

Kaia L. — Nursing

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For most of my life, the main focus of my career has been on volleyball. I've played for years, club, recreational, school, you name it. I thought this was what I was going to do for the rest of my life. Then I came to the realization that not many people get the opportunity to play past college for women's volleyball. Being an Olympic athlete was one of the only options and it isn't very realistic for where I was at. I sat myself down and started thinking about the things I liked. What did I want to do with the rest of my life? I had absolutely no idea. Where does one even begin in a job search? I was so lost and confused. I started thinking about my interests besides volleyball. Would I want to do that for the rest of my life?

I thought long and hard about each one, finally landing on nursing. Although it seems to be a popular career choice for many girls my age, I felt like this would be something worthwhile to pursue. I dug deeper, researching the salary, the job growth, what it's like being a nurse. I set my heart on babies.

As my mom had said, I was always a momma bird. Taking care of my sister when she was first born, making friends wherever I went. My parents have always supported me in whatever I wanted to pursue. Taking care of people and making a difference in the lives of others is something that I've grown up around. My mom works with special education students now and was in speech therapy before that. My dad is a firefighter, he has moved up the ranks to an equipment operator. They chose careers that help others, saving lives, improving lives.

I've thought about both of their jobs and ultimately decided that special education isn't for me. After seeing my mom come home with a black eye or a sad story, the pay and the job at hand didn't seem worth it. She doesn't get paid enough for what she does. I actually would still consider my dad's career as a firefighter. His line of work is similar to mine. I don't love that he has to wake up at any hour to take calls but if nursing were to not work out for me, I would consider being an EMT/firefighter.

Your NICU nurses are nurses for the neonatal intensive care unit. Babies with defects, babies born early, babies struggling to hold onto life. My other path could be labor and delivery. This is helping to deliver babies. Helping the mother push a baby out. Making sure the baby is delivered safely. My passion for babies stemmed from always being around babies and wanting to take care of them to the best of my ability. I went through all the careers to find how I could best help the most babies and landed on NICU nursing and labor and delivery nursing. While I won't know 100% if I truly love it until I'm doing it, nursing degrees are so universal, I could take it anywhere. As my parents always said, "Do what you love and we'll always be here to support you along the way".