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Title:

Pediatric Nursing, Is it Right For You?

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Summary:

Pediatric nursing, or the field of nursing that relates to treating children, is a specialized and sometimes stressful field. Pediatric nursing is not for everyone. Before you decide to specialize in pediatric nursing it is important to understand some of the drawbacks to the field, as well as the benefits.

Keywords:

Scrubs, Nursing, Education, Nursing Scrubs, Nursing Uniforms, Nursing School, Healthcare, Nursing Training, Careers

Article Body:

Pediatric nursing, or the field of nursing that relates to treating children, is a specialized and sometimes stressful field. Pediatric nursing is not for everyone. Before you decide to specialize in pediatric nursing it is important to understand some of the drawbacks to the field, as well as the benefits.

<b>How Do I Become a Pediatric Nurse?</b>

Pediatric nursing is not offered as a specialty in nursing school, so the training that pediatric nurses receive comes through the job. Some hospitals provide an orientation for nurses that are interested in pediatric nursing. This training includes classroom as well as clinical training. Other hospitals do all of their training on the floor, partnering the new pediatric nurse with an experienced nurse as a mentor. Regardless of which method is used at the hospital where you are employed, no one expects you to come directly from nursing school prepared to work in pediatrics without additional training.

Beyond the training that you receive from the hospital, there is specialized coursework available for nurses who are interested in becoming pediatric nurses. The American Heart Association offers a Pediatric Advanced Life Support course, and the Emergency Nurses Association offers the Emergency Nurse Pediatric Course. There is also the Society of Pediatric Nurses, a professional association for those in the field. After you have received training in pediatric nursing, you may want to obtain the Certified Pediatric Nurse certificate, which is available by exam.

<b>Do I Want to Become a Pediatric Nurse?</b>

While these facts address the amount of training that is involved in pediatric nursing, they do not explain the emotional toll of working as a pediatric nurse. Because pediatric nurses work solely with those under eighteen, it can be a difficult job. Working with young patients that are very ill is stressful. Not only must you deal with your patient, but the parents as well. It is a job that can be rewarding, but draining as well. For those that are interested in working with children, it helps to understand what is involved.

Some types of pediatric nursing are less stressful than others. Working in the emergency room of a pediatric hospital will provide a good deal of variety to your day, and most patients suffer from cuts, broken bones and other injuries that, while frightening, are highly treatable. Working as a pediatric nurse in the oncology unit, on the other hand, is a very difficult job. The day after day exposure to extremely ill children and distraught parents require a special person to perform this job. Another challenge that many people have with working around pediatric patients that are very ill is that the children who spend so much time in the hospital become close to their caretakers, and the reverse is true as well. A child in the oncology unit may be there for weeks at a time, or come in several times a week. This creates a strong attachment between the patient and nurse, which, if the patient does not survive, is very painful.

For those that can work as a pediatric nurse with very sick patients, the job can be very rewarding. The joys of watching a child regain his strength and get to return to school cannot be compared to any other situation, and the bond that you develop with your young patients is priceless.

To determine if you are suited to work as a pediatric nurse, it helps to be very self aware. Are you easily upset? Does seeing other people sad or frightened upset you? If so, pediatric nursing may not be your best career path. If you want to work with children, but are concerned that you may not be comfortable working around very sick children, consider a career as a pediatric nurse in the emergency room or operating room. In those places you are exposed to less illness and you are not around the same children for extended periods of time.

<b>Make Pediatric Nursing Work for You</b>

If you choose to become a pediatric nurse, there are a variety of steps that you can take to reduce the stress of your job. Regular exercise and healthy eating both contribute to a general sense of well being. It is also important to develop an informal support group of friends or family members that you can talk to about the stress of your day. Another way to reduce the stress involved in pediatric nursing is to rotate to other units. Spend some time in the pediatric intensive care unit, and then move to the OR. Not only does this give you an emotional break, but it provides you with a well rounded skill set.