

During my final six shifts in the Pediatric Emergency Department, I became more independent, improved my skills, and became more confident in my abilities to perform as a nurse. As I progressed through my shifts, my preceptor gave me more room and freedom to be independent and take lead as the primary nurse. We spent some time in triage, and as time went on, I was able to differentiate and decide what questions to ask the patient and the family members, what focused assessment to do, and what to enter when charting. I saw major progress through my confidence as a nurse as I got into my final shifts. I began to not rely on my preceptor as much when deciding how to care for the patients and deciding what things were important to note. Becoming more independent and confident made me feel less anxious and more calm and comfortable when talking with these patients and their families.

As well as becoming more confident in my assessments and charting, I also became more confident when a code would occur. During my last shifts, I witnessed several codes occur. At the beginning of my preceptorship, I would mostly just observe and stand back, out of the way. As I began to feel more comfortable with the staff members, locations of certain supplies, and the flow of the codes in this department, I found myself jumping in and helping where I could. Even though I still was guided by other staff members and other nurses were walking me through the code, I felt more confident in my ability to be active in these situations and no longer just observe.

Another thing I felt that I drastically improved on was my communication skills. I was very nervous to communicate with any doctors or even other nurses at times, but towards the final shifts of my preceptorship, I was significantly more confident and willing to discuss patients with the physicians attending to them. At the beginning of my shifts in the Pedi ED, I would always ask my nurse if I had a question relating to the patient's needs or care plan. In my final shifts, I would approach the physicians or nurse practitioners if I had a question regarding the patient's plan of care. I also became more confident in my ability to call report to nurses on other floors, as well as handing off patients to the oncoming nurses at shift change. I learned to have the patient's chart open while calling report or reporting off, and to also make notes of significant things that happened with my patient while they were in my care. I learned what things are significant to add and what things I do not need to include when giving report. It really helped that everyone was very patient with me while I was giving report the first few times, and this allowed me to feel more calm and practice to the best of my abilities.

Along with improving on my critical thinking, code, and communication skills, I also improved on my skills such as straight catheterizations, blood draws and IV sticks. I got to do my first straight catheter on a 5 month old female. Before I performed the skill, my preceptor gave me some tips and tricks to achieving this skill on a patient so small. I used these skills and was able to accomplish the straight catheterization on the second try. Although it took two tries, the other nurses were very supportive of me and encouraged me throughout the whole process. I also improved on my IV skills. I learned how to feel and trouble shoot when performing an IV, as well as how far to advance the catheter versus the needle. By the end of my preceptorship, I was able to perform IVs successfully on the majority of my patients. Being able to perform these

skills successfully made me feel much more confident in my ability to practice and perform as a nurse, as well as a feeling of satisfaction with my skills abilities.

Overall, I really enjoyed my time during my preceptorship. I loved my preceptor and am so thankful for all she taught me, and her patience through my learning experience. I feel much more confident in my abilities now, and am so happy with my improvement through my ten shifts. I feel much more confident going in to being a nurse on this unit now, and am excited to learn so much more when I begin as a Graduate Nurse at the end of May. I am very pleased at my ability to improve on my critical thinking skills, assessment skills, communication skills, and skills such as IVs and straight catheterizations. I am so excited to begin working with all the nurses and staff on this unit.