



WE LOVE WHAT WE DO

# Pediatric CARE CONNECTION

A PUBLICATION FOR PEDIATRIC CLIENTS AND FAMILIES OF  
BAYADA HOME HEALTH CARE



BAYADA Pediatrics Nurse Mat Gunkel, RN

## Establishing the Best Working Relationships with Your Child's Nurses

Your BAYADA Nurses are there to ensure your child remains safe in the comfort of home. While some families easily adapt to the changes in routine that come with home care nursing, for others it can be quite challenging.

By setting clear expectations and developing good communication with your child's nurses, you can help build that level of trust and respect that will lead to a positive working relationship.

### A welcoming introduction to your home

BAYADA Nurse **Jessica Pearce**, RN, fondly recalls her first shift in her now 14-year-old client Elise's home. "Her parents offered me coffee, told me where to hang my coat, and let me know I could use their refrigerator," she says. "They showed me where they keep the medication, where they give Elise her treatments, and which room they like to hang out in. It was really helpful."

For Elise's mother, Jen, it's important to set those clear expectations from the start. "I want to have a good relationship with the person who is caring for my child," she says. "I treat the nurses with kindness because I want the care to be as positive as possible for Elise."

### Creating a pleasant home and work environment

Jen understands that her house is also the nurses' workplace. "I work outside of the home, and I appreciate the importance of a clean, safe environment," says Jen, who has a desk in the kitchen where she keeps the binder and tablet. "It's like a nurses' station; it's their space."

While a dedicated workspace may not always be possible, there are simple things parents can do to create a pleasant workplace for the nurses. These include setting the thermostat at a comfortable temperature, indicating which bathroom to use, providing drinking water, and keeping the house clean and free of clutter.

If there are pets in the home or if a member of the family is a smoker, parents can make accommodations as appropriate, such as placing a pet in a crate or in another room or smoking outside while the nurse is in the home.



Greta snuggles in the lap of her nurse, Georgina Minwegen, RN, while sisters Clara and Elsie share in the fun.

### Communication and organization

Another family has developed their own process to facilitate clear communication with the nurses who care for their daughter, Greta, 2, who has a tracheostomy and ventilator. Greta has a twin, Clara, (who does not receive nursing care) and a seven-year-old sister, Elsie, so it's a busy household. To manage their family's hectic routine, Greta's mom, Meghan, hung an 11x14 communications board on the wall next to the crib.

"It's a white board that includes Greta's weekly and daily schedule, important phone numbers, doctor and therapy appointments, changes in the routine, everything the nurses need to know," says Meghan.

While the board has become a valuable tool, it can't replace the importance of personal communication. "I tell the nurses about Greta's medical history, her temperament, her favorite things, her routine, and how I like to do things," says Meghan.

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One of Greta's nurses, **Georgina Minwegen**, RN, appreciates when parents talk about their child's struggles. "It gives me more context and helps me understand why they may want to do things a certain way," she says.

### Fostering trust and respect

Your child's nurses have undergone rigorous training specific to your child's age and diagnosis. Yet, understandably, it can be difficult to step back and allow someone else to care for your child, especially if they do things in a different way.

"If I have questions about how a nurse is caring for my child, I don't finger-point or assume ill intent. I talk to them in a respectful way," says Jen.

Meghan couldn't agree more. "As a parent, I sometimes feel a loss of control, but I'm willing to have an open mind and trust the nurses to do their job," she says.

### When conflicts arise, office mediation can help

No matter how good the communication is, sometimes conflicts arise. This is when your BAYADA office team can help.



BAYADA Nurse Jessica Pearce with her client Elise.

*"As a parent, I sometimes feel a loss of control, but I'm willing to have an open mind and trust the nurses to do their job."*

*~ Meghan, mother of a BAYADA client*

"I encourage parents to call their clinical manager (CM) or client services manager (CSM) who can help to problem-solve in a safe, non-threatening manner," shares BAYADA CSM **Sarah Hamilton**. "It helps take the burden off the parents to have those difficult conversations."

In most cases, problems or misunderstandings can be successfully resolved to the satisfaction of both the parents and the nurse. However, if the nurse is simply not the right fit, then the CSM and CM can work with you to ensure appropriate changes are made.

### Take time for you and your family

Remember, the nurses are there for your child's medical needs, giving you more time to just be a parent and enjoy the normalcy of family time.

"It's okay to ask the nurses for alone time with your child," says Jen, who doesn't hesitate to snuggle on the couch with Elise while the nurses are there.

In addition, knowing your child is in good hands gives you more time to focus on working, sleeping, or spending time with your partner or other children. ■

## Setting Expectations: Questions to Consider

Whether your nurses have been with your child a long time or they are new to your home, the following questions are helpful for setting or clarifying expectations:

- **Knock first?** Would you prefer your nurses to knock, ring the doorbell, or just enter your home at the start of their shift?
- **Parking?** Where do you prefer the nurses park?
- **Off-limit areas?** Are there areas of your home that are off-limits to the nurses?
- **Bathroom?** Is there a certain bathroom you prefer the nurses use?
- **Supply room?** Is there a certain location where supplies are stored?
- **Refrigerator?** Can the nurses place food and drinks in your refrigerator?
- **Microwave?** Can the nurses warm up food in your microwave?
- **Dining area?** Is there a certain area where you prefer the nurses eat their meals?
- **Laundry?** Where would you like soiled laundry placed?
- **Nighttime calls?** If there is a need to wake you during the overnight hours, do you prefer the nurse knock on your bedroom door or call your cell?
- **Non-emergencies?** Would you like to be informed during the overnight hours of non-emergency clinical changes such as a fever, feeding intolerance, pain, restlessness, or behavioral issues?

## Thank You for **Showing Love** during the **2019 Contest for Clinicians**

The **BAYADA 2019 Contest for Clinicians** is just one of the many ways we show love and appreciation to our field staff throughout the year. This year's contest ended on November 24, with more than 39,000 submissions! That means our amazing clinicians—from therapists and home health aides to nurses, social workers, and others—were recognized more than **39,000 times** for demonstrating *compassion, excellence, and reliability*—the core values of *The BAYADA Way*.

Thanks in large part to the many submissions from our clients, families, and community members, our clinicians were rewarded with chances to win gift cards and prizes for the vitally important work they do. Your stories are sources of inspiration and make them feel valued and more closely connected to those they serve. It is no wonder our clinicians love what they do!

Thank you to all who participated in our contest by sharing how your clinicians exemplified *The BAYADA Way*. Your stories are sources of inspiration that help us *build and maintain a lasting legacy as the world's most compassionate and trusted team of home health care professionals*. ■

*"Ally is great! She doesn't make me feel bad for helping me. She's a lot of fun and she makes me feel comfortable in my situation. I was super scared of being in college and all, but she makes everything okay."*

~ on behalf of Pittsburgh, PA Pediatrics Home Health Aide **Allison Gaines**

*"Kyle is the best! Dad feels very comfortable with him. Dad is very anxious when transitioning, but Kyle gives him the confidence and clear instructions necessary to get around safely. He shows a genuine interest in Dad's life as a younger man. We are so fortunate that Kyle has been called to this line of work."*

~ on behalf of Media, PA Home Health Aide **Kyle Reid**



## **Winter Health and Safety Tips** for Children with Special Needs

Children with physical or cognitive limitations may become colder faster because they may not be able to move around or articulate that they are cold.

### **Here are some tips for keeping children with special needs warm and toasty in the winter:**

- For children who wear splints, look for snow boots that unzip low or have VELCRO®-type closures, making them easier to put on and take off.
- For children who use a wheelchair, consider making a large, vertical slit up the back of their coat, making it easier to put on and take off.
- Legwarmers are a good extra layer of warmth. They are really easy to slip over clothing and then remove once indoors.
- For kids who can't tolerate a hat due to sensory issues, fleece headbands or earmuffs are a great alternative.
- Keep extra blankets available for car rides or for use over the legs in the wheel chair.

### **Here are some other tips for safely managing winter:**

- Invest in snow tires for your child's wheelchair. Tires made from a soft rubber work best for gripping snow and ice.
- Carry rock salt in a backpack to throw on icy spots.
- If your child is dependent on electronic medical equipment, make plans now to ensure their needs are met if winter weather results in power outages.
- Register your child as a special-needs individual with your local utility company to become a priority customer during blackouts and emergencies. ■



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BAYADA specialty practices include Home Health Care, Pediatrics, Hospice, Behavioral Health, and Habilitation. Services may vary by location.  
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## Tune in to *Clayton's Voice* Podcast

For families of children with special needs,  
hosted by a mom who's been there

BAYADA Special Needs Advocate **Shelby Myers** is host of a new podcast, *Clayton's Voice*, named in loving memory of her son, Clayton, who lost his battle with a life-changing illness.

The podcast will feature guest speakers who will discuss topics such as:

- Helping siblings cope
- Stress management
- Support from grandparents and the extended family
- Insurance issues
- Coping with feelings of isolation
- Therapy options
- IEP challenges
- Overcoming stereotypes and stigmas

Shelby encourages listeners to reach out with topic ideas or to ask questions by emailing her at [claytonsvoice@bayada.com](mailto:claytonsvoice@bayada.com). ■



Podcast host Shelby Myers enjoying time with her son, Clayton.

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