

DESIGNING PEDIATRIC INTERIORS

For 5 Distinct Stages of Childhood



Pediatric care spans from premature infants to teenagers preparing for adulthood. Each age group experiences healthcare differently, requiring environments supporting development, not simply spaces that look kid-friendly.

Key Design Strategies Across Development Stages



1

INFANTS (NICU): SUPPORTING DEVELOPMENT FROM THE BEGINNING

Key Need
Healing, growth, and family bonding

Design Responses

- Evidence-based space planning
- Thoughtful lighting and finishes
- Family accommodation spaces
- Staff workflow optimization

Strategic Consideration
Design decisions can directly influence infant development and family involvement



2

EARLY CHILDHOOD: REDUCING FEAR THROUGH ENVIRONMENT

Key Need
Reducing fear through environment

Design Responses

- Age-appropriate furniture
- Warm, non-institutional materials
- Interactive artwork
- Positive distractions
- Clear visual landmarks
- Sensory-friendly spaces
- Comfortable family areas

Strategic Consideration
Familiar, welcoming environments help reduce stress and anxiety.



3

SCHOOL-AGE CHILDREN: SUPPORTING LEARNING & CONFIDENCE

Key Need
Exploration and understanding

Design Responses

- Educational graphics
- Interactive waiting areas
- Flexible family spaces
- Intuitive wayfinding

Strategic Consideration
Small opportunities for learning and independence can improve the care experience.



4

PREADOLESCENTS (AGES 9-12): THE OFTEN OVERLOOKED GROUP

Key Need
Balance between childhood and independence

Design Responses

- Contemporary colors and graphics
- Interactive digital experiences
- Flexible age-appropriate spaces
- Support for both family engagement and autonomy

Strategic Consideration
Preadolescents need environments that feel neither childish nor adult-oriented.



5

ADOLESCENTS: RESPECTING IDENTITY & INDEPENDENCE

Key Need
Privacy, control, and social connection

Design Responses

- Acoustic and visual buffers
- Individual seating options
- Quiet spaces
- Charging stations
- Flexible family accommodations

Strategic Consideration
Design should acknowledge growing independence while supporting family involvement.



Family-Centered Design Evolves, Too

Family needs change as children mature, and healthcare environments should adapt alongside them.

INFANT



SCHOOL-AGE



ADOLESCENT

Parent Presence

Parent Reassurance

Shared Decision-Making

Early decisions shape everything. Let's compare notes.

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