

Head Start Guidelines for Weighing and Measuring

Weighing Children on Standing Scale

- 1) Assure scale is on a firm, non-carpeted surface
- 2) Have child remove shoes and any heavy clothing such as jackets, sweat jackets, extra sweat pants.
- 3) Before child stands on scale, assure that all sliding weights are at zero.
- 4) Assure that the pointer at the right end of the beam floats in the center of the trig loop.
- 5) Make adjustments as needed by locating the small screw at the left end of the beam. Use a small flat-head screwdriver or paperclip and turn the screw slowly until the pointer floats in the center of the trig loop.
- 6) Scale is now ready for use.
- 7) Have child stand in center of the scale's platform.
- 8) Assure that child is not holding onto a counter or the scale during weighing. Ask child to put hands on his/her stomach.
- 9) Repeat the weight until 2 weights read the same.
- 10) Document the weight immediately on appropriate form.
- 11) Return sliding weights to zero after every use.

****Keep moving of scales to a minimum. Moving scales can cause scales to become uncalibrated.**

Weighing Children on Digital Scale

- 1) Assure scale is on a firm, non-carpeted surface.
- 2) Have child remove shoes and any heavy clothing such as jackets, sweat jackets, extra sweat pants.
- 3) Before child stands on scale, assure that digital reading on the scale is zero.
- 4) Have child stand in center of the scale's platform.
- 5) Assure that child is not holding onto a counter or the scale during weighing. Ask child to put hands on his/her stomach.
- 6) Document the weight immediately on the appropriate form.
- 7) Assure scale is back to zero before next child is weighed.

Measuring Children with a Wall-Mounted Height Board

- 1) Assure height board is mounted to a wall where the floor is level and there are no protruding baseboards present.
- 2) Have children remove shoes and any bulky clothing. Make sure headbands and other hair accessories are removed as well.
- 3) Have child stand with back against the flat surface directly in front of the measuring board. Head and eyes should face forward (child should not be looking down).
- 4) Find the child's natural stance with knees and feet. The stance will be:
 - a) knees together and feet apart
 - b) knees apart and feet together
 - c) knees together and feet together.

Be sure the child's heels are flat against the wall and touching the wall. Assure that child is NOT standing on tippy toes.

- 5) Assure child's knees are not bent.
- 6) Assure body is not bent and buttocks are not forward (body should be straight).
- 7) Assure child's head faces forward and is not tilted up or down.
- 8) Slowly, lower the moveable headboard until it touches the crown (or top) of the head firmly. Make sure the headboard is not just resting on the hair but is actually touching the top of the head and is level.
- 9) **Get down to the child's level to read the height.** Read the measurements to the nearest $\frac{1}{4}$ inch. If the measurement falls between $\frac{1}{4}$ inch and $\frac{1}{2}$ inch round up.
- 10) Repeat until 2 measurements agree.
- 11) Immediately record the measurement on the appropriate form.

Measuring Children with a Measuring Tape

- 1) Assure tape is mounted to a wall where the floor is level and there are no protruding baseboards present.
- 2) Have children remove shoes and any bulky clothing. Make sure headbands and other hair accessories are removed as well.
- 3) Have child stand with back against the flat surface directly in front of the measuring tape. Head and eyes should face forward (child should not be looking down).
- 4) Find the child's natural stance with knees and feet. The stance will be:
 - a) knees together and feet apart
 - b) knees apart and feet together
 - c) knees together and feet together.

Be sure the child's heels are flat against the wall and touching the wall. Assure that child is NOT standing on tippy toes.

- 5) Assure child's knees are not bent.

- 6) Assure body is not bent and buttocks are not forward (body should be straight).
- 7) Assure head faces forward. Make sure child's head is not tilted up or down.
- 8) Rest a clip board or ruler firmly on the crown (or top) of the head. Make sure the clipboard or ruler is not just resting on the hair but is actually touching the top of the head and is level.
- 9) Before reading measurement, assure clipboard or ruler rests flat on head and is not tilted.
- 10) **Get down to the child's level to read the height.** Read the measurements to the nearest $\frac{1}{4}$ inch. If the measurement falls between $\frac{1}{4}$ inch and $\frac{1}{2}$ inch round up.
- 11) Repeat until 2 measurements agree.
- 12) Immediately record the measurement on the appropriate form.

General Recommendations:

If no stature board available, use a clipboard or ruler

Don't use a cloth measuring tape – they stretch. Mount tape to wall.

Common Measurement Errors for Weighing and Measuring:

Inadequate instrument

Restless child

Reading measurement incorrectly

Recording errors incorrectly

The value of using heights and weights depends on **accuracy** – how they are performed and recorded. When properly performed, heights and weights are crucial in assessing nutritional status and overall health.