

# Neurodiversity-affirming care

At Perth Children's Hospital (PCH), our vision is to provide care that is welcoming and affirming of all neurotypes, every day, for every child, young person and their family.

We have outlined some general tips and the support available for families when coming to PCH.



## Your voice matters

Parents and caregivers, you know your child best. Please share your wisdom with those caring for your child.



## Play and engagement

Share your child's interests, play and sensory preferences or regulation tools. Bring any of these supports that might help.



## Positive communication

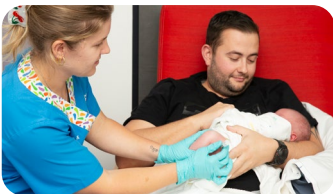
- PCH has several **social stories** to help prepare for appointments.
- Bring your own communication tools or visual supports (e.g. transition timer, visual schedule).
- Share the communication style that works best for you and your child (e.g. key word sign, gestures, simplified language, demonstration or declarative language).
- If you or your child benefit from pauses or time to process, tell your team.
- Ask for an interpreter if you need one and use your home language to support and soothe your child.
- Ask questions and tell staff if there is anything you do not understand.



## Prepare and plan

You can complete a **KKIND Comfort Card** so your team knows what will suit your child best.

- Your team will help your child to have choices and be *Ready Together*.
- Ask for the simple steps, show 'how' on you or your child's teddy, or ask for a walk-through so procedures feel more predictable.



## Comfort positioning

Help the team know what touch and movement your child tolerates and prefers.

- Ask for the **Comfort Positioning** resources to help you prepare for procedures.
- Bring weighted supports or compression garments if they help your child.



## Comfort first: medication options

- If your child has sensory sensitivities or dislikes sticky dressings for numbing cream, ask for glad wrap.
- If your child prefers a medicine with a certain smell, taste, or texture, bring this with you. If they prefer liquids, tablets or capsules let your team know.
- Consider preferred medication 'chasers' that may be helpful for your child, but confirm with your pharmacist and doctor, especially if your child needs to fast.

## Emergency Department

We know this can be a hard space for neurodivergent families.

- Ask for a **Neurodiversity Care Plan** which will help staff to understand and shape care where possible, to your child's strengths and unique needs.
- PCH Emergency Department continues to provide staff with additional training in supporting neurodivergent children.
- Sensory and engagement tools available.

## Outpatients and Medical Imaging

- Contact the clinic and ask if you can book an early appointment time.
- Let your team know your child has access needs or known strategies to help with waiting.
- Use the self check-in kiosks and advise the clinic clerk you would like a text message when the clinician is ready to see you. You can then wait in a quiet space like the Northern Green Space (outside), Kulunga Moort Mia or the Ronald McDonald Family Room.

**Bring comfort tools such as noise cancelling headphones, sunglasses or other sensory items that you know are helpful. Check in with PCH volunteers (in the orange shirts) if you need extra support.**

## Inpatient stays

- Ask for a **KKIND Comfort Card** for any procedural planning.
- Complete the 'What matters to me' wall poster so staff can learn more about your child.
- Ask the team to refer you to KKIND Occupational Therapy if more individualised, procedure planning support is needed.



## Surgery

- Talk to your team if you have any concerns.
- Let them know your child's strengths and past experiences.
- Bring comfort, communication, play and engagement supports with you on the day.
- Let the team know what helps your child with waiting, transitions and treatments.
- If you already have a Neurodiversity Care Plan, Comfort Card or Patient Profile let the team know so they can use it to help in your child's care.
- The **EPIC Kids** website shares helpful ways to talk to children about having an operation.

**Our staff are here to help make your visit as comfortable as possible, so please let them know if you need any assistance or adjustments during your time at PCH.**

For a full list of resources and supports at PCH, scan the QR code or **visit the Keeping Kids in No Distress (KKIND) web page.**

## Feedback

Please share your feedback if we don't get things quite right and tell us what matters most to you. This helps us to improve.

[cahs.health.wa.gov.au/feedback](https://cahs.health.wa.gov.au/feedback)

## Other resources

- Carers WA | [carerswa.asn.au](https://carerswa.asn.au)
- Kiind | [kiind.com.au](https://kiind.com.au)

