).

We spoke to medical professionals too and they estimated that 34% of medical procedures for disabled children have to be repeated because the first or previous attempts were not successful (for example because of anxiety or sensory issues). Our Human Body workshop which your child attended today was designed as a general introduction to medical environments and the human body, helping to familiarise children with medical environments, remove some of the fear out of appointments and to showcase calming/coping techniques.

In addition, we've compiled some great tips which we've sourced from other parents/carers which you'll find below – we do hope they're useful and if you have any to add, we'd love to hear them!

Please email [info@lightyearfoundation.org](mailto:info@lightyearfoundation.org)



### 1 ROLE PLAY

Act out what's going to happen with teddies or favourite toys. Or for specific procedures, ask if you can borrow some items they use, for example a hospital may lend you some old EEG wires which you can use to EEG a teddy at home helping prepare your child for when they visit.



### 4 SHOWING YOUR EMOTIONS

Many children struggle to articulate how they feel particularly if they are feeling anxious. Avoid communication barriers escalating by making up some simple emotion cards - these could be green, yellow, red to show if they are feeling content through to anxious or more elaborate ones with a range of feelings. This enables parents/carers to pick up on any worries early on.

### 2 GO ARMED WITH ACTIVITIES

Take a bag of sensory activities to help with waiting, anxiety or sitting still. Sensory toys or things to fidget with are especially good, for example glitter wands or spinners. If you're feeling especially creative, you could have a go at making something yourself ([www.youtube.com/watch?v=76MTGCgFt5E](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=76MTGCgFt5E) is great for inspiration!).

### 5 VISIT BEFOREHAND

If your child is being seen for a test or appointment, you may be able to visit beforehand, even if it's to see the building to get used to it. You could also pick out some key things as visual prompts such as an interesting clock or picture on the wall to remember for next time.

### 3 DRAWING IT OUT IN THE FORM OF A FUN MAP

Drawing out what is going to happen in the form of a fun map - often going through the steps from leaving home to getting to the doctors or hospital and what will take place can help your child visualise and process what's going to happen rather than fearing the unknown. If you can use a fun theme, such as a pirate map or road map with their favourite cars, all the better!

### 6 CHANGE THE MEMORY

After a medical appointment or procedure, do something fun on the way home, such as visiting an ice cream van. That way, the child's memory will be of the treat on the way home and therefore, will be more likely to remember that than any anxieties for the next visit!