

Brian Maurer's Comments:

Pediatric practitioner Brian Maurer has this comment: "This unfortunate scenario is repeated daily in pediatric primary care practice. An interesting twist: told through the eyes of a 4-year-old as imagined by a pre-medical student.

Most 4-year-olds are quite savvy. They can read between the lines and sense when they will be getting a shot. It is not unusual for the child to get upset while anticipating the administration of injections.

For the past 10 years or so I have been giving shots to the gamut of my patients, newborn through late adolescence. Instructing the parent how to hold the child is key. I've also learned to be quick, minimizing the duration of discomfort to the child. Finally, I've also learned how to talk the older child through the procedure, using a calm voice, explaining things as I go along.

Over the years this approach seems to have worked well for the most part. Every once in a while I have to deal with a child who has a meltdown. If the parent is supportive, that helps a great deal.

I don't advise parents to buy their children expensive presents afterwards. Hugs are far better.