

Tips for Physicians Created by Physicians

Advice from top-performing physicians, scoring above the 93rd percentile rank.

Prior to the Visit

- Always do chart reviews and make notes in advance. If something is odd, try to figure it out.
- Staff are the opening act with patients before the physician comes in. Staff will manage up the physician make the families feel comfortable.
- Be conscious of the wait time, minimize delays, and provide periodic updates.

During the Visit

NON-VERBAL COMMUNICATION

- First focus on the child by getting down to their eye level and find out what the family is worried about.
- Have family sit with the child for exam if the child is scared. Start exam at their feet.
- Watch for non-verbal cues while listening and answer the family concerns first—it's far more important than just providing knowledge about the problem and creates alignment with the family that you are working together to address their concerns.
- Appear calm and unhurried. People don't mind waiting when given time during their appointment.
- The computer is used for educating not charting.

VERBAL COMMUNICATION

- Introduce yourself to the patient and the family. Always apologize for the wait.
- Always speak to the patient/child regardless of age or developmental delay, then the parent. Start and end the visit with a focus on one of the child's interests (i.e. hobbies, sports).
- Preview what is going to happen before doing it (e.g. "I'll start by asking some questions then do an exam, and then we can discuss any testing that may be necessary").

- Let the patient and family know you reviewed their case. You can say, "I understand the following from reviewing your history with nurse...". Or you could say, "From review of your prior records I understand..." and follow up with, "I should probably warn you that I think outloud". This way as a physician you are explaining the rationale for doing (or not doing) certain tests.
- Understand the "Why" behind the patient's presentation. Ask questions like, "Tell me what you think a murmur is? I want you to know what a murmur is and is not. My job today is to clear up if your chest pain is from your heart or from something else."
- "Slow down" when speaking to patients and families and ALWAYS avoid using medical jargon.

Ending the Visit Successfully

- End every visit with, "We are here for you, if you need us. Here is the method for getting a hold of us. If you feel like your questions have not been answered, ask to speak to me directly and my team will get ahold of me." If it is a surgery day, let the family know their call may be returned a few hours later.
- Always ask if they have additional questions. Have nurse check them out to give them an additional opportunity to ask questions.