
The Role of Nurses in Conducting Pediatric Health Screenings

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Abstract:

Nurses play a crucial role in conducting pediatric health screenings, acting as the frontline caregivers who facilitate early detection of health issues in children. They are responsible for assessing growth and development, performing physical examinations, and conducting routine screenings for conditions such as vision and hearing impairments, obesity, and developmental delays. By utilizing standardized protocols and evidence-based practices, nurses ensure that screenings are comprehensive and tailored to the specific needs of each child. Their training allows them to recognize early signs of potential health concerns, enabling timely interventions and referrals to specialists when necessary. Furthermore, nurses provide education and support to families, helping them understand the importance of regular health screenings and promoting healthy lifestyle choices. They often collaborate with pediatricians, nutritionists, and other healthcare professionals to create a holistic care approach that addresses not just the physical, but also the emotional and social well-being of children. Through effective communication, nurses build trust with patients and their families, fostering an environment where children feel comfortable discussing their health concerns. This supportive role is essential in promoting a culture of health awareness, leading to better long-term health outcomes for the pediatric population.

Keywords: Nurses, pediatric health screenings, early detection, growth and development, physical examinations, vision screening, hearing impairments, obesity, developmental delays, education, family support, healthcare collaboration, long-term health outcomes.

Introduction:

Health screenings during childhood are critical to ensuring that children develop optimally, receive timely interventions, and experience enhanced health outcomes. Nurses have emerged as pivotal figures in the health care continuum, especially in pediatric settings where their expertise is instrumental in conducting health screenings tailored to the unique physical, emotional, and social needs of children. As the nexus of patient care and health promotion, nurses engage in a multifaceted role that encompasses assessment, education,

collaboration, and advocacy for families and children alike [1].

In a rapidly evolving healthcare landscape characterized by increasing demands for preventive health measures and the management of chronic conditions, the involvement of nurses in pediatric health screenings has become all the more essential. With the prevalence of childhood obesity, mental health disorders, developmental disabilities, and chronic illnesses on the rise, the timely identification and management of health issues through comprehensive screening processes can profoundly

influence a child's future well-being. Furthermore, nursing professionals are uniquely qualified to navigate the intricate dynamics of family-centered care, which is pivotal in pediatric health settings. Their training equips them with the skills necessary to communicate effectively with both children and their families while fostering a supportive environment conducive to health education and engagement [2].

Nursing practice in pediatric health screenings is guided by a framework of evidence-based guidelines and protocols designed to ensure the reliability and validity of health assessments. These screenings not only encompass physical measurements, such as height, weight, and vision assessments, but also involve developmental screenings, mental health evaluations, and assessments of social determinants of health. Nurses play a critical role in integrating these diverse aspects to form a holistic view of a child's health, addressing both immediate health needs and broader behavioral or environmental challenges that may impact well-being [3].

Moreover, nurses serve as educators, empowering parents and guardians with the knowledge necessary to understand the screening process and the importance of regular check-ups. They provide insights into developmental milestones, preventative care practices, and strategies that promote healthy lifestyles, thereby facilitating a more comprehensive understanding of each child's unique health journey. This educational aspect of nursing practice ensures that families are actively engaged, thereby increasing the likelihood of adherence to health recommendations and follow-up care [4].

Collaboration is another integral aspect of the nursing role in pediatric health screenings. Nurses routinely work alongside physicians, nutritionists, social workers, and other healthcare professionals to coordinate care that addresses both clinical and psychosocial needs. This interdisciplinary approach enhances the ability to recognize complex health issues early, ensuring that children receive appropriate referrals and interventions when necessary. By fostering effective communication and collaboration among various stakeholders, nurses can contribute significantly to the

establishment of more cohesive and responsive health care systems [5].

Despite the critical contributions nurses make to pediatric health screenings, challenges remain. Insufficient staffing, time constraints, and varied levels of training can inhibit the comprehensive execution of health screenings. Additionally, disparities in access to healthcare services, particularly in underserved populations, underscore the need for targeted efforts to enhance screening availability and quality. Addressing these challenges necessitates a commitment to promoting the role of nurses through ongoing education, policy advocacy, and resource allocation that underscores the importance of their contributions to pediatric health [6].

Nursing Responsibilities in Pediatric Screenings:

Pediatric screenings are integral to the holistic assessment of child health and development. These screenings allow for the early detection of potential health issues, ensuring timely intervention and optimal outcomes. Nurses play a pivotal role in these screenings, executing a mix of clinical, educational, and supportive responsibilities. Understanding the multi-faceted nature of nursing responsibilities in pediatric screenings is crucial for healthcare providers, parents, and the community at large [7].

Before the actual screening occurs, nurses prepare by ensuring that all necessary materials, equipment, and protocols are in place. This may involve calibrating instruments and reviewing the screening guidelines pertinent to the specific age group and developmental stage. Nurses also play a key role in gathering comprehensive medical histories, which includes current health status, immunization records, family health histories, and any prior concerns raised by parents or caregivers. This preparatory phase is crucial, as it sets the baseline for individualized care and helps identify children at risk for developmental delays or health issues [8].

During the assessment, nurses perform a range of screenings that evaluate physical, developmental, emotional, and social health. They may utilize standardized tools such as the Ages and Stages Questionnaires or other age-appropriate assessments for evaluating developmental milestones. This assessment is not only based on the clinical data but also considers the behavioral nuances of each child.

For instance, engaging with the child to assess their communication skills or fine motor abilities requires a unique blend of clinical expertise and interpersonal skills. Furthermore, nurses need to observe for any signs of distress or anxiety during the assessment process, modifying their approach accordingly [9].

Effective communication is essential for nurses involved in pediatric screenings, as it greatly influences the screening experience for both children and their families. Nurses must establish a rapport with the child to lessen fears associated with medical assessments. Techniques such as using child-friendly language, incorporating play, or storytelling can help create a comfortable atmosphere, facilitating a smoother evaluation process. Moreover, active listening skills are vital to understanding the concerns of parents or guardians, who may provide critical information about the child's behavior or development [10].

In addition to direct communication with the child, nurses must also communicate pertinent findings to parents and caregivers comprehensively and compassionately. This includes explaining the significance of the screening results, potential interventions, and follow-up actions in clear, non-technical terms. Nurses should also be prepared to address any questions or concerns that parents may have, ensuring that they feel informed and supported throughout the process [11].

Education is a cornerstone of nursing responsibilities in pediatric screenings. Once screenings are completed, nurses are responsible for educating families about developmental milestones, health behaviors, and preventive care strategies appropriate for their child's age and stage. This may include discussions on nutrition, physical activity, sleep hygiene, and social engagement. Providing families with resources related to these topics empowers them to facilitate their child's development and health beyond the clinic setting [12].

Furthermore, nurses inform parents about the importance of routine screenings and regular check-ups, establishing the principle of continuity in healthcare. They may also provide families with information about community resources, programs, or specialists to further address any specific needs or concerns identified during the screening [12].

After screenings, the responsibility of nurses extends into follow-up care. Identifying health issues during screenings often necessitates additional assessments, referrals, or interventions. Nurses coordinate these steps effectively, ensuring that families understand the importance of complying with referrals to specialists or other healthcare providers. This requires organization, as well as building relationships with local healthcare facilities, special education programs, and mental health services [12].

Monitoring the development of at-risk children is also a critical aspect of follow-up care. Nurses are often responsible for scheduling subsequent appointments, assessing the efficacy of interventions, and adjusting care plans as needed in collaboration with other healthcare professionals. Documentation plays a key role during this follow-up phase. Nurses must accurately record screening results, referrals made, and interventions initiated, which contributes to the ongoing healthcare management of the child [13].

Finally, nurses in pediatric screenings serve as advocates for both the children they assess and the families they support. They must be vigilant in identifying social determinants of health that may affect a child's development, including poverty, access to care, and educational resources. By recognizing these factors, nurses can advocate for necessary resources or interventions, which may involve collaborating with social service agencies or policy initiatives aimed at improving child health outcomes [13].

Additionally, advocacy extends to public education about the importance of pediatric screenings. Many parents may be unaware of the significance of regular health assessments and developmental screenings. Nurses can lead workshops, community health fairs, or informational sessions that highlight the role of screenings in enhancing child health. Through such efforts, nurses enhance community awareness and promote a culture of proactive health management.

Screening Protocols and Guidelines:

Children experience rapid and multifaceted development during their early years, making early detection of potential health issues crucial for their long-term well-being. Screening protocols and

guidelines for children serve as systematic approaches that aim to identify health problems, developmental delays, and psychological issues that may not yet be apparent but could impact a child's overall growth. These protocols are designed to ensure that children receive timely interventions, thereby maximizing their potential for healthy development [14].

Rationale for Screening

The rationale underpinning the need for screening protocols in children is rooted in the understanding that early detection can lead to early intervention. Various studies have shown that many developmental disorders, including autism, attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD), and learning disabilities, are more effectively addressed when identified early in a child's life. The primary goal of these screenings is to identify at-risk children before they enter the educational system, ensuring that they are provided with the necessary resources and support that promotes healthy growth and learning.

Moreover, screening activities can help in assessing a child's physical health, including vision, hearing, and general wellness. By implementing structured screening protocols, healthcare providers can catch potential health problems before they develop into more severe conditions requiring complicated treatments [14].

Types of Screenings

Screening protocols for children can be categorized into several domains:

1. **Developmental Screening:** This assessment evaluates a child's development in key areas, including motor skills, language, cognitive abilities, and social-emotional development. The American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) recommends developmental screening at specific ages—usually at 9, 18, and 30 months [15].
2. **Hearing and Vision Screening:** These screenings are essential for identifying sensory impairments that can significantly affect a child's learning and social interaction. The AAP recommends newborn hearing screening, with additional evaluations at certain developmental

milestones if concerns arise. Vision screenings are typically conducted at well-child visits, as undetected vision problems can impede development [16].

3. **Physical Health Screening:** Regular assessments that include monitoring height, weight, BMI, blood pressure, and other physical health indicators are critical. These screenings help identify health problems such as obesity, hypertension, or other medical concerns that could impact a child's overall health [17].
4. **Psychosocial Screening:** Children may also be screened for behavioral and emotional health. The AAP recommends conducting screenings for depression, anxiety, and other psychosocial issues, particularly during adolescent visits, recognizing that mental health is as essential as physical health in children and adolescents [18].
5. **Lead Screening:** In areas where lead exposure is a concern, children may be tested for lead levels in their blood. This is particularly relevant for those living in older homes or in high-risk environments [18].

Implementation of Screening Guidelines

The implementation of screening protocols often involves collaboration among healthcare providers, families, and educational systems to ensure that children receive comprehensive and timely evaluations. Healthcare providers are responsible for conducting the screenings during well-child visits and interpreting the results in the context of the child's development [19].

The guidelines established by organizations such as the AAP and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) provide a framework for effective and efficient screening. These guidelines specify the frequency of screenings, the developmental milestones to be assessed, and protocols for referrals to specialists when concerns arise [19].

Parents and caregivers are integral to this process. Their observations and insights about their child's behavior and development are vital. Family engagement in the screening process enhances the

effectiveness of the outcomes, as it encourages open communication between the family and healthcare providers. Educational institutions also play a pivotal role, as they can facilitate the necessary follow-ups and interventions once screening referrals are made.

Despite the apparent benefits of screening, several challenges exist that can hinder the successful implementation of screening protocols. One significant concern is the inconsistency often associated with follow-up care. Once a screening identifies a potential problem, ensuring that families receive appropriate referrals and that children receive the needed follow-up care can be complicated by various factors, including socioeconomic barriers, transportation difficulties, and limited access to healthcare services [19].

Moreover, there is the complexity of varying local health policies, which can lead to differences in screening practices and availability across regions. Some families may not fully understand the importance of screenings, potentially resulting in missed opportunities for early intervention. Cultural factors can also play a role, as variations in beliefs and perceptions regarding health and developmental needs may impact a family's willingness to engage in the screening process.

Healthcare providers, including pediatricians, nurses, and allied health professionals, are crucial to the success of screening protocols. Training and education on the importance of screenings, as well as continuous professional development, can enhance healthcare providers' ability to identify and address developmental issues effectively [20].

Families must be empowered with information about the screening process, guidelines, and the implications of screening results. Healthcare providers should foster an environment of trust and communication, enabling families to feel comfortable discussing any concerns about their child's development and health [21].

Assessment Tools and Techniques:

Health examinations for children are crucial for monitoring growth and development, identifying potential health issues, and ensuring that children are on track to achieve their developmental milestones. The evaluation of a child's health

involves a systematic approach that incorporates various tools and techniques designed to collect, analyze, and interpret health-related data.

Health examinations serve as an essential foundation for pediatric healthcare. They provide a structured opportunity for healthcare providers to assess a child's overall physical, emotional, and social well-being. Furthermore, these examinations help identify any abnormalities or risk factors that may require attention. Regular health checks can lead to early diagnosis and intervention, resulting in better health outcomes and improved quality of life for children. As such, the tools and techniques used during health examinations play a vital role in delivering effective healthcare [22].

Key Evaluation Tools

1. Growth Charts

Growth charts are among the most fundamental tools used in pediatric healthcare. They provide visual representations of a child's growth in comparison to standardized population data, encompassing metrics such as weight, height, and body mass index (BMI). The use of growth charts helps identify potential growth abnormalities, such as undernutrition or obesity, which are critical in determining a child's health status and recommending appropriate interventions [23].

2. Developmental Screening Tools

Developmental screening tools, such as the Ages and Stages Questionnaires (ASQ) or the Denver Developmental Screening Test (DDST), are used to assess a child's developmental progress. These standardized questionnaires and checklists evaluate various domains, including cognitive, motor, language, social, and emotional development. Implementing these tools assists pediatricians in detecting early signs of developmental delays, enabling timely referrals to specialists and customized interventions [23].

3. Parental and Caregiver Interviews

Engaging parents and caregivers in health examinations is crucial as they provide firsthand information about the child's health history, behaviors, and changes they may have noticed. Structured interviews with specific questions can yield valuable insights, enabling healthcare

providers to better understand a child's health context and any related concerns, such as sleep patterns, eating habits, and behavioral issues [24].

4. Vision and Hearing Screening

Vision and hearing screenings are integral components of pediatric evaluations as they can impact a child's learning and development. Tools like the Snellen chart for vision and pure tone audiometry for hearing help detect sensory deficits early. Identifying such problems ensures that children receive appropriate referrals for treatment or corrective measures, which is vital for their academic and social success [25].

5. Laboratory Tests

Laboratory tests can provide additional valuable information regarding a child's health. Common tests include blood work to evaluate anemia, lead levels, or cholesterol, and urinalysis for metabolic and kidney issues. The results of these tests can illuminate underlying health conditions that may not be readily apparent during a physical examination [26].

6. Immunization Records

Maintaining up-to-date immunization records is another crucial aspect of health examinations for children. Vaccinations protect against numerous preventable diseases and should be reviewed during health assessments. Healthcare providers utilize immunization registries and personal records to ensure that children are fully vaccinated, timely administering any overdue vaccines [26].

Evaluation Techniques

1. Physical Examination

Physical examinations form the backbone of health assessments. A thorough physical examination involves checking vital signs, assessing growth parameters, inspecting the child's body from head to toe, and examining specific systems (respiratory, cardiovascular, neurological, etc.). Each assessment provides significant information concerning various health dimensions, such as nutrition status, organ function, and possible systemic conditions [27].

2. Behavioral Assessment

Behavioral health is a significant component of pediatric evaluations, particularly since emotional

and behavioral disorders can affect a child's overall health. Techniques such as direct observations, standardized behavioral rating scales, and parent or teacher input can provide insights into a child's social functionality, adaptability, and emotional status. Problems identified during behavioral assessments can direct referrals to mental health professionals or therapeutic interventions [27].

3. Anthropometric Measurements

The use of anthropometric measurements, which includes assessing height, weight, head circumference, and skinfold thickness, allows healthcare providers to evaluate body composition and growth patterns. These measurements are critical for defining healthy ranges and recognizing potential issues such as obesity or malnutrition [28].

4. Screening Questionnaires

Screening questionnaires tailored to specific age groups can efficiently collect a wide array of health history and behavioral information. These tools typically cover topics such as nutrition, physical activity, and mental health and can facilitate a comprehensive understanding of a child's well-being, allowing providers to create a tailored health care plan [29].

5. Referral Pathways

After evaluation, referral pathways are essential for enhancing healthcare outcomes for children identified with specific health needs. Evaluation tools help healthcare providers determine when it is necessary to refer children to specialists, such as pediatricians, child psychologists, or early intervention programs [30].

Communication and Family Engagement:

Family communication plays a pivotal role in the health and well-being of children, particularly during health examinations. The relationship between healthcare providers and families is a cornerstone in fostering children's health outcomes [31].

Effective family communication is crucial for various reasons. First and foremost, it ensures that healthcare providers have access to comprehensive information regarding a child's medical history, symptoms, and behavioral patterns. Parents or guardians often serve as the first line of defense in

noticing changes in a child's health. Their insights can be integral for accurate diagnostics and effective treatment. Therefore, a clinician's ability to engage in an open dialogue with the child and their family can lead to more informed health decisions.

Moreover, family communication reinforces the educational aspect of health examinations. Parents usually play a central role in shaping a child's understanding of health matters. Through conversations with healthcare providers, parents can better grasp medical terminologies and contextualize health practices. This knowledge is crucial for instilling healthy behaviors in children and promoting adherence to treatment plans or preventive measures recommended by healthcare professionals [31].

Benefits of Family Participation in Health Examinations

1. **Holistic Care:** Family involvement offers a more holistic view of a child's overall well-being. When families participate in health examinations, they can provide providers with insights that may not be immediately visible during a clinical assessment. For example, information about the child's living conditions, emotional state, and dietary habits can contribute to a comprehensive health assessment [32].
2. **Improved Health Outcomes:** Research indicates that children who have involved family members during health examinations tend to have better health outcomes. Studies reveal that parental involvement in healthcare is correlated with higher vaccination rates, adherence to treatment regimes, and more positive responses to health interventions. Families that are engaged tend to be more vigilant about symptoms and follow medical advice more closely [32].
3. **Empowerment of Families:** Engaging families in health examinations empowers them and promotes a sense of responsibility towards their child's health. This empowerment fosters a collaborative environment where families feel more comfortable voicing their concerns and

preferences, ultimately leading to tailored healthcare solutions that meet the unique needs of the child.

4. **Building Trust and Rapport:** Open communication between families and healthcare providers fosters trust and rapport, pillars of effective healthcare. When families feel heard and respected, they are more likely to return for future health examinations and seek out further medical help when necessary [33].

Challenges to Effective Family Communication

Despite the benefits, several challenges impede effective family communication during children's health examinations.

1. **Time Constraints:** Busy schedules of both healthcare providers and families can lead to rushed examinations, affecting the quality of communication. When time is limited, critical health histories and concerns can go unaddressed, undermining the health outcomes of the examination [34].
2. **Cultural Differences:** Families come from diverse backgrounds with varied cultural norms and values impacting communication styles. Misunderstandings may arise if healthcare providers are unaware or insensitive to these cultural differences. This disconnect can lead to mistrust or reluctance to disclose important information.
3. **Parental Anxiety:** Parents may feel anxious about their child's health, leading to difficulty in communication. Anxiety can manifest as defensiveness or withdrawal, disrupting the flow of information that is crucial for accurate assessments [34].
4. **Language Barriers:** Language differences can create significant obstacles in communication, limiting the effectiveness of interviews and discussions. Families who are non-native speakers of the examination language may struggle to articulate their concerns, leading to miscommunication [34].

Strategies for Enhancing Family Communication

To mitigate challenges and improve family participation during children's health examinations, several strategies can be employed.

1. **Encouraging Open Dialogue:** Healthcare providers should aim to create an environment where families feel comfortable discussing their concerns and asking questions. Active listening is essential, as it signals to families that their input is valued. Providers can reinforce this by responding thoughtfully and avoiding medical jargon [34].
2. **Scheduling Adequate Time for Examinations:** Allocating sufficient time for health examinations allows for comprehensive discussions. This practice enables families to share their perspectives thoroughly, providing providers with essential insight into the child's health [35].
3. **Cultural Competence Training:** Healthcare professionals should undergo cultural competence training to better understand the diverse backgrounds of the families they serve. This training fosters sensitivity to cultural dynamics in communication and helps tailor interactions accordingly.
4. **Use of Translators and Multilingual Resources:** To overcome language barriers, healthcare facilities should provide access to translators and multilingual materials. This resource ensures that all families can communicate effectively with healthcare providers, regardless of linguistic background [35].
5. **Incorporating Technology:** Modern technology can also aid family communication. Telehealth platforms can facilitate remote discussions and follow-up appointments. Moreover, patient portals can provide families with easier access to their child's health information, empowering them to engage actively in the health examination process [35].

Interprofessional Collaboration in Pediatric Care:

As healthcare systems evolve to meet the complex needs of populations, the notion of interprofessional collaboration (IPC) has gained significant traction, especially within pediatric care. This collaborative approach to healthcare delivery encompasses diverse professionals such as pediatricians, nurse practitioners, social workers, psychologists, and therapists, all of whom bring unique expertise to the table. Interprofessional collaboration is not merely a buzzword; it is a necessary paradigm shift that promotes holistic, patient-centered care, enhances communication, and ensures that children receive comprehensive, high-quality healthcare services [36].

The Importance of Interprofessional Collaboration

Pediatric patients often present with a spectrum of medical and psychosocial needs that cannot be addressed adequately by a single provider or specialty alone. For instance, a child diagnosed with asthma may benefit not only from treatment by a pediatric pulmonologist but also from the insights of a nutritionist, a psychologist, and a respiratory therapist. This multifaceted approach is particularly crucial for children with chronic illnesses, disabilities, or complex psychosocial backgrounds [37].

At the core of interprofessional collaboration is the recognition that healthcare professionals must work together to ensure the best outcomes for pediatric patients. IPC encourages the establishment of a shared goal among team members, which aligns closely with the needs and preferences of the child and their family. By fostering a team-oriented environment, IPC enhances the quality of care delivered, reduces the possibility of medical errors, and minimizes the disjointed nature of healthcare that can adversely affect patient outcomes.

Benefits of Interprofessional Collaboration

The implementation of interprofessional collaboration in pediatric care offers a plethora of benefits, resulting in enhanced care delivery and improved patient outcomes [38].

1. **Improved Communication:** IPC fosters robust lines of communication between various healthcare providers. This open dialogue ensures all team members are on

the same page regarding patient observations, treatment plans, and necessary adjustments. Improved communication mitigates the risk of information gaps, which can lead to errors in treatment and care delivery [39].

2. **Comprehensive Care:** By harnessing the collective expertise of various healthcare professionals, children receive comprehensive care that addresses not only physical health but also emotional and social well-being. Holistic treatment plans encompass diverse aspects, including physical therapy, psychological support, and family education, which can significantly enhance the quality of life for pediatric patients.
3. **Increased Efficiency:** In an interprofessional collaborative model, healthcare teams can often streamline processes. This increased efficiency may lead to reduced patient wait times, quicker diagnosis, and more timely interventions. The sharing of responsibilities ensures that no single provider is overburdened, allowing for better allocation of resources and time [39].
4. **Enhanced Family Involvement:** An integral part of pediatric care is the involvement of family members. A collaborative environment encourages family members to actively participate in the care process, thus enhancing communication between all parties. When healthcare professionals work together, they can effectively engage families in decision-making, education, and support, empowering them to play a pivotal role in their child's health journey.
5. **Better Healthcare Outcomes:** Numerous studies have demonstrated that children treated in interprofessional settings often experience better health outcomes. By leveraging the collective knowledge and skills of the healthcare team, children are more likely to receive timely and appropriate interventions, which can lead to improved health trajectories [39].

Challenges of Interprofessional Collaboration

Despite the myriad benefits associated with interprofessional collaboration in pediatric care, several challenges persist that can impede its implementation.

1. **Professional Silos:** One of the primary barriers to effective IPC is the existence of entrenched professional silos. Each discipline often has its unique practices, terminologies, and cultures which can create barriers to collaboration. Overcoming these silos requires strategic efforts to foster mutual respect, understanding, and recognition of each professional's unique contributions [40].
2. **Communication Breakdowns:** Although IPC aims to enhance communication, miscommunication can still occur due to varying communication styles among professionals. This is frequently exacerbated by differences in training, backgrounds, and professional jargon that may alienate team members from different disciplines [41].
3. **Time Constraints:** In a fast-paced pediatric care environment, time constraints can detract from opportunities for collaboration. Healthcare professionals may find it challenging to coordinate schedules for team meetings or discussions about patient care, which can inhibit collaborative efforts.
4. **Lack of Institutional Support:** Successful IPC requires a culture that encourages teamwork and collaboration. In many healthcare settings, there may be insufficient institutional support for collaborative practice, such as training programs, shared spaces for team meetings, or mechanisms for team-based care [41].
5. **Resistance to Change:** Some professionals may be resistant to change, hesitant to adopt new collaborative practices, or unsure of their roles in an interprofessional team. Building a collaborative culture requires ongoing

training, education, and leadership support to bridge these gaps [42].

Best Practices for Successful Interprofessional Collaboration

To effectively harness the benefits of interprofessional collaboration in pediatric care, several best practices have been identified and should be adopted by healthcare teams:

1. **Team Building:** Constructing a strong foundation for collaboration begins with team-building activities that foster trust and understanding among team members. Engaging in joint training sessions or team exercises that emphasize communication and teamwork can promote camaraderie and synergism [43].
2. **Creating Collaborative Protocols:** Establishing clear and defined protocols for interprofessional collaboration can help guide team interactions and streamline care delivery. Protocols should outline roles, expectations, and communication strategies, ensuring clarity among team members.
3. **Incorporating Family Perspectives:** Actively engaging family members and incorporating their input into the care process not only enhances communication but also ensures that the care remains child-centered. Empowering families to provide feedback and participate in decision-making fosters a collaborative environment that benefits the child [43].
4. **Leveraging Technology:** The integration of technology, such as electronic health records (EHR) and telehealth platforms, can facilitate collaboration among team members. EHR systems that allow for shared access to patient information make it easier for multiple professionals to view treatment progress and maintain alignment on care plans.
5. **Continuous Education and Training:** Ongoing education and training programs focused on interprofessional collaboration can enhance team dynamics and improve skills. Professional development that

emphasizes collaboration and communication can help bridge gaps between disciplines and foster a culture of teamwork [43].

Barriers to Effective Screening and Solutions:

In the realm of pediatric healthcare, the examination of children is a multifaceted process that presents numerous challenges. These obstacles can stem from the inherent developmental differences in children, as well as environmental factors, healthcare system limitations, and the psychological aspects of pediatric care. Consequently, nurses play a crucial role in overcoming these challenges to ensure proper assessment and holistic care of young patients [44].

Common Obstacles to Examination

1. **Developmental Variability:** One of the primary challenges of examining children is their developmental variability. Infants, toddlers, and adolescents exhibit drastically different levels of communication, cognitive ability, and emotional responses. For younger children, ensuring accurate data collection can be particularly difficult as they may not articulate their symptoms effectively or may react with fear or anxiety to the examination process. This variability necessitates an adaptive approach that takes into consideration the developmental stage of the child [45].
2. **Fear and Anxiety:** Many children experience fear and anxiety during medical examinations, which can lead to resistance, distress, or even the potential for incomplete examinations. The sterile environment of a healthcare facility, coupled with unfamiliarity with healthcare providers, can exacerbate these feelings. This psychological barrier not only hinders the physical examination but can also affect the child's willingness to seek medical care in the future [45].
3. **Parental Influence:** Parents' attitudes and behaviors toward healthcare can significantly impact a child's examination experience. Overprotective or overly

anxious parents may inadvertently transmit their fears to the child, leading to increased anxiety and resistance during the examination. Conversely, parents who are dismissive of their child's symptoms or concerns may provide insufficient medical histories, further complicating the examination process.

4. **Time Constraints:** The pressure of managing a high patient load can lead to time constraints, limiting the thoroughness of pediatric examinations. Nurses and medical professionals may feel rushed to complete assessments, which can compromise the quality of care provided to children. As a result, vital information may not be gathered, leading to increased risk for misdiagnosis or delayed treatment [45].
5. **Communication Barriers:** Effective communication is pivotal in pediatric examinations. The ability to engage with children and elicit information requires skill and patience. For children with developmental delays, disabilities, or those who speak different languages, additional communication barriers must be navigated, which can complicate the examination process and affect the quality of care provided [46].

Effective Solutions

To overcome these obstacles, several effective strategies can be employed:

1. **Developmentally Appropriate Approaches:** Healthcare providers, especially nurses, can utilize developmentally appropriate approaches to examinations. This involves creating a child-friendly environment and using age-appropriate language and tools. For instance, using play therapy techniques or interactive engagement can help ease a child's anxiety and facilitate communication, making the examination more effective [47].
2. **Parental Involvement:** Educating and involving parents in the examination process can mitigate fears and promote

cooperation. By providing clear information about what to expect and how to support their child during the examination, healthcare providers can help reduce both parental and child anxiety. Encouraging parents to remain calm and reassuring during examinations reinforces a positive message about healthcare.

3. **Training and Education:** Ongoing training for nurses in pediatric care can enhance their ability to manage anxiety and resistance during examinations. Workshops that focus on communication skills, behavioral management, and child development can equip nurses with the necessary tools to conduct effective examinations. This specialized training empowers nurses to establish trust and rapport with young patients, leading to more successful assessments [47].
4. **Utilization of Technology:** Incorporating technology into pediatric examinations can streamline processes and enhance communication. Telemedicine services, for example, can allow parents to consult with healthcare professionals from home, potentially easing anxiety for both the child and the parents. Additionally, utilizing child-friendly digital tools during examinations can capture important health information while keeping children engaged [48].
5. **Comprehensive Assessment Protocols:** Developing and implementing comprehensive protocols for pediatric examinations can ensure that each child's unique needs are met without compromising the quality of care. Standardizing practices allows healthcare providers to systematically gather necessary information, even amidst time constraints. Protocols should be flexible enough to accommodate the varying developmental levels of children [49].

The Role of Nursing in Examining Children

Nurses occupy a unique and essential role in the pediatric healthcare setting, serving as the critical link between children, their families, and the

healthcare system. They are often the first point of contact in a clinical setting and play a crucial role in the examination process [50].

1. **Providers of Comfort and Ease:** Nurses are trained to create a welcoming and calming atmosphere conducive to effective examinations. By employing comforting gestures, active listening, and playful engagement, nurses can foster a sense of security for young patients. This comfort level can significantly reduce anxiety and facilitate more accurate examinations [51].
2. **Educators and Advocates:** Nurses in pediatric settings not only examine children but also educate families about health maintenance and disease prevention. They serve as advocates for children, ensuring that their voices are heard amid competing adult concerns. This advocacy is particularly crucial when addressing the emotional and psychological aspects of medical examinations [51].
3. **Bridging Communication Gaps:** Nurses are adept at interpreting non-verbal cues from children during examinations, facilitating communication between the child and the healthcare team. They can bridge the gap between children and parents, ensuring that pertinent information is shared and understood during the examination process. By fostering a collaborative environment, nurses enhance both communication and the quality of care [52].
4. **Facilitators of Comprehensive Care:** Through their holistic approach, nurses ensure that examinations evaluate not only physical health but also emotional and developmental well-being. They are trained to recognize potential signs of distress and intervene appropriately, advocating for further assessments when necessary.
5. **Role Models for Future Healthcare:** Finally, nurses model positive relationships with healthcare for young patients, encouraging them to view medical examinations as an integral part of

maintaining overall health. By building ongoing relationships with families, nurses contribute to a culture of trust in healthcare, potentially influencing children's willingness to engage in future medical care [52].

Impact of Pediatric Screenings on Health Outcomes:

Pediatric screenings are a crucial element of healthcare designed to assess the health of children and identify any potential health issues early in their development. These screenings are performed at various stages of a child's life, beginning shortly after birth and continuing through adolescence. The significance of these screenings lies in their potential to detect health concerns before they escalate into more serious problems, thus significantly impacting health outcomes throughout a child's life [53].

Pediatric screenings encompass a wide range of assessments, including physical examinations, developmental screenings, and specific tests for conditions such as vision and hearing impairments, metabolic disorders, and emotional health issues. These screenings are typically conducted at routine well-child visits and adhere to recommended schedules stipulated by healthcare organizations such as the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). Screening protocols are frequently updated based on emerging research and changing demographics, ensuring that early identification strategies remain relevant and effective [53].

One of the primary benefits of pediatric screenings is the early detection of potential health conditions. For example, newborn screening programs can identify metabolic disorders, such as phenylketonuria (PKU) and congenital hypothyroidism, through simple blood tests. Early diagnosis of these conditions enables timely interventions, which can prevent severe complications, including developmental delays, physical disabilities, and in certain cases, life-threatening crises [54].

Furthermore, developmental screenings can provide insights into a child's cognitive and emotional growth. Tools like the Ages and Stages Questionnaires (ASQ) help parents and healthcare providers detect developmental delays at an early

stage. Researchers have found that early intervention services, which may include speech therapy, physical therapy, or special education, can significantly improve long-term developmental outcomes for children with identified delays [54].

Pediatric screenings also play a vital role in promoting preventive care and encouraging healthy behaviors. Annual visits often include assessments of body mass index (BMI), dietary habits, and physical activity levels, allowing healthcare providers to identify children at risk for obesity and its associated health issues, such as diabetes and cardiovascular problems. By educating families on nutrition and exercise, healthcare providers can help instill healthy habits in children, thus contributing to better long-term health outcomes [55].

Additionally, screenings for mental health are becoming increasingly recognized for their importance. The early identification of mental health issues such as anxiety, depression, and behavioral problems can facilitate timely access to necessary supports and treatments. Given the rising rates of mental health disorders among children and adolescents, regular screenings can play a critical role in minimizing the impact of these conditions, promoting resilience, and ensuring that children are equipped with the coping strategies necessary for healthy development [56].

Pediatric screenings also have the potential to address health disparities within communities. Low-income families and underserved populations often face barriers to accessing healthcare, which can result in uneven health outcomes across different demographic groups. Implementing universal pediatric screening programs in community health centers and schools can facilitate access to care for marginalized populations. By identifying health issues at scale and providing necessary follow-up care, these programs can assist in reducing health disparities and improving overall community health [56].

Moreover, the data collected from pediatric screenings are invaluable for public health officials. Comprehensive screening programs yield essential insights into the prevalence of various health conditions among children, which can inform policy decisions and resource allocation. These data help in designing targeted interventions and campaigns,

particularly in areas where certain health issues are disproportionately affecting specific groups [57].

As technology continues to evolve, so too do the methods and approaches to pediatric screening. Digital health tools and telemedicine have expanded the reach and accessibility of health screenings. Online assessments and virtual consultations can provide families with the means to perform preliminary evaluations and receive medical advice without the barriers of travel and time constraints. Mobile health applications also allow parents to monitor their children's developmental milestones and maintain communication with healthcare providers, promoting a continuous dialogue regarding health [57].

Moreover, innovations in data analytics can enhance the effectiveness of screening programs. By analyzing large datasets, researchers can identify trends in pediatric health and assess the effectiveness of interventions. This approach not only strengthens the infrastructure of pediatric health systems but also fosters a culture of evidence-based practice, leading to improved health outcomes across multiple dimensions of care [58].

Despite the numerous benefits associated with pediatric screenings, there are challenges that must be addressed. Issues such as healthcare access, varying compliance rates among populations, and the potential for over-diagnosis must be navigated carefully. For instance, while screenings are vital for early detection, they must also be balanced against the possibility of unnecessary stress for families and children when false positives occur [59].

Furthermore, it is essential to ensure that screening programs are culturally competent and tailored to meet the needs of diverse populations. Engagement with community leaders and the inclusion of cultural considerations in screening protocols can enhance acceptance and participation in these programs, ultimately leading to better health outcomes [60].

Conclusion:

In conclusion, the role of nurses in conducting pediatric health screenings is vital to ensuring the early detection and intervention of health issues in children. Nurses not only perform essential assessments and screenings but also serve as advocates for children's health, providing education

and support to families about the importance of preventive care. Their expertise in using standardized protocols and tools enhances the reliability of screenings, while their ability to communicate effectively fosters trust and encourages family engagement in health management.

Moreover, nurses play a crucial role in interprofessional collaboration, working alongside pediatricians and other healthcare providers to create a comprehensive care plan that addresses the holistic needs of children. By identifying potential health concerns early on, nurses contribute significantly to improved health outcomes, setting the foundation for a healthier future for the pediatric population. Ultimately, enhancing the role of nurses in pediatric health screenings is essential for promoting health equity and optimizing care for all children.

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