## Non-Drug therapies for pain management and comfort

Pain is complex and there are many non-drug therapies that can be used to manage pain and help decrease a child's anxiety. These techniques also can become coping skills that you / your child can use in future life experiences.

**Distraction:** Giving your child something else to focus on is a very effective way to help him/her cope with pain. Interactive toys, blowing bubbles, singing or music, deep breathing, story telling, video games, computer activities and TV are useful distractions for children in the hospital and clinics

**Relaxation:** Simple things such as imagining a favorite place can relax even very young children during painful moments. Child Life Specialists can help you and your child learn more about relaxation methods

**Music:** A child's favorite music may be comforting during stressful times in the hospital or during a painful moment.

**Tactile Methods:** The use of cold, heat, massage, gentle touch and positioning can help soothe pain.

**Positions of Comfort:** A young child often feels more in control when sitting up. Older children often prefer to choose the position of comfort. A nurse can help you and your child decide what positions might be comfortable for procedures

**Environment**: Lowering lights, decreasing noise and limiting visitors may help some children. Favorite blankets, toys, and pictures are also comforting.

**Parent Presence:** Children have reported that having a family member present during a painful procedure helps them feel better. Ask you nurse or doctor how you can help and coach your child through a painful moment.

## Questions to ask before procedures

When your child is going to have an operation or a procedure (even simple procedures such as placing an IV line) you may want to ask:

Will there be much pain during or after the procedure?

- How long will the pain last?
- What will be done to help my child's pain?
- What are the side effects of the pain treatments?
- What can I do to help my child during and after the procedure?