The Nemours ED REACH Program accommodates children with autism spectrum disorders (ASD), sensory disorders, mental health disorders and similar conditions. It is based on awareness, communication, environment and education. Awareness helps staff to identify these children and prevent undue anxiety and escalating behaviors. Communication occurs with families, the patient and staff members regarding the patient’s needs. A sensory-friendly environment decreases harsh stimuli and promotes calming. Staff receive ongoing training regarding ASD, REACH concepts, procedure planning, and recognizing and managing anxiety and agitation.

The REACH Program accommodates children with ASD, decreases use of restraints and sedatives, and improves patient experience and outcomes.

**ACTIONS TAKEN**
- Collaboration with Child Life
- Education: Voluntary events plus mandatory training for ED staff every two years
- Distraction objects and rewards placed throughout the ED for staff to access
- Sensory-friendly exam room in the Emergency Department (grant funded)
- EMR questionnaire, best practice alert and track board identification for children in the REACH Program

**SUMMARY OF RESULTS**
- A survey of providers suggests that REACH Program training is effective at improving provider comfort and knowledge when treating children with ASD.
- Review of electronic health records of patients identified with ASD or a similar condition showed that anxiolytic, antipsychotic and alpha-agonist use was rare. Physical restraint was extremely infrequent.
- Positive Press Ganey comments from families with ASD.

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