

Age Specific Communication Techniques

Why Important?

Health care workers provide care for all age groups. It is important to understand the emotional and physical stages of the life continuum. This knowledge assists you in recognizing normal and abnormal development and behavior. This awareness of life's stages allows you to be an effective health care worker

6 Weeks Old

- Typical Behaviors
 - Baby first begins to smile
- Age specific communication Techniques
 - Answer to their needs (crys)
- Communication during medical care
 - When possible hold, cuddle, and softly speak to the infant



10 Weeks

- Typical Behaviors
 - Infant has the ability to roll from a prone to a supine position
- Age specific communication Techniques
 - Hold, cuddle, and softly speak frequently to infant
- Communication during medical care
 - Comfort infant by speaking in a soothing tone and touch them gently to communicate your presence. Be reassuring!

4-6 months

Postnatal
Months 4-6

- Typical Behaviors
 - Infant raises head and shoulders while in supine position
- Age specific communication Techniques
 - Talking to infants helps them to recognize sounds and make associations. It is helpful to talk slowly and clearly. Sudden strange noises cause fear and startle reaction
- Communication during medical care
 - Same as 10 weeks
 - Watching for rolling while completing an examine

6-8 Months

A baby is crawling on all fours, looking directly at the camera. The baby is wearing a light-colored, short-sleeved shirt. The background is a plain, light color.

- Typical Behaviors
 - Infant sits without being supported; when placed on abdomen infant will scoot. Eye color may change
- Age specific communication Techniques
 - Distract or move infant when they are headed for trouble
- Communication during medical care
 - When possible perform procedures quickly and efficiently to minimize time the infant is exposed to discomfort. Allow mom or other family members to be present when possible

8-11 Months

- Typical Behaviors
 - Attempts to feed self and begins to crawl, stand, and take steps. As infant becomes a toddler expect frequent falls
- Age specific communication Techniques
 - Use simple terms to warn:
 - HOT!
 - Hurt!
 - Tastes Bad! *yuck*
- Communication during medical care
 - Same as 6-8 months
 - Use simple sentences in a soft voice when talking

1 Year old

- Typical Behaviors
 - Understands simple conversations or commands
- Age specific communication Techniques
 - Speak clearly and slowly using simple words. Don't use baby talk!
 - Resist saying NO
- Communication during medical care
 - Speak in a calming voice tone. Allow for family to be available when possible

18 Months-8 years old

- **Typical Behaviors**
 - Walks alone
 - Potty training
 - Eye and body coordination improves
 - Begins to feel guilt and shame
 - Physical skills improve
- **Age specific communication Techniques**
 - Frequent reassurance
 - Truthful and caring conversations
 - Keep discussions short and easy to understand
 - Positive acceptance is important
- **Communication during medical care**
 - Refer to child by name
 - Use same terms parents use
 - Explain in simple terms what is happening
 - When possible play with child
 - Follow all techniques from earlier ages





9-12 Years Old

- Typical Behaviors
 - Adult sexual characteristics become noticeable
 - Preteens look to friends for approval
- Age specific communication Techniques
 - Give them a chance to express themselves
 - Use positive responses to indicate that you hear what they are saying
 - Explain clearly the difference between acceptable and non acceptable
- Communication during medical care
 - Offer to show them what will be done prior to procedure
 - Tell children what to expect in terms of development
 - Explain importance of asking questions

13-20 years old

- Typical Behaviors
 - Strive for independence
 - Dramatic sexual development
- Age specific communication Techniques
 - Need others to listen and reflect words back
 - Respect privacy
 - Question behavior only when pertinent to health
- Communication during medical care
 - Same as 9-12 years old
 - Tell them to get assistance when needed

20-60 Years old

- Typical Behaviors
 - Evaluate life
 - Feel confined
 - Patterns of living are set
- Age specific communication Techniques
 - Show positive interest in what they are saying
 - Interpret body language
 - Protect privacy
- Communication during medical care
 - Be aware of impact of medical procedures
 - Be sensitive to fears
 - Your behavior must communicate respect
 - Know when silence is preferred



60 and older



- Typical Behaviors
 - Continue daily life in the same adult patterns
 - Retirement
 - Completing life long projects
- Age specific communication Techniques
 - Listen and share stories
 - Promote good listening- example go to a quiet area
- Communication during medical care
 - When appropriate and possible show medical procedure prior
 - Tell what to expect in terms of how they will feel
 - When possible allow significant other to stay with them