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## **Revisions to the Society of Pediatric Nurses' Residency Core Competencies**

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Formal nurse residency, i.e., transition to practice, programs for newly licensed nurses have been in place for over 20 years (Vizient/American Association of Colleges of Nursing, 2025). These programs assist new graduate pediatric registered nurses (RNs) with developing confidence as practicing nurses, in mastering skills learned in their basic education, acquiring skills that are new based on practice setting, and cultivating their professional identity, thereby increasing nurse satisfaction and retention.

Nurse residency programs in pediatric settings are especially needed to bridge the education-practice gap created by limited pediatric education and clinical exposure available to nurses in undergraduate programs. (American Nurses Association [ANA] et al., 2016). Nurse residency programs combine didactic, simulation, and coaching/precepting strategies focused to promote the development of essential competencies for pediatric practice leading to enhance patient outcomes. These programs usually involve the first 6 to 12 months of employment.

There are several existing resources available/useful in developing pediatric transition to practice programs. The ANA, National Association of Pediatric Nurse Practitioners, and Society of Pediatric Nurses' (SPN, 2015) *Scope and Standards for Pediatric Nursing, 2<sup>nd</sup> edition* provides the foundation for pediatric nursing practice. In 2017, SPN identified key competencies (knowledge, skills, and attitudes) to move the new graduate pediatric RN (regardless of educational background) from entry-level competence toward proficiency in pediatric nursing through the release of its inaugural *Pediatric Residency Core Competencies* document (Mott, et al, 2018; SPN, 2017). In 2021, the Pediatric Nurse Certification Board (PNCB) released its competency framework for pediatric nurses. National accreditation of nurse residency

programs is available through both the Commission on Collegiate Nursing Education (CCNE, 2021) and through the ANCC Practice Transition Accreditation Program (PTAP) (ANCC, 2023).

Changes in professional/educational standards such as the development of SPN's *Pediatric Nursing Excellence Model* (PNE) (McDowell et al., 2023) and release of SPN's *Pre-licensure Core Competencies, 2<sup>nd</sup> edition* (Lewis et al., 2024; SPN, 2023), compelled review and subsequent revision of SPN's *Pediatric Residency Core Competencies* document (SPN, 2017). In early 2022, SPN's Board of Directors authorized a task force of SPN members to revise both competency documents (pre-licensure and residency). Rather than pursuing concurrent revision task force members used a sequential approach, revising the pre-licensure competencies document between January 2022 and March 2023 (Lewis et al., 2024; SPN, 2023).

Upon completion of the pre-licensure competencies, the task force began residency competency revisions via monthly virtual meetings April 2023 to October 2024. Task force members conducted a gap analysis comparing the original residency competencies to the revised pre-licensure competencies document, the CCNE accreditation standards, the PNCB competencies, and the PNE Model.

The original residency core competencies model consisted of 44 competencies distributed across 8 domains. The task force collaborated to revise and align the existing competencies with the PNE Model and consists of 5 domains denoting essential elements of pediatric nursing practice (engagement, values, principles, care delivery, and continuous improvement) resulting in a total of 65 competencies distributed across those domains. The concepts of family-centered care and accountability are woven through the competencies.

The revised competencies can be used in a variety of ways to facilitate smoother transitions into practice by informing all team members of the knowledge, skills, and attitudes newly licensed pediatric nurses are expected to possess upon residency program completion. In addition to residency program development, the competencies can be used guide professional development programs for nursing staff, or to develop a standardized framework to assess and enhance the performance of new graduate pediatric RNs, ensuring high-quality patient care and optimal outcomes.

For those who are attending the 2025 SPN Conference in Anaheim, you are encouraged to attend the plenary session titled *SPN Unveiling the New* on Thursday, May 1, from 1:45-3:00 pm to learn more about the newest version of the *SPN Residency Core Competencies* will be presented there.

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