

Self-Assessment for the Neonatal Developmental Care Specialist Designation Examination



Applicants for the Neonatal Developmental Care Specialist Designation may use this document as a means to assess their own level of integration of developmentally supportive caregiving into their routine practices in the NICU. It is recommended that an applicant's assessments fall into the "all the time" category in 80% of the answers for each of the four developmental care practice standards. Practicing at this level of integration will best support successful completion of the Specialist Designation examination.

Standard 1: The infant receives individualized care.

Practice Standard	Personal Assessment	Comments and Study Notes
If an infant has an individualized developmental care plan, I read it carefully and use it as a guide for timing and structuring my care.	<input type="checkbox"/> all the time <input type="checkbox"/> some of the time <input type="checkbox"/> seldom	
I am mentally and emotionally engaged with each infant in my care, continually guided by the behavior of the infant.	<input type="checkbox"/> all the time <input type="checkbox"/> some of the time <input type="checkbox"/> seldom	
I stay attuned to every infant between care periods, so that I respond promptly if an infant needs attention or added support to stay relaxed and restful even if I am not the infant's assigned caregiver. I am ready to begin care when the infant is showing a natural change of state, recognizing that state changes are often very subtle.	<input type="checkbox"/> all the time <input type="checkbox"/> some of the time <input type="checkbox"/> seldom	
I am flexible in timing my care to support and protect a quiet sleep state.	<input type="checkbox"/> all the time <input type="checkbox"/> some of the time <input type="checkbox"/> seldom	
I carry out care that can be flexibly timed together with procedures for which timing is less flexible, being careful to avoid overwhelming the infant.	<input type="checkbox"/> all the time <input type="checkbox"/> some of the time <input type="checkbox"/> seldom	
I make ongoing judgments about the necessity of interventions for each infant and make collaborative decisions to delay or eliminate interventions that may create unnecessary stress.	<input type="checkbox"/> all the time <input type="checkbox"/> some of the time <input type="checkbox"/> seldom	
If it is necessary to wake a sleeping infant, I approach the infant gently with a soft touch or whisper and spend the necessary moments to help the infant move smoothly and comfortably to a higher state before doing any assessment or procedure.	<input type="checkbox"/> all the time <input type="checkbox"/> some of the time <input type="checkbox"/> seldom	
I avoid doing any procedures, assessments, or caregiving tasks with an infant in a prone position where he or she is unlikely to be able to use self-comforting abilities.	<input type="checkbox"/> all the time <input type="checkbox"/> some of the time <input type="checkbox"/> seldom	
I ensure that every feeding experience is a positive, pleasant, and nurturing time regardless of the size or age of the infant or the route or volume of the feeding.	<input type="checkbox"/> all the time <input type="checkbox"/> some of the time <input type="checkbox"/> seldom	

(continued)

Standard 1: The infant receives individualized care. *(continued)*

Practice Standard	Personal Assessment	Comments and Study Notes
I am aware of the infant’s fragile digestive systems during hands-on care before feedings and work carefully to avoid fluctuations in perfusion that may influence how the gut accommodates and digests feedings.	<input type="checkbox"/> all the time <input type="checkbox"/> some of the time <input type="checkbox"/> seldom	
If an infant has difficulty remaining stable and organized in spite of my careful handling, I slow down or stop, help the infant recover completely, and reconsider my approach before continuing.	<input type="checkbox"/> all the time <input type="checkbox"/> some of the time <input type="checkbox"/> seldom	
I respond to and support the infant’s efforts to spend time quietly awake in relaxed engagement with his or her caregivers, recognizing the development of quiet alertness as the necessary foundation for each infant’s formation of social relationships.	<input type="checkbox"/> all the time <input type="checkbox"/> some of the time <input type="checkbox"/> seldom	
I stay with the infant and support a smooth transition back to restful sleep before stepping away from the bedside.	<input type="checkbox"/> all the time <input type="checkbox"/> some of the time <input type="checkbox"/> seldom	
I provide appropriate pain management when noxious procedures are necessary.	<input type="checkbox"/> all the time <input type="checkbox"/> some of the time <input type="checkbox"/> seldom	
I integrate a pain assessment tool into my practice.	<input type="checkbox"/> all the time <input type="checkbox"/> some of the time <input type="checkbox"/> seldom	

Standard 2: Family-centered care is supported from birth.

Practice Standard	Personal Assessment	Comments and Study Notes
My manner toward families and those supporting them is warm, respectful, and welcoming.	<input type="checkbox"/> all the time <input type="checkbox"/> some of the time <input type="checkbox"/> seldom	
My manner toward families is consistent with my words.	<input type="checkbox"/> all the time <input type="checkbox"/> some of the time <input type="checkbox"/> seldom	
I maintain flexibility to welcome and support families consistently at all times of the day.	<input type="checkbox"/> all the time <input type="checkbox"/> some of the time <input type="checkbox"/> seldom	
I accommodate the presence of families in the nursery during rounds or shift changes by sharing information in a tone of voice that preserves confidentiality.	<input type="checkbox"/> all the time <input type="checkbox"/> some of the time <input type="checkbox"/> seldom	
I model careful, nurturing, and supportive caregiving for families.	<input type="checkbox"/> all the time <input type="checkbox"/> some of the time <input type="checkbox"/> seldom	
I form relationships with families, show genuine interest in their experience, and respect their central role in the life of their infant.	<input type="checkbox"/> all the time <input type="checkbox"/> some of the time <input type="checkbox"/> seldom	

(continued)

Standard 2: Family-centered care is supported from birth. *(continued)*

Practice Standard	Personal Assessment	Comments and Study Notes
I can be counted on to support the same inclusion of family members that other colleagues have provided for families in previous shifts.	__all the time __some of the time __seldom	
I support families in understanding and supporting their infant's behavioral and developmental goals from the earliest possible time and nurture their confidence in supporting their infant's goals.	__all the time __some of the time __seldom	
I support families in supporting their infants during potentially stressful procedures.	__all the time __some of the time __seldom	
I reserve family activities (e.g., bathing) for families.	__all the time __some of the time __seldom	
I help families understand the ways in which their infant's behavior communicates how the infant is handling their interaction and help them use these behavioral cues as their guide for pacing, positioning, and interacting with their infant.	__all the time __some of the time __seldom	
I ensure that families see all infants consistently treated with the support and respect they would want for their own infant when they are not around.	__all the time __some of the time __seldom	

Standard 3: All caregivers practice collaboratively.

Practice Standard	Personal Assessment	Comments and Study Notes
I stay at the bedside to support infants in my care through stressful procedures.	__all the time __some of the time __seldom	
If I need to perform a procedure or examination on an infant who is in the care of another person (nurse or parent), I respectfully discuss the need with that person and agree on a time that is in the mutual interest of all.	__all the time __some of the time __seldom	
I talk with the other person about how to proceed and what the infant needs before we begin.	__all the time __some of the time __seldom	
I show flexibility whenever possible by gently completing my own caregiving or assessments while the infant is available for another procedure rather than disturbing the infant again later.	__all the time __some of the time __seldom	
I seek another person to support an infant in my care during a potentially stressful experience, including bathing and weighing.	__all the time __some of the time __seldom	

(continued)

Standard 3: All caregivers practice collaboratively. *(continued)*

Practice Standard	Personal Assessment	Comments and Study Notes
I am willingly available to my colleagues to provide support for infants in their care during potentially stressful procedures.	__all the time __some of the time __seldom	
I consistently share information about infants' behavioral competencies, vulnerabilities, and thresholds when communicating with colleagues during rounds or shift changes.	__all the time __some of the time __seldom	
I respect and support the roles of other individuals and disciplines in the lives of infants in my care.	__all the time __some of the time __seldom	
I participate (as preceptor or mentor) in developmental care orientation of new staff.	__all the time __some of the time __seldom	
I serve on the Developmental Care Committee at my institution.	__all the time __some of the time __seldom	

Standard 4: A developmentally appropriate environment is provided for every infant and family.

Practice Standard	Personal Assessment	Comments and Study Notes
I adequately support all infants by maintaining a consistently calm, relaxing environment with muted sound and lighting between and during caregiving interactions.	__all the time __some of the time __seldom	
I consider all the sources of light, sound, movement, smell, and taste confronting an infant during care and eliminate all inappropriate or unnecessary sources of stimulation.	__all the time __some of the time __seldom	
I am mindful of my own voice and other sounds I produce in the nursery.	__all the time __some of the time __seldom	
I silence alarms as soon as possible and avoid unnecessary alarms.	__all the time __some of the time __seldom	
If I need to use an over-the-bed light for hands-on care, I carefully shield the infant's eyes but do not use a blindfold so I can respond to and support the infant if he or she attempts to gaze at me.	__all the time __some of the time __seldom	
I provide infants with the bedding and other physical supports they need to maintain optimal tone and position and to remain either in a quiet, restful sleep or a relaxed, comfortable wakefulness.	__all the time __some of the time __seldom	

(continued)

Standard 4: A developmentally appropriate environment is provided for every infant and family. *(continued)*

Practice Standard	Personal Assessment	Comments and Study Notes
I am continually mindful of the need to structure an infant’s visual field to support alert wakefulness as appropriate (without overwhelming), transition to sleep, or quiet, restful sleep.	<input type="checkbox"/> all the time <input type="checkbox"/> some of the time <input type="checkbox"/> seldom	
I provide as much space and comfort as possible for family caregiving, keep charts and equipment nicely organized, and avoid clutter.	<input type="checkbox"/> all the time <input type="checkbox"/> some of the time <input type="checkbox"/> seldom	
I encourage families to personalize their infant’s bed space and make the environment more homelike.	<input type="checkbox"/> all the time <input type="checkbox"/> some of the time <input type="checkbox"/> seldom	
I participate (as preceptor or mentor) in developmental care orientation of new staff.	<input type="checkbox"/> all the time <input type="checkbox"/> some of the time <input type="checkbox"/> seldom	
I serve on the Developmental Care Committee at my institution.	<input type="checkbox"/> all the time <input type="checkbox"/> some of the time <input type="checkbox"/> seldom	