

# Policy statement addresses safety for children in emergency care settings

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All emergency departments should understand the unique safety issues

related to children, according to a policy statement and accompanying technical report released by the American Academy of Pediatrics, American College of Emergency Physicians, and Emergency Nurses Association and published online Oct. 3 in *Pediatrics*.

Madeline M. Joseph, M.D., from the University of Florida College of Medicine-Jacksonville, and colleagues revised a previous [policy statement](#) relating to [patient safety](#) in the emergency care setting.

The authors note that due to a number of environmental and [human factors](#), caring for children in the emergency setting can be prone to medical errors. Frequent workflow interruptions, multiple care transitions, and barriers to effective communication are seen in the [emergency department](#). In addition, the safe care of critically ill and injured patients is made more challenging by the high volume of patients, high decision density under [time pressure](#), diagnostic uncertainty, and limited knowledge of patients' history and preexisting conditions.

The staff of all emergency departments, including general emergency departments that care for the majority of ill and injured children, must understand the unique safety issues related to children. To improve safety for all children seeking emergency care, it is imperative that principles of patient safety are practiced, a culture of safety supported, and best practices adopted.

"This policy lays out the steps that emergency departments can take to lessen the risk of medical errors and provide safe care for children of all ages," Joseph said in a statement. "This includes keeping medicines and equipment on hand that are appropriate for children. It also means listening and engaging families in decisions about child's care."

**More information:** [Policy Statement](#)

[Technical Report](#)

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