

FROM PICU TO PACU: A SUCCESSFUL EDUCATIONAL PROGRAM TO SUPPORT ACQUISITION OF NEW KNOWLEDGE AND STANDARDIZATION OF CARE

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Background:

Our children's hospital recently separated from an adult facility and opened its own surgical services department. Experienced pediatric critical care nurses were recruited and hired to staff a Post-Anesthesia Care Unit (PACU). During training, we identified gaps in knowledge among these PICU nurses regarding: anesthetic agents, airway management, post-operative neurological care, and Phase I discharge criteria.

Objectives:

We sought to increase knowledge and comfort level with identified topics; provide hands-on experience with airway management techniques; promote a standardized approach to care regardless of nursing experience; and ensure compliance with ASPAN Standards.

Process:

After identifying staff needs, we developed a curriculum utilizing the ASPAN Competency Based Orientation and Credentialing Program for the Registered Nurse in the Perianesthesia Setting, and delivered a four hour mandatory class at three different times to accommodate different scheduling needs. Participants evaluated their pre- and post-class knowledge for each topic.

Statement of Successful Practice:

We educated 21 nurses over one week, which resulted in a statistically significant change in the nurse's ($n = 12$, 57% response rate) perception of their understanding of: Anesthesia Agents ($p < .001$); Management of Airway ($p < .001$); Neurologic Status ($p = .018$) and Discharge Criteria ($p = .001$).

Implications for Advancing Practice:

Pediatric PACU nursing is highly specialized. As a result, it is difficult to recruit experienced staff. We demonstrate that PICU nurses can be trained in the care of the PACU patient in a short period of time, which allows for increased utilization of nursing staff within a facility.