Improving Care for Children With Developmental Disabilities

Paula Essig, BSN, RN, BC
Pediatric Surgery
Providence St. Vincent Medical Center, Portland, Oregon

Purpose

Purpose: The purpose of the staff education on working with autistic and developmentally delayed children is to improve patient care by increasing staff knowledge and confidence when caring for this population.

Background

Background: In the Gerry Frank Center Pediatric Surgery there have been several incidents of staff members being hurt when caring for developmentally delayed children. There are communication techniques shown to prevent and manage challenging behaviors (Johnson et al., 2012). The adult’s reaction to the rumbling of a child, a sign increased anxiety, directly impacts the progression to rage in the child with ASD (Nora et al., 2012). Staff members were verbalizing their concerns and decreased confidence when caring for these children.

Assessment

Assessment: When asked in a survey, 20 of 25 pediatric staff RN’s strongly agreed and the remaining 5 agreed that they could benefit from an educational training regarding the care of developmentally delayed children. In working with my Nurse Educators, Child Life Specialist and Nurse Manager it was decided that it would be beneficial to educate the pediatric nurses regarding caring for the developmentally delayed child.

Goals

To improve staff knowledge when caring for developmentally delayed children regarding: what important questions can be asked when first caring for the child, how parents can help prepare the child before procedures, how the staff can prepare them for procedures, what toys to offer them, how to prevent challenging behaviors, recognition of escalating behavior and what to do during challenging behaviors.

Intervention

Staff education provided via educational presentation by CLS in June 2015 to pediatric nursing staff.

Evaluation

According to the Post Education Survey: The majority of staff agreed and strongly agreed that the education met the above goals and improved their ability to provide excellent patient care to these children.

Next Step

More in depth education on this topic, sharing of information (case studies), mentoring from Child Life Specialist and debriefing to help staff become more competent.

References


The author would like to acknowledge the assistance of Mandy Lesher BSN RN CPN and Rachel Neill BSN RN CCRN