OSCE checklist for child health nursing: dehydration

OSCE checklist for child health nursing: a child dehydration assessment checks intake, losses, urine and clinical condition, with prompt escalation when the child appears unwell. Use this original practice checklist with your course guidance and supervised skills teaching.

Numbered practice steps

1. Observe responsiveness, breathing and circulation immediately and summon urgent help for serious illness before a detailed history. Confirm the child's identity and introduce your student role. Explain the task in suitable language, check who can consent under the applicable law, and seek the child's agreement as appropriate. Explain privacy and its limits before sensitive questions. Use hand hygiene and appropriate protective equipment before contact.
2. Ask the caregiver about drinking, feeding, vomiting, diarrhoea and recent urine or wet nappies. Establish the pattern and change rather than accepting the word normal alone.
3. Continue observing responsiveness, breathing, colour and comfort while taking the history. Escalate any deterioration immediately.
4. Check observations and hydration signs using the paediatric pathway within your competence. Consider age, medical conditions and inability to keep fluids down.
5. Report concerning findings and follow the agreed assessment and fluid plan. Do not calculate or start an independent fluid regimen from a general checklist.
6. Explain warning signs and where to seek help if discharge is appropriate. Ask the caregiver to describe the plan back and document assessment, advice and follow-up.
7. Close by checking understanding, ensuring comfort and cleaning your hands and equipment as appropriate. Document findings and hand over any unresolved safety concern to the supervising practitioner.

Common omissions

A single wet nappy does not describe a trend. Assuming every vomiting child has gastroenteritis can miss other illness. Safety advice needs a contact route and clear reasons to return.

Try an original practice task

Practise asking about intake and losses in a child with diarrhoea. Summarise the concerns and make an escalation decision using the observations supplied by your course.

These steps support learning, rather than authorising independent treatment. Follow your school's task and local policy; ask for help when a decision exceeds your competence.

Related nursing practice

Return to child health nursing OSCE practice or use the full checklist directory.

For a related communication exercise, try the dehydration practice station. Its task and clinical setting may differ from this checklist.

Common questions

Is this a school marking sheet?

No. This is an original learning checklist. Your school sets the task and assessment criteria.

Can I print this checklist?

Yes. Use the PDF download on this page for practice.

Sources

- NMC: The Code
- NICE CG84: diarrhoea and vomiting in children

Checked 2026-11-13. Fees and rules change, so confirm them with the regulator before you book.