

Babies, children and young people's experience of healthcare

Information for the public
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Making healthcare a better experience for babies, children and young people

Having a good experience of healthcare means feeling supported and listened to by the staff caring for you. It also means being treated as an individual and having your needs put first. Making healthcare a positive experience for a baby, child or young person is just as important as for an adult. Good healthcare can make a child or young person feel confident, empowered and able to make decisions about their own health. It can improve how they feel about their diagnosis and treatment and lead to better results for their health. Not having a good experience may leave them feeling anxious about their care, or they may find it harder to trust healthcare professionals or be reluctant to seek out healthcare in the future.

We want this guideline to help healthcare professionals give every baby, child and young person the best possible experience of healthcare by making sure:

- they communicate well with each child or young person, and listen to and respect them
- they know how to involve parents or carers in discussions and decisions about care, and how that may need to change as a child gets older
- decisions about a baby, child or young person's healthcare are made in the right way, taking into account consent, assent and competence
- children and young people always get the support they need, including the option for some to have someone to represent their wishes and speak on their behalf (an advocate)
- children and young people are supported to keep up their usual activities while receiving healthcare as much as possible, such as school, social media or seeing friends.

Information for children and young people

NICE gives advice to people who work in health and social care. We help them to give good care to people with different conditions and needs.

This advice is about how to give the best possible experience of care to all babies, children and young people. It says:

- things should be explained in a way you can understand
- you should always be asked what you think about your care
- you should always know what will happen next
- you should be able to make choices about your care whenever you are able to
- staff looking after you should make you feel comfortable and safe.

You can also look at [my healthcare experience checklist](#) to see how healthcare staff should support and look after you.

Where can I find out more?

You can find more information on the [NHS website on caring for children and young people](#).

The organisations below can give you more advice and support.

- [Together for short lives](#), 0808 8088 100
- [Rainbow Trust Children's Charity](#), 01372 363438
- [The Association for Young People's Health](#), 0207 922 7715
- [Bliss](#), hello@bliss.org.uk
- [Children's HIV Association](#), 0117 905 5149
- [Communication Matters](#), 0113 343 1533

NICE is not responsible for the content of these websites.

To share an experience of care you have received, contact your local [Healthwatch](#).

We wrote this guideline with people who have experienced healthcare as a child or young person, with parents and carers, and those who work in healthcare and look after babies, children and young people. We also asked groups of children and young people what they thought. All the decisions are based on the best research available.

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