

For my Capstone preceptorship, I was matched with the Neonatal Intensive Care Unit. Being on this unit has been a dream come true. I have learned a multitude of skills while completing my five preceptor shifts thus far. While in the NICU, I have gone between two preceptors and it has been an amazing experience. With each shift I've completed, I have learned something new and hope to continue learning with the remaining shifts I have.

On my first and second shifts, I was given two patients. The first was intubated and had premature RDS, while the second was there for premature RDS and was on oxygen. This was my first experience working with a baby that was on the vent. During this clinical, my preceptor showed me how to navigate oral care, provide gavage feedings, showed me the setting on the vent and how they worked, and oriented me to the unit. She also showed me how to care for a patient on high flow oxygen and explained how many liters are needed to attempt to breastfeed. I also was able to see skin to skin with mom and baby and sit in on session with the lactation consultant. By the second shift, I was doing all documentation for both babies with my preceptor reviewing and cosigning.

My third shift was spent with a new preceptor who was absolutely fantastic. For this shift, I had 3 patients, all of which were feeders growers. During this shift, I documented on all my patients, as well as, did gavage feeds, bottle fed, participated in every care time, and administered a variety of medications.

The fourth shift was incredibly challenging. I was given 4 patients for this shift and, at times, felt very overwhelmed. One patient was admitted for possible aspiration, while the other three were there for premature RDS. Of the four, one was NPO, one was in an isolette, one was under bili lights, and one was in an open crib. This shift showed me so much, not only about myself, but also about time management and prioritization. All of my assigned babies had the same care times so prioritization played a huge role in this shift. I learned how to handle bili lights and check bili levels, I administered medications and participated in a blood transfusion, I learned how to care for a baby in an isolette, and bottle fed/gavage fed two of the four babies. Not only was I caring for all four babies, I was also documenting on four, which was especially challenging for me. Nonetheless, I stepped up to the plate and was able to time manage while simultaneously caring for four babies.

During my fifth shift, I was given two primary patients and helped with a third. My two primary patients were there for premature RDS, while the third one had a trach. I was able to complete a variety of skills during this shift! I inserted an OG tube, helped with a bath for an infant in an isolette, directly participated in rounds with Dr. Sparks, watched a PIV inserted, suctioned a trach patient, gave a feeding and medications through a G-tube, documented for my two primary patients, and gave a variety of medications. This was by far one of the best shifts yet. My preceptor for this shift, Callie, was absolutely fantastic. I felt so supported by her and never felt like I was in over my head. She walked me through all of my cares and answered any questions I had.

Overall, the first five shifts of my preceptorship have shown me so much. I feel like I have grown, not only in skills, but overall as a student nurse. I hope to continue to be able to have experiences that highlight my learning and skills.