

CHALLENGE OF PAEDIATRIC NURSING

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PAEDIATRIC Nursing is a field of challenge to creative imagination and ingenuity in a nurse. There are situations which stretch her intellectual ability, Physical stamina, emotional stability and spiritual strength. To play her role successfully the nurse should have sound knowledge of the principles of Nursing, technical competence, keen sense of observation and exactitude of reflex-responses. An ideal paediatric nurse is a substitute mother, psychologist, philosopher, friend, guide and host embodying love, hope and compassion.

The goals of paediatric nursing is to foster growth and development and promote optimum state of health physically, mentally and socially for the child.

The nurse whose patient is an infant or child should remember that he is growing and developing physically, mentally and emotionally. She has a responsibility not only to provide for his clinical nursing needs but also see that his growth and development progress as well under the circumstances of illness. She should also help parents to understand and provide for their child's present and future needs. The value of family centered continuity of care must not be forgotten.

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Paediatric nursing is distinguished from adult nursing from the facts that.

- (a) Babies are not little adults, physically, physiologically or emotionally. The ways in which their needs are expressed their ability to cope with them and their response to illness are quite different because of these, differing responses may be anticipated.
- (b) Various responses of the child are influenced by the phase of growth. Illness is a traumatic experience, illness occurring at a specific phase of developmental cycle of a child may affect the personality. The nurse therefore can minimize psychological trauma by helping the child to adjust rather than repress his feelings.
- (c) The differences in the Cardio-pulmonary, urinary and central nervous system functions, i.e. Heart has to push blood around his body in an entirely new way because some of the blood vessels used after birth are different from the ones used before and his circulation is not efficient at first, while he has more need for nourishing blood especially his brain at this period requires extra blood for growth.

Breathing is also a problem because his lungs too may

take time to become fully accustomed to their new job.

His nourishment must be obtained by sucking instead of getting automatically from his mothers' blood. At first sucking also is difficult because the nerves and muscles are not properly co-ordinated. The kidneys and skin are still to acquire efficiency in the maintenance of water, electrolytes, acid-base balances and temperature.

In this situation it helps to bring him back often as nearly as possible to his prenatal condition. The nutritive needs, susceptibility to disease and effect of trauma or disease may affect nursing techniques and responsibilities.

- (d) The paediatric nurse must often cope with situations that differs from those considered normal in other services, paediatric nursing and general adult nursing embrace many common principles. She must discriminate and apply principles specific to the care of infants and children.

The above aspects calls for diverse talents in a nurse to diagnose nursing problem, identifying needs to plan and devise nursing intervention. She must be also aware of the factors influencing her role in the community health program for integrated child development.

The following components will require ingenuity, creative imagination besides the understanding of basic and technical nursing capabilities.

1. Development of a Philosophy of Child Care

This is essential to provide a frame work and develop objectives of child care and its evaluation. This requires a knowledge of Public documents expressing concern for child welfare and rights of children.

2. Meeting the Child's Needs

Patterns of child care is derived from ideas and beliefs of culture in which one lives. Traditional patterns often have little relevance to basic needs of the child. Nurses' beliefs, attitudes and feelings influence the methods of handling children therefore nurses must develop keen appreciation of human variability and understanding of need for individualization in child care. They must understand emotions, attitudes and behaviour of the child and be able to interpret.

Understanding normal child at different ages is basic to the understanding of sick child. The nurse is expected to play an important role in meeting physical, social, emotional and spiritual needs of a child. This is an area of great significance where the love for the child in a nurse is more important than all the technical competence put together. The Role as a substitute mother in destitute children cannot be played without an aptitude and real liking of children.

3. Awareness of Basic Concept of Mental health

To help develop an integrated personality in a child the nurse should appreciate the principles of mental health and its inter relatedness. The effect of play, toilet training, feeding habits and discipline in child care should be recognized.

The nurse should also have an understanding of the basic drives of individual and symptomatic behaviour to recognize the underlying problems of mental ill health.

4. Hospital Admission

To help reduce psychological trauma, of hospitalization and adjustment, the nurse must know and appreciate the importance of skillful procedure and unprejudiced attitude in admitting the child to hospital.

5. Outlining Plan for Care of Child

A plan provides for continuity and evaluation of nursing care. Plan should determine the needs and decide the skills, concepts and behaviour of the nurse and define the role of nursing in community health service for the child.

Using previous experience in recognizing degree of health and disease, community factors affecting the individual and family as a unit and adopt nursing care child according to age experience, degree of illness, specific type of illness etc.

6. Safety Program as it Affects the Child

The nurse is obliged to help prevent accidents among chil-

dren, the price of negligence may be high statistical facts regarding accidents among children, and research in prevention of accidents helps to adopt measures for accident prevention.

The pre-operative post-operative and special therapy nursing and premature children nursing areas require expert handling of equipments, observation skills, adequate safety precautions and giving emotional support to the child and parents.

7. Rehabilitation

The nurse must appreciate the importance of working together, growth through illness and understand the factors in prolonged illness—The process and function of rehabilitation must be understood and the child assisted to achieve good health to the limit of his capacity.

Integrated child care is a team work. The success depends upon the team spirit. The quality of the contribution of the nurse as a team member depends upon her due recognition and appreciation of her role and her willingness to take responsibility besides her temperamental and technical qualities. The focus is on the nurse as a person who has to be cool yet competent amidst increasing complexity of Problems and tension charged situation to overpower the challenge.

(See page 115 for Bibliography)