

Pediatric Surgeon

Surgery on newborns, infants and children. Fifteen years of training for one of the smallest and hardest specialties in medicine.

TYPICAL PAY

\$559,030

a year, full time

PAY RANGE

\$215k to \$727k

starting to experienced

TIME TO QUALIFY

15 to 16 years

after high school

DEMAND

Limited

job outlook

LICENCE NEEDED

Yes

regulated job

WHERE YOU WORK

Children's hospitals, university medical centers, neonatal intensi...

How you get there

- 1 High school** Grades 11 and 12
Biology, chemistry, physics and math, with the grades for a college where you can hold a very high grade point average.
- 2 Bachelor's degree** 4 years
Any major, as long as you finish the pre-medical science courses and sit the Medical College Admission Test (MCAT).
- 3 Medical school** 4 years
Classroom science then hospital rotations, ending in a Doctor of Medicine (MD) or a Doctor of Osteopathic Medicine (DO).
- 4 General surgery residency** 5 years
Five years of operating, on call, across trauma, cancer, vascular and everything else. Many trainees add research years on top.
- 5 Pediatric surgery fellowship** 2 years
Two more years in an accredited program. It is one of the most competitive fellowships in American medicine.
- 6 Board certification** During and after fellowship
The American Board of Surgery requires certification in general surgery first, then a pediatric surgery qualifying exam and a certifying exam.

Pros and cons

- + Among the highest paid jobs in the country, at a median of \$559,030
- + You fix problems that would otherwise end a life at the start of it
- + Academic work, teaching and research come with most jobs
- Fifteen years of training, finishing in your late thirties
- The federal outlook is below average, and the number of jobs is genuinely small
- Nights, weekends and emergency call for your whole career

Optional boosts

Neonatal surgery. Pediatric surgical oncology. Fetal surgery. Trauma and burns.

Where these numbers come from

My Next Move: Pediatric Surgeons (29-1243.00)

The American Board of Surgery: pediatric surgery certification

American Pediatric Surgical Association

Association of American Medical Colleges

Numbers checked September 2026. Pay figures are typical full-time annual amounts in United States dollars, based on Bureau of Labor Statistics wage data and published pay scales. They vary by state, employer and experience. Tuition is for in-state students at public schools unless the card says otherwise. Sources, links and the click-through version: <https://career.help/us/careers/pediatric-surgeon>

Good to know

You have to be a general surgeon first

The American Board of Surgery will not certify a pediatric surgeon who is not already certified in general surgery. Pediatric surgery is built on top of the full adult training, not instead of it.

Some patients weigh under two pounds

Premature newborns can be operated on at well under a kilogram. Instruments, sutures and blood volumes are all scaled down accordingly, and there is no margin for a slip.



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