

Growth Charts

Guidance for health professionals

The UK-WHO growth charts provide a description of optimal growth for healthy, breastfed children. Anyone who measures a child, plots or interprets charts should be suitably trained, or be supervised by someone qualified to do so. Here are some resources for healthcare professionals about the charts and how to use them.

Measuring guidance

- When weighing children use class III electronic scales.
- Weigh babies naked and weigh toddlers in vest and pants, without shoes.
- When measuring the head circumference use a narrow tape, either paper or plastic.
- When measuring the length of a child, shoes and nappy should be removed and appropriate equipment is essential, such as a length board or mat (applicable up to 2 years of age).
- When measuring height of a child shoes should be removed and a rigid rule with T piece or stadiometer should be used (applicable up to 2 years of age).

Measuring guidance

- Plot in pencil.
- Record measurements and date in ink.
- Age errors are the most common source of plotting errors.
- Centile describes the percentage expected to be below that line.
- A child is on a centile if within 1/4 space of the line or between the two centiles if not.
- A centile space is the distance between two centile lines

Videos

- [How to measure height](#)
- [How to measure head circumference](#)

- [How to measure length](#)
- [How to weigh](#)
- [How to weigh children who don't want to be weighed](#)

More advice

More detailed advice on using the growth charts can be found through the relevant PDF files below, including specific guidance for different age groups (newborn infants, preterm infants, toddlers) and close monitoring.

If you require any further information, including access to free PowerPoint presentations and training materials please contact growth.charts@rcpch.ac.uk.

Available PowerPoint presentations include: introduction to the 0-4 and 2-18 charts, implementing the charts, measuring and plotting, introduction to growth chart training and PCHR.

Available training materials include activity sheets on: measuring and plotting, infant and toddler, preterm and term.

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