

Heights and Weights

Policy

Neighborhood House Association (NHA) Early Head Start/Head Start (EHS/HS) staff and families work together to identify each child's nutrition and health needs. Staff complete growth measurements (height/length and weight) twice annually to identify new or recurring medical concerns of children, make appropriate referrals, and provide nutrition education materials as needed.

Reference and Regulation:

Head Start Performance Standards 1302.33(a)(1); 1302.42(b)(4);
1302.44(a)(1)

Center for Disease Control and Prevention: "Measuring Children's Height and Weight Accurately At Home"

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Procedure

Issuance Date: August 2006

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When assessing children's nutritional status, it is important to recognize that healthy children have individual differences and patterns of growth. Do not compare the growth of children arbitrarily, but instead use growth assessments like Weight-for-Length and BMI measurements calculated on growth charts (in PROMIS) to help decide when a nutrition or health referral should be made. The procedure for completing growth assessments is as follows:

Center Based/HS Home Based Programs

- The 1st height/length and weight measurement of the child is taken by EHS/HS staff (Teacher, Family Service Advocate, or Site Supervisor) during enrollment and prior to the child's first day of attendance or no later than 45 days of the child's first day of attendance. (See section below regarding EHS Home-Based Program procedure)
- The 2nd height/length and weight is taken 6 months from the date of the first measurement.
- All heights/lengths and weights are taken without shoes unless the child refuses. In such cases, please note in the Progress Notes of Section 2 of the Child File that the measurement was "taken with shoes on." (See guidelines below from the Center for Disease Control and Prevention on how to properly measure height and weight for children)
- All information from the 1st and 2nd measurements are entered into PROMIS in:

Health section → Physicals/Tests → Medical Tests/Screenings → Height & Weight

- Height/length and weight measurements are also documented in the Child File on the Supplemental Health Data Form. Use BMI for HS children, and use the Weight-for-Length percentile results for EHS children. Mark the appropriate follow-up box on the Supplemental Health Data Form.
- Height and weight measurements that are completed during the physical exam may not be used in place of the measurements taken by EHS/HS staff.

EHS Home-Based Program ONLY

- Staff working with children in the EHS Home-Based program does not have to take additional heights/lengths and weights measurements.
- Staff follows EPSDT guidelines and utilizes the measurements taken by the health care professional during the well-baby exams and/or toddler physicals.

Height and Weight Follow Up

- Staff shares the results of the height/length and weight measurements using the Growth Charts from PROMIS with the parents/guardians. Explaining why growth charts are used and that depending on where the child falls on a healthy growth pattern for their age/gender can be an indicator of overall growth/development or possible health concerns.
- See Referral Criteria – Nutrition in the Program Support SOPs section and the NUT-Nutrition Assessment and Responding to Nutrition Needs SOP for follow-up instructions on all results requiring staff to offer internal or external referrals to the child's parent/guardian.

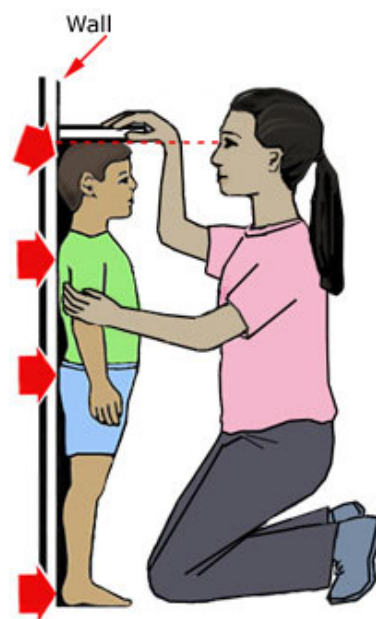
Documentation:

Perinatal Diet Questionnaire
Physical Assessment Forms
Well Baby Check-Ups
Supplemental Health Data form
PROMIS

Measuring Height Accurately

To measure height accurately to calculate BMI-for-age/Weight-for-Length:

1. Remove the child or teen's shoes, bulky clothing, and hair ornaments, and unbraid hair that interferes with the measurement.
2. Take the height measurement on flooring that is not carpeted and against a flat surface such as a wall with no molding.
3. Have the child or teen stand with feet flat, together, and against the wall. Make sure legs are straight, arms are at sides, and shoulders are level.
4. Make sure the child or teen is looking straight ahead and that the line of sight is parallel with the floor.
5. Take the measurement while the child or teen stands with head, shoulders, buttocks, and heels touching the flat surface (wall). (See illustration.) Depending on the overall body shape of the child or teen, all points may not touch the wall.
6. Use a flat headpiece to form a right angle with the wall and lower the headpiece until it firmly touches the crown of the head.
7. Make sure the measurer's eyes are at the same level as the headpiece.
8. Lightly mark where the bottom of the headpiece meets the wall. Then, use a metal tape to measure from the base on the floor to the marked measurement on the wall to get the height measurement.
9. Accurately record the height to the nearest 1/8th inch or 0.1 centimeter.



Measuring Weight Accurately

To measure weight accurately to calculate BMI-for-age/Weight-for-Length:

1. Use a digital scale. Avoid using bathroom scales that are spring-loaded. Place the scale on firm flooring (such as tile or wood) rather than carpet.
2. Have the child or teen remove shoes and heavy clothing, such as sweaters.
3. Have the child or teen stand with both feet in the center of the scale.
4. Record the weight to the nearest decimal fraction (for example, 55.5 pounds or 25.1 kilograms).

Information sourced from: Center for Disease Control and Prevention

Neighborhood House Association

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