

Assessing Pain in Children

Nursing

Choosing a pain tool that matches the child's age and ability to report.

Match the tool to the child, not the child to the tool. Believe the parent.

Choosing a tool

Behavioural tools for non-verbal children

Faces scales from about four years

Numeric scales from about eight years

Specific tools for cognitive impairment

Use the same tool each time for comparison

Behavioural cues

Facial expression and brow

Cry, and whether it is consolable

Legs drawn up, guarding, rigidity

Withdrawal, unusual stillness, poor feeding

Sleep disturbance and altered play

The parent saying this is not like them

Educational reference. A quiet child is not necessarily comfortable.
Analgesia choices and doses follow local paediatric prescribing