



Cook Children's Nurse Residency Program

Clinical Unit Descriptions per Specialty Track

Medical/Surgical Subspecialty Track

3 Pavilion – Renal/GI Unit

The patients on this unit vary in age from infant to adolescent with complex health problems related to the kidneys and gastrointestinal (GI) tract. Nurses on this unit are challenged to understand hemodynamics and renal function, as well as various types of dialysis and gastrointestinal disorders. If you want diagnostic variability, along with medical and surgical patients in multiple age ranges, this unit is an excellent learning experience for new nurses.

4 Main – Acute Medical & Surgical Unit

The patients on this 36-bed unit range in age from infants to adolescents, caring for a wide variety of medical, surgical, and behavioral diagnoses. This multidisciplinary unit encompasses specialties from all areas of the hospital. It provides an excellent opportunity to develop foundational nursing skills, practice patient/family education, refine communication techniques, and enhance time management. This unit is very fast-paced with a high patient turnover each day. This unit will provide you with the opportunity to discover and learn something new every day.

5 Main – Pulmonary Care and Infectious Disease Unit

The primary focus of this unit is on children with a variety of respiratory and infectious diseases, such as RSV/Bronchiolitis, Cystic Fibrosis, Sepsis, and a multitude of other medical diagnoses. Staff specialize in high-flow oxygen delivery and hypothermia treatment plans. 5 Main is a pilot unit for various hospital initiatives and participates in refining new protocols and procedures. Astute respiratory assessment and patient/family education are key elements of the nursing care on this unit. If you have a keen eye for subtle changes and enjoy teaching, this unit will provide a rich clinical experience!

6 South Tower – Behavioral Health Unit

This unit consists of two elements: inpatient behavioral health for children with serious psychiatric concerns and an outpatient partial hospitalization program (PHP). These programs attempt to meet the psychiatric mental health needs of pediatric patients. The philosophy of the program is based on the Collaborative Problem-Solving approach, and that “Kids Do Well If They Can.” The focus of this specialty is crisis stabilization, developing positive coping strategies, and returning the child to their home as quickly as possible. Nurses working in this area have a heart for these incredible patients and recognize the importance of Trauma Informed Care and looking at the “bigger picture!”

3 North – Endocrinology

Nurses on this unit care for pediatric patients with various endocrine diseases and disorders (such as Diabetes and Addison’s disease). Cook Children’s is a national forerunner for the treatment and care of infants and children with hyperinsulinism. Patient/family education is an essential nursing function on this unit!

5 South Tower – Trauma and Pre/Postoperative Unit

The patients on this unit range in age from infant to adolescent. Nurses primarily focus on the pre- and postoperative care of children requiring surgery, including patients with traumatic injuries. This is truly a multidisciplinary floor. Nurses on this unit collaborate with surgeons, anesthesiologists, physician assistants, nurse practitioners, physical therapists, occupational therapists, and many other healthcare professionals to prepare children and their families for surgery and provide postoperative nursing care and patient/family education. Diagnoses range from uncomplicated appendectomies to complex spinal fusions, with a wide range in between. This unit is very fast-paced with a high patient turnover each day. If you enjoy patient/family education and gaining a variety of clinical skills, this unit will effectively utilize your abilities.



6 Main – 23-hour Observation Unit

This unit is an extension of the Emergency Department. This unit has a narrow focus on diagnoses such as asthma, constipation, and RSV/bronchiolitis, to name a few. Each of these diagnoses has a well-established treatment pathway, providing consistency in care. This unit is built on strong interdisciplinary teamwork, including respiratory therapists, paramedics, nurses, patient care techs, and nurse practitioners. Patients and their families are provided with the opportunity to be admitted for observation and care, rather than undergoing procedures such as breathing treatments for hours in the Emergency Department. The primary goal of this unit is to provide strong patient/family education to prevent return to the Emergency Department. Health literacy is also a strong focus for the staff on 6 Main. The nurses on this unit are experts at assessing health literacy and providing targeted patient education to help families successfully care for their children.

4 Pavilion – Neurosurgery and Epilepsy Monitoring Unit

This unit specializes in the diagnosis and treatment of children with complex seizures and neurological diseases and disorders. Nurses on this unit have the opportunity to care for medical patients undergoing diagnostic studies such as video EEG monitoring and various scans, as well as surgical patients undergoing repair of a wide range of neurological diseases and disorders. Diagnoses seen on this unit are infantile spasms, seizure disorders such as epilepsy (receiving medical and/or surgical treatment), movement disorders, and tumor resections. Nurses on this unit enjoy the challenge of understanding the function of the brain and central nervous system, as well as the role of educator to patients and families dealing with these diseases and disorders!

5 North Tower – Hematology/Oncology Unit

The staff on this unit specializes in pediatric disorders of the blood and childhood cancer. We have one of only five MIBG treatment rooms in the United States. MIBG is a specialized treatment for neuroblastoma, giving some children an improved prognosis over the years past. The stem cell bone marrow transplant unit provides children with certain types of cancer, as well as Sickle Cell Disease, with the possibility of a cure. Hematology/Oncology requires robust emotional health, strong coping skills, as well as nursing knowledge, skills, and critical thinking



Infusion Center

The infusion center is located in the Dodson Outpatient Building, and our nursing staff serves a wide variety of patients. In infusion, you will see both acute and chronic patients from various specialties, including, but not limited to, hematology/oncology, nephrology, rheumatology, gastroenterology, and others. Nurse residents should expect a fast-paced environment and an opportunity to use a variety of skills, such as accessing ports, starting PIVs, practicing time management, and using critical thinking skills. Our infusion center currently features 24 chairs, 10 private rooms, an adolescent and young adult (AYA) room, and an activity playroom. Infusion also offers opportunities to grow as you gain experience, including training as a line access nurse (LAN) and orientation to our procedural area. If you enjoy a fast-paced environment, working within a close-knit team, and want a taste of outpatient nursing, infusion is the place to be!

4 North Tower – Transitional and Rehabilitative Care Unit

This unique unit is really two subspecialties in one. The Translational Care Unit (TCU) cares primarily for graduates of the Neonatal Intensive Care Unit (NICU) whose caregivers will be taking them home with tracheostomies (many on ventilators). The Rehabilitative Care Unit (RCU) provides collaborative team care to children with traumatic brain injuries, near drowning, strokes, and other diseases, disorders, or injuries involving loss of function. The team's goal is to maximize the return of function in these amazingly resilient children and support their caregivers on the journey. TCU/RCU offers an opportunity to develop relationships with patients and their caregivers since some have extended stays. Both TCU and RCU offer educational and training opportunities, enabling caregivers to learn how to care for their children with medically complex needs. This is a unit where interdisciplinary teamwork is essential, as you work together with RTs, PTs, OTs, physicians, social workers, case managers, nurse practitioners/physician assistants, among others, to care for these often-complex children while planning for their transition to their home environments.

Dialysis Clinic

Dialysis is an outpatient clinic that specializes in providing life-sustaining renal replacement treatments to patients with kidney failure. We serve patients ranging in age from newborn to 18 years. Our facility offers two modalities: Intermittent Hemodialysis and Peritoneal Dialysis. Patients on intermittent hemodialysis come three times a week and dialyze for about 3 to 4 hours whereas patients on peritoneal dialysis have the flexibility to perform daily exchanges at home and are seen in clinic every month. Although we are an outpatient facility, dialysis nurses also perform inpatient hemodialysis treatments in the hospital and provide consultation on peritoneal dialysis treatments within the hospital as well. Our nursing team has specialized knowledge in the operation of several complex machines and water purification systems. Dialysis nurses work closely with the interdisciplinary team to provide optimal care for patients on maintenance dialysis. If you love establishing rapport with patients and families, providing continuous education to improve the health of patients, while learning highly specialized knowledge and skills, you will love being in dialysis.



Intermediate Care Units

Rotations available in both Medical/Surgical Subspecialty & Critical/Intermediate Care Tracks

3 South – Cardiac Stepdown Unit

Cardiac Stepdown is a 14-bed, fast-paced unit. You will see a variety of diagnoses, including pre- and post- op congenital heart defect patients from the Cardiac ICU, post-cardiac catheterization, and telemetry overflow patients. You will provide care to patients with central lines, pacemakers, chest tubes, high-flow nasal cannulas, and occasionally tracheostomies, as well as home ventilators. This is a great unit to develop strong critical thinking, prioritization, and cardiac assessment skills, along with a basic understanding of congenital and acquired heart defects.



Procedures/Operating Room

This rotation will focus on the nursing care of pediatric patients who are sedated or undergoing general anesthesia. The procedural environment involves the skilled interventions and collaborative support of a multidisciplinary team involving physicians/surgeons, anesthesiologists, certified registered nurse anesthetists, scrub techs, and circulating nurses. Equipment utilized within this environment is kept to the strictest and highest sterile standards to minimize risk to patients postoperatively. Nurses are skilled in communication, anticipating the needs of the procedural field, and collaborating with pre- and post-procedural nursing care. Some examples of procedures within this environment include colonoscopy, bronchoscopy, laparoscopic appendectomy, open reduction of a forearm fracture, spinal fusion, and tonsillectomy.

Preoperative/Post Anesthesia Care Unit (PACU)

This environment uniquely supports patients and their families before and after an invasive procedure. Nurses are skilled in preoperative and discharge teaching, ensuring families are prepared and comfortable caring for their child. Being able to make quick connections with families, easing their fears and anxieties, and communicating clearly are essential skills to develop in this environment. Additionally, within the post-anesthesia care unit, nurses receive specialized training to extubate pediatric patients after their procedures, complete focused assessments and interventions for pain, and manage acute airway issues. Interdisciplinary partners within this environment are advanced care technicians, respiratory therapists, certified registered nurse anesthetists, physicians, and nurses.

Critical/Intermediate Care Track

Emergency Department

Cook Children's Emergency Department is a Level II trauma center, offering emergency surgical and specialty care 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. There are four trauma rooms, 77 beds, and 10 triage areas. In a typical year, we treat more than 120,000 patients from birth to age 21. In this unit, you will be joined by an interdisciplinary staff including physicians, respiratory therapists, child-life therapists, and orthopedic and wound care technicians. In July 2021, the department received the coveted Lantern Award from the Emergency Nurses Association. The award recognizes new initiatives developed by our nurses and medical team, such as sepsis infection screening and suicide prevention programs.

Cardiac Intensive Care Unit (CICU)

The CICU is a 14-bed unit supporting patients with cardiac disease who require medical and/or surgical intervention. We perform a wide range of surgical and procedural interventions, including the most complex single-ventricle surgical repairs. Some procedures are conducted at the bedside with our CVOR and Cath Lab teams, such as chest closures, chest explorations, tunneled line or drain placements, and ECMO cannulation/decannulation. You will be working closely with Cardiac intensive care physicians (with 24/7 coverage), cardiac surgeons, and interprofessional team members in the care of these patients, particularly our respiratory therapy team, which is core to the CICU, our child life specialist, Echo & EKG techs, and OT, PT & ST teams. This is an excellent unit for those who also value learning, are detail-oriented, and are ready to work in a fast-paced environment with minimal downtime. Most importantly, it is for individuals who prioritize patient safety above all else.

Pediatric Intensive Care Unit (PICU)

The PICU is a 49-bed unit (including six infectious disease rooms) that specializes in providing quality care to critically ill children. The PICU hosts a range of ages from infants to teenagers and many diagnoses, including sepsis, oncology, trauma, seizures, respiratory failure, diabetes, neurosurgical patients, and many others. This unit focuses on family-centered care and involves the patients, family, and other team members in the plan of care. The PICU utilizes a variety of technologies to care for patients, including ventilators, dialysis, high-flow nasal cannulas, ECMO, inotropic support, and temperature management devices. Teamwork is consistently demonstrated in this unit. The PICU team comprises nurses, charge nurses, pediatric intensive care physicians, nurse practitioners, respiratory therapists, patient care technicians, and other specialized healthcare professionals.

Neonatal Intensive Care Unit (NICU)

Our state-of-the-art NICU is designated Level IV, the highest level of designation that can be achieved. We boast 106 private rooms and admit over 1,000 patients annually. We care for very low birth weight infants as young as 22 weeks and see a vast array of diseases, including respiratory, surgical, cardiac, genetic, renal, neurological, hematological, and metabolic conditions. The NICU also has a variety of acuity levels, ranging from infants requiring the highest level of care on ECMO to those who are ready for discharge home. Our large collaborative team includes several NICU dedicated specialties, such as physical, occupational, and speech therapies, child life, lactation, and respiratory therapy. The provider team, comprising neonatologists and Neonatal Nurse Practitioners, has a passion for teaching and collaboration with staff. Finally, our education team is dedicated to the growth of nurses through the residency and beyond orientation into the NICU.