

# Therapeutic Recreation and Age Appropriateness

If your interactions are age-appropriate, it means you treat people with disabilities the same way you would treat other people who are the same chronological age. Age-appropriate activities and interactions are based on respect. The following are examples of age appropriateness.

## Offer people choices that people their age would consider appropriate:

Situation	These <i>age-inappropriate</i> activities or responses foster childlike images	These activities or responses are <i>age-appropriate</i>
Movies /Television	Cartoons, children's shows (e.g., Sesame Street)	Comedy, sports, suspense, game, western or animal shows
Music	Children's tapes, CDs and music	Radio or tapes (mix tape, relaxation device, etc.)
Diversional (distraction) items (not toys)	Infant toys (i.e. rattle, top)	Maracas, sensory stimulation items
Hobbies	Children's coloring books, playing Candyland, watch- ing Sesame Street	Special collections (e.g., stamps), computers, art projects, magazines, card games with card holder
Reading Materials	Children's books	Magazines, poetry, books, newspapers
Room Decorations	Cartoon characters children's theme	Sports figures, appropriate pictures of actors or actresses, landscapes, nature

## Speak to people with disabilities as you would to others who are the same age:

**Situation**

These *age-inappropriate* activities or responses  
foster childlike images

These activities or responses are  
*age-appropriate*

Nicknames

Tommy, Billy, Janey

Tom, Bill, Jane

Tone of voice,  
speech

High-pitch, baby talk

Use normal voice and words the  
person understands

Social interactions	Speak only to parents or caregivers	Speak to the person, make eye-contact, include in conversations and at the table
Negative conversations (i.e., speaking about the individuals as if they cannot hear)	Speak about people as if they're not there; discussing topics individual should NOT hear	Step out of room to discuss sensitive topics; assume people can understand you
Communication	Assume people cannot understand	Ask caregivers if a method of communication is used

**Offer help and assistance that lets people be as independent as possible :**

<b>Situation</b>	<b>These <i>age-inappropriate</i> activities or responses foster childlike images</b>	<b>These activities or responses are <i>age-appropriate</i></b>
Partial Participation	Individuals watch a game as you "play" for them	Use physical or verbal assistance such as a card holder; adapt activity so people can participate (i.e. break down the steps)
Responsibilities / Control	Do chores for them, dress them, feed them, push their wheelchair when they're capable of pushing themselves	Encourage problem solving, decision making, initiation; give responsibilities to allow for independence and choices
Free time	Telling an adult, "Someone is here to PLAY with you"	Instead of "play", use age-appropriate term such as, hang-out

**Examples of Age-Appropriate Diversions:**

- Reading**      **Music**      **Television**      **Games**      **Arts/Crafts**      **Other**

newspaper		movies	card games	painting	walk outside
magazines		game shows	catch	drawing	conversation
poetry	radio	comedy	computer	models	gift shop
comic strips	tape/cd	westerns	board games	simple projects	sensory stimulation items
Guinness Book of World Records	TV station	sports	video games	sewing	chapel
riddles, jokes	play instrument	suspense	crosswords	journal	cooking
books (novels, short stories)	sound machine	dramas	word search	stencils	dance
		animal shows	basketball (sports)	beads (jewelry)	

Make An Appointment

[651-290-8707](tel:651-290-8707)

Refer a Patient

[651-325-2200](tel:651-325-2200)

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If you are a Gillette patient with urgent questions or concerns, please contact Telehealth Nursing at [651-229-3890](tel:651-229-3890).