



Position Statement: Child Health Nursing Child Health Subnetwork

Document pertains to:

Child Health Nurses (CHN), Child and Family Health Nurses (CFHN), Maternal and Child Health Nurses (MCHN) Child, Youth and Family Health Nurses (CYFHN) – In this document referred to as Child Health Nurse.

Purpose

To promote awareness and understanding of the specialty of Child Health Nursing and outline the requirements to practice as a Child Health Nurse in Queensland Hospital and Health Services (HHSs).

Definition

A Child Health Nurse is a registered nurse with advanced knowledge and skills in the primary health care of infants, children and families. CHNs practice at an advanced level working in partnership with parents/caregivers to promote the health and development of the child and family unit

This includes:

- Child growth and development
- Health promotion & health education
- Infant mental health & the parent child relationship
- Perinatal mental health
- Adjusting to parenting support
- Breastfeeding support and education
- Infant and child nutrition Promotion and advocacy for immunisations
- In some jurisdictions (e.g. Rural and remote) additional health screening including Vision, Hearing health, and Lead screening programs

Requirements to Practice

To practice autonomously in the community with families and their children, the Child Health Nurse:

- must possess the relevant knowledge, technical skill and attitudes (Australian Health Ministers Advisory Council, 2011)
- has the ability and skill to provide safe and competent nursing care (The Nursing and Midwifery Office, 2011).
- has extensive comprehensive and specialist nursing knowledge (Productivity Commission Education and Training Workforce Early Childhood Development, 2011).



- is competent in identification and assessment of health issues, delivering health information, guidance and decision making (ACPCHN, 2nd Edition 2006; Australian Health Ministers Advisory Council, 2011; Herceg, 2006; McHugh, Bradley, & Hornbuckle, 2011).
- practice is supported by the Australian College of Children and Young People's Standards of Practice (2016 and the National Standards of Practice for Maternal Child & Family Health Nurses in Australia (2017)

Child Health Competencies

The Child Health Nurse demonstrates competence in:

- child focused and family centred nursing care
- professional body of knowledge
- critical thinking
- a primary health care approach
- knowledge of continuum of health to illness for children
- child health screening and surveillance to assess child's physical, emotional, social and cognitive development
- providing anticipatory guidance appropriate to the age of the child
- working in partnership with families
- identifying parent strengths and challenges and providing education and support relevant to individual family needs
- collaborating with parents/caregivers and relevant agencies to achieve positive family outcomes
- working collaboratively with multidisciplinary health professionals
- facilitating referrals for further assessment or intervention where required
- ethics and legislation
- commitment to performance improvement and evaluation.

References

- Australian College of Children and Young People's Nurses (ACCYPN), Standards of Practice for Children and Young People's Nurses, 2016.
- Australian Health Ministers Advisory Council. (2011). National Framework for Universal Child and Family Health Services. Canberra ACT.
- Herceg, A. (2006). Improving health in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander mothers, babies and young children: a literature review.
- McHugh, A., Bradley, R., & Hornbuckle, J. (2011). Women and children first. O&G Magazine, 13, 28-31.
- Productivity Commission Education and Training Workforce Early Childhood Development. (2011). Victorian Association of Maternal and Child Health Nurses Submission. Melbourne.
- The Nursing and Midwifery Office. (2011). Child and Family Health Nursing Professional Practice Framework 2011-2015. North Sydney.
- NSW Child and Family Health Nursing Clinical Nurse Consultant Network and Child and Family Health Nurses Association (NSW) (2022) Child and Family Health Nursing Professional Practice Framework, MCaFHNA website. <http://www.mcafhna.org.au>