



ASSOCIATION FOR EUROPEAN PAEDIATRIC AND CONGENITAL CARDIOLOGY

# GENERAL RECOMMENDATIONS FOR TRAINING INSTITUTES IN PAEDIATRIC CARDIOLOGY

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## GENERAL RECOMMENDATIONS FOR TRAINING INSTITUTES

Paediatric congenital cardiovascular centres are established and constituted to provide high-quality cardiac care for paediatric and adolescent patients. Centres are usually components of paediatric tertiary health care systems.

### INSTITUTE FACILITIES AND MANPOWER

The ideal training institute should contain the following elements:

- Sufficiently high quality patient care and sufficient workload that the institute can comply with the training requirements of a Paediatric Cardiologist according to the [AEPC Recommendations for Training in Paediatric and Congenital Cardiology](#), 2020.
- The infrastructure for the assessment and treatment of patients with congenital and acquired cardiovascular disease from fetal life to adults.
- Full complement of specialists representing paediatric and congenital cardiology including imaging, interventional cardiology and electrophysiology, paediatric cardiac surgery, paediatric anaesthesiology and paediatric cardiac intensive care, and appropriate allied health care professionals.
- A department of Paediatric Cardiology with access to comprehensive types of specialised imaging facilities needed for evaluation of paediatric patients with congenital and acquired cardiac defects from the fetus to adulthood.
- A paediatric echocardiographic laboratory with diagnostic elements and equipment / facilities suitable for children and adolescents, with facilities for recording and reporting examinations off-line, and staffed by physicians and / or technicians trained in paediatric and congenital echocardiography.
- Contain in-patient areas and out-patient clinics making use of modern information technology.
- An ICU equipped and staffed to provide continuously available services. Coverage by paediatric cardiac surgeons and paediatric cardiologists capable of performing complete echocardiographic assessments and cardiac catheterisation should be available 24/7.
- A minimum of 3 full-time equivalent paediatric cardiologists.
- Experienced congenital heart surgeons staffing a paediatric cardiovascular surgical programme. One or more operating rooms should be specifically designated and designed for paediatric cardiovascular procedures. A dedicated team of anaesthesiologists, perfusionists, operating room nurses and technicians should be available to support all paediatric cardiovascular surgical procedures.
- At least one cardiac catheterisation laboratory with facilities for cardiac catheterisation, angiocardiology, interventional procedures and electrophysiology studies for infants and children (see [AEPC Recommendations for Ideal Cardiac Catheterization Laboratories](#)).
- System, staffing and structure in place to document and analyse the centre's results and outcomes, and commitment to continuous quality improvement methodology in all programmes.
- Peer review by a national or an international organization, in order to ensure the quality of the training institute
- Links to an academic research institute, where staff can carry out research activities.

### TRAINING AT THE INSTITUTE

The training institute should ensure that:

- Structured clinical meetings are held regularly.
- Discussion at joint multidisciplinary meetings with cardiac surgeons and other disciplines are held regularly in a formal forum.



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- It provides a stimulating atmosphere in which the trainees learn critical evaluation of decision making and the literature.
- There are adequate opportunities for multidisciplinary consultations with adult congenital cardiology and with clinical genetics, paediatricians and sub-specialists, obstetrics and radiology departments.
- The trainees are encouraged to make case presentations at local meetings and to teach other junior doctors, nurses and medical students.
- The trainees have adequate time for studying heart-lung specimens, if available, and to participate in anatomic-pathological conferences/courses.
- The trainees have access to the appropriate high quality paediatric cardiology journals and are given protected time for personal study.
- The trainees are encouraged to participate in scientific research in paediatric cardiology and related fields.
- The trainees are encouraged to participate in important and relevant national and international scientific symposia and congresses by presenting their research through oral or poster presentations.

**NOTE:** Trainees may need to move to another institute for periods of time if some training modules are not completed due to lack of capacity or patient volume, or for a specific technique required according to the "[AEPC Recommendations for Training in Paediatric and Congenital Cardiology](#)". Trainees should document their experience and training in the [AEPC Logbook](#).