OSCE checklist for paediatric developmental assessment

An OSCE checklist for paediatric developmental assessment covers taking a developmental history, then checking gross motor, fine motor and vision, speech, language and hearing, and social skills against the child's age, noting anything late or lost, and planning the next step.

OSCE checklist for paediatric developmental assessment: steps to practise

1. Clean your hands, introduce yourself to the parent or carer and the child, confirm the child's name and date of birth, and check the adult's relationship to the child.
2. Explain the assessment, gain consent from the parent and agreement from the child, and speak to the child at their level.
3. Ask the parent about concerns, pregnancy and birth (including gestation), feeding, sleep, vision, hearing, illnesses and any family history of developmental problems.
4. Ask what the child can do now in each area, and ask clearly whether the child has lost any skill they used to have.
5. Check gross motor skills for the age, such as head control, sitting, crawling, standing and walking.
6. Check fine motor skills and vision, such as reaching, grasping, the pincer grip, building with blocks and drawing.
7. Check speech, language and hearing, such as babbling, first words, joining words and following instructions.
8. Check social and emotional skills, such as smiling, eye contact, pointing, play and interest in other children.
9. Observe the child during play and watch how they use their hands, how they move and how they interact. Note any asymmetry.
10. Say you would check growth and head circumference on the growth chart. Compare findings with the age milestones, and use the corrected age for a child born early, as your local guidance advises.

11. Escalate red flags to a senior: loss of skills, asymmetry, no social smile, concerns about hearing or vision, or any safeguarding concern.
12. Explain your findings to the parent, say what you would do next, such as a hearing test, review or referral to the child development team, document and clean your hands.

What candidates commonly forget

- Not asking about loss of skills
- Not using the corrected age for a child born early
- Relying only on parent report and not observing the child
- Forgetting hearing and vision
- Not checking growth and head circumference
- Not giving the parent a clear plan

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 Speech and play concern in a toddler. Back to the paediatrics OSCE for MBBS students page: paediatrics OSCE for MBBS students, or see the full OSCE checklist list.

Common questions

What is the OSCE checklist for paediatric developmental assessment?

Introduce, consent, take a developmental history, check gross motor, fine motor and vision, speech, language and hearing, and social skills for the age, observe play, use the corrected age if born early, escalate red flags, explain and plan.

What is a red flag in development?

Loss of skills at any age, asymmetry of movement, no social smile, no babbling or words by expected ages, or concerns about vision or hearing. Use the milestones your course teaches and tell a senior.

Why check hearing?

Hearing loss can cause speech delay. Ask about hearing early and arrange a formal hearing test if there is speech delay.

Sources

- WHO motor development milestones
- CDC: developmental milestones

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