

Katelyn Hutchens, BS, CCLS

BACHELOR OF SCIENCE IN EARLY CHILDHOOD DEVELOPMENT, MINOR IN PSYCHOLOGY
2.5 YEARS OF EXPERIENCE

"BE SILLY. BE HONEST. BE KIND." - RALPH WALDO EMERSON

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

I work at a freestanding children's hospital and cover two campuses. Our main campus has 367 beds and our second campus has 52 beds. I cover the burn unit one day a week at our main campus and cover the second campus three days a week. At the second campus I primarily focus on the Inpatient Unit, Epilepsy Monitoring Unit, Radiology, and our pediatric ED. Our pediatric ED at our second campus has a total of 28 beds.

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

It depends on the time of day/hours I am working/unit I am covering. The day I cover the burn unit I typically see around 6-12 patients a day. I work with burn patients that are inpatient and also cover outpatient burn treatments. I cover at our second campus one weekday evening and two weekend shifts. During my evening shift I typically see around 5-10 patients and, on the weekend shift I see around 5-15. Typically during the hours I work at our second campus I primarily see patients in our inpatient unit, EMU unit, and the pediatric ED.

What does your average day look like?

Each and every day is different for me since I work at both campuses and cover different areas. I work Tuesday 2:30-11, Friday 9-5:30, Saturday and Sunday 11:00-11:30. On my evening shift at our second campus I usually get handoff, check the ER board, and check for evening MRI referrals. I then spend most of my evening going wherever I am needed, mostly seeing our ED patients. When I am at the main campus and on the burn unit I check the census and print the outpatient treatments for the day. I then prioritize my day based on the census and treatment times. On the weekends I am the only CCLS at our second campus, I spend most of my time on the inpatient unit and the pediatric ED.

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

My all time favorite distraction item is bubbles! Bubbles are great to promote deep breathing and patients can keep their hands busy during a procedure/treatment.

What's the best part about your job?

The best part of my job is the variety and how each shift is always so different and the ability to make the hospital a not-so-scary place for children. I love empowering patients and watching them succeed during a procedure/treatment. It's the best feeling seeing a patient proud of themselves or a parent proud of the outcome of a procedure/treatment. Seeing a kid smile after is the best reward!

What's the hardest part in doing your job?

The hardest part of my job is missing a procedure or treatment. On the weekend, I am the only CCLS so prioritization is key but I try to give the parents the tools they need to help their child cope, if I assess I need to be in another procedure at the same time.

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

I think some people think I just get to play all day or be the iPad/bubble lady. A lot of therapeutic interventions occur with patients and our hospital has a unique Epilepsy Monitoring Unit where we provide services and we also provide services to our Sleep Lab department by providing support during sleep lab setups.

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

The importance of self-care! Self-care is so important in any field, taking care of our self makes us a better CCLS for our patients and families we serve.

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

It is worth every bit of hard work and all of the sacrifices you must make along the way during your child life journey! Be open to new opportunities and don't forget how far you have come! Each and every day I am so lucky and blessed to be a Certified Child Life Specialist!

