

Health Career Observer



The Official Newsletter of the WNY R-AHEC

February 2023

Pediatric Nurse Practitioner

Pediatric Nurse Practitioners (PNP's) are advance practice registered nurses (APRN's) who specialize in caring for newborns, infants, toddlers, adolescents and young adults. PNP's focus on well-childcare and the prevention or management of common pediatric acute illnesses and chronic conditions. PNP's can diagnose and treat without physician oversight. They consult with physicians and other health professionals when needed. PNP's can work independently, in pediatric offices, hospitals, specialty clinics, school-based health centers or urgent or convenient care clinics.

Average Annual Pay: \$123,780



"Getting to see kids grow and learn is so much fun... I love seeing a kid smiling and laughing for the first time in months after battling depression."

How Do I Become a Pediatric Nurse Practitioner

**Projected Job
Market Growth:
31% by 2031**

Pediatric Nurse Practitioners need at least a master's degree. APRN's must be licensed registered nurses in their state, pass a national certification exam and have a state APRN license. They may choose to earn a Doctor of Nursing Practice (DNP) or a Ph.D. Most APRN programs prefer candidates who have a bachelor's degree in nursing, but some schools offer bridge programs for registered nurses with an associate degree or diploma in nursing. There are also APRN programs available for those who did not obtain a degree in nursing but rather in a related health science field. These programs will prepare students for the RN licensure in addition to APRN curriculum.

What Does a Pediatric Nurse Practitioner Do?



Perform physical exams and observe patients



Record patient medical history and symptoms



Perform and order diagnostic tests



Analyze test results



Diagnose health problems



Prescribe medication and treatments



Create patient care plans



Counsel and educate patients and families



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A Professional Account

Ashley Milliken, MS RN CPNP-PC, a Certified Pediatric Nurse Practitioner at Stony Brook Pediatrics shares her personal insight.

What is the most rewarding part of your job?

"Getting to see kids grow and learn is so much fun. It is also so rewarding to see a kid who has been struggling with a really hard issue, like depression or anxiety, come in for an appointment and say they're finally seeing things turn around. I love seeing a kid smiling and laughing for the first time in months after battling depression."

What is the most challenging?

"I think the most common answer you'll hear in pediatrics is the sadness of seeing kids who are sick and don't get better. That's always heartbreaking. When a kid passes away at the hospital, you are with the child and their family for that brief but terrible moment, and then you likely won't ever see them again. When you are in primary care, you continue to care for that family for a long time. You're walking with them through their grief and often still caring for their other kids. So, that requires a lot of emotional investment."

What do you wish you knew back in school that you know now?

"Before starting nursing school, I thought I was going to school to learn everything I needed to know about medicine in order to be able to take care of whatever patients I had on any given day. Boy, was I wrong! There are so, so many types of illness, types of patients, and ways you can care for people when they need help. Nursing school could only scratch the surface on all of those topics. School in any healthcare profession can never teach you everything you need to know to be a good clinician. But, it can teach you to THINK like a good clinician. There's a reason why we call it "practicing medicine." No one comes out of school knowing everything they need to know. You are constantly learning more along the way."

Anything else you want to share?

"I think many people discount how vitally important it is to care for yourself and process your emotions and experiences on a regular basis when you work with sick and dying people. When we are part of a patient's death, or we encounter a terrible, heartbreaking situation with a patient who is suffering, it can feel like you are not allowed to have any feelings about that. But, it is so important to make room for yourself to feel sad, to grieve that loss, and to allow your support system to care for you for a little while. Otherwise, you will start to create unhealthy ways of handling that trauma and grief - ways that usually result in either bitterness or burnout."



Click on the image for a personal account from a Pediatric Nurse Practitioner

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=67LyHjKNrD8>



Scan Me



Click on the image for information on Nurse Practitioners

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=smiXChYIRUU>



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For more information visit the US Bureau of Labor Statistics
www.bls.gov/ooh/healthcare/nurse-anesthetists-nurse-midwives-and-nurse-practitioners.htm
or the American Association of Nurse Practitioners
<http://www.aanp.org/>