

PedsAcademy[®] : A Hospital-Based Internship Program for Future Teachers

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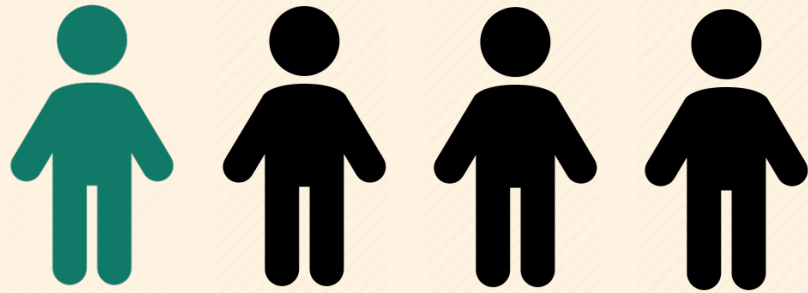


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For more information, please contact us at
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Chronic Illness Among Children in America



1 in 4 children live with chronic illness

Common chronic illnesses include asthma, seizure disorders, cancer, diabetes, cystic fibrosis, & sickle cell anemia.

Chronic illness affects normal activities, may limit the child's ability to function, or result in long periods of hospitalization.

Data and Statistics

Asthma is the leading cause of chronic illness among school-aged children and adolescents. (CDC, 2022).

Sickle cell disease is the most common inherited blood disorder in the United States and affects 1 in every 365 black or African-American births in the United States (CDC, 2020).

Although **pediatric cancer** death rates have dropped by nearly 70% over the past 40 years, cancer is still the leading cause of death from disease among children from birth to age 14 (CDC, 2021).

Each year an average of 62,000 children sustain **brain injuries** requiring hospitalization as a result of motor vehicle crashes, falls, sports injuries, physical abuse and other causes (BIAA, 2022).

Chronic Health Conditions and School

- Children with chronic health conditions may experience **problems with school performance**, including reduced attention and concentration, poor motivation, and absenteeism.
- Chronically ill children tend to **have higher dropout rates and behavioral challenges** (Division of Population Health National Center for Chronic Disease Prevention and Health Promotion, 2017).
- Children with long-term health conditions may be **more likely to experience mental illness** in early adolescence than healthy children (Brady, Deighton & Stansfeld, 2020).



Teacher Preparation

- Specific coursework and field experiences focused on meeting the educational needs of students with chronic health conditions is largely absent from teacher preparation programming (Irwin et. al., 2018).
- **Teachers report worry, fear, and lack of preparedness relative to supporting this student population.**
- There are many misperceptions about this population of students and these misunderstandings often translate into misguided focus on stereotypical attitudes.





How can teacher preparation programs better prepare future educators to meet the needs of this growing student population?

A Program Like No Other...

Mission: To meet the educational needs of patients during their hospitalization, while simultaneously helping to better prepare future teachers for working with children with chronic and complex medical needs.



PedsAcademy Highlights

- **Certified Teacher** on-site, Monday through Friday
- **Educational services based on each patient's individual needs**, including tailored instruction, educational enrichment activities, and return-to-school planning
- **Developmentally supportive play/activities for infants and toddlers** to promote stimulation and growth in cognitive, social, language, and physical skills (e.g., reading, singing, peek-a-boo, sorting games)
- **Only hospital school program nationwide to offer a formal internship program for future teachers** in early childhood development, elementary education, exceptional student education, and secondary education



The Hospital Classroom

- Promotes normalization and supports coping by offering a familiar, student-centered environment!
- Features a **wide selection of teaching tools and school supplies.**
- Quality, **well-stocked library of children's books** for all ages!



AAP's Policy Statement on Early Literacy

The American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) recommends that pediatric providers promote early literacy development for children beginning in infancy by

1. advising all parents that reading aloud with young children can enhance parent-child relationships and prepare young minds to learn language and early literacy skills;
2. counseling all parents about developmentally appropriate shared-reading activities that are enjoyable for children and their parents and offer language-rich exposure to books, pictures, and the written word
3. providing developmentally appropriate books given at health supervision visits for all high-risk, low-income young children;
4. using a robust spectrum of options to support and promote these efforts; and
5. partnering with other child advocates to influence national messaging and policies that support and promote these key early shared-reading experiences

Little Readers Program

- Aims to **promote parent-baby bonding and support early language development** by encouraging parents to talk, sing, and read aloud to their baby in the NICU.
- **Upon admission, each family receives a Little Readers Packet** which includes a free children's book and information about the benefits of reading with their baby in the NICU.
- A **mobile book cart** enables families to add new books to their baby's library throughout their hospital stay. Recordable storybooks are also available which allow parents to read to their baby even when they are unable to be at bedside.



READING Paws

- **PedsAcademy Teacher Interns help patients and siblings practice their reading skills** by reading aloud to one of the hospital's nationally registered and qualified therapy dogs.
- **Each participating child receives a brand-new book to keep** which is “pawtographed” by their four-footed reading companion!
- On average, **230 individual canine-assisted READING sessions are conducted with patients each year.**



Traveling Library

- Mobile library cart provides patients (and their visiting siblings) with access to high-quality books during their hospital stay.
- Books are available in other languages so, regardless of primary language spoken, all patients and families can partake in the joy of reading!
- Unlike traditional libraries, there are no book returns! **When a patient selects a book from PedsAcademy's Traveling Library, it is theirs to keep!**
- **The Traveling Library distributes an average of 1,200 books per year!**



Summer Explorers Camp

- **Eight-week STEAM-based summer camp for patients and their families.**
- **Each camp week features a new theme** to provide educational and engaging summer fun (e.g., Junior Engineer, A Trip Into Space, LegoMania, Mad Science Lab, Dinosaurs Rock).
- **Total of 55 patient campers participated during Summer 2021**



Annual Events

- NICU Read-A-Thon
- Putting the “BOO” in BOOKS
- Read for the Record
- Read Across America
- STEM Day
- We LOVE Books!



2021 Impact Report



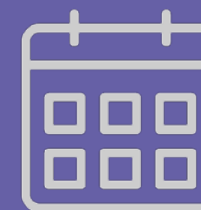
300+ patients participated in the Hospital School Program



1,800 hours of instructional time provided



2,000+ books distributed total



Hospital School Programming provided 12 months of the year!



Parent & Family Testimonials



“

The teacher we had was hands down the best and was able to get on my son's level to help him with his schoolwork, so he does not get behind during his stay in the hospital.

-Parent of Patient (age 11)

”



“

This was a great experience for my daughter and helped her from backsliding on her educational needs while in the hospital.

-Parent of Patient (age 13)

”



What UCF Teacher Interns are saying...

Karla Sanabria-Matos

PedsAcademy Teacher Intern

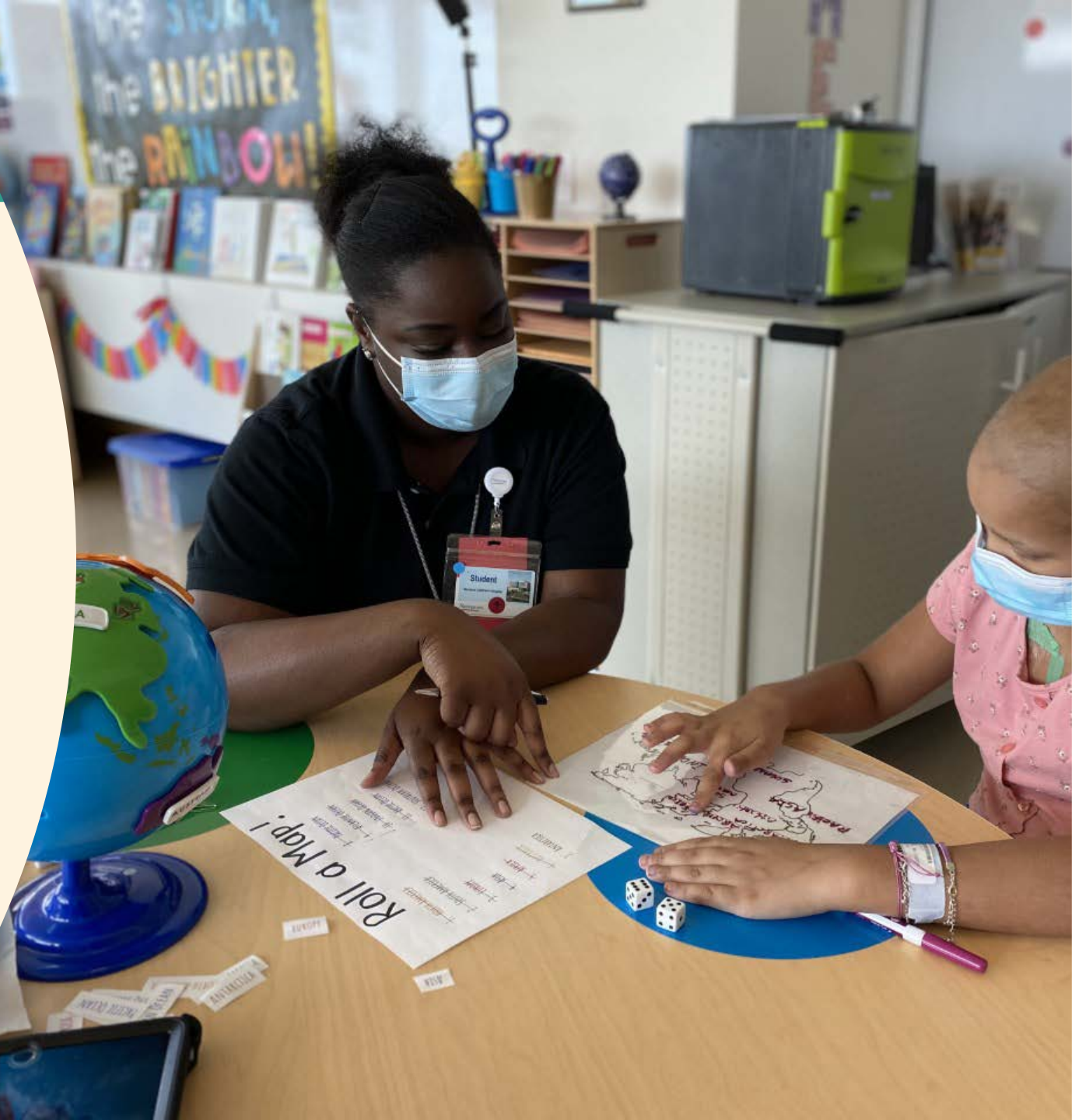
“I’ve learned to become a more culturally and emotionally responsive educator who is adaptable and flexible based on my students’ needs. But most of all, I’ve seen firsthand how meaningful this program is, whether it’s reading to the babies in the NICU or doing sensory bins with the in-patient rehab kids, it makes me extremely proud to have a PedsAcademy chapter in my undergraduate story.”



Hadassa Jean-Louis

PedsAcademy Teacher Intern

“Professionally, this opportunity allowed me to see what schooling looks like for children who are hospitalized or spend most of their time in and out of hospitals. It pushed me to think outside of the box when creating lesson plans and activities for different kinds of students and gave me valuable information that I can use in a traditional classroom setting. I made so many connections with not only the patients but the student teachers I had the pleasure of working with. It truly felt like I was working with a team that had the education and well-being of patients first.”



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Questions?

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