

Child Development: Don't Delay The Play

Developing a poster to empower parents of long stay Paediatric patients

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What we heard from families...

- During our day to day work onto the children's wards we heard that parents/ carers of long stay patients felt disempowered when handling their children due to the medical environment.
- Concerns included: Were they allowed to pick their child up? Would they hurt them? Did the lines/ attachments mean they could not touch them etc. Parents would report concerns about attachment and bonding and be unsure how to support the child's development.

What we did...

- We developed an MDT poster to show key developmental positions and activities for parents/ carers to use as a reference.
- It is a universal intervention designed to be accessible to a wide range of families.
- Once the first draft was complete we took it to families on the wards for feedback and made changes accordingly.
- We have now printed 8 copies and installed them in family rooms and other places where parents/carers might spend downtime on the wards.

We used a GNCH foundation grant to commission bespoke images from a local artist. These demonstrate a range of activities with children who represent the medical and demographical diversity of the families on the wards.

The sections are ordered to represent the order in which developmental stages are ideally achieved.

We linked to another important project within paediatric therapy in order to raise the profile and provide important advice.

We used simple language to be accessible to a wide range of people. The pictures also provide a visual to support this.

We explained the key roles within the MDT and how we can each support play.

Child Development: Don't Delay The Play

Lying down
Use colourful, light-up or noisy toys for baby to look at and reach for.
Help baby bring their hands together to touch and feel.
Lying babies on their side gives them a different view.
Cuddling, massaging and giving kisses helps baby learn about their body.
Chatting, singing and making silly noises helps you get to know each other.

Tummy Time
Don't put baby on their tummy to sleep.
Cuddle baby on your chest and lean back so they are on their tummy.
Try a rolled up blanket under baby's chest.
Use a mirror to help baby lift their head and toys to help them reach.
Playing on hands and knees is a great way to work towards crawling.
Put toys just out of reach so they have to move to get them.

Sitting
Sit behind baby on the floor with toys in front to help them learn to sit.
Try making a treasure basket.
Try feeding baby in an upright position face to face on your knee.
Sitting in the right chair helps baby see what is around them and helps them to play with toys.
Sit baby on your knee with their feet on the floor to practice getting from sitting to standing.
Help baby play with food, even if they aren't eating it at the moment.

Standing
Put toys on furniture to help baby pull up into standing and hold their strength standing up.
Move toys just out of reach so they have to step to the side to get them.
Walking between two people is a fun game.
Squinting down helps balance and confidence.
Baby walkers aren't recommended.
A push along toy is a great way to practice walking.

Daily Routine
Routines are important so try doing things at the same time every day.
Get dressed
Brush teeth
Bath time
Meal times
Play time
Nap or quiet time

Sensory
Playing gives lots of sensory experiences. Try one thing at a time at first.
Moving
Rocking, sweeping, swinging, side to side, up and down
Listening
Quiet, loud, music, voices, toys, singing
Feeling
Tough, smooth, soft, hard, natural, cold, warm
Tasting (if safe)
Sweet, sour, salty, hot, cold
Smelling
Food, perfume, sweet, strong.

Physiotherapist
To help baby develop the strength and skills for rolling, sitting, crawling etc it is important to move and play in different positions throughout the day.
So 'Don't delay the play'

Occupational Therapist
The skills for everyday life, like getting washed and dressed, are more fun when they are learned through play. Playing gives children opportunities to experience new sensations and helps them to understand their bodies and the world around them.

Speech and Language Therapist
Babies learn language through hearing and looking at your face expressions so it is important to talk to your child as much as you can.
Reading, chatting and singing together helps baby learn how to communicate.

Play Specialist
It can be hard to know what are the best toys or to have ideas for play activities. We have knowledge of child development and loads of ideas for playing and singing so come and chat to us.
We link with the therapy teams and can get you extra support if needed.

For more information
Scan QR codes

Figures are for illustrative purposes only. Medical equipment may differ. Poster created by: Penny Walsh Physiotherapist, Lindsay Carr Occupational Therapist and Gillian Webster Speech and Language Therapist. Illustrations by: Hannah Littler-Smith. Funded by: Great North Children's Hospital Foundation.

We used QR codes to encourage interaction with the poster. The main one links to a 'Don't Delay the Play' webpage hosted on the trust internet site.



Please try it!

What next...

- More copies for more clinical areas
- Development of a short video for the website
- Provision of soft mat and developmentally appropriate toys for every child in GNCH
- Developmental play group for children and families
- Development of a song book with links to videos of nursery rhymes

