

Preface

This book and its companion website has been written and developed by experienced children's and young people's nurses specifically to assist readers in developing the practical skills necessary to care for children and their carers in a variety of acute care settings. Practical nursing skills, carried out with competence and compassion, are highly valued by children, young people and their families. These skills promote health, recovery and comfort, making an essential contribution to positive healthcare experiences. The Nursing and Midwifery Council (NMC) highlights the importance of fundamental skills by explicitly identifying them in their Essential Skills Clusters for pre-registration nursing students. This information related to specific skills detailed within this book has been mapped against the NMC skills clusters and other healthcare competencies. The early chapters in the book discuss fundamental skills for caring, skills expected of any nurse entering the first part of the NMC register for the child field of practice. Later chapters provide details of more specialist skills for caring for children and young people with more specific healthcare problems. To achieve this we have recruited a number of senior nurses from specialist clinical areas in differing parts of the British Isles to contribute to the book. We hope you will be inspired to learn from all our contributors who have endeavoured to give you an insight into the real world of children's and young people's nursing where the emphasis is on the delivery of safe and evidence-based care.

In some care environments nurses are more likely to supervise or support children and their carers than directly carry out these practical skills themselves. It is important to stress that to supervise others in providing quality fundamental care requires a sound knowledge and understanding of these skills, and a commitment to their value.

The book's first three chapters explain the caring context for the undertaking of skills with children and young people, emphasising the importance of the nurses underpinning knowledge and attitudes as well as the practical component of skills. Many chapters cite individual procedural policies from different healthcare institutions. It is important to stress that, although the procedures detailed within this book are based on best evidence, some healthcare institutions will have differing procedural policies, and readers are therefore strongly advised to read their own policies before attempting to implement any of these procedures in practice.

The book and the accompanying website are interactive, evidence-based and promote theory-practice links and reflective practice.

While this book is particularly applicable to recently qualified nurses and pre-registration child field of practice nursing students, it is also relevant to care assistants who are studying qualifications in care, students on a range of assistant practitioner (foundation degree) healthcare-related programmes, and to all those involved in the teaching of practical skills, including university and college lecturers, and practitioners.

Children's and young people's nurses care for children and their families across the age continuum in a wide range of healthcare settings in different circumstances.

We hope that this book will be essential reading for those who practice or aspire to become practitioners, in which the cardinal tenet is to 'first do the child no harm'.

*Alan Glasper
Marion Aylott
Cath Battrick
June 2009*