

## **Preparing Your Child for a Vaccine**

- In the time leading up to the visit, it is fair for you to tell your child that you are unsure whether he/she is receiving a vaccine until the medical staff informs you.
- Validate (i.e., communicate that his/her thoughts make sense and you understand) thoughts / feelings about shots: tell him/her that you don't like shots either; and, in fact, no one likes shots.
- If your child asks if the shot hurts, be honest. Try: "Yes, it hurts, but only a little; like a quick pinch."
- After you have validated your child's thoughts/feelings, you could let your child know that shots keep him/her healthy.
- Work with the medical team to allow your child some control of the vaccine experience: if possible, the shot could be at the beginning or the end of the visit, he/she can watch or look away, and he/she can be surprised or the nurse can count to 3 before the shot.
- Caregivers should stay calm, your child will likely feel calmer as well; provide comfort ("I'm here," and "would you like to hold my hand?"), and allow for child control when possible.
- If you think your child needs more support, please call our office (617-277-7320) to speak with one of our clinical social workers, who can provide more information and help to develop a specific plan for the visit.