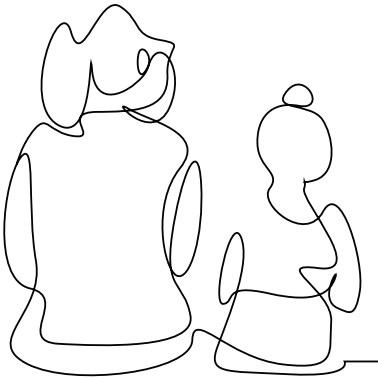


# Tips for Engaging Children and Youth in Acute Care Settings

## COMMUNICATION



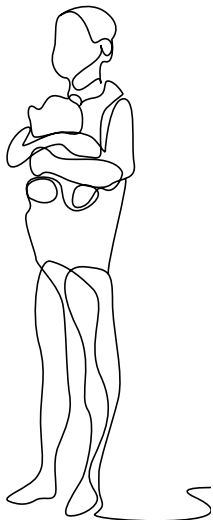
- Treat the child/youth with respect and compassion
- Approach in a quiet, calm and confident manner that is non-judgmental/non-stigmatizing
- Explain who you are and what you are doing
- Ask preferred name and pronoun. Use gender inclusive language
- Take time to listen
- Validate the child/youth's feelings and concerns
- Be transparent and communicative throughout all interactions
- Offer choice whenever possible
- Use words and terms the child/youth can easily understand
- Involve families /caregivers in planning and updates as appropriate and within limits of confidentiality

## COMFORT AND REGULATION



- Check in frequently and briefly (this may help avoid unnecessary agitation)
- Ensure their physical and emotional needs are met (e.g. pain management, toileting, nourishment, hydration)
- Provide comfort items that help with emotional and behavioural regulation, such as: warm drink, sleep mask, blankets, lip balm, paper and pencils, snacks, books, playing cards and stuffed animals
- Provide sensory modulation items such as: fidget toys, ear plugs, arts and crafts, music/relaxing sounds or digital media
- Offer suggestions for coping and emotional regulation, such as: relaxation techniques on cue cards, apps that provide specific regulation strategies
- Encourage active use of coping/de-escalation strategies, such as: walking, talking, writing, resting, crying, and deep breathing
- Offer time alone and a quiet space
- Offer spiritual care or practice
- Offer music therapy
- Connection with family/support person

## ENVIRONMENTAL MODIFICATION



- Protect the child/youth from accidental harm (e.g., do not leave them unattended on a bed without safety guards, lower the bed as close to the floor as possible)
- Modify the environment to create a low stimulus environment (e.g. reduce lighting, noise, and the number of people in the room)
- Minimize the number of different staff attending the child/youth
- Allow them to have familiar but non-dangerous personal items (own clothing)
- Accompany them to and from places (e.g. the washroom)