

Developmental Aspects of Pediatric Patients		
Age*	Keys to Successful Interaction	Characteristics
Newborn (birth to 1 month)	Likes to be held and kept warm May be soothed by having something to suck on Avoid loud noises, bright lights	Normally alert, looking around Focuses well on faces Flexed extremities
Infant (1–12 months)	Likes to be held Parents should be nearby Examine from toes to head Distract with a toy or penlight	Normally alert, looking around Eyes follow examiner Slightly flexed extremities Can straighten arms and legs Can sit unaided by 6–8 months
Toddler (1–3 years)	Make a game of assessment Distract with a toy or penlight Examine from toes to head Allow parents to participate in exam Respect modesty, keep child covered when possible	Normally alert, active Can walk by 18 months Does not like to sit still May grab at penlight or push hand away
Preschooler (3–6 years)	Explain actions using simple language Tell child what will happen next Tell child just before procedure if something will hurt Distract child with a story Respect modesty	Normally alert, active Can sit still on request Can cooperate with examination Understands speech Will make up explanations for anything not understood
School-age child (6–12 years)	Respect modesty Let child make treatment choices when possible Allow child to participate in exam	Will cooperate if trust is established Wants to participate and retain some control
Adolescent (12–18 years)	Explain the process as to an adult Treat the adolescent with respect	Has clear concepts of future Can make decisions about care