

1. How does this clinical site relate to the course?

Pediatrics focuses on caring for humans from the moment they are born until they are eighteen. During this period, the child will spend most of their life going to school and being in the school setting. School nursing is a nursing role that is often overlooked, even though it plays an important role in the health and safety of children. This clinical site emphasizes how important preventative care is and how crucial immunizations are for children since other children in enclosed spaces will surround the children for most of the day. Any illness in the classroom can quickly spread from child to child and cause problems at the school. Overall, since this course is centered around pediatrics, a school is the perfect place to engage in pediatrics and learn about their care.

2. How were you an engaged nursing professional today?

Unfortunately, there were not many nursing opportunities during my clinical rotation. Only two students visited the school nurse, one for a band-aid and the other because they had a stuffy nose. While there were limited opportunities for hands-on learning, I learned a lot about the behind-the-scenes of school nursing. During this day, the school nurse went through all the student's immunizations and school physicals and made sure that every student had the appropriate documents for them to be able to attend school. If they did not have the necessary documents, the nurse called their guardians and informed them they could not participate in school without them. I also learned what is required from the student and their guardians to have medications given at the school. The school nurse was very informative and had much to teach about the school system and how everything is run.

3. How did you contribute to the service provided by the school nurse today?

As previously stated, I did not have many opportunities to engage with students and practice care, but I tried to be as welcoming as possible to the two students who came into the nurse's room. The students may have been nervous about visiting the school nurse, so having a welcoming presence can help them feel more relaxed and at ease. One of the few things I had the opportunity to do was to prepare the daily meds needed for the following week for the students who took medications at school. A big role of the school nurse was to get all medical records in order, but I couldn't help in that regard because I didn't know how the school's system worked, and the school nurse said it was something I just couldn't do.

4. Name 3 ways this clinical site impacts Pediatric health.

The school setting impacts pediatric health in a multitude of ways. According to the Illinois State Board of Education (2023), a physical education class is required for all Illinois students from elementary school through high school, at least three days per five-day week. This promotes physical activity and reduces the risk of childhood obesity. School cafeterias also play an important role in Pediatric health. Some schools have programs like the National School Lunch Program that ensure that every lunch meal has the following components: grains, meat/meat alternatives, fruit, vegetables, and milk (Illinois State Board of Education, 2020). Programs like these ensure that children have access to healthy, balanced meals. The school nurse also mentioned that the school has dental and vision clinics for the children. This allows children who may not have access to dental and visual examinations to be still checked.

5. What are the health risks of the population served during today's clinical based on your observations today?

One of the health risks I saw during my clinical rotation was the lack of immunizations and health records that the school nurse had to go through. The school nurse had to make various

phone calls to guardians, letting them know that their child would soon be unable to attend school if they did not provide the needed documents. Allowing the students to attend school for well over a month without proof of vaccinations puts both the student and their classmates at risk of contagious diseases.

Childhood obesity seems to be a potential health risk in this population. A few of the children I saw during the school day appeared to be somewhat overweight, and this can become a more serious problem in the future.

6. Choose one of the health risks identified in question 5 and develop a plan of care to address this. Include a nursing diagnosis, a measurable goal, and at least 3 nursing interventions to achieve this goal.

Childhood obesity is a serious condition as it can come with many health issues. Even with mandatory physical education classes and healthy lunches being provided, there are still many cases of children being overweight or close to obese. A nursing diagnosis for this would be “at risk for being overweight related to being heavier than the recommended weight for their age group as evidenced by their school physical exam.” The goal for this diagnosis would be for the child to be in the recommended BMI for their age and height. This can be achieved by setting a realistic goal for the child, having the child keep a food diary of what they eat, and encouraging foods low in calories and fat (Phelps, 2023).

7. How will your experience during the School Nurse job shadowing impact your nursing practice?

One factor to consider when working with children in the school setting is that the child may be faking an injury or illness just to be able to get out of school. Not only is a thorough

assessment of the child necessary but being able to read non-verbal cues is necessary as well. If a child presents with stomach pain or discomfort but doesn't come in guarding their stomach, it could be a sign that they may not actually be in pain. In nursing school, we get taught to pay attention to the non-verbal cues of the patient, but it wasn't until the school nurse shadowing that I realized how important recognizing said cues may be.

## References

Illinois State Board of Education. (2023). *Illinois instructional mandates 2023-24 school year*.

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Phelps, L.L. (2023). *Nursing diagnosis reference manual* (12th ed.). Wolters Kluwer.