



PROCEDURE	
Weight assessment 0 – 2 years	
Scope (Staff):	Community health staff
Scope (Area):	CAHS-CH, WACHS
Child Safe Organisation Statement of Commitment	
The Child and Adolescent Health Service (CAHS) commits to being a child safe organisation by meeting the National Child Safe Principles and National Child Safe Standards. This is a commitment to a strong culture supported by robust policies and procedures to ensure the safety and wellbeing of children at CAHS.	

This document should be read in conjunction with this [DISCLAIMER](#)

Aim

To correctly measure and interpret the weight of infants and children under two years of age.

NOTE: Weight assessments for children over 2 years, including those undertaken as part of the 2 year contact, will be conducted in accordance with the *Weight assessment 2 years and over* procedure.

Risk

The accurate measuring of weight is an integral part of growth assessment. Failure to undertake weight assessments or obtaining inaccurate weight measurements may delay the identification of significant growth deviations for a child.

Background

Assessment of growth identifies whether a child has age appropriate growth or is deviating from normal parameters. For assessment of growth to be meaningful, serial measurements should be taken and plotted onto a growth chart over a period of time.¹ Growth assessment is especially important during infancy to detect and monitor slow or excessive growth, check the impact of illness and treatment, and to identify or monitor those at higher risk.²

Along with growth measurement; the child should always be assessed according to their overall health and wellbeing, and developmental progress. Consideration of rate of growth, growth trajectory (as indicated on growth charts) and child's history and clinical judgement are required to determine whether further review or referral is required.³

Key Points

- To be performed by community health staff with appropriate training and assessment skills.
- Assessment of weight is undertaken as a component of the 0-14 days, 8 week, 4 month, 12 month and 2 year Universal contacts.

- For children receiving the Enhanced Child Health Schedule, weight assessment is offered and conducted at each scheduled contact before five years of age.
- Weight assessment should also be completed as part of a holistic assessment when concerns regarding growth or any other identified risk are raised by nurse or parent at any Universal Plus contact or drop-in session.
- Weight status in infants and children must be assessed using age and sex specific reference values.⁴
- Nutrition and health status affect weight and overall growth and development.⁵
- Weight is most accurately measured without clothing up to the age of two.
- To ensure weight measurement accuracy, reliable and sensitive equipment must be used along with good technique. Small errors during the measuring, recording or plotting can have a significant impact on the infant's/child's growth assessment results and subsequent care planning.
- Scales must be cleaned after use for each child, according to manufacturer's recommendations and organisational policy guidelines.
- Community health nurses must follow the organisation's overarching Infection Control Policies and perform hand hygiene in accordance with WA Health guidelines at all appropriate stages of the procedure.

Equipment

- Digital scales with a motion detector and stabiliser.
- These scales should weigh in increments of 5 grams (g) with the capacity to weigh up to at least 20 kilograms (kg). They should be large enough to support a two year old child.
- Other devices, such as for length measurement, must not be attached to the scales.
- Scales must be checked for accuracy annually. Refer to Appendix 1 for information on checking.

Procedure

Steps	Additional Information
<p>Explanation</p> <p>Explain the procedure to the parent and the child where relevant. Allow sufficient time for discussion of parent concerns.</p>	<p>Encourage parent support and involvement with the procedure.</p>
<p>Preparation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Place a sheet/paper towel on the scale. • Child will be undressed and nappy removed. 	
<p>Measuring</p>	

Steps	Additional Information
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Turn on scale and ‘tare’ to zero. • Ask parent to place child on the scales centrally so that weight is evenly distributed. 	
<p>Recording</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Follow the manufacturer’s guide to read the weight recording (some scales may take time to give a stable reading). • Record weight to the nearest 10g or 0.01kg. • Plot result on the appropriate weight for age and gender growth chart. • Use dots to plot but do not join the dots with a line. • Document if the child is in plaster, a harness, or any other item unable to be removed, which may impact on results. • Infants born after 37 completed weeks should be plotted on the WHO birth to 2 year growth charts. The actual age for these infants commences at birth. Growth measurement plotting begins at birth at “0” and continues according to actual age. • Infants born less than 37 weeks gestation should be plotted onto the WHO birth to 2 years growth charts with their age corrected for their prematurity until 2 years of age.^{3,6} 	<p>Age is plotted in completed weeks/months/years as appropriate.</p> <p>A child born before 37 completed weeks gestation is considered preterm.³ Once a corrected age of 40 weeks is reached, the WHO standards can be used to monitor ongoing growth. Corrected age should be used until two years of age. If the child catches up before this then actual age can be used.</p> <p>Fenton Preterm Growth Charts can be used from 20 - 40 weeks gestation or up to 50 weeks of age, as these babies may not be old enough to be plotted from week 0 on the WHO growth charts.⁵</p> <p>If concerns with growth status are identified in clients prior to 6 months of age, use the WHO 0-6 month growth charts to monitor and record serial weight and length measurements.</p>
<p>Interpretation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Interpret the growth chart with regards to the pattern of growth trajectory. • Discuss findings and growth patterns with parents. 	<p>Interpretations of measurements are to be done in conjunction with a holistic assessment.</p> <p>Serial measurements showing unexpected changes in the growth trajectories requires additional assessment and /or referral.</p> <p>For more information refer to the <i>Weight assessment 2 years and over, Growth birth to 18 years, Growth faltering, Overweight</i></p>

Steps	Additional Information
	<i>and obesity guidelines.</i>

Referral pathway

Additional referral to a dietitian, internal breastfeeding services or lactation consultant may be considered, dependent on individual requirements and local area availability.

If required, refer to a medical practitioner.

Documentation

Nurses maintain accurate, comprehensive and contemporaneous documentation of assessments, planning, decision making and evaluations; according to CAHS-CH and WACHS processes.

References
1. Dietitians of Canada, Canadian Paediatric Society, The College of Family Physicians of Canada, Community Health Nurses of Canada. Promoting optimal monitoring of child growth in Canada: Using the new World Health Organization growth charts – Executive Summary. <i>Paediatrics & Child Health</i> . 2010;15(2):77-9.
2. World Health Organization. Training course on child growth assessment Geneva: World Health Organization; 2006 [Available from: http://www.who.int/nutrition/publications/childgrowthstandards_trainingcourse/en/].
3. National Health and Medical Research Council. Infant feeding guidelines: information for health workers. Canberra: NHMRC; 2012.
4. The Royal Children's Hospital Melbourne. Growth measuring technique - under 2 year olds. Melbourne 2013. p. 2.
5. Smith Z. Faltering Growth. 2008. In: <i>Clinical Paediatric Dietetics</i> [Internet]. Wiley Online Library; [556-65].

Related policies, procedures and guidelines
The following documents can be accessed in the Clinical Nursing Manual via the HealthPoint link, Internet link or for WACHS staff in the WACHS Policy link
BMI assessment – child health
Breastfeeding deviations from normal
Growth birth – 18 years
Growth faltering

Head circumference assessment
Height assessment 2 years and over
Length assessment 0 - 2 years
Overweight and obesity
Physical assessment 0 - 4 years
Universal contact guidelines
Weight assessment 2 years and over

Related CAHS-CH forms

The following forms can be accessed from the [CAHS-Community Health Forms](#) page on HealthPoint

Breastfeeding Assessment Guide

World Health Organization Charts (CHS800A series)

Related CAHS-CH resources

The following resources can be accessed from the [CAHS-Community Health Resources](#) page on HealthPoint

Baby's First Foods

How children develop

Practice guide for Community Health Nurses

Toddler Tucker

Related external resources

[Royal Children's Hospital Child Growth learning resource.](#)

[Preterm Fenton Growth Charts](#)

[World Health Organization Charts 0 – 6 months](#) (external link)

Appendix 1: Annual calibration testing of infant scales

Key points

- Checking accuracy of scales must be conducted annually.
- Scales must also be checked for accuracy each time the battery is replaced and wherever there is professional concern.
- Staff must comply with health service provider Occupational Safety and Health guidelines for all manual handling tasks.
- Manufacturer's recommendations must be followed with regard to transportation, servicing and calibration.


Equipment

- Set of standard weights: 100g, 1000g and 5000g.

Procedure

Steps	Additional Information
Check the zero set	This should read zero +/- 1 unit.
Check the accuracy of the <u>100 grams</u> weight	Place the 100g weight on the scales. It should read 100.0g +/-0.5g.
Check tare operation	With the 100g weight still on scales, press the <i>tare</i> operation or 'hold' button to zero the scales. It should read 0.0g +/- 0.1g.
Check the accuracy of the <u>1.000 kilogram</u> weight	Place the 1.000 kg weight on the scales. It should read 1000g +/- 5g.
Check the accuracy of the <u>5.000 Kilograms</u> weight	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Remove 1.000kg weight and press <i>tare</i> to reset. • Place the 5.000kg weight on scales. • It should read 5000g +/- 25g.
When there are discrepancies in the readings repeat the test	If discrepancies persist on retest, the equipment may require replacement or repair. Liaise with line manager.
Document details of calibration	Attach details to the back of the scales and complete the <i>Annual Baby Scale Check Certificate</i> , when required.
Replace battery (as required) and document details of replacement	Attach details to the back of the scales and complete the <i>Annual Baby Scale Check Certificate</i> , when required.

This document can be made available in alternative formats on request for a person with a disability

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