

## DESCRIBING DEVELOPMENTAL ASSESSMENTS AND CUES

We have been able to return to patients in the four Short Clinical stations, but the Development station remains scenario-based. Therefore, candidates should think of their approach to a developmental assessment of a child as similar to the way SIM training is run in Life Support courses in the UK and overseas. For the four Short Clinical stations, candidates will conduct a normal examination of the patient in the station.

### **Describing Developmental Assessments**

In the MRCPCH Face-to-Face normal circuit with some patient clinical examination, candidates will have to describe how they would undertake a developmental assessment instead of demonstrating the actual assessment of a child. We encourage all trainees to practice describing how they will assess a child with various presentations. Being able to describe a developmental assessment in a focused and structured manner will be central to successful delivery. When doing so, being able to share with the examiner what you would be looking for will give the examiner confidence around your thought processes contributing to developing the developmental picture e.g.: 'I would engage with the child to see if they can build a tower and if so, how many blocks high.'

The examiner may intervene to ask questions, probe statements or provide prompts during the station. The examiner will check the candidate's understanding of the task provided. If the candidate does not understand the task, they may ask the examiner to repeat it.

### **Cues**

In this exam, while candidates are describing the process of a developmental assessment, the examiner will provide 'cues' at key points to help build up a picture (the signs or information the candidate would have picked up had they actually done a certain element of the assessment with a child). For instance, if the candidate said, "I would see if the child was able to build a tower with blocks and see how many blocks high they could build it," the examiner would deliver a cue, "the child is able to build a tower of 2 blocks high." Candidates should expect cues to be offered where they would have discovered signs or information in a real developmental assessment.

There are two types of cues: universal and dependent.

**Dependent cues** are the signs or information the candidate would have picked up had they actually assessed the patient. These are provided by the examiner depending on whether the candidate describes a specific element of the developmental assessment. For instance, if the candidate said, "I would see if the child was able to build a tower with blocks and see how many blocks high they could build it," the examiner would deliver a cue, "the child is able to build a tower of 2 blocks high."

If a candidate:

1. Omits a relevant element in their description the examiner will **not** provide the dependent cue for that element. Such omissions can adversely impact on the signs/information the candidate identifies and consequently their formulation of the developmental issues and management.
2. Refers to an element of an assessment in a cursory way, the examiner might ask for details before they provide the dependent cue for that element.

Candidates should expect dependent cues to be provided where they would have discovered signs or information in a real developmental assessment. To enable the examiner to provide these dependent cues, candidates are advised to take a breath/pause for a few seconds after they have described each element of the assessment before moving on to the next. In case a candidate does not pause, the examiner may indicate they have a dependent cue to deliver by raising a pen or their hand.

**Universal cues** are the signs that any candidate would have discovered simply by being in the room with the child. For example, a universal cue might be if a child had dysmorphic features. These cues typically consist of photographs but may include audio or video recordings. These universal cues will be provided at the start of the station, during the four-minute reading time and are also available to the candidate throughout the station.

### **Other cues**

Finally, there are some cues that should be *dependent cues* but are provided with *universal cues* at the start of the station for ease of delivery. For example, there might be a video recording which shows a child's gait. Examiners will inform candidates where these cues relate to a specific element of the assessment. For instance, if the candidate says they would ask the child to walk for them, the examiner will refer them back to what they had seen when watching the video during the reading time.

### **Reading & Review Time**

In the 3 minutes prior to the start of the station, Candidates must read the candidate information sheet and **must review all cues**. Although these cues are available for the candidate to view/listen throughout the station, candidates should be mindful that the time they take to do this during the station will reduce the time for the different assessment stages of the station.