



SOCIETY OF
PEDIATRIC NURSES

SPN Position Statement

Importance of Direct Pediatric Clinicals in Undergraduate Nursing Education

All SPN Position statements are valid for two years after approval date.

Approved by SPN Board of Directors on 9/7/2023

Original Authors: Ann Bowling, PhD, APRN, CPNP-PC, CNE, CHSE

Michaela Lewis, DNP, ARNP, CPNP-AC/PC, CPN, CPEN, CNE, CNE-cl, PMHS, CCRN, VA-BC

The Society of Pediatric Nurses (SPN) recognizes the need for child health clinical and didactic content in undergraduate nursing programs. The healthcare needs of pediatric patients present unique challenges and particular attention must be given to differing epidemiology of disease in pediatric patients and approaches to treatment, developmental stages, limited communication abilities in infants and young children, and the provision of nursing care in the context of the family.

SPN believes that all children should receive safe, high-quality, culturally humble, family-centered care in an environment that supports the health and development of the child. To ensure the existence of a workforce trained to deliver this specialized care, nursing students must have pediatric-specific training. Building upon this belief, SPN recommends the following be included in undergraduate nursing education:

- Prelicensure nursing programs must have readily discernible pediatric nursing content built upon theoretical and empirical knowledge as outlined in SPN's *Pre-Licensure Core Competencies* (SPN, 2023).
- Nursing education must include direct pediatric clinical care experiences. Direct patient care experiences can be in inpatient/acute care settings but may also occur in any other environment where care is provided to the child and their family, including ambulatory clinics, rehabilitation units or centers, community settings, schools, camps, or the home (American Association of Colleges of Nursing [AACN], 2021).
- Direct patient care pediatric clinical experiences may be supplemented, but not fully replaced, with adjunctive experiential learning modalities such as

simulation. Pediatric simulations, when used, need to follow the International Nursing Association of Clinical and Simulation Learning (INACSL) standards for simulation (Watts et al., 2021).

- The *Pre-Licensure Core Competencies* provide a framework for the development and revision of undergraduate nursing curricula specific to the practice of pediatric nursing and should be incorporated in the design and delivery of student-centered, concept-based, curricula, in addition to the following resources:
 - *Pediatric Nursing Scope and Standards of Practice* (2nd ed.). (American Nurses Association [ANA] et al., 2015).
 - *Healthcare Simulation Standards of Best Practice* (Watts et al., 2021).
 - *The Essentials: Core Competencies for Professional Nursing Education* (AACN, 2021).

REFERENCES

American Association of Colleges of Nursing. (2021, April 6). *The essentials: Core competencies for professional nursing education*. Retrieved August 24, 2023, from <https://www.aacnnursing.org/Portals/42/AcademicNursing/pdf/Essentials-2021.pdf>

American Nurses Association, National Association of Pediatric Nurse Practitioners, & Society of Pediatric Nurses. (2015). *Pediatric nursing: Scope and standards of practice* (2nd ed.). American Nurses Association.

Society of Pediatric Nurses. (2023). *Pre-licensure core competencies*. Retrieved August 24, 2023, from <https://spn.memberclicks.net/assets/docs/About-SPN/SPN%20Pre-Licensure%20Core%20Competencies.pdf>

Watts, P., Rossler, K., Bowler, F., Miller, C., Charnetski, M., Decker, S., Molloy, M., Persico, L., McMahan, E., McDermott, D., Hallmark, B. (2021). Preamble. *Clinical Simulation in Nursing*, 58, 1-4 <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ecns.2021.08.006>