

## **Part A: Nurses' Role in Primary Health Care**

### **Introduction**

This paper focuses on an important nursing role – the role of the Child and Family Health nurse – in health promotion of infants, children, and their families. This is an extremely important area of healthcare as this population is of immense need of guidance for physical, mental, emotional, and social well-being. This paper also examines one particular health education resource which provides information regarding solid foods for a baby, and its relevance for the chosen target population.

### **Purpose and Responsibilities of a Child and Family Health Nurse**

Child and Family Health nurses are an important part of the primary healthcare workforce as they are responsible for the health and well-being of children from their infancy to their late childhood stage. They are responsible for delivering Universal Child Health Services (UCHS) to bring about a positive improvement in child health outcomes. These nurses may either work in a hospital or a community setting depending on the jurisdiction of a particular region (Fraser et al., 2016).

Some of their important duties and responsibilities include assessment of the relationship and attachment between parents and their children, delivering relevant services to at-risk and vulnerable children, undertaking health surveillance of infants in their area of work, providing support to families, promoting various health services, and developing therapeutic relationships. Apart from that, they also provide support to parents in bringing up a physically, mentally, and emotionally healthy child while addressing all their nutrition and behaviour-related concerns. As opposed to other categories of nurses who deliver population-based services, child and family health nurses provide universal services by developing a strong nurse-client relationship with individual families (Rowe and Barnes, 2006).

### **Importance of the Role of Child and Family Health Nurse**

#### ***1. To the Individual Consumer***

Child and Family Health Nurses deliver universal services which encompass internationally recognized and accepted children's rights and essential services. Through these services, consumers are assured that the nurses are taking all health-related decisions in the best interests of their child. These nurses provide culturally relevant services to their clients keeping in mind their specific living and financial contexts. As early childhood is an age where most of the brain development takes place, these nurses provide evidence-based support to parents to ensure that they make the most out of this age and promote a healthy lifestyle for their children. They take care of the holistic well-being of children as well as their parents in order to ensure that every child lives and thrives in a healthy and happy home and school environment (Turley et al., 2018).

## ***2. To the Community***

At the community level, Child and Family Health nurses use multiple frameworks for health education and promotion programs for assessment and support of child and family health from the infancy to the late childhood stage. They address complex health issues in the community including psychosocial well-being of the child as well as the family. Their clients can be as diverse as same-sex couples, single parents, or grandparents who are the primary guardians of the child, and they may present with varying emotional and social issues. These nurses also provide support to parents who are migrants or refugees, all the time keeping in mind their cultural diversity and specific health requirements (Drummond and Marcellus, 2005). Child and Family Health nurses also take care of maternal needs soon after a baby is born. They provide education and support for post-delivery care of the infant as well as the mother, breast-feeding related issues, infant bonding, post-partum depression, and post-natal health check-ups (Barnes et al., 2003).

## ***3. To the Policy Makers***

Most developed countries around the world promote the delivery of universal child and family health services to all children aged 0 to 5 years. In achieving this vision of provision of quality healthcare services to children, Child and Family Health nurses play a very important role in addressing different healthcare requirements in their communities. They translate the

services outlined in healthcare policies into community efforts in the areas of child development, health promotion, and healthcare assessment for both children and their families (Rollans et al., 2013).

Apart from fulfilling policy guidelines, the experiences of these nurses, especially in a community setting, are very insightful for updating old policies or dictating new policy frameworks. This is because Child and Family Health nurses are at the forefront of healthcare service delivery to children and they are the most qualified to indicate issues with the current policy frameworks. They are also in a position to bring to light previously unidentified health-related questions or requirements that their clients might have that might need to be structured in order to provide better healthcare services (Rollans et al., 2013).

## **Part B: Health Promotion and Education**

The resource that is selected for this part of the assessment is 'First Foods: Food from Home' prepared by the Department of Health & Ageing of the Australian Government. This resource provides a comprehensive description of the first solid foods, and how and when they should be introduced in a child's diet.

### **Intended Consumer Group**

The intended consumer group for this resource is parents of newborns and children up to 2 years of age who are either preparing to start solid foods or have already started solid foods and need extra guidance. Most parents have several questions regarding when to start with solid foods, how and what foods to introduce, and possible allergies that may arise due to solid foods. Surveys have shown that around 25% of parents introduce solid foods to their babies before the age of 4 months mostly due to ignorance and lack of appropriate guidance from their pediatricians (Kuo et al., 2011). Therefore, the chosen resource intends to provide the necessary information to parents of newborn babies and infants regarding starting solid foods.

### **Intended Purpose**

Since the past two decades, according to recommendations by the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP), solid foods for babies should be started at the age of 6 months. Starting solid foods before or after this age can result in eating disorders, allergies, deficiencies, or other health concerns in the baby. The chosen resource correctly informs new parents of the appropriate age at which solid foods should be introduced and also, the types of foods that should be introduced initially (Hollis et al., 2017).

### **Suitability of the Resource**

The chosen resource provides a strong argument for why it is necessary to start solid foods at the age of 6 months rather than before or after this age. It provides a list of several healthy options that can be given to the baby at different ages such as 6 months, 12 months, and 24 months, along with advice on seasonings and type of milk that needs to be given to the infant. It also gives advice on how to introduce solid foods such as the number and rate at which different foods need to be introduced and how to balance giving solid foods with breast feeding or formula feeding. Additionally, it highlights the food items that can prove choking hazards for the baby so that these can be avoided in the diet or given under supervision.

As a lot of parents do not have access to the latest information or frequent pediatrician visits, resources like these can go a long way in educating parents about the right way to introduce solid foods. Most of these guidelines have been introduced recently and they are in stark contrast to the feeding practices of previous generations. In such a scenario, this type of health resources can provide a means of disseminating recent recommended changes to feeding practices and allow parents to voice their questions and/or concerns (Cowbrough, 2010).

### **Benefits and Challenges**

When people become parents, one of the most important concerns they have regarding their baby's health is nutrition, feeding, and introduction of solid foods. The challenge here is that most people in the earlier generation(s) have followed different protocols for starting their babies on solid foods and they often tend to influence the perceptions and habits of parents

belonging to the most recent generation (Cichero, 2016). Therefore, most people who are parents to new-borns today are extremely confused regarding the current recommendations for feeding their babies. As a result, health education resources similar to the chosen resource can be extremely educational and informative for parents of new-borns.

A lot of parents tend to solely depend on store-bought fortified baby foods for feeding their babies mostly because they are not aware of home-made foods that can alternatively be given to their baby (Beck et al., 2019). Health education resources make it extremely easy for parents by providing a variety of different options to choose from, some even with clear instructions on how to prepare these foods. Having access to this type of information regarding home-made baby foods provides encouragement to parents to give mostly home-based foods to their babies.

Another concern of parents is how to introduce solid foods to their babies, the numbers of different items that can be introduced at a time, the interval between solid foods, and how to balance solid foods with breast-feeding or formula milk (Rapley, 2016). Comprehensive health education resources similar to the chosen one can answer all these questions of parents and also encourage them to reach out to the appropriate healthcare provider for further clarifications. An important risk while introducing solid foods to babies is mistakenly giving them foods that can serve as choking hazards (Lorenzoni et al., 2019). Most parents may not be aware of this and therefore, health education resources serve to draw the parents' attention to this point while informing them of the specific types of foods that should be avoided in their child's diet.

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