

Where are the teachers?

Learning in the clinical environment can feel challenging as there is a need to balance the needs of children and their families, the needs of the ward and the treating team and your needs as a student. Students typically wish to be exposed to core paediatric cases and have the opportunity to participate in the assessment and care of children.

Sometimes the team you are paired with will spend dedicated time teaching you.

Sometimes the team you are paired with will help you learn from them while they provide patient care such as on a ward round or in clinic.

There will be other times where you will need to be self-directed and seek out opportunities to learn. This may be if your unit is especially busy or especially quiet. There are however many people in the hospital who can help make the most of your time on the rotation.

On the wards:

Nurse in charge: Introduce yourself to the nurse in charge. If there are children with specific conditions which you are hoping to see the nurse in charge can guide you as to who would be appropriate. They can also advise on the best time to practice clerking patients.

Bedside nurse: Introduce yourself to the bedside nurse. Ask them if you can help perform a child's vital signs, measure and plot growth parameters. Watch how they administer medications in different age groups.

Play therapist/child life: Observe how they use play therapy in different age groups to alleviate procedural distress.

Patients and families: Spend as much time as possible with patients and their families. Use your time to clerk patients, practice eliciting clinical signs in children of different age groups. Try to understand the impact of the child's hospital admission on the family.

Allied health team: Allied health staff may be able to help you identify patients with key clinical signs that it would be worthwhile assessing. Observe their assessments and determine how they differ from your own. Spending time with allied health can be key to understanding complex patient's medical needs.

Multidisciplinary meetings: Most wards host a number of MDT meetings. These provide opportunity to see how many types of patient issues are addressed in hospital. As an intern you will likely participate in and run these meetings.