

Population Specific Care - Infant, Pediatric, and Adolescent

Lesson 1: Objectives

At the completion of this course, you will be able to:

Describe the stages of growth and development for neonates, infants, toddlers, preschoolers, school-aged children, and adolescents and use this information to provide population specific care.

Introduction

As a healthcare provider you must give care that is appropriate for the population in which you serve. To do this, you must be aware of the stages of growth and development and have the knowledge, abilities, and skills needed to assess, plan, and evaluate care.

Age-specific groups have been created to provide practice guidelines for giving care to individuals across the lifespan. These guidelines assist in care planning, discharge planning and education. Be advised, however, that the growth and development of a person can be different than others in their age group. In addition, literature varies regarding where each age group begins and ends.

Lesson 2: Infants - School Age

As you care for an individual you should determine their physical, physiological, cognitive and psychosocial state, in addition to their moral and spiritual needs.

Neonates and Infants

The neonatal stage extends from birth to 28 days old. A neonate's behavior is mostly reflexive.

The infant stage extends from 1 month to 1 year of age. The physical growth of an infant is rapid. They respond to sounds and will coo, babble, laugh, vocalize, and imitate sounds. They depend on others for their needs and develop a sense of trust when these needs are met. Crying is the infant's reaction to stress and the main way in which they communicate as they gradually learn to tolerate stress. Infants have no understanding of waiting.

Toddlers

The toddler stage extends from 1 to 3 years of age. During this stage there is an increase in motor development and psychosocial skills. For example, by 3 years of age a toddler can express likes and dislikes, display curiosity and ask questions, understand words such as up, down, cold, hungry, and speak in sentences of three to four words. Toddlers also begin to develop a sense of independence and assert themselves with the frequent use of the word "no." The toddler needs positive feedback so that they can develop a positive and healthy self-concept.

Preschoolers

The preschool stage extends from 3 to 6 years of age. During this stage the preschooler gains control of their body and displays an increase in coordination. The preschooler also emerges as a social being. By 5 years of age a preschooler can understand right from wrong, respond to others' expectations of behavior, use complete sentences, and cooperate in doing simple chores.

School Age

The school age stage extends from 6 to 12 years of age. This stage includes the preadolescent period from 10 to 12 years of age. By 12 years of age the school age child can articulate an understanding of right and wrong, express themselves in a logical manner, and talk through problems. The child begins to develop a sense of competence and perseverance. They are greatly influenced by their peers and may express the need for privacy. The skills learned during this stage are particularly important in relation to work later in life and willingness to try new tasks.

Lesson 3: Care Guidelines: Infants - School Age

When caring for a neonate, infant, toddler, preschooler or school age child you should:

- Involve the parent(s) or other guardians in his/her care;
- Prepare him/her for interventions and procedures using simple, short, direct and concrete explanations;
- Identify normal and abnormal assessment data and modify care as needed;
- Modify diagnostic and therapeutic interventions as needed;
- Use appropriate equipment;
- Approach him/her in a non-threatening manner and allow the presence of familiar objects for comfort;
- Provide opportunities to participate in decision making and care as appropriate; and
- Use rewards and praise when appropriate.

Lesson 4: Adolescents

The adolescence stage extends from 12 to 20 years of age. During this stage physical growth accelerates and the adolescent begins to establish a sense of identity. Peer groups provide the adolescent with a sense of belonging, pride and social learning. Stress increases during this stage as the adolescent starts planning for the future. The leading causes of adolescent death are motor vehicle accidents, homicide and suicide.

Lesson 5: Care Guidelines: Adolescents

When caring for an adolescent you should:

- Allow for participation in care and decision making;
- Prepare him/her for interventions and procedures using understandable explanations;
- Identify normal and abnormal assessment data and modify care as needed;
- Modify diagnostic and therapeutic interventions as needed;
- Use appropriate equipment;

Evaluate the adolescent's coping behaviors and assist in the development as needed;
Provide opportunities for interaction with peers;
Provide for privacy and respect modesty; and
Assess educational needs and provide appropriate referrals and resources.

Lesson 6: Conclusion

Following these guidelines will help you provide the best care possible. If you have any questions regarding population specific care, contact the appropriate personnel within your organization.