

## **My Calling to Provide Specialized Care and Compassion as a Pediatric Oncology Nurse**

My nursing journey began in high school when I volunteered at the local children's hospital. I vividly remember my first day in the pediatric oncology wing. I was tasked with entertaining a 6-year-old boy named Caleb, who had just been diagnosed with leukemia.

We colored pictures together, and I brought him toys and books to help pass the time between treatments. Seeing the smile on Caleb's face when I visited him each week filled me with true joy. The hospital staff were also so welcoming and appreciative of my time. I knew then that I wanted to pursue pediatric nursing.

After earning my bachelor's degree in nursing, I accepted a job in the pediatric unit of a hospital close to home. During my orientation, I requested to shadow nurses in the oncology and hematology departments in my free time. I assisted with treatments like chemotherapy, blood transfusions, lumbar punctures, and more. It deepened my understanding of the physical and emotional toll pediatric cancer takes.

My favorite part of each shift was sitting with my patients after procedures were done. I'd ask how they were feeling and if I could get them anything to be more comfortable. Oftentimes, they just wanted someone to talk to. I felt privileged to offer companionship and humor when they needed it most.

My 5 years of experience have refined my nursing skills and cemented my passion for pediatric oncology. I aim to transition into a pediatric specialty hospital and join their cancer and blood disorders team full-time. In the future, I plan to earn my MSN and become a pediatric nurse practitioner.

I want to coordinate patient care through all stages while providing family-centered support. Though the work is emotionally challenging, every child I help reminds me why I chose this career.

