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“You may feel little, but everybody is a big deal.”

-Kid President

Can you tell me a little bit about your hospital and the units you cover?

I work on a 12 (up to 4 PICU)-bed pediatric floor within a Women's hospital. Pediatrics has only been around for four years at this location. I go everywhere! Pediatrics, PICU, NICU, Outpatient, Radiology, and the ED. I will get consulted for Mother/Baby every now and again.

What's your typical unit census and about how many patients do you see per day?

Typically there are about 4-10 patients on the inpatient unit. Depending on the ED's census, I see anywhere from 6-14 children per day.

What does your average day look like?

My shift at the hospital is 2:30pm-11pm, Sunday through Thursday. During the week, I have one hour of collaboration with the only other CCLS at our hospital. I start my day by checking in on the inpatient floor and following up with anything from the morning. From there, I spend the majority of my shift in the Emergency Department. I prioritize based on level of acuity in the ED, if procedures are occurring on the inpatient unit, and where I can be the most helpful.

What is your favorite distraction item and how do you use it?

Hide and seek books – I love using them whenever possible! I have used them before for breathing treatments, IVs, I&D procedures, and getting patients to look certain ways. I also **love** kinetic sand for inpatient kiddos.

What's the best part about your job?

My favorite part of the job is being able to see that I've made a difference with a scary or difficult situation for a child. This can be anything from playing with kids on the patient floor, singing with kids through laceration repairs, or helping a child through a procedure when a family member thinks that they “won't do well.” Being able to show patients, families, and staff that we are a beneficial part of the team is my favorite part of every shift!

What's the hardest part in doing your job?

The hardest part of the job for me is when I miss interactions or procedures. I would love to always be available to help every kid, but it is obviously not possible. I believe that child life is so essential and so beneficial that I would love to be able to interact with every child. If only we could be in 5 places at once.

What's a facet of your job that people wouldn't expect?

Siblings! I love being able to provide support to siblings. Making sure that siblings are aware of what's happening and educating them is just as important as educating patients. Sometimes it's hard to remember that siblings go through traumatic experiences when they see someone they love upset. We started a sibling education class last summer prior to supporting siblings that were going to meet a new baby that was in the NICU; this was a great way to see the impact that we can make on siblings. Education and using child-friendly language can go a long way.

What's something you wish you knew when you started on this unit?

Every day is different and you learn new skills (even as a CCLS). I love the fact that this job keeps me on my toes, teaches me new skills, gives me ways to talk to children and families, and keeps me wanting to learn more every single day. I also wish that I knew that the relationships you make with other members of staff, especially nurses, can go a long way.



Do you have anything else you'd like to share about your job, tips for students, or thoughts?

Don't give up! This process is difficult but totally worth it when you can make an impact on kids every day. Find ways to keep your confidence up, and ask questions – always!