

Advanced Children Nursing I (HA-0302)

Care of Children with Special Needs

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Learning objectives:

Identify the scope of problems or effects on the family in caring of child with special needs

Identify the changing trends in care of children with special needs

Outline nursing care that promote the family's optimal adjustment to the child's chronic disorder

DEFINITION OF CHILDREN WITH SPECIAL NEEDS

- Children with special health care needs (CSHCN), defined as those children who have or are at increased risk for a chronic physical, developmental, behavioral, or emotional condition and who also require health and related services of a type or amount beyond that required by children generally (McPherson et al , 1998)
- "Special needs" are commonly defined by what a child *can't* do -- by milestones unmet, foods banned, activities avoided, experiences denied.
- may have mild learning disabilities or profound cognitive impairment; food allergies or terminal illness; developmental delays that catch up quickly or remain entrenched; occasional panic attacks or serious psychiatric problems.
- The designation is useful for getting needed services, setting appropriate goals, and gaining understanding for a child and stressed family.

Key terms regarding children with special needs

- CHRONIC ILLNESS : condition that interfere with daily functioning for more than 3 months in a year, or (at time of diagnosis) is likely to do either of these.
- CONGENITAL DISABILITY : a disability that has existed since birth but is not necessarily hereditary
- DEVELOPMENTAL DELAY : a maturational tag – an abnormal, slower rate of development in which a child demonstrates a functioning level below that observed in normal children of the same age

(Wong et al, 1999)

Key terms regarding children with special needs

- **DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITY** : Any mental and/or physical disability that is manifested before 22 years and is likely to continue indefinitely
- **DISABILITY** : typically defined as a physical or mental impairment substantially limiting one or more major life activities (eg walking, seeing, speaking, breathing, learning)
- **HANDICAP** : a condition or barrier imposed by society, the environment, or one's own self, not synonym for disability
- **IMPAIRMENT**: A loss or abnormality of structure or function
- **TECHNOLOGY DEPENDENT CHILD** : A child aged birth and 21 years with chronic disability that require routine use of a medical device to compensate for the loss of a life sustaining bodily function, daily ongoing care and/or monitoring is required by trained personnel.

Wong et al, 1999)