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**PEDIATRIC NURSING  
CERTIFICATION BOARD**

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**PNCB Certification Exam  
Certified Pediatric Nurse Exam (CPN<sup>®</sup>)  
Paper and Pencil Testing**

**Candidate Handbook  
2008**

PEDIATRIC NURSING CERTIFICATION BOARD, INC.  
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## **PNCB**

The Pediatric Nursing Certification Board (PNCB) offers its multiple-choice national exam for pediatric nurses at your healthcare facility in paper-pencil format. Once eligibility for the Certified Pediatric Nurse (CPN<sup>®</sup>) Exam has been confirmed, candidates are notified of their scheduled testing site and date. No candidate may take a test at a time or place other than the one designated.

### **EXAM ELIGIBILITY NOTIFICATION**

Candidates eligible for the PNCB's national Certified Pediatric Nurse (CPN<sup>®</sup>) Exam received an official notification of eligibility via postcard and email from the PNCB. A Notification of Eligibility will also be available to each candidate by logging in at [www.pncb.org](http://www.pncb.org) and clicking on "My Documents". Each candidate receives information about the date and site of the exam. Please check this information to be sure it is the exam date and site you applied for.

### **CONTACT INFORMATION**

If you have questions concerning the CPN<sup>®</sup> Exam at any time, please call the PNCB office at 888-641-2767, during business hours: 8:30 A. M. – 5:00 P. M. Eastern Time, Monday – Friday or email [admin@pncb.org](mailto:admin@pncb.org).

### **NONDISCRIMINATION POLICY**

PNCB does not discriminate among candidates on the basis of race, color, creed, gender, religion, national origin, disability or marital status.

### **REQUIREMENTS FOR SPECIAL ACCOMMODATIONS**

PNCB complies with the Americans with Disabilities Act and strives to ensure that no individual with a disability is deprived of the opportunity to take the exam solely by reason of that disability. The PNCB recognizes that at times a candidate may request special testing accommodations. The PNCB makes every attempt to address requests for testing accommodations based upon review of documented health needs. In all cases, requests for special accommodations are to be included at the time of application. Please review all of the requirements for special testing accommodations on the PNCB's web site—[www.pncb.org](http://www.pncb.org). Please note that an updated medical or health review is required to evaluate and process requests. Call the PNCB office (1-888-641-2767) if you have any questions. A completed Special Accommodations request form is required before any special accommodations requests may be granted.

### **TAKING THE EXAM AT THE TESTING SITE**

Your examination is a proctored exam, given by paper and pencil at your onsite testing location. On the day of your exam, report to the assigned testing site no later than 30 minutes before the scheduled testing time.

### **IDENTIFICATION FOR ADMISSION**

**Please take two forms of ID** with you on the day of your examination. To gain admission to the testing area, you must present two forms of identification, one with a current photograph. Both forms of identification must be current and include the candidate's current name and signature. The candidate will be required to sign a roster for verification of identity. Acceptable forms of photo identification include a current driver's license with photograph, a current state

identification card with photograph, a current passport, or a current military identification card with photograph. If the candidate does not have a photo ID, one form of ID must contain a physical description (ethnic status, gender, height and weight). Employment ID cards, student ID cards and any type of temporary identification are NOT acceptable as the primary form of identification. Failure to provide appropriate identification at the time of the examination is considered a missed exam. There will be no refund of your examination fees.

## **PNCB EXAM INFORMATION**

Questions on the PNCB's CPN<sup>®</sup> Exam are designed to measure candidate knowledge of pediatric nursing content and to evaluate the candidate's ability to assess, plan and implement nursing interventions, and evaluate nursing care, incorporating research findings.

The Certified Pediatric Nurse Exam (CPN<sup>®</sup>) consists of 200 multiple choice questions presented in random order to each candidate. Total testing time allowed is 3 hours, 30 minutes. Registration and the introductory session are not deducted from the total testing time. Some of the questions may contain graphics. Each exam item has 3 to 4 suggested responses, only one of which is correct. Approximately twenty (20) of the 200 test questions are considered non-scored pre-test items and are randomly distributed throughout the exam. Each year new test questions are pre-tested to determine how well they will perform before they are used in the scored portion of the national exam. The pre-test questions cannot be distinguished from the test questions that are scored, so it is important to answer ALL test questions. It is important to remember that each candidate's pass/fail status is determined by their responses to the approximately 180 scored items. Answers provided to the pre-test questions do not affect an examinee's score.

Candidates should attempt to answer all questions to the best of their ability. It is to the candidate's advantage to answer each item even if the candidate is not certain of the correct response. Since skipping a question will not earn you credit, guess at an answer in instances of uncertainty. There is no additional penalty for incorrect responses as opposed to "no response" answers. After you've answered all the questions, you may review and change your responses. Candidates must complete the exam either by answering all the questions or running out of time.

## **EXAM PREPARATION**

Click on [CPN Study Resources](#) and link to a CPN<sup>®</sup> reference list, detailed content outline, and sample questions. These materials are not inclusive of all resources utilized in the preparation of the certification exam. Candidates may seek additional study aides in preparation for the exam. The PNCB does not recognize or endorse any specific study programs or materials.

[The CPN Exam Prep](#) is a unique online practice testing tool designed to offer a computer-based simulation of the types of questions included in the CPN Exam. This learning activity can help you become familiar with the presentation and structure of CPN Exam questions related to pediatric nursing content in the following areas:

- Family Centered Care
- Growth & Development
- Physiology/Pathophysiology
- Psychosocial/Behavioral Health
- Health Promotion/Maintenance

The CPN Exam Prep has 50 questions. A two (2) month testing period is assigned. Five (5) hours are allowed to complete the prep exam. During the exam time you may GRADE your answers and review feedback of correct and incorrect answers. On completing the exam module, you may view your score report and feedback for each question. A score report and question feedback will also be sent to you via email. A continuing education certification for 5 contact hours is awarded on exam completion, before you log off.

### **INCLEMENT WEATHER OR EMERGENCY**

In the event of inclement weather or unforeseen emergencies on the day of an exam, PNCB and your proctor will determine whether circumstances warrant the cancellation, and subsequent rescheduling, of an exam. Please contact your proctor for exam status. Every attempt is made to administer the exam as scheduled; however, should an exam be canceled, all scheduled candidates will receive notification following the exam from the PNCB regarding rescheduling or reapplication procedures.

### **EXAM WITHDRAWAL POLICY**

In order to successfully withdraw from your scheduled exam, please note the following requirements.

- A withdrawal request must be received at the PNCB two (2) weeks prior to your assigned test date. The withdrawal request may be emailed to [admin@pncb.org](mailto:admin@pncb.org).
- Withdrawal requests received following the assigned testing date will not be honored and no fees will be refunded.
- The candidate must submit a new application and the exam fee, in order to take the exam in the future.

### **POLICIES REGARDING LATENESS AND NO SHOW**

Sometimes unavoidable circumstances cause a candidate to report late. If the proctor finds the reason for lateness valid and justifiable, the candidate may be allowed to enter the exam. No extra time will be permitted to complete the exam. A candidate, who appears more than 15 minutes late for an exam will not be able to sit for the exam. The candidate forfeits the exam fee. The candidate will be required to reapply and submit the reapplication fee.

### **RESCHEDULING YOUR EXAM (one time only)**

Once registered for a written exam you may withdraw and reschedule to take another written exam or the computer-based test (CBT) exam, one time without penalty. The following rescheduling procedures are established by the PNCB.

- A withdrawal request from your assigned testing date (written or computer-based test (CBT)) and your request to reschedule your exam, must be submitted to the PNCB office two (2) weeks prior to the assigned exam date. The reschedule request may be emailed to [admin@pncb.org](mailto:admin@pncb.org).
- An additional \$30 exam fee is due for CBT, unless Act of God, i.e.: hurricane
- Rescheduling requests received following the assigned testing date will not be honored and no fees will be refunded.

Following completion of the appropriate steps for exam rescheduling you will receive a new notification of eligibility for your rescheduled exam.

## **EXAM FEES POLICIES**

It is the policy of the PNCB to assess reasonable fees for the services provided. Similarly, refund requests for fees may be considered by the Board of Directors. The following refund procedures are established by the PNCB.

- The registration fee will not be refunded under any circumstances.
- To receive a refund of the initial exam fee, a withdrawal request must be received at the PNCB two (2) weeks prior to your assigned test date. The withdrawal request may be emailed to [admin@pncb.org](mailto:admin@pncb.org).
- If the candidate becomes ill and cannot take the exam they must contact the proctor to inform them of their illness. The candidate must also contact the PNCB and provide written medical documentation. If these conditions are met, they may reschedule their exam without cost.
- If an application is received after the registration deadline or if it is not eligible for processing for another reason, all fees will be refunded to the applicant.
- Reapplication fee applies only if the candidate paid full exam fees within the past 24 months and tested within the past 12 months. If not, full exam fees are due.

A candidate will forfeit all exam fees

- if the candidate fails to take the exam on the assigned date of the exam (NO SHOW).
- if the candidate is not able to sit for the exam because of lateness.
- if the candidate wishes to withdraw or withdraw and reschedule an exam but fails to submit a withdrawal request to the PNCB at least two weeks prior to the scheduled testing date.

## **EXAM ADMINISTRATION**

Total testing time allowed is 3 hours, 30 minutes. Registration and the introductory session are not deducted from the total testing time. Total testing time is structured to allow candidates to take short breaks. You may take a break whenever you wish, but you will not be allowed additional time to make up for time lost during breaks.

Testing aids and electronic devices are not permitted in the testing room. This includes paper of any kind, notes, books, translators, calculators, rulers, pens, beepers, cell phones, watches with flashing lights or alarm sounds, pocket organizers, hand-held or lap-top computers, electronic writing pads or pen input devices, pagers and other electronic or manual devices. Also a place will be provided away from the testing area for candidates to store their drink bottles, purses, bags, coats, jackets, sweaters, hats, luggage, snacks or food, and other personal belongings.

## **MISCONDUCT**

Individuals who engage in any of the following conduct may be dismissed from the exam, their scores will not be reported and exam fees will not be refunded. Examples of misconduct are when a candidate

- creates a disturbance, is abusive, or otherwise uncooperative;
- displays and/or uses electronic communications equipment such as pagers, cellular phones, PDAs;
- gives or receives help or is suspected of doing so;
- attempts to record exam questions or make notes;
- attempts to take the exam for someone else; or
- is observed with notes, books or other aids.

## **FOLLOWING THE EXAM**

There will be no score report at the end of the testing session. At the end of the testing session, each candidate's exam booklet and answer sheet are collected. After completing the exam, candidates are asked to complete a short evaluation of their exam experience.

The PNCB reserves the rights to delete from scoring any and all questions that, in its sole opinion, are considered to be flawed, or may have been exposed prior to the administration of the test. Deletion of such items is vital to maintaining the validity of the test, and the reliability of the results.

## **IF YOU PASS THE EXAM**

An official score report will be mailed to you within three (3) weeks following your testing date, noting your PNCB certification number. In addition to your official score report, the PNCB will mail a certification wall certificate and lapel pin. A wallet card may also be accessed by logging-in to your PNCB account and clicking on "[My Documents](#)".

## **IF YOU DO NOT PASS THE EXAM**

An official score report will be mailed to you within 3 weeks of your testing date. Your score report will note the number of items that you missed in each exam content area. Please review your exam score performance to learn more about your strengths and weaknesses in all of the exam content areas. The official score report from the PNCB will also include "Tips for Re-Taking the Exam".

Although you are unsuccessful, you are encouraged to re-examine. You may apply to re-take an exam after you receive official notification from PNCB. At that time, you may submit an application to re-take the exam. For faster processing complete your re-exam application online via the PNCB web site at [www.pncb.org](http://www.pncb.org). Your official fail score report will provide details on how many times you may re-take an exam. Please feel free to contact the PNCB if you have any questions at [admin@pncb.org](mailto:admin@pncb.org).

## **EXAM SCORING**

The CPN® Exam is a criterion-referenced exam and is scored by statistical analysis of test items according to standard psychometric procedures. On your Individual Performance Report (IPR) three values are presented to reflect your performance. One score is the "raw score" - the number of items that you answered correctly. This number by itself does not mean much, so the "raw score" may be converted to a "percentage score" - indicating the percent of items you answered correctly. The third score is called the "scaled score". To understand the "scaled score", you need to know the scoring process used by the PNCB.

In the PNCB criterion-referenced certification exam the raw score (percent score) is measured against or compared to an absolute criterion of mastery. This criterion is called the "cut-point". The number or percentage of items that must be answered correctly in order to pass is not decided arbitrarily. Rather, a panel of experts (CPNP® & CPN® National Exam Committees) evaluates each item individually for its level of difficulty. The average of these item values determines the criterion or "cut- point" for the exam depending on the items that appear on the exam. The "scaled score" is a way of putting all scores, regardless of the version of the exam a candidate takes or the total number of items on the exam, on the same scale or frame of reference. We use scaled scores that range from 200 (0 items correct) to 800 (all items correct) with a scaled score of 400 corresponding to the cut-point on the exam. So a candidate must score above 400 in order to pass.

## **COPYRIGHTED EXAM QUESTIONS**

All exam questions are the copyrighted property of PNCB. It is forbidden under federal copyright law to copy, reproduce, record, distribute or display these exam questions by any means, in whole or in part. Doing so may subject you to severe civil and criminal penalties.

## **SCORES CANCELLED BY THE PNCB**

PNCB is responsible for the validity and integrity of the scores they report. On occasion, occurrences, such as misconduct or cheating by a candidate, may cause a score to be suspect. PNCB reserves the right to void or withhold exam results if, upon investigation, violation of its regulations is discovered.

## **CONFIDENTIALITY**

Information about candidates for testing and their exam results are confidential. Studies and reports concerning candidates will contain no information identifiable with any candidate.

## **PNCB RECERTIFICATION PROGRAM**

You will receive important information describing requirements for maintaining your certification through the PNCB's Recertification Program. For detailed information go to our web site at [www.pncb.org](http://www.pncb.org): Look under the heading "For Certified Pediatric Nurses (CPN®)" and click on "All About CPN® Recertification".