

Pediatric Emergencies: The Other Patients

How to make calls go smoothly by involving parents.

By Richard Huff



Richard Huff



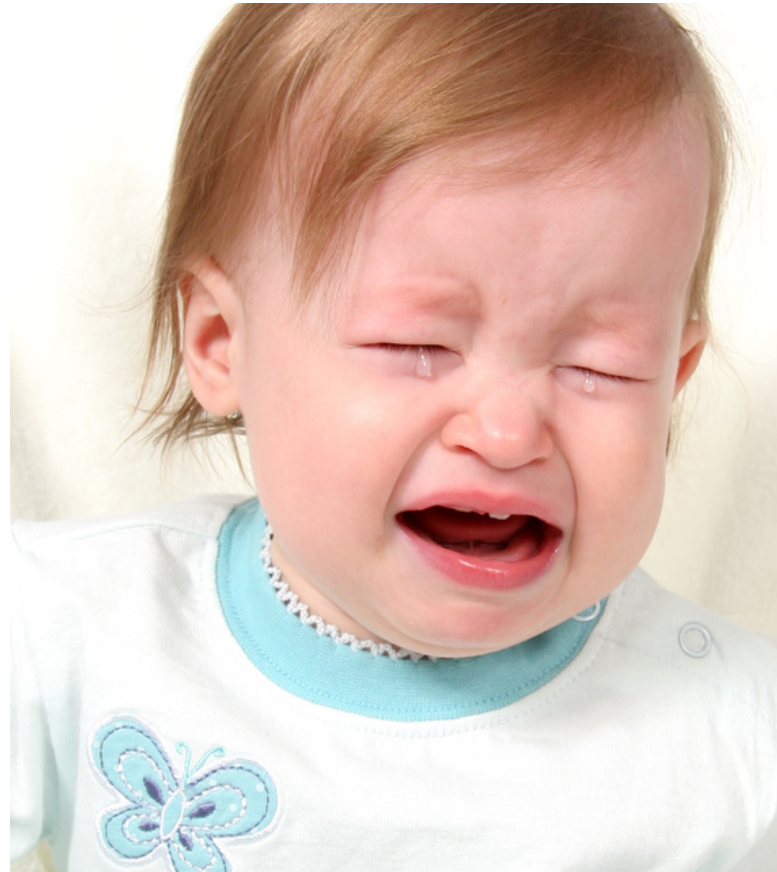
- Former Three-time Chief, Atlantic Highlands First Aid
- NREMT-B, NJ EMT-B
- Director At Large, National Volunteer Fire Council/EMS/R
- New Jersey State First Aid Council
- New Jersey EMS Task Force
- Journalist
- Communications executive



Pediatric calls gone wrong?



- Bad calls?
- What did I do wrong?
- What might have I done better?





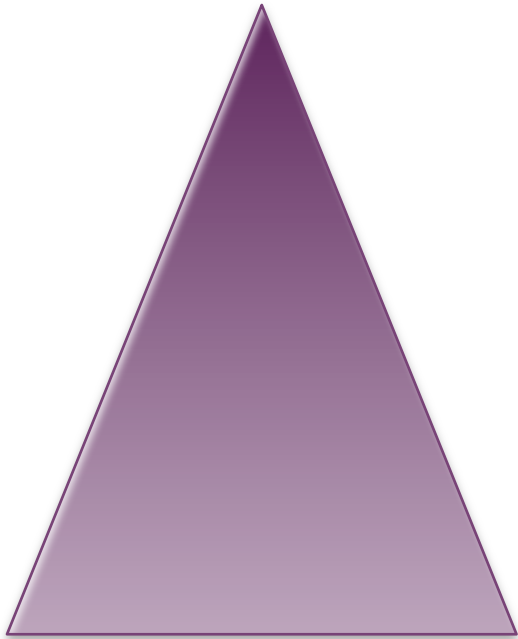
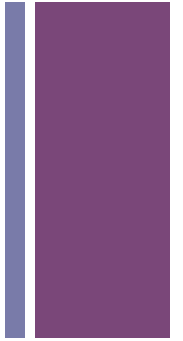
This Class

- The dynamics of pediatric calls.
- What we know, what we can change.
- Where things go wrong.
- How making parents part of the process is important.





It's also about.....





The call that got us here

- A father
- A son
- A dog





The call that got us here...



- How do you think the kid reacted?
- How about the parent?
- How about us?
- We'll come back to this later.



Some perspective



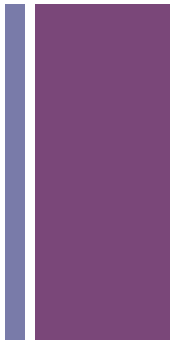
- In 2010, there were an estimated 129.8 million visits to emergency departments (EDs) of nonfederal short-stay and general hospitals in the United States. - CDC



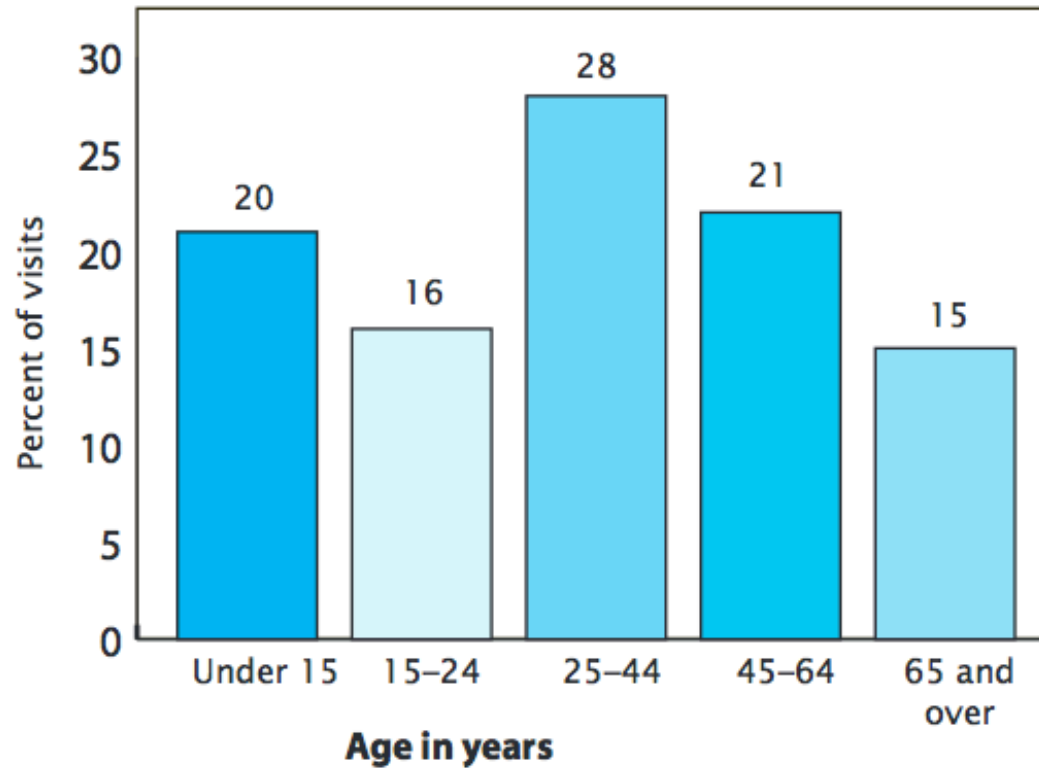
Pediatric volume



- In 2009–2010, there were an estimated 33.7 million annual average ED visits by persons aged 18 years and under in the United States, and 11.9 million (35.3%) of these visits were injury related. - CDC



Percent distribution of ED visits by patient age: 2010





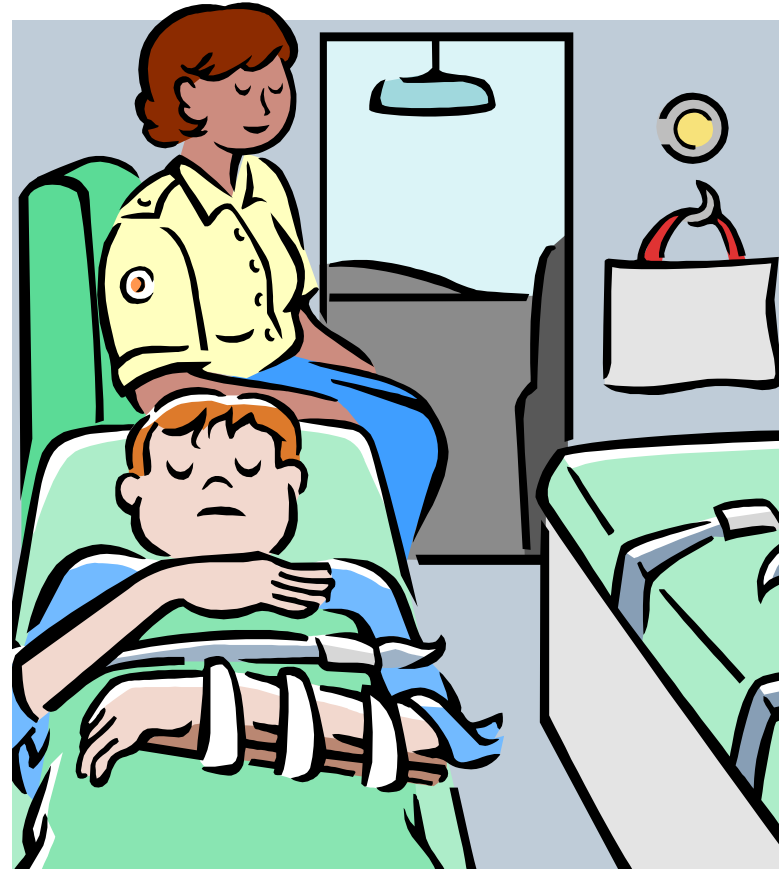
What does this mean?

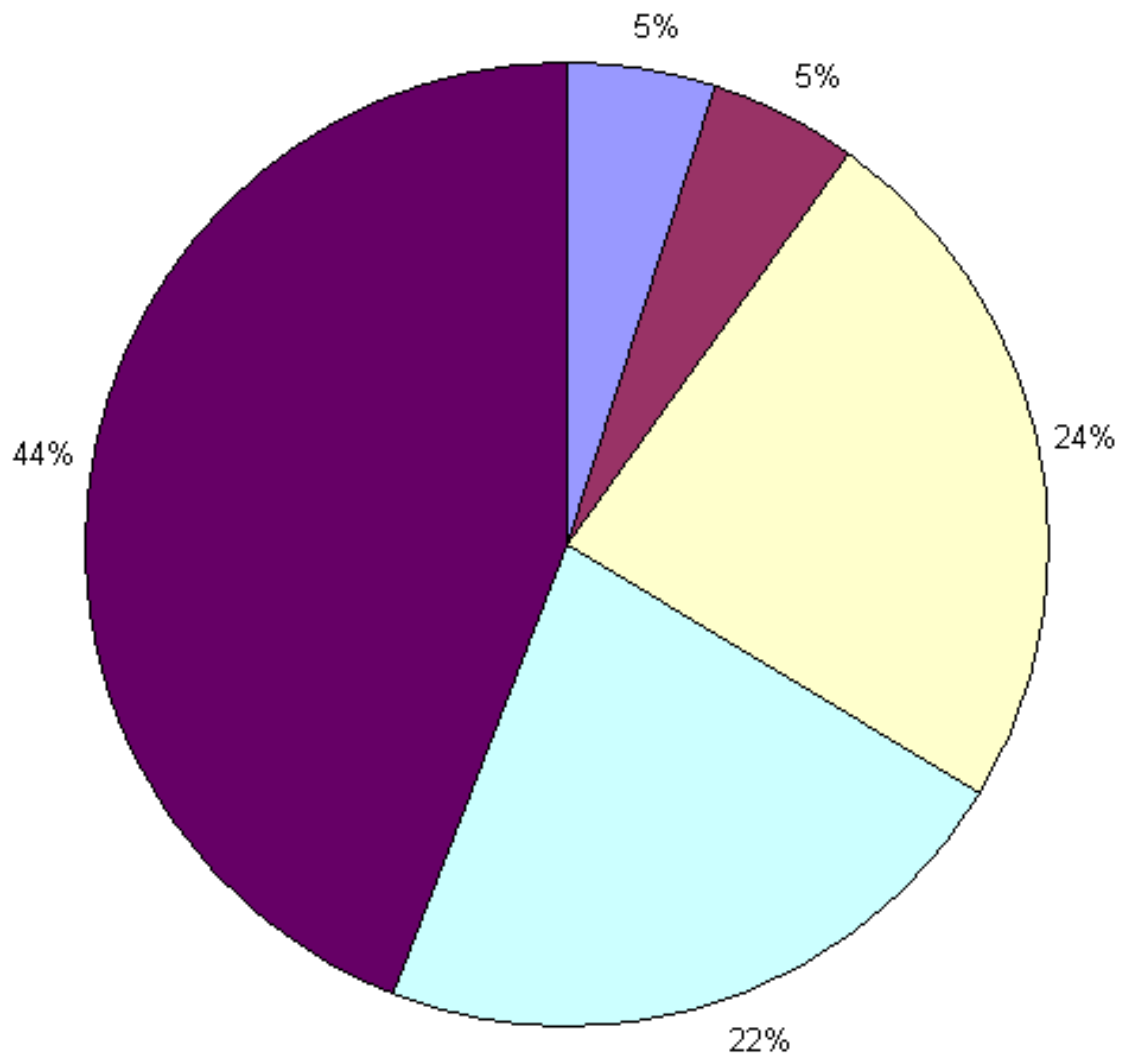




Lets visit my neighborhood

- Atlantic Highlands, NJ
- 600 EMS calls a year.
- Children and those under 18 represent roughly 10% of our customers.







What happens



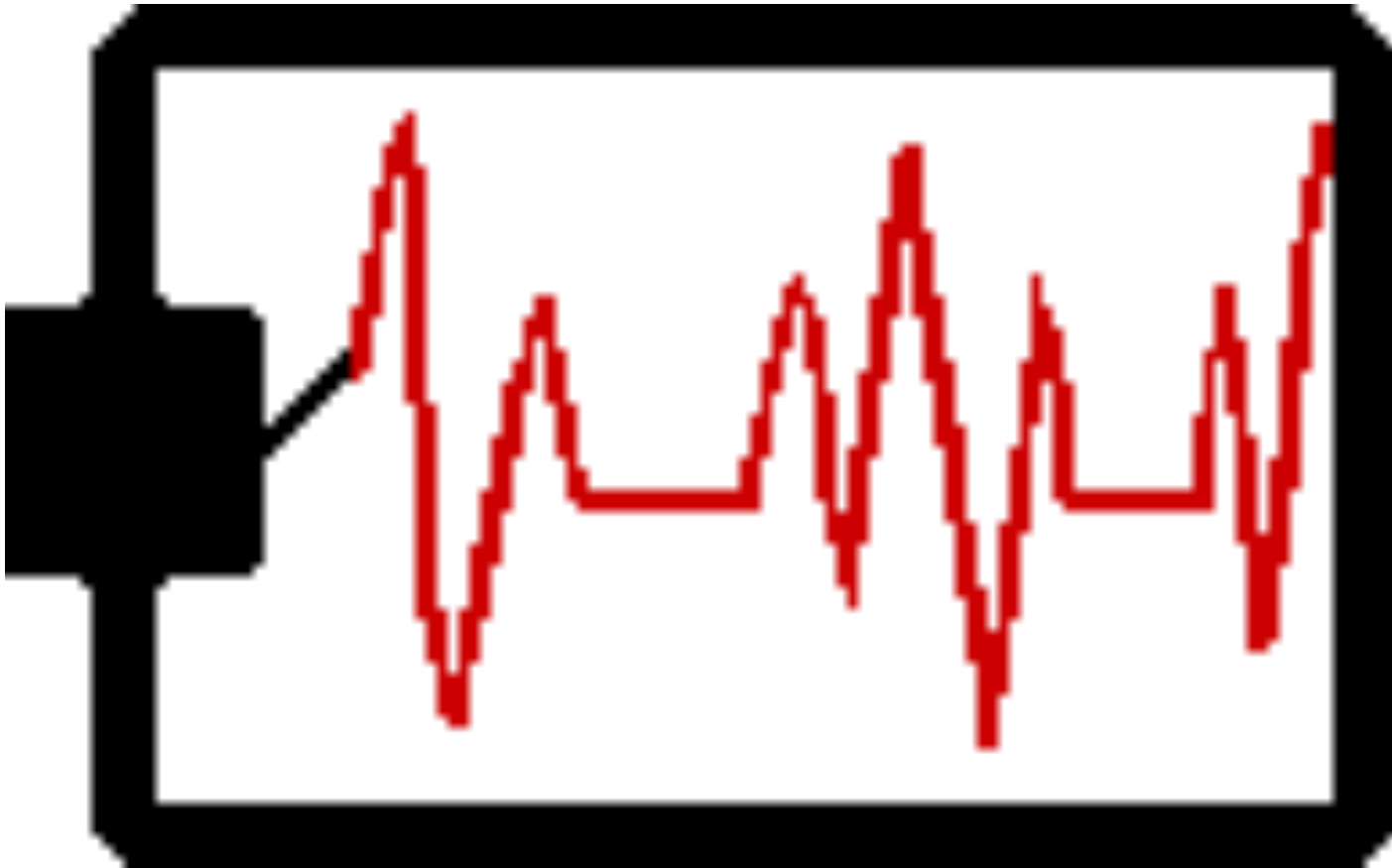
To this?

- Pager goes off....
- A four year old boy, difficulty breathing, in and out of consciousness.
- It's 10 p.m. on a weeknight.
- What happens on your squad?

To this?

- Pager goes off...
- An 83-year-old woman, difficulty breathing. Also complaining of abdominal pains.
- It's 10 p.m. on a weeknight.
- What happens at your squad?

+ Question.....



What we tend to do...

- We panic.
- We run in.
- The parents panic.
- We look at the kid like it's an alien.
- We panic a little more.





What does that do?





Why do we react so?

- We have kids?
- We're afraid?
- Kid calls are exciting?
- We want to be heroes?



+ Could it be...





What we're taught in school





Real sick or not so sick?





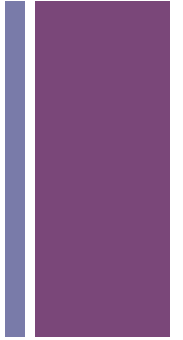
Using the triangle



- Quick assessment without touching the patient.
- Airway and Appearance: How is the child's airway? Crying or not. How are they reacting to parents?
- Breathing: How's that going? Are they struggling?
- Circulation to the skin: How's their color?



Levels of conversation





Tools





What's wrong with the PAT?

Puts focus only on kids

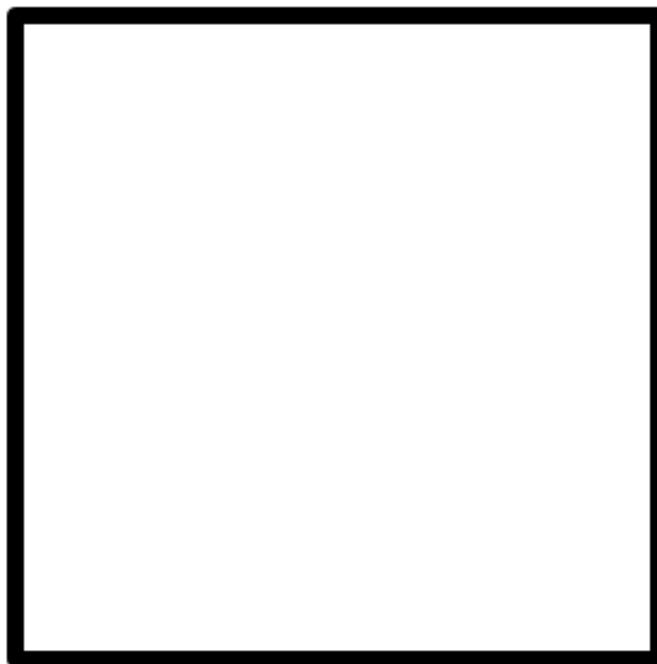
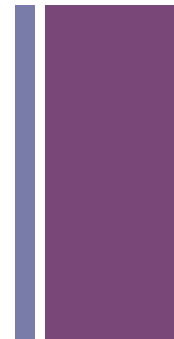


We should also look at parents





Make the triangle a square





Make the parents one side of the square



+ Bedside manner?

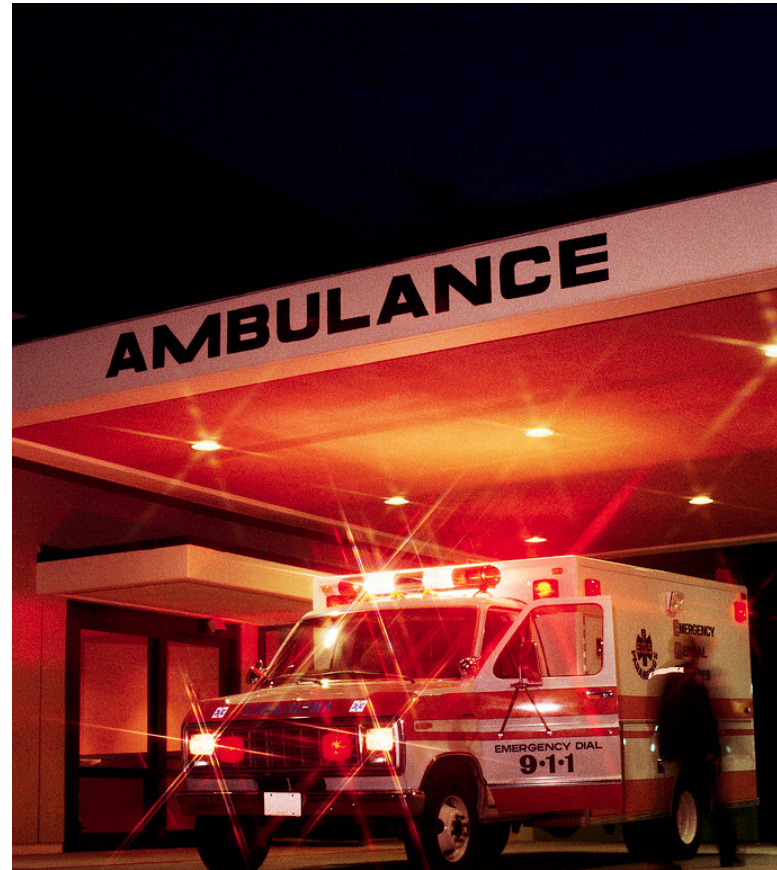
- How often do you work on people skills?
- Critique a member's bedside manner?
- Members with attitude?





Become a human

■ Technical
vs.
compassion



A plan of attack

- *Stop, take a deep breath and think.*



+ What did we learn in EMT class?

■ Scene size up!



First order of business

- Look at yourself
- Slow down
- We set the tone
- We can lose control





Make it the pediatric square



- How is the parent doing?
- Think about that for a second....
- Can the parent help?
- Now think of calls that went bad....



Think like a parent





The scenarios

- Screaming parents
- Screaming kids





Parent's emotions?



- Frightened
- Angry
- Helpless
- Embarrassed
- Guilty



And then we walk in...





Have a game plan





Some of us are parents



- Use those parenting skills
- Understand helpless feeling
- Know the failures
- Assign technical and bedside teams

+ Make parents part of the team

- Stay calm
- Their knowledge versus ours
- Praise them
- Special needs
- Plain language





“Don’t tell me to calm down!”

- Telling anyone to calm down is harder than you think.
- Throw them a curve ball.





Don't scold the parents





Really

- Managing parent is as important as managing the kid.
- Simple, off topic questions, help when emotional.





More Tips



- Separate kid from parent if needed.
- Role of parent changes with age of kid.





More Tips

- Reassurance
- Acknowledge fears without saying you understand
- Skip dreaded “sweetheart” and “dear”
- Up not down



+ Added benefits?

- Less stress on us?
- Less stress on the system?
- Better treatment of patients?



+ The Kid, the Dad and the Dog

- How do you think the kid reacted to the bite?
- How do you think the parent reacted?



+ Start now!



- Talk about managing kid cases before they happen.
- Put together a training program.
- Reach out to local organizations for help in dealing with special populations.
- Urge everyone to slow down and take a few more seconds before getting on the ambulance.
- Get people talking after kid calls.

+ Questions?



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