OSCE checklist for growth chart plotting

An OSCE checklist for growth chart plotting covers measuring the child accurately, choosing the right chart for age and sex, plotting each point, joining the points and explaining what the line shows to the parent.

OSCE checklist for growth chart plotting: steps to practise

1. Wash your hands, introduce yourself, explain what you will do, gain consent and confirm the child's name and date of birth.
2. Weigh the child on a calibrated scale: babies undressed with no nappy, older children in light clothing without shoes.
3. Measure lying length or standing height using the method your chart sets for the child's age, and the head circumference in babies.
4. Calculate the child's age, and correct for prematurity as the chart instructions say.
5. Choose the right chart for the child's sex and age, and the right section, such as weight-for-age.
6. Find the age on the horizontal axis and the measurement on the vertical axis, and place a clear dot where they meet.
7. Join the new dot to earlier dots if your chart asks you to, and look at its position against the centile or reference lines.
8. Look at the trend: following a line, crossing up or down across lines, or flat.
9. Ask the parent about feeding, illness and development, and give advice based on the findings.
10. Record the measurements, wash your hands, explain the result in plain words, and report to the nurse in charge or doctor a child whose weight is falling down across centile lines, is below the lowest line or whose measurements do not fit together.

What candidates commonly forget

- Using the wrong age or not correcting for prematurity
- Weighing a baby with a nappy on
- Using the wrong chart for sex

- Looking at one point instead of the trend
- Not reporting a child who is falling across centile lines

Local policy comes first

This is our own practice checklist. Your college, hospital or country may do some steps differently. Where local policy and this list disagree, follow local policy.

Practise the hands-on steps with a classmate or in a skills lab, because an AI patient cannot watch your technique. You can practise the talking part with an AI patient, and try one station free with no sign-up. Next, try Two-month baby check and worries about vaccines. Back to the child health nursing OSCE page: child health nursing OSCE, or see the full OSCE checklist list.

Common questions

What is the OSCE checklist for growth chart plotting?

Measure accurately, calculate age, pick the right chart, plot the point, read it against the centile lines and earlier points, ask about feeding and illness, record, explain and report.

Why look at the trend?

A single point can mislead. Falling down across centile lines may be the first sign of a problem and needs review.

Which chart do I use?

The one your course or country uses. Many use the WHO child growth standards, and the UK uses the UK-WHO growth charts.

Sources

- WHO child growth standards
- NICE NG75: faltering growth

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