

Preceptoring on the Go

This section is focused on practical tips that you can use to make the most of your clinical days, even the busy ones. Refer to PART 1: Entry into the agency guide for preceptor, student and faculty if you require more detail on expectations of the student and faculty tutor.

Before the Placement Begins

Meet your student before the placement begins. This allows you to get to know the student: his/her experiences, expectations and skills. The investment of time in reviewing this information before the first day will likely result in a smooth working relationship.

- Meet with your student before the start of the placement to have a chat and tour your workplace. Introduce the student to all interprofessional team members, the daily routine, information about the types of patients you work with and other guidelines.
- Also on your tour, review the location of key resources such as equipment, binders, resource staff and other information.
- Prepare some questions to help you get to know your student: focus on past experiences, skills and learning style. Share information about your practice.
- Be clear and upfront about your expectations for your student so that come evaluation time, there are no surprises.
- Ask the student to bring his/her learning plan and review this with him/her, highlighting what goals you think are achievable. Work with your student to revise goals that are not realistic.
- Make sure your student feels welcome by getting to know him/her as well as his/her hopes and fears.
- If you sense any areas for potential conflict, address them immediately.

Pre-plan for Each Clinical Day

Review your appointment list with your student and decide together which patients are appropriate for him/her.

- Communicate your expectations for work to be done by the student (appropriate for his/her training and course objectives), number of patients, amount of time with each patient, and the amount of time you as the preceptor can spend with the student each day.
- Clearly outline the priorities for what needs to be done by the end of the day for your student to help him/her identify priorities and a focus.
- Clearly outline any anticipated difficulties and any learning opportunities available to the student each day to help the student choose what opportunities in which to participate.
- Seek out opportunities to share teaching with your interprofessional team members when you cannot teach such as: 1) working with one of your colleagues who likes to teach, 2) attending a clinic, 3) doing phone follow-up, or 4) researching learning questions using resources on-site or the Internet.



Time with Patients

- Allow the student to observe in the beginning, taking on more as s/he is comfortable.
- Work together with one patient trading off tasks. For example, the student can do the history and you can do the physical examination or the student can perform both the history and physical while you chart the information.
- Set a time limit for the student such as: "Get as much of the history as you can in 10 minutes, then I will come in."
- Schedule your patients in waves: two in time slot 1, one in time slot 2 and none in 3. In the first time slot, you and the student start in different rooms at the same time. You do a second case in time slot 2 while your student finishes. In time slot 3 the student discusses the case with you, charts and prepares for the next wave. This way you can still see 3 patients in three time slots; you will, however, need to have an extra exam room available.

Discussion Time

Set aside at least some time for discussion with your student every clinical day. Students require feedback on a daily basis to grow and improve. Review with the student both his/her areas of strength and weakness.

- Give your student a time limit for presenting the cases and for asking questions. For example, "Give me the history, assessment and diagnosis in 5 minutes," or "I can spend 10 minutes with you before lunch to answer your questions about the case, then I want to give you feedback on your assessment."
- If you can, assign the student to patients you know well. You can give your student background to help focus his/her assessment.
- As much as possible, end the day with an evaluation to sum up everything that happened, and plan for the next student day.
- Use the one-minute preceptor technique.

Adapted from: "Mastering the preceptor role: Challenges of clinical teaching," by C. Burns, M. Beauchesne, P. Ryan-Krause, & Sawin, K., 2006, *Journal of Pediatric Health Care*, 20, pp.172-83.

