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Advocating for kids with special needs

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Raising a child with special needs often involves endless medical appointments, therapies and hospital visits. It can be exhausting and overwhelming for everyone involved. Often these excessive visits can scar the child, making them less willing to participate and more fearful of the experience. I should know— I have had all of these challenges with son as he navigates countless specialists, therapies, and surgeries. In my talk, I share my personal experience as a mom of a child of special needs, as well as insights and advice from healthcare professionals,

therapists and other parents on how to minimize the stress for these kids. It is often the small changes that have the biggest impact. Taking the time to explain the procedure in simple ways to the child. Making sure appointments (when possible) are booked for times that work for the child (some children function better early in the morning, others in the afternoon). Letting the child have some input and choices, instead of always being told what to do and expected to comply (which, let's face it, rarely happens or happens at a cost of a child is fearful of the next medical encounter). I also help medical professionals understand your one procedure or appointment is not the only time this child

is visiting the doctor. You are one of many (sometimes in a week). Understanding how to minimize the stress will not only help you but also other healthcare professionals. This session will include helpful tips for healthcare professionals and parents. I will share some real-life examples of excellent medical experiences and not so positive ones. Highlighting how spending an extra few minutes preparing and working with the child, ultimately saves everyone involved time, frustration and the healthcare system money. I speak from practical experience, as well as the knowledge I gained while researching my book and continuing to work as a patient advocate for families of kids with a special need.

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