

# Monitoring Short Stature Procedure

## Purpose

This tells site teams how to assess if a child needs to be monitored for stature (height) and the steps to take when a child is identified as at risk.

## Guidance

A child's height is determined by many factors. They include the height of parents, prenatal nutrition, food intake in early childhood and general health status. Growth charts have been developed to measure and predict a child's rate of growth.

Many children who measure at or below the 5<sup>th</sup> percentile for height/age are growing normally. Health professionals look for a trend that is consistent over time. A child who consistently follows a growth curve is considered to have appropriate growth. Even so, a height/age measurement at or below the 5<sup>th</sup> percentile may indicate a problem. This is especially true when there is a sudden change in a child's growth pattern. Reassure parents if their child has a consistent growth pattern that they are most likely growing at a rate that is right for them.

## Procedure

### 1. Identify

Site team must identify children at risk for short stature within 45 days of entry date. The risk factors include a diagnosis of having short stature by their health care provider as well as:

- having a concern listed on the Health and Developmental History
- having a diagnosis that is documented on Well Child Exam
- having growth charts indicate a child is at or below the 5<sup>th</sup> percentile for height/age

### 2. Document

Site teams must document children at risk for short stature within 45 days of entry date. Recheck measurement and graphing for accuracy. Record any other measurements available to assess pattern of growth.

- ECEAP sites input information in ELMS and EPI-Info.
- Head Start sites send ChildPlus growth worksheet to the Health Information Line then receives growth charts back from PSESD. FAX: 888-979-5897 or SCAN/EMAIL: [health@pugetsoundhs.org](mailto:health@pugetsoundhs.org)
- Contact parents or guardians to tell them their child's growth status and discuss plans to address concerns. Include the following:
  - Ask them about family history and if the measurements you have follow a consistent pattern or if there is a sudden change in growth. If short stature reflects a rapid or drastic change in growth pattern, discuss the concern with the parent and encourage them to follow-up with their primary care provider.
  - Ask if the child has been referred to WIC or to a Registered Dietitian by their health care provider. If a child is not enrolled in WIC, explain the program and encourage the parent to enroll their child.
  - Document the discussion with parents.
  - Share the child's growth status and plans with team members.
  - Continue to work with site team and family to make changes that promote healthy eating choices/patterns and exercise.

### Related Documents

Nutrition Consultation Request Form

### Resources

#### *Child of Mine-Feeding With Love and Good Sense*

Written by Ellyn Satter, MS, RD, this book is an excellent resource for professionals and parents to better understand the dynamics of feeding children.

[www.choosemyplate.gov](http://www.choosemyplate.gov)

Developed and maintained by USDA, this website has a wide variety of information on nutrition, exercise and health. Tip sheets for parents are available in English and Spanish on many topics.