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Introduction to Child Health Nursing

Child Health Nursing

Definition, concepts, scope, principles and objectives of pediatric nursing, role and responsibilities of a pediatric nurse, rights of children and family-centered care.

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CHAPTER 01 / CHILD HEALTH NURSING 01. Introduction to Child Health Nursing

1. Definition and scope

Child health nursing is the promotion of health, prevention of illness and care of newborns, infants, children and adolescents in the context of their development and family. It includes neonatal, acute and chronic care, community prevention, emergency care, disability support and palliation. Paediatric nursing is not simply adult care with smaller equipment: anatomy, physiology, communication, dependence and medication clearance change with age.

2. Principles and objectives

- Promote survival, growth, development and safety; prevent disease through nutrition, immunization and health education.
- Provide age-appropriate, atraumatic care that minimizes pain, fear and separation.
- Use family-centred partnerships: respect family expertise, share information and involve caregivers according to child and family preferences.
- Respect the child's evolving autonomy, assent, privacy and best interests, with legally appropriate consent and safeguarding.
- Use weight-based measurements, age-specific reference ranges and suitable equipment.

3. Rights and responsibilities

The UN Convention on the Rights of the Child emphasizes survival/development, protection, participation and non-discrimination. Nurses assess needs, advocate for child safety, monitor treatment, educate caregivers, identify neglect/abuse, coordinate referrals and document objectively. In India, safeguarding and reporting obligations must follow applicable law and institutional child protection pathways. Do not promise absolute secrecy to a child who discloses imminent harm; explain appropriate safety disclosure.

4. Child-friendly clinical care

Use play and concrete explanations for young children, choices within safe limits, caregiver presence where appropriate, and privacy for adolescents. Explain procedures honestly without promising no pain. Use distraction and analgesia, prepare equipment before approaching child, and evaluate comfort and response.

5. Important Examination Questions

Long Answer Questions

1. 1. Explain the scope and principles of child health nursing.

Short Answer Questions

1. 1. Describe family-centred care
2. 2. explain child rights and atraumatic care.

Very Short Answer Questions (with answers)

1. 1. What is assent? - A child's affirmative agreement when developmentally able, alongside legally required consent.
2. 2. Is a child a small adult clinically? - No.

6. Quick Revision

- Developmental stage shapes all care.
- Parents are partners, not substitutes for the child's voice.

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B.SC. NURSING / CHAPTER-WISE STUDY NOTES

- Safeguarding is a professional responsibility.

7. Conclusion

Developmental stage shapes all care. Parents are partners, not substitutes for the child's voice. Safeguarding is a professional responsibility.

Practice questions

Choose one best answer. The answer key and explanations follow the questions.

1. Which approach best demonstrates family-centred paediatric nursing?

A. Share information and involve caregivers according to child and family preferences
B. Ask caregivers to leave all decisions to staff
C. Use the same participation plan for every family
D. Obtain information only from the accompanying adult

2. A developmentally able child gives affirmative agreement to a procedure. What is this called?

A. Parental consent
B. Assent
C. Informed refusal
D. Proxy authorization

3. Which preparation is most appropriate for a young child facing a procedure?

A. Give an abstract account of physiology
B. Promise the procedure cannot hurt
C. Use play and concrete explanations

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D. Provide explanations only after completion

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Answer key and explanations

1. A - Share information and involve caregivers according to child and family preferences

Family-centred care respects family expertise and includes caregivers according to preferences.

2. B - Assent

Assent is the child's affirmative agreement alongside legally required consent.

3. C - Use play and concrete explanations

Concrete explanations and play match young children's developmental needs.

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