

Leadership Approaches within Child Health Nursing Teams and Their Effect on Nurses' Parental Guidance Practices

Gyanu Kaushik, Research Scholar, SONS, ITM, University, Madhya Pradesh.

Mrs. Anushi Singh, Research Guide, SONS, ITM, University, Madhya Pradesh.

Introduction

Child health nursing is a specialized field within healthcare that demands a unique set of skills and competencies. Nurses working in pediatric units play a crucial role not only in the care of children but also in managing the emotional and informational needs of parents. Effective leadership within child health nursing teams is essential to ensure that nurses can manage parents effectively, providing support and guidance during challenging times. This article explores the various leadership styles found in child health nursing teams and how they impact nurses' ability to manage parents.¹

1. Leadership Styles in Child Health Nursing Teams

Leadership in child health nursing teams can take on various styles, each with its own set of characteristics and implications for managing parents. Here are some of the common leadership styles found in pediatric healthcare settings:

1.1 Transformational Leadership

- Transformational leaders inspire and motivate their teams to achieve a shared vision.
- They encourage creativity, innovation, and personal growth among team members.
- Transformational leaders are empathetic and provide emotional support to both nurses and parents.
- This style fosters a collaborative environment that enhances nurses' ability to manage parents effectively.²

1.2 Transactional Leadership

- Transactional leaders focus on clear structures, rules, and rewards for performance.
- They ensure that tasks are completed efficiently and according to established protocols.

- While transactional leadership can provide stability and consistency, it may lack the emotional support needed for managing parents in challenging situations.³

1.3 Servant Leadership

- Servant leaders prioritize the needs of their team members and aim to serve them.
- They are compassionate, empathetic, and actively listen to their team's concerns.
- Servant leadership encourages nurses to adopt a similar attitude when managing parents, promoting a patient-centered approach.⁴

1.4 Laissez-Faire Leadership

- Laissez-faire leaders take a hands-off approach, allowing team members to make decisions independently.
- While this style can foster autonomy, it may lead to confusion and inconsistency in managing parents if not carefully monitored.⁵

1.5 Authoritarian Leadership

- Authoritarian leaders dictate tasks and expect compliance from their team members.
- This style may not be well-suited for child health nursing teams, as it can hinder communication and collaboration with parents.⁶

2. Impact on Nurses' Management of Parents

2.1 Transformational Leadership

- Transformational leaders create a supportive and encouraging environment, which allows nurses to manage parents effectively.
- Nurses under transformational leaders are more likely to engage in open communication with parents, address their concerns, and provide emotional support.
- This leadership style helps nurses build trust with parents, enhancing their ability to navigate challenging situations.⁷

2.2 Transactional Leadership

- Transactional leadership can ensure that nurses adhere to established protocols and guidelines when managing parents.
- However, it may not provide the emotional support and empathy needed to address parents' emotional needs during their child's illness.
- Nurses working under transactional leaders might focus more on task completion than on building relationships with parents.⁸

2.3 Servant Leadership

- Servant leaders emphasize empathy and active listening, which are crucial skills for managing parents effectively.
- Nurses under servant leaders are encouraged to prioritize parents' concerns and engage in open and compassionate communication.
- This leadership style fosters a patient-centered approach and helps nurses provide holistic care to both children and parents.⁹

2.4 Laissez-Faire Leadership

- Laissez-faire leadership can promote autonomy among nurses but may result in inconsistency in managing parents.
- Without clear guidance and support, nurses may struggle to address parents' needs consistently.
- Effective communication with parents may also suffer if nurses are unsure about their roles and responsibilities.¹⁰

2.5 Authoritarian Leadership

- Authoritarian leadership is generally not suitable for child health nursing teams, as it can hinder effective communication and collaboration with parents.
- Parents may feel disempowered and disregarded, which can lead to dissatisfaction and mistrust.
- Nurses working under authoritarian leaders may find it challenging to balance their responsibilities to both their leaders and the parents they serve.¹¹

3. The Importance of Leadership Training

To ensure that child health nursing teams can effectively manage parents, it is crucial to provide leadership training for nurse leaders and managers. Leadership training can help nurse leaders develop the skills necessary to adopt effective leadership styles that promote collaboration, empathy, and open communication within the team.¹²

Leadership training should also focus on:

- Emotional intelligence: Nurses must be equipped with the emotional intelligence needed to understand and address the emotions of parents facing difficult situations.
- Conflict resolution: Child health nursing teams often encounter conflicts with parents due to the stress of caring for a sick child. Training in conflict resolution can help nurses manage these situations professionally.¹³
- Communication skills: Effective communication is paramount in managing parents. Nurses should be trained in active listening, empathetic communication, and delivering difficult news.
- Cultural competence: Child health nursing teams must be culturally competent to provide care that respects and honors the diversity of parents and families they serve.¹⁴

Conclusion

Leadership styles within child health nursing teams have a significant impact on nurses' ability to manage parents effectively. Transformational and servant leadership styles tend to foster open communication, empathy, and collaboration, enhancing nurses' relationships with parents. On the other hand, transactional, laissez-faire, and authoritarian leadership styles may present challenges in managing parents, such as reduced emotional support or inconsistent approaches.

To ensure that child health nursing teams excel in managing parents, it is vital to provide leadership training that emphasizes emotional intelligence, conflict resolution, communication skills, and cultural competence. By nurturing effective leadership styles and empowering nurses with the necessary skills, healthcare organizations can create environments where nurses can provide the best possible care to children and their families, even in challenging circumstances. Ultimately, effective leadership in child health nursing teams benefits not only the parents but also the well-being of the entire healthcare team and the children they care for.

Reference

- Aarthun A, Øymar KA, Akerjordet K. Parental involvement in decision-making about
[1] their child's health care at the hospital. *Nurs Open* 2019; 6(1): 50-8.
- Melo EMOP, Ferreira PL, Lima RAG, Mello DF. The involvement of parents in the
[2] healthcare provided to hospitalized children. *Rev Lat Am Enfermagem* 2014; 22(3): 432-9.
- Mol C, Argent AC, Morrow B. Parental satisfaction with the quality of care in a South
[3] African paediatric intensive care unit. *South Afr J Crit Care* 2018; 34(2): 51-8.
- Abdelkader R, Khalaf I, Kridli S, Arabiat D, Alrimawi I. Parents Involvement in Child's
[4] Care in an Arab Pediatric Setting. *Health Sci J* 2016; 10(4): 1-6.
- Rokach A. Psychological, emotional and physical experiences of hospitalized children.
[5] *Clin Case Rep Rev* 2016; 2(4): 399-401.
- Burns KEA, Misak C, Herridge M, Meade MO, Oczkowski S. Patient and family
[6] engagement in the ICU. Untapped opportunities and underrecognized challenges. *Am J Respir Crit Care Med* 2018; 198(3): 310-9.
- Aarthun A, Øymar KA, Akerjordet K. How health professionals facilitate parents'
[7] involvement in decision-making at the hospital: A parental perspective. *J Child Health Care* 2018; 22(1): 108-21.
- Abdelkader R, Arabiat DH, Holmes SL, Hamdan-Mansour A. Socio-demographic
[8] correlates of parents' participation in care of a hospitalized child. *J Child Health Care* 2016; 20(3): 374-83.

[9] Sundal H, Vatne S. Parents' and nurses' ideal collaboration in treatment-centered and home-like care of hospitalized preschool children – a qualitative study. *BMC Nurs* 2020; 19(1): 48.

[10] Svendsen EJ, Pedersen R, Moen A, Bjørk IT. Exploring perspectives on restraint during medical procedures in paediatric care: a qualitative interview study with nurses and physicians. *Int J Qual Stud Health Well-being* 2017; 12(1): 1363623.

[11] Albert A, Charkot E. Pediatric imaging-Radiology Key 2016. <https://radiologykey.com/pediatric-imaging/>

[12] Gómez-Cantarino S, García-Valdivieso I, Moncunill-Martínez E, Yáñez-Araque B, Ugarte Gurrutxaga MI. Developing a family-centered care model in the neonatal intensive care unit (NICU): A new vision to manage healthcare. *Int J Environ Res Public Health* 2020; 17(19): 7197.

[13] Hall SL, Cross J, Selix NW, *et al.* Recommendations for enhancing psychosocial support of NICU parents through staff education and support. *J Perinatol* 2015; 35(S1)(Suppl. 1): S29-36.

[14] Seidl FW, Pillitteri A. Development of an attitude scale on parent participation. *Nurs Res* 1967; 16(1): 71-3.