



Autism Society of America's Guide to Accessible Vaccination

Sensory Considerations

 **Turn lights low,** reduce fluorescent lighting when possible.

Reduce crowding to eliminate social and visual overwhelm.


 **Play calming video/music with low volume** on available TVs/screens in shared spaces.

Offer a variety of seating options when available. (chairs, cushions, bean bags, etc.)

Offer deep pressure supports like weighted stuffed animals, shoulder wraps, or lap pads.

Make a variety of sensory tools available at check in to use throughout the appointment.

Patience and a smile will go the extra mile.

Noise reducing headphones available at check in. 

“My son was very comfortable getting his booster. The quiet rooms and friendly staff were a huge help. We were all very excited that he handled it so well.” – Vaccine Education Initiative event participant

Appointment Preparation



Use social narratives to help individuals and families prepare for the appointment.



Prepare and send a visual schedule ahead of time. Participants can use this at the appointment to walk through the steps of the appointment.



Ask individualized questions during registration/sign up, such as:

- How have past vaccine experiences gone?
- To help us prepare for a positive experience, please share any accommodations you may need or find helpful.
- Please provide any additional information about how we can provide a successful vaccination experience.



Send paperwork ahead of time to reduce time spent waiting at check in.



Prepare a feedback survey to be taken during observation or sent out via email after the event.



Send a reminder email to participants with tips, resources, and paperwork.

Space Considerations

- **Waiting room with sensory tools,** activities, visual schedules.
- **Private rooms** for vaccine administration.
- Plan for an **extra vaccination room** in case someone needs more time.
- When possible, have **separate observation and waiting rooms.**
- **Two separate observation spaces** when possible - one with activities for children and one for older teens and adults.
- **Allow movement,** exploration, and play.
- **Clear signs** showing where to go.

- **Break space** for volunteers, nurses, and others to reduce crowds, and noise in other spaces. Consider providing water, coffee, snacks, etc.

Injection Tools

Buzzy Bee®: A Buzzy Bee® is a small vibrating bee with blue ice-pack wings. It helps block sharp pain and provides distraction when giving injections or other medical procedures.

Shotblocker®: A ShotBlocker® is a small piece of plastic and the back side of it is covered in short plastic prongs. To use it, press the prong side onto the the arm, leg, or wherever the individual is receiving a shot. The prongs confuse or distract the nerves to avoid feeling the pain of the needle.

“The Autism Society provided a thorough training on accessible vaccination practices and ways to increase inclusivity. Our city and health officials will be utilizing the accessible vaccine kits and many lessons learned from today’s session.”

From a Healthcare Training at the NY State Association of City and Health Officials

Other Supports & Accommodations

Get trained! Email us to learn about the Autism Society's Accessible Healthcare Training.



Family Support Volunteer - a volunteer trained or experienced in working with those with Autism to help support participants all the way through the process. This person should be prepared with comments from the registration process and able to provide individualized support based on the needs of the participant.

Empower personal choice and individual preferences.

Commitment to flexibility, patience, and a **calm environment.**

Support Animals.

Plan for extra time, and know it makes a difference!



Provide water & snacks for participants while waiting and in observation.

“I have feared shots my whole life... this is the first time I got a vaccine from a caring and knowledgeable person. This clinic helped me get a shot without fear.” – Adult participant

Free Resources

 Visit [AutismSociety.org/VEI](https://www.autismsociety.org/VEI) to download resources like:

Communication Board

Visual Schedules

Social Narratives

Our National Helpline offers our trained Information & Referral (I&R) Specialists to provide resources to services and supports across the country.

Call at 800.328.8476 | Email us at VEI@AutismSociety.org | Visit us at [AutismSociety.org/VEI](https://www.autismsociety.org/VEI)