



POLICY STATEMENT

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ETHICAL & PROFESSIONAL PRACTICE FOR THE EUROPEAN PAEDIATRIC NURSESS

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ETHICAL & PROFESSIONAL PRACTICE FOR THE EUROPEAN PAEDIATRIC NURSES



□ Scope

- The purpose of this policy statement is to delineate the concept of professionalism within the context of paediatric nurses and to provide a brief statement of ethical and professional principles to guide the professional behavior and practice of paediatric nurses.



Introduction



- Ethical knowing is essential to paediatric nursing since the discipline has a moral obligation to provide services to children and their parents. Paediatric nurses are responsible for conserving children's life, alleviating suffering and promoting health (Noureddine, 2001).
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- Ethics includes values, codes, and principles that govern decisions in paediatric nursing practice and relationships. Ethical principles are necessary to guide to professional development. A code of ethics functions as a tool and necessary mark of a profession and professional self-definition (Davis, 2008).





- Paediatric nurses should be competent to the principles of Health Care Ethics such as (ICN, 2005):
 - **Beneficence**
 - (Safeguard and promote the interest and well being of children and families)
 - **Nonmaleficence**
 - (Avoid doing harm, prevent harm, protect from harm)
 - **Autonomy**
 - (Self determination or parental consent (depending on the age of child), full disclosure, privacy)
 - **Justice**
 - (Treatment of all children equally and fairly)
 - **Veracity**
 - (Provision of honest and accurate information to children and families)
 - **Privacy**
 - (Protection of personal information, limited body exposure)
 - **Confidentiality**
 - (Protection of personal information, trust relationship)
 - **Accountability**
 - (Justifying actions, responsibility, professionalism)
 - **Fidelity**
 - (Faithfulness, constancy or loyalty to terms & responsibilities of the profession, involves trust)



Paediatric Nurses' Professional Values



□ **Paediatric nurses should be competent to professional values and performance such as (AAP, 2007; NMC, 2008):**

- **Integrity** (Fairness, commitment, honesty both with children, families and peers in all professional communication, nondiscrimination, and conflict resolution)
- **Reliability and responsibility** (Accountability to children, families, other health professionals)
- **Respect** (Treating all children with respect to their individual worth with sensitivity to gender, race, and cultural differences)
- **Empathy** (Ability to understand children's and family members' reactions from their point of view)
- **Continuous Education/Competence** (Commitment to lifelong learning and education)
- **Self-limitation/Self-awareness** (Maturity to acknowledge deficiency (knowledge or technical skills) and ask for consultation or assistance)
- **Communication and collaboration** (Recognition that patients' families and the health care team must work cooperatively and communicate effectively, recognition of appropriate boundaries in patient care)
- **Altruism and advocacy** (Devotion to children's wellbeing and rights beyond own interests and needs)
- **Maintenance of clear professional boundaries** (Refusal of gifts, favours or hospitality that might be interpreted as an attempt to gain preferential treatment, establish and actively maintain clear boundaries at all times with children their families and carers).
- **Provision of a high standard of practice and care at all times** (Use of the best available evidence, maintenance of up to date skills and knowledge, retention of clear and accurate records)



Ethical Practice



- Paediatric nurse, in all dimensions of care, practices with respect for the inherent dignity, worth, and uniqueness of every individual, unrestricted by any personal, social or economic consideration. The paediatric nurse's primary commitment is to the patient, whether an individual, family, group, or community and acts in order to protect the health, safety and rights of the patient.
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- Paediatric nurse is responsible and accountable for individual nursing practice and consistent with the obligation to provide optimum care to the child and family. Simultaneously, paediatric nurse has to maintain competence, and to continue personal and professional growth, along with the participation in establishing, maintaining, and improving health care environments and conditions of employment conducive to the provision of safety and quality health care.
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- Paediatric nurse has also the ethical obligation to participate in the advancement of the profession (education, clinical practice, knowledge development) and to collaborate with other health professionals to meet health needs.
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- Paediatric Nurses' Associations are responsible for articulating nursing values, for maintaining the integrity of the profession and its practice, and for shaping social policy (ANA, 2001).



Involving Children in Research



- Research involving children is important for the benefit of all children and should be supported, encouraged and conducted in an ethical manner. Legally valid consent should be obtained from the child, parent or guardian as appropriate (RCN, 2007).
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- In competent children informed consent should be obtained before commencing data collection.
- Parents/guardians should be involved in the decision to participate wherever possible and in all cases where the child is not yet competent. A child's refusal to participate/continue in research should be respected. If a child becomes upset by a procedure, researchers must accept this as a valid refusal (Gibson, Twycross, 2007).
- Consent should be considered an on-going process. Children can give consent if they are capable of choosing between alternative courses of action (RCN, 2005).



Involving Children in Research



- Children need sufficient information before they can decide whether to participate in a research study or not. This includes information about (Gibson, Twycross, 2007; RCN, 2000):
 - ▣ **Scope of the research**
 - (Identifiable prospect of benefit to children, is well designed and well conducted)
 - ▣ **Possible risks**
 - (Types of intervention, probability, timing, equity, interim finding)
 - ▣ **Possible benefits**
 - (Magnitude, probability, beneficiaries, resources)
 - ▣ **Details of their role**
 - (How invasive or intrusive is the research? (psychosocial research should be assessed as carefully as physical research))
 - ▣ **Researchers curriculum vitae**
 - ▣ **Funding**



Future Implications



- ... (*PNAE members proposals*)
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End note



- This brief statement of principles emphasizes the core professional values that paediatric nurses should adopt and that will serve as an ethical foundation for quality health care for children and their families.
- The purpose of this statement is to identify the fundamental ethical standards and values to which the paediatric nursing profession is committed, and that are incorporated in other endorsed professional nursing guidelines and standards of conduct.
- It can be used as a reference point for paediatric nurses across Europe, from which to reflect on the conduct of themselves and others and guide ethical decision making and practice.



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