

# TIPS AND TOOLS:

## FOR PREPARING YOUR CHILD FOR A VISIT TO THE DOCTOR

Visiting the doctor may be overwhelming for many children. It is helpful to plan ahead and prepare your child as much as possible. This resource outlines some tips and tools that might be helpful for families and caregivers in preparing to see a doctor.

### PLAN AHEAD



Schedule your child's doctor's visit a few weeks or months ahead of time. The doctor usually prefers this and it will help you and your child have time to prepare for the visit.

People with autism sometimes like to know if there will be a change in their usual routine or daily schedule. By scheduling a doctor's visit in advance and talking with the person about the change, it will help to them to be prepared.

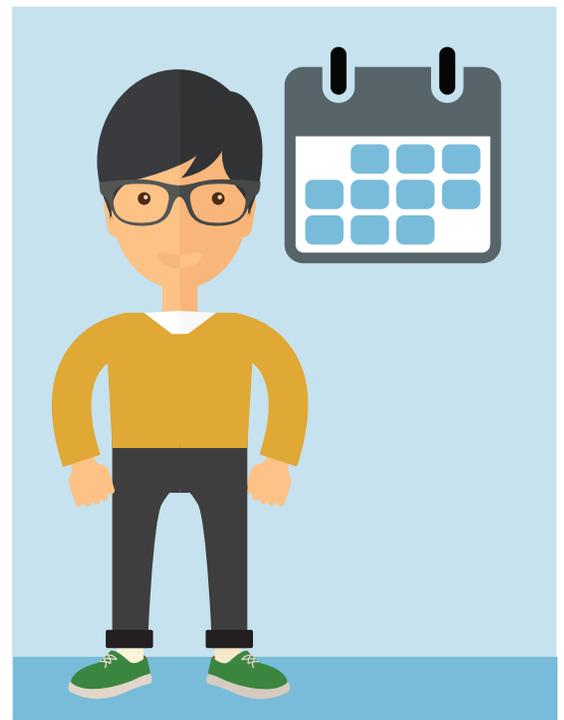
### PLAN AHEAD BY USING A CALENDAR

One way to plan ahead is to use a calendar to show activities that your child will be doing and when. This may include the doctor's visit, as well as trips, family visits, and other events that are not typically in the child's routine.

Introduce a calendar to your child if they are not already using one. Some children in Pre-K or Early Intervention learn the days of the week and the months of the year so they may be familiar with the calendar by the time they are in elementary school.

Once your child is familiar and comfortable with using a calendar, try using a large calendar that can highlight when an appointment is scheduled. Let the child know they are going to visit the doctors so they can make sure their body is healthy and strong. Then you can both look at the calendar together and talk about when the appointment is scheduled.

**Try This:** *"Hey Suzie, guess what? We are going to visit the doctors, so they can make sure your body is healthy and strong. Let's take a look at the calendar."*



## PLAN AHEAD BY USING A CALENDAR (CONT.)



If possible, use stickers or draw pictures of something related to a doctor visit so that they can recognize that the symbol means they are going to the doctor. This could be a picture of a doctor, nurse, or tools that a doctor or nurse may use during the visit.

**Try This:** “*Suzie’s Doctor Visit is on Wednesday Oct 1st. Let’s put a doctor sticker on that day.*”

## PLAN AHEAD BY USING SOCIAL STORIES

Help your child prepare for the doctor’s visit by creating a new social story or using an existing social story that will outline what the visit may look like. The social story may include descriptions of the visit and pictures to show what will happen and when.



[Click here to view our social story for going to the doctor.](#)

## PREPARE FOR THE APPOINTMENT BY READING A BOOK



To help prepare your child for the doctor’s visit you can read a book with pictures and text that outlines what will happen when your child goes to the doctor. You can visit your local library to see if they have books on this topic that you can borrow to help prepare for the visit. When the month for the appointment arrives, you can introduce the month as “Doctor Time”. This could be a good time to try reading the book during the child’s evening/ bedtime routine, so they can start getting familiar with what is going to happen.

**Try This:** “*Let’s read our Doctor book together before bedtime!*”

You can start by reading the book 3 times a week, and as the appointment gets closer, fade the days away, to maybe once a week. Make it fun!