

South Bay Laboratory Age Specific Competency

Age related competency means that the health care worker has the knowledge and skills required for planning and giving care based on the age-related development of a specific group of patients.

Age related competencies recognize the predictable needs for each stage of life, and they allow the caregiver to identify those needs in relation to the individual receiving care. Age related competency allows for appropriate care specific to the age of the patient.

There are six developmental groups.

1. Infants – Birth through 12 months of age.
2. Pediatrics – 1 year through 12 years of age.
3. Adolescents – 10 years through 19 years of age.
4. Adults – 40 through 60 years of age
5. Geriatric – 60 years of age and older.

In the laboratory age related competencies help us use objective predictions based on an age group. They help us modify our approach to the patient and the patient's family based on age related criteria. The proper approach to the patient based on the age related criteria help insure a positive outcome in terms of blood and other specimen collection. At the testing level, age related reference ranges provide accurate test results.

When collecting blood samples laboratory personnel must be able to recognize that age specific needs of the various age groups (infants, peditrics, adolescents, adults, and geriatrics) present different challenges, conditions & needs which may require different approaches, techniques, or equipment to be used. When giving instructions for specimen collection other than blood, use language and instructions that are appropriate to the age group.

Infants:

- ◆ Dependent on the type of test to be performed and the amount of specimen needed, the phlebotomist must choose the correct technique to be used – fingerstick, heelstick, phlebotomy.
- ◆ All procedures should be carefully and thoroughly explained to the parent or guardian by the clerk or phlebotomist.
- ◆ The phlebotomist should be familiar with the minimum specimen requirements and collect the sample accordingly.

Pediatrics:

- ◆ The phlebotomist or clerk should use good interpersonal skills to prepare the patient and parent for the procedure.
- ◆ Inquire about the child's past experiences with blood draws,
- ◆ Explain and demonstrate the procedure to the child and the parent, being honest with the child regarding the amount of pain they can expect to feel. Use words that are age appropriate in explaining the procedure.
- ◆ Explain the need for the child to remain still and encourage the parent's involvement in the procedure to comfort the child and help the child remain still. Enlists the help of a co-worker if needed to help the child remain still.

Adolescents:

- ◆ Use good interpersonal skills to prepare the patient for the procedure. Understand that the adolescent may be embarrassed to show fear, or to ask questions, and may act hostile to hide the fear. Understand that an authoritarian approach is unlikely to be successful.
- ◆ Answer any questions honestly.

Geriatrics:

- ◆ Assess the patient for physical limitations and age-associated disability and illness and adjust the procedure accordingly.

Age	Fears & Concerns	Communication	Comfort	Safety	Parent Behavior
13-17 years	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Actively involved in anything concerning the body More independent Embarrassed to show fear Needs privacy May act hostile to mask fear 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Introduce yourself Use adult vocabulary, do not "talk down" Explain procedure thoroughly Ask if he or she would like to help with the procedure Ask what might make them more comfortable Allow time for questions or to handle supplies 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Maintain privacy Take extra time for explanations and or preparation Offer them the opportunity to have parent close by Give them time to recover after the procedure if they have cried. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use the same strategies as adult Use appropriate collection supplies and equipment depending on the size of the individual and the physical and emotional tolerance to the procedure 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Child may not want parent to be present
Child with special needs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Fears are similar to the behaviors of the developmental level. Need relaxed gentle approach. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use strategies that are appropriate for the development stage 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use strategies that are appropriate for the development stage. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use strategies that are appropriate for the developmental stage. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use strategies that are appropriate for the developmental stage

Garza, Diana & Becan-McBride, Kathleen, Phlebotomy Handbook 6th Edition, pp 309-311 Prentice Hill, NJ. 2002