

TODDLER DEVELOPMENT

Development Goals

Snapshot of developmental goals and what toddlers understand:

- Play:
 - engage with the world around them through repetitive actions with items to help them understand more of how the world works and practice their physical skills
 - they seek the opportunity for mobility and being able to explore using their body
 - they might imitates adult actions through play, can start trying to help
- Learning:
 - think symbolically (i.e. use a block as a telephone), learn to use words and pictures to represent objects
 - understanding the body: begins to be able to identify external body parts
- How they relate to themselves:
 - has a bit more control over their own body thus can set out with a goal of manipulating something they see and can achieve it, acts pleased when accomplishes something
 - first signs of autonomy emerge (doing tasks on their own like drinking from a sippy cup, or using a spook)
 - opportunity to express independence - hence the use of the word "no"
 - self-concept develops, meaning they begin to be able to identify their own thoughts and feelings

Stressors

This age group experiences stress during a medical experience such as:

- Fear of bodily injury or pain
- Restriction to movement - not being able to continue to explore or opportunities for independence in movement or exploration
- Loss of routine

Separation anxiety, which is fear upon being separated from caregiver, or fear of adults other than their caregiver, can peak between 10 and 18 months, and typically ends by the time they are 3 years old.

How to support or help

- Caregivers being involved and in close proximity during something stressful or painful
- Provide comfort item during stressful or painful experience
- Provide choices when possible
- Limit restriction of their body when possible
 - for example, if setting up NG tube items takes a while, allow child to play and explore on their own, and only hold in restrictive position when procedure is ready

COPING PLAN

Prepare Through Play

Using medical play items, show the toddler simple steps of what will happen when getting the NG tube placed by doing it on a doll or stuffed animal. Playing through it multiple times will help them solidify their understanding.

What to say:

- "An NG tube is a bendy tube that goes in your nose."

You can use a doll or stuffed animal, and string for the NG tube. Play through the steps of:

- sitting with caregiver, on their lap getting a big hug
- string goes into the nose
- tape string onto face
- turn around to give caregiver a big hug
- pictures of tummy (X-Ray)
- showing all done when getting to return to playing with favorite toy/activity

Give Choices

The toddler does not have the choice of the NG tube placement happening, but you can provide feelings of independence and control by giving choices that they actually do have - but be mindful to not give an overwhelming amount of choices

- Which comfort item do they want to hold?
- Do they want to count to 3 or caregiver to count to 3

Position for Comfort

Comfort positioning is a way to help the child feel comforted, while still limiting movement, as an alternative to holding them down during the NG placement. When a child is comforted they are more likely to feel safe and more calm.

Sitting on caregiver's lap with the child facing away from caregiver, so child's back is to caregiver's chest.

- Arms: caregiver giving the child a big hug from behind to support in securing the child's arms and hands.
- Legs: child's legs can also be between the caregiver's legs, or the caregiver can fold a leg over the child's leg.

Nasogastric "NG" Tube

Toddler (1 - 3 years)

During the Procedure

Explain what is happening, and use the same language used during the preparation play

- The nurse is measuring the tube
- the nurse is putting a sticker on your face

Remind them of their jobs and point out what they are doing well

- "I see you holding your head so still"
- "You are doing such a great job giving your stuffed animal a big hug"
- "I see you using those deep breaths"

Remind of how they will know they are all done

- "remember you will know you are all done when you are turned around for a big hug"

Distraction

- Light Spinner to focus on, and help draw focus up to tilt head back for positioning for NG tube
- Taking small sips of clear liquids using a straw during placement of the NG tube to help the NG tube move easier down to the stomach
- Popsicle may help comfort the throat following the NG tube placement

Remember

Crying or struggling does NOT mean the child is not coping - this is a natural response to negative stimuli, to all of the people in the room, and to being restricted from movement.

Focus on the recovery:

- Helping your child to calm down through a lot of caregiver interaction
- Allow opportunity for your child to return to play/exploration opportunity to help normalize the situation or regulate themselves