

NAPNAP Position Statement on Certification

The National Association of Pediatric Nurse Practitioners (NAPNAP) believes that the practice of pediatric nursing requires specialized knowledge and skills for both the general pediatric nurse and the pediatric nurse practitioner (PNP). Certification is the formal recognition of the specialized knowledge, skills, and experience demonstrated by the achievement of identified standards to promote optimal health outcomes. Certified PNPs promote optimal health outcomes and have a positive impact on the quality of health care to children and families. Numerous studies have demonstrated the positive benefits of nursing certification (Cary, 2001; American Association of Colleges of Nursing, 2002; Stromborg et al., 2005).

Certification is a process by which an independent, non-governmental agency recognizes an

individual nurse's qualifications and knowledge for specialty nursing practice (American Board of Nursing Specialties, 2004). Through the completion of specialized education, experience in specialty nursing practice, and the successful completion of a qualifying examination, nurses achieve specialty certification credentials. Maintenance of certification is accomplished through a variety of mechanisms including reexamination, continuing education, self-assessment, and ongoing clinical practice.

Certification maintenance seeks to assure the public that the certificant has maintained a level of knowledge, as well as ongoing participation in activities that support the maintenance of competence in the specialty (American Board of Nursing Specialties, 2004). NAPNAP supports PNP cer-

tification as a nationally recognized mechanism for validation of this specialty knowledge and skills.

NAPNAP believes that pediatric nurses and PNPs require specialized knowledge and skills and supports the Pediatric Nursing Certification Board (PNCB) as the recommended certification organization. NAPNAP confers fellowship status of PNP members who are certified by the Pediatric Nursing Certification Board (PNCB) and the American Nurses Credentialing Center (ANCC).

NAPNAP advocates for:

1. National certification of pediatric nurses and nurse practitioners in specialty areas by an accredited certification organization (National Council of State Boards of Nursing, 2002).
2. Educational preparation of nurse practitioners and advanced practice nurses at the graduate level (American Association of Colleges of Nursing, 1996).
3. Educational programs for nurse practitioners designed to meet nationally recognized standards for graduate nursing education (Association of Faculties of Pediatric Nurse Practitioner Programs, 1996; National Organization of Nurse Practitioner Faculties, 2002a, 2002b, 2004).
4. Certification at the advanced practice level, which should be considered a requirement for state licensure in advance nursing practice (National Council of State Boards of Nursing, 2002).
5. Individual responsibility for nurses and nurse practitioners to participate in a certification maintenance program, by an accredited certifying organization throughout their professional career.

NAPNAP affirms that professional certification of pediatric nurse

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practitioners and nurses is necessary to assure consumers, colleagues, and the public at large the highest quality pediatric nursing care. Certification assures national consistency of professional standards, imposes standard titles, helps the public understand the professional's scope of practice, and provides a venue for the public to raise practice grievances (American Association of Colleges of Nursing, 1994).

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