

# Children: a vulnerable population

[Literature](#), [Russian Literature](#)



Running head: Children: A Vulnerable Population Children: A Vulnerable Population Children: A Vulnerable Population When thinking of vulnerable populations, at first thought one thinks of culture and minorities. Regardless of race, gender, ethnic background, or age children are classified as being vulnerable. Children are dependent on adults for virtually everything and it is this aspect that makes them vulnerable. From health care, nutrition, emotional, and social well being children look to adults for guidance and help in times of need. Many people view children as “ tiny adults. ” With this type of view, one can see how easy it is to push them into the background, therefore, becoming invisible and easily forgotten. After much research, one can see the importance of bringing them into the foreground. When dealing with children it is important to look at things through the child’s perspective and understand that children are capable of thinking, feeling, and creating, and that they learn by practicing these capabilities (Canning & Mullin). An assessment tool that can be used to aid staff in looking at things through a child’s perspective is the letters PPA. Position is the stance one takes in relation to the child or children. Children attend to the present. Looking at Attitude addresses emotion, concentration and thinking (Canning & Mullin). This makes one stop and examine the child’s body language, tone of voice, and even the child’s culture and or beliefs. Lastly, Actions speak louder than words (Canning & Mullin). Putting oneself in the shoes of the child will allow one to see a perspective or insight that may otherwise have been missed. With today’s economic problems, more often people are becoming unemployed, families are losing insurance. Therefore, parents are delaying in seeking medical care for their children. The recession of the economy has

affected families across all income levels and range of vulnerability, but it is affecting those who are most vulnerable even more than the population as a whole. If one doesn't have insurance, or if a family income is at a lower level, the children are likely to be at an even higher risk (Recession Stressful...). The stress experienced from the financial situation does not only affect the parents but the children as well. Common symptoms of stress in children include acting out, abdominal pain, and headaches (Recession Stressful...). After researching this, when a child comes in with the above symptoms, it is extremely important to look into the family dynamics and try to obtain any pertinent information not only in regard to health history but changes in lifestyle as well. Along with stress making an impact on today's children, so is the type of and amount of nutritional intake. Children need a higher proportion of essential nutrients than adults. With this in mind we are seeing that with a decrease in family income and in some cases an increase in family size, the average nutrient intake may fall below the recommended daily level. " There are children whose only adequate meal of the day is the one obtained during school; and others who are overweight not because they eat too well too often, but because they eat too much of the wrong kind of food" (Osner & Thomas). This is due to processed foods tending to be cheaper than other types of foods such as fresh fruits, vegetables, and meat. These convenience foods make it easier on working families to allow their children to fend for themselves. Children do not always make the best choices when it comes to nutrition; they tend to pick the foods that taste good with low nutritional value such as chips and snack cakes. Along with poor nutritional choices, children are not as active as those of older

generations. With parents or guardians working longer hours for less pay, just to get by, children are left alone and are not getting out and exercising and participating in active play. Today's children find their entertainment in the form of video games, computers, and television. This sedentary lifestyle is leading our children to becoming obese and running a higher chance, along with the above mentioned diet trend, of developing chronic health conditions such as diabetes. In addition to these health risks, obesity may reduce the quality of everyday life due to decrease in mobility and even cause physical and mental, such as depression, discomforts. Lastly today's children are exposed to more environmental factors that lead to chronic disabling diseases such as asthma, cancer, and neurological and behavioral problems. These are becoming more prevalent due not only from exposure to toxins such as tobacco smoke, hazardous waste from industrial factories, and more chemical solvents but to an increase in life expectancy related to better health care. Children are highly vulnerable due to prolonged exposure and their lifestyle. This is said because children play close to the ground and have more hand-to-mouth exposure. Pound for pound of body weight, children drink more water, eat more food and breathe more air than adults. During the first 6 months of life they drink seven times as much water as the average American adult. Children ages 1 to 5 eat three to five more times food and the air intake of a resting infant is twice that of an adult (Landrigan). As stated before, because of the longer life expectancy, children have more time to develop chronic diseases triggered by early exposure. Before completing this research, I believed that at least older children were able to make conscious and good decisions about their health. I also

assumed that at times, the pain they may be experiencing could all be in their head and they would be fine. After working with children for the past 3 years and doing this paper, I now know that not only do we need to educate our children so they can be able to make the best decisions in regard to their nutrition and health but extra education may also be needed to educate the parents as well. I had never given much thought as to access to health care and the effects of families with no insurance. I believed that there were plenty of programs out there, such as public assistance, which enables one to be able to take his or her children to the doctor as necessary. With my research and firsthand experiences, I now realize that even with such programs, that health care is still unattainable sometimes. Even with these economic times, families are falling through the cracks in our system because of just being over the guidelines to qualify for assistance but yet not having access through employment to insurance and such. I find my views and biases changing everyday as I learn more through my job and experiences. I see the importance of listening to my pediatric patients carefully and seeing their problems through their eyes, allowing me to see it differently or through their perspective. This will allow for an optimal working relationship with my young patients. I believe by doing this, I may be able to make referrals to community programs for assistance, with the help of Social Services, that the parents may not have know existed. This will allow for possible early detection of health problems that can be corrected or controlled before more serious symptoms arise. References Landrigan, P. (2005, February). Children as a Vulnerable Population. *Human & Ecological Risk Assessment*, 11(1), 235-238. Retrieved August 1, 2009, doi: 10.

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