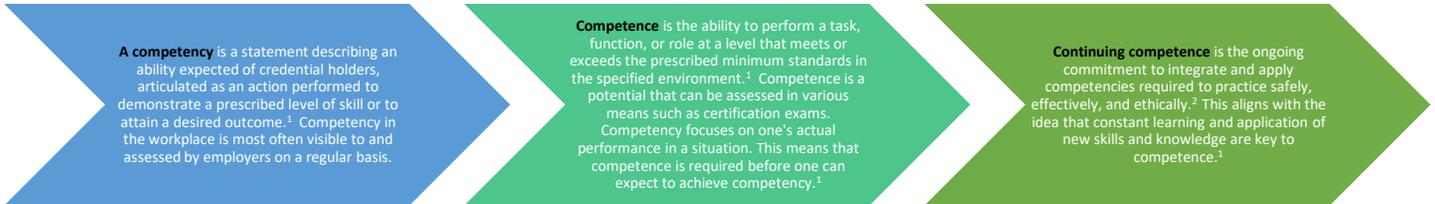




Continuing Competence for Pediatric Nursing Professionals



PNCB is uniquely positioned to develop a definition of Pediatric Nurse Competence in conversation with practitioners, employers, and patients. PNCB will define competence both for entry to practice and career advancement. PNCB builds upon the definition of competence written by the American Board of Nursing Specialties (ABNS) with competencies specific to pediatric nursing.

We adhere to the ABNS beliefs about competence, followed by its definition. Competence is:

1. A professional and ethical obligation to safe practice.
2. A commitment made to the individual, the profession, and to consumers.
3. A responsibility shared among the profession, regulatory bodies, certification agencies, professional associations, educators, health care organizations/workplaces, and individual nurses.
 - a. Healthcare organizations/workplaces accept responsibility for measuring, documenting, and supporting competency, and for addressing any deficiencies in staff members' competency.
4. Evolutionary, in that it builds upon previous competence and integrates new evidence.
5. Dynamic, fluid, and impacted by many factors as the individual enters new roles and new situations.¹

Continuing competence is the ongoing commitment of a registered nurse to integrate and apply the knowledge, skills, and judgment with the attitudes, values, and beliefs required to practice safely, effectively, and ethically in a designated role and setting.¹

PNCB does not work alone to monitor continuing competence. Continuing competence is an obligation and responsibility shared by the nursing professional, employers, regulatory agencies such as state boards of nursing, and the certification board. This shared responsibility provides reassurance to parents and caregivers and their children, among other stakeholders, that an individual possesses knowledge, skills, and attitude to safely provide health care.

Based on our exploration and research, **we believe pediatric nursing is best described in terms of a [Pediatric Nurse Mindset](#).** This Mindset is the foundation of delivering high quality care and a conceptual underpinning for recertification program definition. The Mindset encapsulates the persona of a fully engaged pediatric nursing professional. It represents a validated definition of what makes pediatric nurses uniquely qualified to care for children, adolescents, and young adults.

PNCB will first integrate these tenets into its Certified Pediatric Nurse (CPN) recertification program through alignment with our validated [Pediatric Nurse Competency Framework](#). CPNs will map their Recert activities to one of 6 focus areas of the Framework to show how they are tracking with the essential focus areas of pediatric RN practice. A competency framework will be explored for CPNP-PCs and CPNP-ACs.

PNCB fulfills its mission as a covenant with its stakeholders. This covenant is expressed in Promises made to each constituent.

The promise to the public and employers is that a person who possesses an active credential embodies knowledge, skill, and attitudes consistent with the Pediatric Nurse Mindset, and has advanced their knowledge of pediatric practice through lifelong learning. Through our research, PNCB has observed evidence through a combination of employment, education, and practice consistent with the credential holder's role and career. Where PNCB cannot devise an assessment at the level of granularity necessary to demonstrate competency, PNCB will develop a mapping process that evaluates the certificants overall disposition as evidence of competence.

Our promise to certificants is to design a quality recertification program that is communicated clearly and reassessed periodically to evaluate emerging trends in the pediatric nursing workforce and health care industry. We offer options to recertify that recognize their interests, areas of expertise, and self-assessed knowledge gaps. We will continuously innovate to identify opportunities that allow certificants to demonstrate competence without undue administrative burden. We will align the rigor of the program with the demonstrated impact of program requirements. We uphold a covenant with certificants with these tenets, and certificants return that covenant with ethical reporting of their activities to maintain competence. **Recertification** should be evidence-based, holistic, and meaningful. Certification boards need to understand the daily ecosystems of certificants and how renewal activities align with supporting optimal patient health regardless of setting. Recertification is not simply an accounting of credits. For PNCB, recertification is the lived experience of lifelong learning that elevates pediatric practice and enriches a nurse's benefit to children and families.

Our Covenant with certificants leads to the following implications:

- **Clinical practice hours** contribute to a real time demonstration of competence, but by themselves are not solely sufficient to maintain competence because assessment of this activity is not required when a nurse recertifies. In comparison, contact hours and academic credit are assessed, and Professional Practice Learning (PPL) options have reporting, documentation, or outcomes. While practice connects the nurse to a patient, our other Recert options connect nurses with new validated knowledge or activities to enhance the delivery of care to a patient. PNCB will continue to survey / review this topic and may institute a limited number of requirements for certificants who do not have current practice hours in some realm of pediatric nursing.
- **Specialization and advancement** are inherent in practice, and a loss of proficiency in some competencies at the expense of others is acceptable as long as the person practices with their areas of proficiency. We will continuously learn about how pediatric nurse competency is expressed through specialization over time. We will provide a language for pediatric nurses to express their areas of practice so that we can honor the diversity of roles in the specialty. As we learn, we will develop clear pathways for certificants in different roles to demonstrate and document their activities and feel confident in their role.
- **Assessments come in many forms and with many applications.** We will continue to research methods of assessment that leverage technology and methods to assess competence. Where we find gaps, we will use the resources of the organization to strive to close them.

PNCB will keep you informed before changes are launched. Our initial goals are to award more credits for select options, analyze how CPNs map Recert options to the Framework focus areas, and add more clarity to the clinical practice option. We will also move PMHS Recert to an annual program beginning in November 2022. And we will continue to evaluate future Recert options which may include things like a longitudinal assessment or different activities for those who hold the credential without practice in pediatric nursing.

The work PNCB performs to align stakeholders is a team effort with those stakeholders. PNCB thanks the many volunteers who contributed their time and expertise, including the 16,000 certified pediatric nursing professionals who

participated in surveys. Consistent with PNCB's position to align stakeholders, we will continue to keep the community abreast of developments and innovations as we devise an evidence-based continuing competence program.

¹Case Di Leonardi B, Biel M. Moving forward with a clear definition of continuing competence. *J Contin Educ Nurs*. 2012.43;(8):346-351.

²Institute for Credentialing Excellence Terminology Task Force. *Basic Guide to Credentialing Terminology*. 2nd ed. Washington; 2020. p. 8.