Time for change in children and young people’s nurse education

We teach nursing students about intuition, or ‘gut feeling’, to understand its role in identifying children’s deterioration. However, since changes heralded by the Nursing and Midwifery Council’s (NMC) standards of proficiency, nurses and nurse academics have been raising concerns about their education.

Ongoing debates highlight the dilution of field-focused education and a move towards ‘genericism’, but without research to underpin our gut feelings about the effects of these changes, it can be difficult for the voices of children’s nurses to be heard. The NMC is starting to listen, but is this enough?

Calls for a proper evaluation of the effects of the changes are being made in all fields of practice. The Fit4CYP project led by academics at the University of Plymouth hopes to answer some of the questions being asked.

Those who shape preregistration nurse education need to listen to children and young people, and their families. As children’s nurses, we know this, and we understand the importance of embedding the voice of children and young people in curricula. But when curricula are adult-centric and generic ensuring this occurs is difficult.

Let’s keep encouraging healthcare professionals to question what works best for preregistration nurse education and children, and together we can ensure positive change.

If we keep speaking up and reflect the voices of children, young people and their families to escalate our concerns, we will be heard.

This is an abridged version of an article at rcni.com/childrens-nurse-curricula

Further information


University of Plymouth (2023) Fit for Children and Young People project (Fit4CYP). tinyurl.com/UoP-fit4cyp

‘Calls for evaluation to understand the changes are being made in all fields of practice’