OSCE checklist for child health nursing: child pain

OSCE checklist for child health nursing: a child pain assessment uses the child's report where possible and a suitable observational approach when they cannot describe pain. Use this original practice checklist with your course guidance and supervised skills teaching.

Numbered practice steps

1. 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 child how they communicate and involve their caregiver appropriately. Explain the assessment and ask about the location and nature of the discomfort.
3. Choose a locally accepted pain tool suitable for the child's development and communication. Explain how to use it without suggesting which answer to give.
4. For a child who cannot self-report, observe behaviour, movement and response to comfort using the appropriate tool. Ask caregivers what is different from usual.
5. Consider illness, injury, distress and effects on eating, movement or sleep. Severe, unexplained or worsening pain needs clinical review rather than repeated scoring alone.
6. Follow the agreed comfort and prescribed treatment plan, then reassess using a consistent approach. Document the tool, findings, action, response and any escalation.
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 quiet child may still have pain. A caregiver's view adds context but should not replace a child's own report when they can give one. Recording a score without action or reassessment is incomplete.

Try an original practice task

Practise with a developmentally appropriate teaching pain scale from your course. Ask a partner to describe how discomfort affects play and rehearse a clear reassessment handover.

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 child pain 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 NG204: babies, children and young people experience of healthcare

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