Neonatal Nursing Core Competencies

Neonatal nursing is a highly specialized. Uniform qualifications and competencies to support standard knowledge and clinical performance are necessary for high quality care. This document presents a competency framework for the novice through expert neonatal nurse to meet the complex needs of neonates and families. It is to be used to guide curriculum development, orientation, and performance review. The first section presents the competency framework followed by competencies at each level of practice-novice to expert, followed by instructions as to how to use a performance checklist to guide staff evaluations.

Competency Framework

I.	Clinical Practice
II.	Professional, Ethics, and Legal Practice
III.	Leadership and Teamwork
IV.	Infant-Family-Centered Developmental Care
V.	Research

Values

- Excellence in Quality Neonatal Care, Practice, and Education
- Neonatal nursing as a Global Specialty
- Infant- Family-Centered Developmental Care
- Culturally Sensitive Care • Compassion
- Healthy Work Environment
- Standards of Care, Practice, and Education

Benner Model of Skills Acquisition (Benner, 1982)

- Benner Level 1: Novice or Advanced Beginner
- Benner Level 2: Competent
- Benner Level 3: Proficient
- Benner Level 4: Expert

WHO Three Levels of Care (UNICEF & WHO: https://www.unicef.org/reports/transforming-care-for-every-small-and-sick-newborn-2020)
- **Primary (LEVEL I):** Immediate newborn care (thorough drying, skin-to-skin contact (SSC), delayed cord clamping, hygienic cord care); neonatal resuscitation; early initiation and

support for exclusive breastfeeding; routine care (Vitamin K, eye care and vaccinations, weighing, and clinical examinations); prevention of mother-to-child transmission of HIV; assessment, management of and referral for bacterial infections, jaundice and diarrhea, feeding problems, birth defects and other problems; pre-discharge advice for mother and baby care and follow-up.

- **Secondary (LEVEL II):** Thermal care, comfort and pain management, kangaroo mother care (KMC), assisted feeding for optimal nutrition (cup feeding and nasogastric feeding), safe oxygen administration, prevention of apnea; detection and management of neonatal infection, detection and management of hypoglycemia, jaundice, anemia, and neonatal encephalopathy, seizure management, safe administration of intravenous fluids, detection and referral management for birth defects. Transition to intensive care: continuous positive airway pressure (CPAP), exchange transfusion, detection and management of necrotizing enterocolitis (NEC), specialized high-risk infant follow-up of infants (including preterm).
- **Tertiary (LEVEL III):** Advanced feeding support (e.g., parenteral nutrition), mechanical/assisted ventilation, including intubation, screening and treatment for retinopathy of prematurity, surfactant treatment; investigation and management of birth defects, pediatric surgery, genetic services.

Recommendation for staff that work in Level II Neonatal Unit or Special Care Unit based on the WHO Level standards:

The unit should have nurses with different competency skills. Novice or advance beginners and competent to care for the small and sick infant at the bedside. Proficient and expert levels should be in the role of mentorship and leadership within the unit, as well as, at the bedside as needed.

- Requirement for Novice and advanced beginners:
- Completed the neonatal nurse competency requirements:
- Formal neonatal course-length up to one year. Include: embryology, pharmacology, system specific illness and treatments. Passed 70% of the skills checklist required for novice and advanced beginner neonatal nurse.
- Requirement for Proficient and Expert:
- Minimum of 2 years neonatal experience. Completed a formal neonatal course. Passed 70% of the skills required for the proficient and expert neonatal nurse.

A. Competency Framework – Novice Nurse and Advanced Beginner

I. Clinical Practice
Clinical Practice Standard

- Uses theory, research evidence, observations, and experience in clinical decision-making

- Practices in accordance with professional, legal, and ethical responsibilities affecting neonatal practice

- Fulfills the conduct requirement for the profession of nursing.

Clinical Practice Competencies

- Practices within agreed parameters, apply knowledge, clinical judgment, and a range of skills to provide safe and effective neonatal care

- Maintains ongoing neonatal knowledge

- Defines areas of neonatal deficiencies within their scope of practice and find ways to alleviate those deficiencies

- Develops and implements a plan of care, individualized to the neonate/family according to unit policies and guidelines

- Ensures written documentation is clear and follows local guidelines and standards

- Demonstrates awareness of current practices available in neonatal nursing care

- Provides evidence-based neonatal nursing care

- Maintains and improves quality in all aspects of neonatal nursing care.

The novice nurse demonstrates skills and competencies by:

- Attending neonatal orientation, training, and educational lectures

- Actively following unit policies and procedures

- Articulating an understanding of neonatal anatomy and physiology to others

- Developing skills in assessment and care of the neonate and family

- Completing professional documentation

- Using initiative to see neonatal learning opportunities

- Beginning to organize one's own clinical workload

- Beginning to recognize variations in clinical parameters

- Developing an understanding of neonatal equipment and participating in the preparation of the equipment's use with the mentor's help

- Developing an understanding of the need for routine diagnostic tests and how to perform tests within the scope of practice and hospital guidelines

- Beginning to understand the need for frequent clinical assessment

- Articulating the rationale for using current evidence to provide care

- Beginning to articulate principles of cue-based individualized care

- Developing an understanding of accountability for one's own practice

- Participating in medical rounds and discussions regarding neonates in their care

- Consulting with senior neonatal nurses to review the neonatal care when needed

- Beginning to provide information, concise reports, and communication related to the plan of care

- Providing the family with evidence-based care information and support.

II. Professional, Ethics and legal Practice
Professional, Ethics, and Legal Practice Standards
- Fulfils the conduct requirement of the neonatal nursing profession
- Uses communication effectively and maintains confidentiality
- Enhances professional development of self and others

Professional, Ethics, and Legal Practice Competencies
- Demonstrates an understanding of professional accountability
- Always engages in ethical and lawful practice
- Utilizes institutional policies, procedures, guidelines, and protocols to provide safe neonatal/family care
- Communicates effectively with members of the interdisciplinary neonatal team including the family
- Ensure that evidence-based information is provided in a timely manner
- Maintains a safe and secure environment
- Demonstrates knowledge of and is compliant with local and national health and safety regulations
- Upholds excellent practice standards to minimize potential adverse risks to the neonates

The novice neonatal nurse demonstrates knowledge and skill competency by:
- Employing the regional and national safety/health regulations.
- Utilizing infection prevention techniques and articulating neonatal risk for infection
- Practicing within the scope of practice regarding medication preparation and administration
- Identifying the steps needed to intervene in emergency situations
- Following unit-based protocols and policies
- Developing a plan for increasing and reviewing clinical skills in partnership with the supervisors or mentors
- Seeking opportunities for continuing education and records Clinical Professional Development (CPD) hours or continuing education.

III. Leadership and Teamwork
Leadership and Teamwork Standards
- Engages in collaborative practice to achieve planned outcomes
- Provides a support environment for colleagues
- Manages the use of staff and physical resources

Leadership and Teamwork Competencies
- Demonstrates leadership skills within nursing practice
- Actively strives to attain skills and knowledge in neonatal care
- Provides an ongoing portfolio of continuing education
- Takes responsibility for developing themselves and others
- Contributes to the overall unit operation where employed
- Actively contributes to neonatal working groups
- Contributes to the orientation of new staff
- Collaborates with outside agencies and community health facilities

- Manages resources effectively
- Participates in clinical governance.

The novice neonatal nurse demonstrates knowledge and skill competency by:
- Collaborating with a mentor to provide a rapid response when a colleague requires assistance
- Observing how others develop flexible and creative approaches in challenging situations
- Developing an awareness of the financial resources needed in the unit
- Using resources appropriately.

IV. Infant –Family Centered Developmental Care

Infant- Family-Centered Developmental Care Standards
- Promotes the participation of families in the neonatal developmental care
- Advocates and protects the rights of the neonate and family
- Develops therapeutic and caring relationships

Infant- Family-Centered Developmental Care Competencies
- Utilizes their interpersonal relationships and communication skills to care for neonates and families
- Incorporates the concepts of infant- family-centered developmental care in the daily planning and implementation of neonatal care
- Provides all infant- family-centered developmental care per unit policy and practice
- Act as the neonate's/family's advocate in care
- Ensures integration of families in the care of the neonates
- Fosters an environment of open communication between the family and care team
- Communicates with other departments and health care workers that need to be involved in care of the neonate.

The novice neonatal nurse demonstrates knowledge and skill competency by:
- Practicing infant- family-centered developmental care
- Giving accurate and timely communication to the family guided by a mentor
- Observing strategies that encourage and maintain the participation of the family in the planning, delivering, and evaluating neonatal care
- Observing mentor's use of systems' continuum of care for the neonate and family
- Recognizing opportunities for bonding and attachment for the family and neonate
- Recognizing the need for continuity of care to build a professional relationship with family and where possible adhere to the continuity of care
- Documenting and recording the care input from the family
- Developing a high level of sensitivity to identify individuality and the cultural needs of the family
- Articulating an awareness of stress placed on families and providing appropriate support
- Following educational programs developed to meet the educational needs of the family
- Refraining from disclosure of information to any interested parties without prior family consent

- Applying knowledge of how to support families receiving distressing information.

V. Research

Research Standards

- Understands the importance of research in neonatal practice

Research Competencies

- Establishes a culture that incorporates evidence and research, to support best practices
- Demonstrates the ability to offer clinical practice guided by critical thinking coupled with established problem-solving skills
- Collaborates in unit-based research, quality of care projects, and audits.

The novice neonatal nurse demonstrates knowledge and skill competency by:

- Adopting a spirit of inquiry toward clinical practice
- Utilizing evidence-based guidelines
- Articulating an awareness of why research must be conducted in an ethical manner
- Developing the ability to challenge or question practices based on research
- Developing the ability to participate in an interdisciplinary research team
- Participating in research where appropriate
- Reading peer review journals.

B. Competency Framework –Competent Nurse

I. Clinical Practice

Clinical Practice Standards

- Uses theory, research evidence, observations, and experience in clinical decision-making
- Practices in accordance with the professional, legal, and ethical responsibilities affecting neonatal practice
- Fulfills the conduct requirement for the profession of nursing

Clinical Practice Competencies

- Practices within agreed parameters, apply knowledge, clinical judgment, and a range of skills to provide safe and effective neonatal care
- Maintains ongoing neonatal knowledge
- Defines areas of neonatal deficiencies within their own scope of practice and find ways to alleviate those deficiencies
- Develops and implements a plan of care that is individualized to the neonate/family according to unit policies and guidelines
- Ensures that written documentation is clear and follows local guidelines and standards
- Demonstrates an awareness of current practices available in neonatal nursing care
- Provides evidence-based neonatal nursing care.

The competent neonatal nurse, having knowledge and skill competency by:

- Explaining unit policies, procedures, and guidelines
- Understanding of and applying accountability for individual practice

- Reviewing and evaluating variations in clinical vital signs
- Applying neonatal cues/observations to individualize direct nursing activities
- Exhibiting strong time-management skills and can assist others with their workload
- Articulating the importance of cue-based individualized care and applies this to neonatal care
- Providing informative, concise reports and communication related to the plan of care.
- Reviewing one's own practice to improve quality care
- Understanding the importance of working within an interdisciplinary team.

II. Professional, Ethical and Legal Practice

Professional, Ethics and Legal Practice Standards

- Fulfills the conduct requirement of the neonatal nursing profession
- Uses communication effectively and maintains confidentiality
- Enhances professional development of self and others

Professional, Ethics, and Legal Practice Competencies

- Always engages in ethical and lawful practice
- Utilizes institutional policy, procedures, guidelines, and protocols to provide safe neonatal/family care
- Works and communicates effectively with every member of the interdisciplinary neonatal team including the family as a team member by ensuring that evidence-based information is provide in a timely manner
- Maintains a safe and secure environment
- Demonstrates knowledge of and be compliant with local and national health and safety regulation, and upholds excellent practice to minimize potential adverse risk to the neonates
- Adheres to infection prevention techniques, risk management requirements, and security policies at the institution daily
- Acts in the best interests of the neonate and family
- Participates in professional neonatal nursing organizations and advocates for specialization.

<u>The competent neonatal nurse, having knowledge and skill competency by:</u>

- Collaborating with others to follow hospital's safety and risk management
- Exhibiting competence in relation to the equipment utilized on the neonatal unit
- Articulating the role of the nurse in emergency situations and possesses the clinical ability to support other team members in such situations
- Utilizing active listening skills, empathy, and interpersonal relationship skills facilitating trust in family and staff
- Articulating and utilizing conflict resolution skills
- Adhering to performance reviews as stipulated by the employer and maintaining a record of Clinical Professional Development (CPD) hours
- Articulating an understanding of the use of evidence-based hospital policies and guidelines and support of other members of the team to access and understand them
- Complying with the nursing professions code of ethics.

III. Leadership and Teamwork

Leadership and Teamwork Standards

- Engages in collaborative practice to achieve planned outcomes
- Provides a supportive environment for colleagues
- Manages the use of staff and physical resources

Leadership and Teamwork Competencies
- Demonstrates leadership skills within nursing practice
- Actively strives to attain skills and knowledge in neonatal care
- Provides an ongoing portfolio of continue education
- Takes responsibility for developing themselves and others
- Contributes to the overall unit operation where they are employed
- Actively contributes to neonatal working groups
- Contributes to the orientation of new staff
- Collaborates with outside agencies and community health facilities
- Manages resources effectively
- Participates in clinical governance.

The competent neonatal nurse, having knowledge and skill competency by:
- Seeking advice from a proficient or expert nurse when neonate/family needs require expertise
- Participating in the developmental and delivery of educational programs according to the level of knowledge
- Fostering an environment of learning for self and others
- Actively taking part in the organization and delivery of care when neonatal transfers are required.

IV. Infant- Family Centered Developmental Care
Infant- Family-Centered Developmental Care Standards
- Promotes the participation of families in the neonatal developmental care
- Advocates and protects the rights of the neonate and family
- Develops therapeutic and caring relationships

Infant- Family-Centered Developmental Care Competencies
- Utilizes their interpersonal relationships and communication skills to care for neonates and families
- Incorporates the concepts of infant- family-centered developmental care in the daily planning and implementation of neonatal care
- Provides all infant- family-centered developmental care per unit policy and practice
- Act as the neonate's/family's advocate
- Ensures integration of families in the care of the neonates
- Fosters an environment of open communication between the family and care team.

The competent neonatal nurse, having achieved knowledge and skill competency by:
- Understanding and applying supportive developmental care interventions
- Providing strategies that encourage and maintain the participation of the family
- Supporting all family integrated care strategies that support bonding and attachment for the neonate and family
- Actively participating in and advocating for family education
- Communicating information in a sensitive manner to the family which may cause

distress such as impending death or potential life-long complications

- Accurately documenting and understanding the significance of neonatal data-reporting to senior team members as required
- Always Applying confidentiality through clinical discussions and the storage of neonatal/family information.

V. Research

Research Standards

- Understands the importance of research in neonatal practice

Research Competencies

- Establishes a practice that incorporates evidence, research, and tools to follow-up on best practices
- Demonstrates the ability to offer clinical practice guided by critical thinking coupled with established problem-solving skills
- Collaborates in unit-based research, quality of care projects, and audits.

The competent neonatal nurse, having achieved knowledge and skill competency by:

- Encouraging questioning and reviewing their clinical practice in themselves and others
- Actively participating in quality improvement activities in practice
- Employing auditing skills
- Providing evidence of competency in searching and critically appraising literature
- Exhibiting the ability to critically evaluate research
- Seeking opportunities to participate in research
- Using evidence to support minimum staffing ratios for a safe environment
- Challenging practice decisions and treatment when appropriate using evidence and research
- Providing informative, concise reports and communication related to the plan of care
- Actively working to ensure the availability of equipment and staff needed for safe unit functioning
- Identifying the need for and implementing variations from planned care and reviewing ongoing care.

C. Competency Framework – Proficient Nurse

I. Clinical Practice
Clinical Practice Standards

- Uses theory, research evidence, observations, and experience in clinical decision-making
- Practices in accordance with the professional, legal, and ethical responsibilities affecting neonatal practice
- Fulfils the conduct requirement for the profession of nursing

Clinical Practice Competencies

- Practices within agreed parameters, apply knowledge, clinical judgment, and a range of skills to provide safe and effective neonatal care
- Maintains ongoing neonatal knowledge

- Define areas of neonatal deficiencies within their own scope of practice and find ways to alleviate those deficiencies
- Develops and implements a plan of care that is individualized to the neonate/family according to unit policies and guidelines
- Ensures that documentation is clear and follows local guidelines and standards
- Demonstrates an awareness of current practices available in neonatal nursing care Provides evidence-based neonatal nursing care.

The proficient neonatal nurse, having achieved all the levels one and two skills demonstrates knowledge and skill competency by:

- Ensuring the management and implementation of quality evidence-based care for all categories of neonates admitted to the neonatal unit
- Practicing sound time management through one's own workload management and the supervision of other team members
- Using evidence to support minimum staffing ratios for a safe environment
- Challenging practice decisions and treatment when appropriate using evidence and research
- Providing informative, concise reports and communication related to the plan of care
- Actively working to ensure the availability of equipment and staff needed for safe unit functioning
- Identifying the need for and implementing variations from planned care and reviewing ongoing care.

II. **Professional, Ethics and Legal Practice**

Professional, Ethics, and Legal Practice Standards

- Fulfils the conduct requirement of the neonatal nursing profession
- Uses communication effectively and maintains confidentiality
- Enhances professional development of self and others

Professional, Ethics, and Legal Practice Competencies

- Always engages in ethical and lawful practice
- Utilizes institutional policy, procedures, guidelines, and protocols to provide safe care for the neonate and family
- Works and communicates effectively with every member of the interdisciplinary neonatal team including the family as a team member by ensuring that evidence-based information is provide in a timely manner
- Maintains a safe and secure environment
- Demonstrates knowledge of and be compliant with local and national health and safety regulation, and upholds excellent practice to minimize potential adverse risk to the neonates
- Adheres to infection prevention techniques, risk management requirements, and security policies at the institution daily
- Acts in the best interests of the neonate and family
- Participates in professional neonatal nursing organizations and advocates for specialization.

The proficient neonatal nurse, having achieved all the levels one and two skills demonstrates knowledge and skill competency by:

- Mentoring others to follow regional and national safety/health regulations

- Providing leadership in relationship to ensuring infection prevention techniques are followed and promoted
- Engaging closely with the hospital risk management committees for safety and security
- Leading in an emergency
- Managing the staffing resources related to workload to ensure safety according to the national and international staffing standards
- Actively participating in performance reviews for competent and novice nurses
- Seeking multiple ways to advance clinical skills
- Acting as a change agent in practice to improve neonatal/family outcomes and align with evidence
- Addressing unprofessional practice as it relates to confidentiality and privacy legislation
- Addressing inconsistencies between legal principles and local policies and practice
- Leading others in a systematic approach to ethical decision-making.

III. Leadership and Teamwork

Leadership and Teamwork Standards

- Engages in collaborative practice to achieve planned outcomes
- Provides a supportive environment for colleagues
- Manages the use of staff and physical resources

Leadership and Teamwork Competencies

- Demonstrates leadership skills within nursing practice
- Contributes to the overall unit operation where employed
- Actively contributes to neonatal working groups
- Contributes to the orientation of new staff
- Collaborates with outside agencies and community health facilities
- Manages resources effectively
- Participates in clinical governance.

The proficient neonatal nurse, having achieved all the levels one and two skills demonstrates knowledge and skill competency by:

- Contributing to quality improvement and change management
- Leading and accepting responsibility for the orientation of new colleagues as part of the professional role
- Encouraging a culture of learning and providing opportunities for others to expand skills in the clinical area
- Supporting and promoting an environment that facilitates cultural sensitivity
- Encouraging a positive work environment and recognizing when work levels exceed safe limits
- Coordinating team support in crisis and challenging clinical situations
- Providing professional leadership, facilitating change, and participating in neonatal unit management
- Developing action plans utilized to address areas that require improvement
- Serving on a hospital committee or board

- Networking and maintaining relationships with other professionals outside the neonatal unit
- Proposing policy and service changes
- Arranging or requesting debriefing sessions as appropriate
- Facilitating and planning conflict resolution preparation and training for team members.

IV. Infant- Family Centered Developmental Care

- Promotes the participation of families in the neonatal developmental care
- Advocates and protects the rights of the neonate and family
- Develops therapeutic and caring relationships

Infant- Family-Centered Developmental Care Competencies

- Utilizes their interpersonal relationships and communication skills to care for neonates and families
- Incorporates the concepts of infant- family-centered developmental care in the daily planning and implementation of neonatal care
- Provides all infant- family-centered developmental care per unit policy and practice
- Act as the neonate's/family's advocate
- Ensures integration of families in the care of the neonates
- Fosters an environment of open communication between the family and care team
- Communicates with other departments and health care workers that need to be involved in care of the neonate.

The proficient neonatal nurse, having achieved all the levels one and two skills demonstrates knowledge and skill competency by:

- Facilitating the education of team members about brain physiology and the underlying principles of developmental care
- Communicating proficiently with collaborating teams, families, and others about neonatal status changes
- Advocating for neonate and family to influence decision-making and the plan of care.

V. Research

Research Standards

- Understands the importance of research in neonatal practice
- **Research Competencies**
- Establishes a practice that incorporates evidence, research, and tools to follow-up on best practices
- Practice will be guided by critical thinking coupled with established problem-solving skills.

The proficient neonatal nurse, having achieved all the levels one and two skills demonstrates knowledge and skill competency by:

- Demonstrating the ability to examine and evaluate evidence-based practice and research findings to support practice and implement change
- Identifying clinical questions and developing research strategies to address these questions

- Making recommendations that have an impact on neonatal care
- Fostering a culture of inquiry
- Leading evidence-based practice change
- Contributing to the development and use of evidence-based guidelines
- Teaching how to challenge or question practice as a basis for research
- Leading an interdisciplinary research team
- Teaching how to validate current practice through research
- Encouraging health care teams to participate in research

D.   Competency Framework – Expert Nurse

I.   Clinical Practice
Clinical Practice Standards

- Uses theory, research evidence, observations, and experience in clinical decision-making
- Practices in accordance with the professional, legal, and ethical responsibilities affecting neonatal practice
- Fulfills the conduct requirement for the profession of nursing

Clinical Practice Competencies

- Practices within agreed parameters, apply knowledge, clinical judgment, and a range of skills to provide safe and effective neonatal care
- Maintains ongoing neonatal knowledge
- Define areas of neonatal deficiencies within their own scope of practice and find ways to alleviate those deficiencies
- Develops and implements a plan of care that is individualized to the neonate/family according to unit policies and guidelines
- Ensures that documentation is clear and follows local guidelines and standards
- Demonstrates an awareness of current practices available in neonatal nursing care
- Provides evidence-based neonatal nursing care

Maintains and improves quality in all aspects of neonatal nursing care.
The expert neonatal nurse, having achieved all the levels one, two, and three skills demonstrates knowledge and skill competency by:
- Developing and maintaining competencies to perform an independent role
- Utilizing technology for measurement, monitoring, and evaluating treatment outcomes
- Critically analyzing plans of care to ensure use of evidence-based interventions and best practices
- Monitor care for quality and safety issues
- Accepting responsibility for staff practice reviews
- Developing ongoing policies and strategies to improve neonatal nursing care
- Advocating for the neonate and family locally, regionally, nationally, and internationally
- Developing and implementing documents that ensure informative, concise reports and communication related to neonatal nursing care

- Ensuring continued availability of resources
- Analyzing and revising unit guidelines and polices as needed.

II. Professional, Ethics and Legal Practice
Professional, Ethics, and Legal Practice Standards

- Fulfils the conduct requirement of the neonatal nursing profession
- Uses communication effectively and maintains confidentiality
- Enhances professional development of self and others

Professional, Ethics, and Legal Practice Competencies

- Always engages in ethical and lawful practice
- Utilizes institutional policy, procedures, guidelines, and protocols to provide safe care for the neonate and family
- Works and communicates effectively with every member of the interdisciplinary neonatal team including the family as a team member by ensuring that evidence-based information is provide in a timely manner
- Maintains a safe and secure environment
- Demonstrates knowledge of and be compliant with local and national health and safety regulation, and upholds excellent practice to minimize potential adverse risk to the neonates
- Adheres to infection prevention techniques, risk management requirements, and security policies at the institution daily
- Acts in the best interests of the neonate and family
- Participates in professional neonatal nursing organizations and advocates for specialization.

The expert neonatal nurse, having achieved all the levels one, two, and three skills demonstrates knowledge and skill competency by:
- Taking responsibility for the neonatal environment including compliance with unit, local, and government requirements
- Ensuring guidelines and policies are regularly reviewed and updated according to new evidence, disseminating to the neonatal team to guide best practices
- Participating in scholarly activity through links with relevant professional journals and evidence of publications and presentations
- Maintaining membership and actively participates in professional nursing or other professional organizations
- Leading risk management (quality and safety) activities and incident monitoring
- Developing a culture of safety governance by complying with risk management (quality and safety) strategies
- Upholding best practices in health, safety, and security
- Managing and facilitating education/training and competency of less experienced team members
- Supporting and developing policies related to inappropriate interventions and unprofessional practice

- Contributing to the interdisciplinary team by acting as a consultant for other health care teams providing neonatal care
- Supporting or developing a conflict resolution policy
- Organizing the process of clinical handovers and documentation policies
- Facilitating resolution of ethical dilemmas by mediation or conflict resolution
- Advocating for the development of or adherence to a code of ethics for neonatal nurses within the country context.

II. Leadership and Teamwork

Leadership and Teamwork Standards

- Engages in collaborative practice to achieve planned outcomes
- Provides a supportive environment for colleagues
- Manages the use of staff and physical resources
- Engages in ethical justifiable nursing practice

Leadership and Teamwork Competencies

- Demonstrates leadership skills within nursing practice
- Takes responsibility for developing themselves and others
- Contributes to the overall unit operation where employed
- Actively contributes to neonatal working groups
- Contributes to the orientation of new staff
- Collaborates with outside agencies and community health facilities
- Participates in clinical governance.

The expert neonatal nurse, having achieved all the levels one, two, and three skills demonstrates knowledge and skill competency by:

- Ensuring that neonatal care includes interdisciplinary staff and the family
- Utilizing knowledge of public policy to influence programs impacting neonatal nursing
- Establishing new strategies and polices for neonatal care at local and national levels
- Seeking advice when the needs of the neonate/family require expertise beyond one's own ability and qualifications
- Accepting responsibility for policy and guideline review and update
- Evaluating models of care delivery to accommodate nursing and neonatal acuity levels.

III. Infant-Family-Centered Developmental Care

Infant- Family-Centered Developmental Care Standards

- Promotes the participation of families in the neonatal developmental care
- Advocates and protects the rights of the neonate and family
- Develops therapeutic and caring relationships

Infant- Family-Centered Developmental Care Competencies

- Utilizes their interpersonal relationships and communication skills to care for neonates and families

- Incorporates the concepts of infant- family-centered developmental care in the daily planning and implementation of neonatal care
- Provides all infant- family-centered developmental care per unit policy and practice
- Act as the neonate's/family's advocate
- Ensures integration of families in the care of the neonates
- Fosters an environment of open communication between the family and care team
- Communicates with other departments and health care workers that need to be involved in care of the neonate.

The expert neonatal nurse, having achieved all the levels one, two, and three skills demonstrates knowledge and skill competency by:

- Writing developmental care protocols, standards, and educational programs
- Strategically influencing policies and making effective family change through conferences, presentations, publication, or health policies
- Identifying neonate/family care barriers, using communication and polices to overcome them
- Acting as a resource for the health care team about systems' knowledge and resources to negotiate for optimal continuum of care for the neonate and family
- Developing policies and guidelines that meet the needs of the neonate and family through planned and opportunistic activities related to all areas of practice
- Negotiating work distribution within hospital systems to ensure continuity of care for the neonate and family
- Encouraging an environment with a high level of sensitivity to individual and cultural needs of the family.

V. Research
Research Standards

- Understands the importance of research in neonatal practice

Research Competencies

- Establishes a practice that incorporates evidence, research, and tools to follow-up on best practices
- Practice will be guided by critical thinking coupled with established problem-solving skills
- Collaborates in unit-based research, quality of care, and audits.

The expert neonatal nurse, having achieved all the levels one, two, and three skills demonstrates knowledge and skill competency by:

- Identifying gaps between practice and research then producing action plans to address these gaps
- Developing a research solution for complex professional, clinical, or managerial problems
- Leading research projects
- Revising protocols, procedures, and guidelines utilizing evidence-based practice
- Acting as a role model for developing evidence-based guidelines

- Utilizing research findings-evidence to guide and inform practice changes and the development or review of practice frameworks
- Disseminating evidence-based guidelines
- Disseminating research findings to colleagues-internal and external
- Teaching how to validate current practice with research.

Directions for completing Skills Checklist:

The following is a list of competencies, skills and equipment performed in rendering care to patients. Please indicate the level of experience/proficiency with each and, where applicable, the types of equipment and/or systems with which you are familiar. Use the following KEY as a guideline:

LEVEL 1: NO EXPERIENCE WITH SKILLS, REQUIRES CLOSE SUPPERVISION
2: NEED ASSISTANCE – HAS SOME EXPERIENCE WITH SKILL, REQUIRES MODERATE SUPERVISION
LEVEL 3: CONFIDENT: HAS EXPERIENCE WITH ABILITIY, REQUIRES LITTLE OR NO SUPERVISION

Expected Competency Level to perform the Task:
N = Novice Performs at Level 1 at 70% of the time
C = Competent Performs at Level 2 at 70% of the time
P = Proficient Performs at Level 3 at 70% of the time
E = Expert Performs at Level 3 at 80% of the time

A. General Competencies

General Clinical Competencies	Skills	Level of Care	1	2	3
a. Ensure all equipment for evaluation and treatment available	Every neonatal nurse	I, II, III	o	o	o
b. Ensuring continued availability of resources	Every neonatal nurse	I, II, III	o	o	o
c. Evaluate vital signs per unit protocol	Every neonatal nurse	I, II, III	o	o	o
d. Applying neonatal cues/observations to individualize direct nursing activities	Every neonatal nurse	I, II, III	o	o	o
e. Developing an understanding of the need for routine diagnostic tests and how to perform tests within the scope of practice and hospital guidelines	Every neonatal nurse	II, III	o	o	o
f. Clearly document assessment and care	Every neonatal nurse	I, II, III	o	o	o
g. Provide information, concise reports, and communication related to the plan of care	Every neonatal nurse	I, II, III	o	o	o
h. Define area in knowledge deficiencies and seek improvement	Every neonatal nurse	I, II, III	o	o	o
i. Describe plan of care to parents	Every neonatal nurse	I, II, III	o	o	o
j. Articulate and understand anatomy and physiology and able to explain it to others	Every neonatal nurse	II, III	o	o	o
k. Communication evidence-based care in rounds	Proficient Expert	II, III	o	o	o
l. Work with multi-specialty team to develop plan of care	Proficient Expert	III	o	o	o

m. Challenging practice decisions and treatment when appropriate using evidence and research	Proficient Expert	II, III	o	o	o
n. Know local policies, procedures, guidelines and standards	Proficient Expert	II, III	o	o	o
o. Develop and evaluate procedures and strategies of care	Proficient Expert	II, III	o	o	o
p. Analyzing and revising unit guidelines and polices as needed	Proficient Expert	II, III	o	o	o
q. Ensure staff are providing quality care	Every neonatal nurse	I, II, III	o	o	o
r. Using evidence to support minimum staffing ratios for a safe environment	Every neonatal nurse	II, III	o	o	o
s. Actively seek and teach evidence-based care	Every neonatal nurse	II, III	o	o	o
t. Manage daily patient work load	Every neonatal nurse	II, III	o	o	o
u. Developing an understanding of accountability for one's own practice	Every neonatal nurse	I, II, III	o	o	o
v. Developing and maintaining competencies to perform an independent role	Every neonatal nurse	II, III	o	o	o
w. Consulting with senior neonatal nurses or physician to review the neonatal care when needed	Every neonatal nurse	II, III	o	o	o
x. Responsible for managing neonatal staff workload	Proficient Expert	II, III	o	o	o
y. Developing ongoing policies and strategies to improve neonatal nursing care	Proficient Expert	II, III	o	o	o
z. Developing and maintaining competencies to perform an independent role	Every neonatal nurse	I, II, III	o	o	o
aa. Utilizing technology for measurement, monitoring, and evaluating treatment outcomes	Every neonatal nurse	II, III	o	o	o
bb. Critically analyzing plans of care to ensure use of evidence-based interventions and best practices	Every neonatal nurse	I, II, III	o	o	o
cc. Monitor care for quality and safety issues	Every neonatal nurse	I, II, III	o	o	o
dd. Accepting responsibility for staff practice reviews	Proficient Expert	II, III	o	o	o
ee. Developing ongoing policies and strategies to improve neonatal nursing care	Proficient Expert	II, III	o	o	o
ff. Advocating for the neonate and family locally, regionally, nationally, and internationally	Proficient Expert	II, III	o	o	o
gg. Ensure prescribed drugs are correct dose, time and route	Every neonatal nurse	I, II, III	o	o	o

				1	2	3
hh. Evaluate and document effect of given drug	Every neonatal nurse	I, II, III		o	o	o
ii. Prescribe above medications in mg/kg/d or mcg/kg/d	Every neonatal nurse	I, II, III		o	o	o
Professional, Ethics and Legal Practice				1	2	3
a. Practicing within the scope of practice regarding medication preparation and administration	Every neonatal nurse	I, II, III		o	o	o
b. Employing the regional and national safety/health regulations	Every neonatal nurse	II, III		o	o	o
c. Collaborating with others to follow hospital's safety and security protocols guide by risk management	Every neonatal nurse	II, III		o	o	o
d. Exhibiting competence in relation to the equipment utilized on the neonatal unit	Every neonatal nurse	II, III		o	o	o
e. Articulating the role of the nurse in emergency situations and possesses the clinical ability to support other team members in such situations	Proficient Expert	II, III		o	o	o
f. Utilizing active listening skills, empathy, and interpersonal relationship skills facilitating trust in family and staff	Every neonatal nurse	I, II, III		o	o	o
g. Articulating and utilizing conflict resolution skills	Every neonatal nurse	I, II, III		o	o	o
h. Adhering to performance reviews as stipulated by the employer and maintaining a record of Clinical Professional Development (CPD) hours	Every neonatal nurse	I, II, III		o	o	o
i. Articulating an understanding of the use of evidence-based hospital policies and guidelines and support of other members of the team to access and understand them	Every neonatal nurse	I, II, III		o	o	o
j. Complying with the profession's Code of Ethics	Every neonatal nurse	I, II, III		o	o	o
k. Mentoring others to follow regional and national safety/health regulations	Competent, Proficient, Expert	II, III		o	o	o
l. Providing leadership in relationship to ensuring infection prevention techniques are followed and promoted	Competent Proficient Expert	I, II, III		o	o	o
m. Engaging closely with the hospital risk management committees for safety and security	Proficient Expert	I, II, III		o	o	o
n. Leading in an emergency situation	Proficient Expert	I, II, III		o	o	o

o. Managing the staffing resources related to workload to ensure safety according to the national and international staffing standards	Every neonatal nurse	II, III	o	o	o
p. Actively participating in performance reviews for competent and novice nurses	Proficient Expert	I, II, III	o	o	o
q. Seeking multiple ways to advance clinical skills	Every neonatal nurse	I, II, III	o	o	o
r. Acting as a change agent in practice to improve neonatal/family outcomes and align with evidence	Competent, Proficient, Expert	II, III	o	o	o
s. Addressing unprofessional practice as it relates to confidentiality and privacy legislation	Competent, Proficient, Expert	II, III	o	o	o
t. Addressing inconsistencies between legal principles and local policies and practice	Competent, Proficient, Expert	II, III	o	o	o
u. Leading others in a systematic approach to ethical decision-making	Proficient Expert	II, III	o	o	o
v. Taking responsibility for the neonatal environment including compliance with unit, local, and government requirements	Every neonatal nurse	II, III	o	o	o
w. Ensuring guidelines and policies are regularly reviewed and updated according to new evidence, disseminating to the neonatal team to guide best practices	Proficient Expert	II, III	o	o	o
x. Participating in scholarly activity through links with relevant professional journals and evidence of publications and presentations	Competent Proficient Expert	II, III	o	o	o
y. Maintaining membership and actively participates in professional nursing or other professional organizations	Every neonatal nurse	II, III	o	o	o
z. Leading risk management (quality and safety) activities and incident monitoring	Every neonatal nurse	II, III	o	o	o
aa. Developing a culture of safety governance by complying with risk management (quality and safety) strategies	Competent, Proficient, Expert	II, III	o	o	o
bb. Upholding best practices in health, safety, and security	Every neonatal nurse	I, II, III	o	o	o
cc. Managing and facilitating education/training and competency of less experienced team members	Competent, Proficient, Expert	II, III	o	o	o
dd. Supporting and developing policies related to inappropriate interventions and unprofessional practice	Proficient Expert	II, III	o	o	o
ee. Contributing to the interdisciplinary team by acting as a consultant for other health care teams providing neonatal care	Proficient Expert	II, III	o	o	o

			1	2	3
ff. Supporting or developing a conflict resolution policy	Proficient Expert	II, III	o	o	o
gg. Organizing the process of clinical handovers and documentation policies	Competent, Proficient, Expert	II, III	o	o	o
hh. Facilitating resolution of ethical dilemmas by mediation or conflict resolution	Proficient Expert	II, III	o	o	o
ii. Advocating for the development of or adherence to a code of ethics for neonatal nurses within the country context	Proficient Expert	III	o	o	o
Leadership and Teamwork			**1**	**2**	**3**
a. Collaborating with a mentor to provide a rapid response when a colleague requires assistance	Every neonatal nurse	I, II, III	o	o	o
b. Observing how others develop flexible and creative approaches in challenging situations	Every neonatal nurse	I, II, III	o	o	o
c. Developing an awareness of the financial resources needed in the unit	Every neonatal nurse	I, II, III	o	o	o
d. Using resources appropriately	Every neonatal nurse	I, II, III	o	o	o
e. Seeking advice from a proficient or expert nurse when the needs of the neonate/family require expertise beyond one's own ability and qualifications	Novice Competent	II, III	o	o	o
f. Participating in the developmental and delivery of educational programs according to the level of knowledge	Proficient Expert	II, III	o	o	o
g. Fostering an environment of learning for self and others	Every neonatal nurse	I, II, III	o	o	o
h. Actively taking part in the organization and delivery of care when neonatal transfers are required	Proficient Expert	I, II	o	o	o
i. Contributing to quality improvement and change management	Proficient Expert	I, II, III	o	o	o
j. Leading and accepting responsibility for the orientation of new colleagues as part of the professional role	Every neonatal nurse	I, II, III	o	o	o
k. Encouraging a culture of learning and providing opportunities for others to expand skills in the clinical area	Competent, Proficient, Expert	I, II, III	o	o	o
l. Supporting and promoting an environment that facilitates cultural sensitivity	Every neonatal nurse	I, II, III	o	o	o
m. Encouraging a positive work environment and recognizing when work levels exceed safe limits	Every neonatal nurse	I, II, III	o	o	o

			1	2	3
n. Coordinating team support in crisis and challenging clinical situations	Competent, Proficient, Expert	II, III	o	o	o
o. Providing professional leadership, facilitating change, and participating in neonatal unit management	Proficient Expert	II, III	o	o	o
p. Developing action plans utilized to address areas that require improvement	Every neonatal nurse	I, II, III	o	o	o
q. Serving on a hospital committee or board	Competent, Proficient, Expert	II, III	o	o	o
r. Networking and maintaining relationships with other professionals outside the neonatal unit	Every neonatal nurse	II, III	o	o	o
s. Proposing policy and service changes	Proficient Expert	I, II, III	o	o	o
t. Arranging or requesting debriefing sessions as appropriate	Every neonatal nurse	II, III	o	o	o
u. Facilitating and planning conflict resolution preparation and training for team members	Proficient Expert	II, III	o	o	o
v. Ensuring that neonatal care includes interdisciplinary staff and the family	Every neonatal nurse	II, III	o	o	o
w. Utilizing knowledge of public policy to influence programs impacting neonatal nursing	Proficient Expert	III	o	o	o
x. Establishing new strategies and polices for neonatal care at local and national levels	Proficient Expert	III	o	o	o
y. Seeking advice when the needs of the neonate/family require expertise beyond one's own ability and qualifications	Every neonatal nurse	I, II	o	o	o
z. Accepting responsibility for policy and guideline review and update	Every neonatal nurse	II, III	o	o	o
aa. Evaluating models of care delivery to accommodate nursing and neonatal acuity levels	Every neonatal nurse	II, III	o	o	o
Infant- Family-Centered Developmental Care			1	2	3
a. Practicing infant- family-centered developmental care • Observing mentor's use of systems' knowledge and resources to negotiate optimal continuum of care for the neonate and family • Articulating an awareness of stress placed on	Every neonatal nurse	I, II, III	o	o	o

	families and providing appropriate support				
	b. Giving accurate and timely communication to the family guided by a mentor	Novice Advance Beginner	II, III	o o o	
	c. Observing strategies that encourage and maintain the participation of the family in the planning, delivering, and evaluating neonatal care	Every neonatal nurse	I, II, III	o o o	
	d. Recognizing opportunities for bonding and attachment for the family and neonate	Every neonatal nurse	I, II, III	o o o	
	e. Recognizing the need for continuity of care to build a professional relationship with family and where possible adhere to continuity of care	Every neonatal nurse	I, II, III	o o o	
	f. Documenting and recording the care input from the family	Every neonatal nurse	I, II, III	o o o	
	g. Developing a high level of sensitivity to identify individuality and the cultural needs of the family	Every neonatal nurse	I, II, III	o o o	
	h. Following educational programs developed to meet the educational needs of the family	Every neonatal nurse	II, III	o o o	
	i. Refraining from disclosure of information to any interested parties without prior family consent	Every neonatal nurse	I, II, III	o o o	
	j. Applying knowledge of how to support families receiving distressing information	Proficient Expert	I, II, III	o o o	
	k. Understanding and applying supportive developmental care interventions	Every neonatal nurse	II, III	o o o	
	l. Providing strategies that encourage and maintain the participation of the family	Every neonatal nurse	I, II, III	o o o	
	m. Supporting all family integrated care strategies that support bonding and attachment for the neonate and family	Every neonatal nurse	I, II, III	o o o	
	n. Actively participating in and advocating for family education	Proficient Expert	II, III	o o o	
	o. Communicating information to the family which may cause distress in a sensitive manner	Proficient Expert	II, III	o o o	
	p. Accurately documenting and understanding the significance of	Competent Proficient	II, III	o o o	

				1	2	3
	neonatal data reporting to senior team members as required	Expert				
q.	Applying confidentiality at all times through clinical discussions and storage of neonatal/family information.	Every neonatal nurse	I, II, III	o	o	o
r.	Facilitating the education of team members about brain physiology and the underlying principles of developmental care	Proficient Expert	II, III	o	o	o
s.	Communicating proficiently with collaborating teams, families, and others about neonatal status changes	Every neonatal nurse	II, III	o	o	o
t.	Advocating for neonate and family to influence decision-making and the plan of care	Competent Proficient Expert	II, III	o	o	o
u.	Writing developmental care protocols, standards, and educational programs	Proficient Expert	II, III	o	o	o
v.	Strategically influencing policies and making effective family change through conferences, presentations, publication, or health policies	Proficient Expert	II, III	o	o	o
w.	Identifying neonate/family care barriers, using communication and polices to overcome them	Competent Proficient Expert	II, III	o	o	o
x.	Acting as a resource for the health care team about systems' knowledge and resources to negotiate for optimal continuum of care for the neonate and family	Proficient Expert	II, III	o	o	o
y.	Developing policies and guidelines that meet the needs of the neonate and family through planned and opportunistic activities related to all areas of practice	Proficient Expert	II, III	o	o	o
z.	Negotiating work distribution within hospital systems to ensure continuity of care for the neonate and family	Proficient Expert	II, III	o	o	o
aa.	Encouraging an environment with a high level of sensitivity to individual and cultural needs of the family	Competent, Proficient, Expert	II, III	o	o	o
Research				1	2	3
a.	Adopting a spirit of inquiry toward clinical practice.	Every neonatal nurse	I, II, III	o	o	o
b.	Utilizing evidence-based guidelines	Every neonatal nurse	I, II, III	o	o	o

c.	Articulating an awareness of why research must be conducted in an ethical manner	Proficient Expert	II, III	o	o	o
d.	Developing the ability to challenge or question practices based on research	Competent Proficient Expert	II, III	o	o	o
e.	Developing the ability to participate in an interdisciplinary research team	Competent Proficient Expert	II, III	o	o	o
f.	Participating in research where appropriate	Every neonatal nurse	II, III	o	o	o
g.	Reading peer review journals	Every neonatal nurse	II, III	o	o	o
h.	Encouraging questioning and reviewing their clinical practice in themselves and others.	Every neonatal nurse	II, III	o	o	o
i.	Actively participating in quality improvement activities in practice	Competent Proficient Expert	II, III	o	o	o
j.	Employing auditing skills	Proficient Expert	II, III	o	o	o
k.	Providing evidence of competency in searching and critically appraising literature	Proficient Expert	II, III	o	o	o
l.	Exhibiting the ability to critically evaluate research	Proficient Expert	II, III	o	o	o
m.	Seeking opportunities to participate in research	Competent Proficient Expert	II, III	o	o	o
n.	Demonstrating the ability to examine and evaluate evidence-based practice and research findings to support practice and implement change	Proficient Expert	II, III	o	o	o
o.	Identifying clinical questions and developing research strategies to address these questions	Proficient Expert	II, III	o	o	o
p.	Making recommendations that have an impact on neonatal care	Proficient Expert	II, III	o	o	o
q.	Leading evidence-based practice change	Proficient Expert	II, III	o	o	o
r.	Contributing to the development and use of evidence-based guidelines	Proficient Expert	II, III	o	o	o
s.	Teaching how to challenge or question practice as a basis for research	Competent Proficient Expert	II, III	o	o	o

t. Leading an interdisciplinary research team	Proficient Expert	II, III	o	o	o
u. Teaching how to validate current practice through research	Proficient Expert	II, III	o	o	o
v. Encouraging health care teams to participate in research	Proficient Expert	II, III	o	o	o
w. Publishing or presenting original work, reviews, commentaries.	Proficient Expert	II, III	o	o	o
x. Identifying gaps between practice and research; producing action plans to address gaps	Proficient Expert	II, III	o	o	o
y. Developing a research solution for complex professional, clinical, or managerial problems	Proficient Expert	II, III	o	o	o
z. Leading research projects	Proficient Expert	II, III	o	o	o
aa. Revising protocols, procedures, and guidelines utilizing evidence-based practice.	Proficient Expert	II, III	o	o	o
bb. Acting as a role model for developing evidence-based guidelines	Proficient Expert	II, III	o	o	o
cc. Utilizing research findings-evidence to guide and inform practice changes and the development or review of practice frameworks	Proficient Expert	II, III	o	o	o
dd. Disseminating evidence-based guidelines	Proficient Expert	II, III	o	o	o
ee. Disseminating research findings to colleagues-internal and external	Proficient Expert	II, III	o	o	o
ff. Teaching how to validate current practice with research	Proficient Expert	II, III	o	o	o
SYSTEM RELATED COMPETENCIES					
A. Cardiac					
Assessment:			1	2	3
a. Auscultation	Every neonatal nurse	I, II, III	o	o	o
b. Heart sounds/murmurs	Every neonatal nurse	II, III	o	o	o
c. Pulses	Every neonatal nurse	II, III	o	o	o
d. Blood pressure	Every neonatal nurse	II, III	o	o	o

			1	2	3
e. Heart rate	Every neonatal nurse	I, II, III	o	o	o
f. Pulse oximetry	Every neonatal nurse	II, III	o	o	o
g. All four-extremity pulse oximetry/blood pressure	Every neonatal nurse	II, III	o	o	o
Equipment/Procedure:			1	2	3
a. Cardiac monitor	Every neonatal nurse	II, III	o	o	o
b. Placing cardiac leads	Every neonatal nurse	II, III	o	o	o
c. Pulse oximetry machine	Every neonatal nurse	II, III	o	o	o
d. Placing pulse oximetry probe	Every neonatal nurse	II, III	o	o	o
e. Perform neonatal resuscitation	Every neonatal nurse	I, II, III	o	o	o
f. Interpret laboratory findings associated with cardiac	Proficient Expert	III	o	o	o
g. Perform cardiac ultrasound	Proficient Expert	III	o	o	o
h. Interpret cardiac ultrasound	Proficient Expert	III	o	o	o
Care of the patient with:			1	2	3
a. Heart murmur undiagnosed	Every neonatal nurse	III	o	o	o
b. Heart failure	Every neonatal nurse	III	o	o	o
c. Undiagnosed cardiac defect	Every neonatal nurse	III	o	o	o
d. Diagnosed cardiac defect	Every neonatal nurse	III	o	o	o
e. Post-resuscitation	Every neonatal nurse	II, III	o	o	o
Cardiac Medications			1	2	3
a. Lasix	Every neonatal nurse	II, III	o	o	o
b. Digoxin	Every neonatal nurse	III	o	o	o
c. Captopril	Every neonatal nurse	III	o	o	o
d. Ibuprofen	Every neonatal nurse	III	o	o	o
e. Paracetemol	Every neonatal nurse	III	o	o	o
f. Dopamine	Competent Proficient	III	o	o	o

			1	2	3
	Expert				
g. Dobutamine	Competent Proficient Expert	III	o	o	o
h. Adrenaline	Competent Proficient Expert	III	o	o	o
i. Sifandil	Competent Proficient Expert	III	o	o	o
j. Other _____	Competent Proficient Expert	III	o	o	o

B. Respiratory

Assessment			1	2	3
a. Inspect lungs: auscultate, palpate, percuss, inspect	Every neonatal nurse	I, II, III	o	o	o
b. Breathing pattern/rate/WOB	Every neonatal nurse	I, II, III	o	o	o
c. Skin color	Every neonatal nurse	I, II, III	o	o	o
d. Document pulse oximetry reading/respiratory rate/ WOB	Every neonatal nurse	I, II, III	o	o	o
e. Ensure all equipment for evaluation and treatment available	Every neonatal nurse	I, II, III	o	o	o
Equipment/Procedure:			1	2	3
a. Bulb suction	Every neonatal nurse	I, II, III	o	o	o
b. Machine suction	Every neonatal nurse	II, III	o	o	o
c. Document pulse oximeter reading and intervention	Every neonatal nurse	II, III	o	o	o
d. Set-up nasal cannula	Every neonatal nurse	II, III	o	o	o
e. Set-up nasal continuous positive pressure (NCPAP)	Competent Proficient Expert	II, III	o	o	o
f. Order NCPAP	Proficient Expert	II, III	o	o	o
g. Set-up nasal bubble CPAP	Competent Proficient Expert	II, III	o	o	o
h. Order bubble CPAP	Proficient, Expert	II, III	o	o	o
i. Set-up face mask oxygen	Competent Proficient Expert	II, III	o	o	o

j. Set-up oxygen tank/or concentrator	Competent Proficient Expert	II, III	o	o	o
k. Assist with intubation	Competent Proficient Expert	III	o	o	o
l. Intubate	Proficient Expert	III	o	o	o
m. Place neonate on ventilator (setting)	Proficient Expert	III	o	o	o
n. Care for the infant on the ventilator	Competent Proficient Expert	III	o	o	o
o. Manage the care of an infant on ventilator	Proficient Expert	III	o	o	o
p. Identify a pneumothorax by exam	Competent Proficient Expert	I, II, III	o	o	o
q. Identify a pneumothorax by chest xray	Competent Proficient Expert	II, III	o	o	o
r. Assist with needle aspiration for pneumothorax	Competent Proficient Expert	II, III	o	o	o
s. Needle aspirate a pneumothorax	Proficient Expert	II, III	o	o	o
t. Assist with chest tube placement	Competent Proficient Expert	II, III	o	o	o
u. Place a chest tube	Proficient Expert	III	o	o	o
v. Take care of an infant with a chest tube	Competent Proficient Expert	III	o	o	o
w. Set up bag mask	Every neonatal nurse	I, II, III	o	o	o
x. Use bag mask on a baby	Every neonatal nurse	I, II, III	o	o	o
y. Help administer Surfactant	Competent Proficient Expert	III	o	o	o
z. Order Surfactant	Proficient Expert	III	o	o	o
aa. Perform Allen Test prior to artery blood draw	Proficient Expert	III	o	o	o
bb. Perform radial artery blood draw	Proficient Expert	III	o	o	o

			1	2	3
cc. Interpret and manage blood gas	Competent Proficient Expert	III	o	o	o
dd. Adjust the ventilator according to blood gas	Proficient Expert	III	o	o	o
ee. Extubate a neonate to appropriate oxygen therapy	Proficient Expert	III	o	o	o
Care of the patient with:			**1**	**2**	**3**
a. Respiratory distress syndrome/Hyaline Membrane Disease	Every neonatal nurse	II, III	o	o	o
b. Transient tachypnea of newborn	Every neonatal nurse	II, III	o	o	o
c. Meconium aspiration syndrome	Every neonatal nurse	II, III	o	o	o
d. Pneumothoraxes	Competent Proficient Expert	II, III	o	o	o
e. Pneumonia	Every neonatal nurse	I, II, III	o	o	o
f. Apnea and Bradycardia	Competent Proficient Expert	II, III	o	o	o
g. Bronchopulmonary Dysplasia	Competent Proficient Expert	III	o	o	o
Interpretation of Laboratory			**1**	**2**	**3**
a. Blood gases	Competent Proficient Expert	III	o	o	o
Pulmonary Drugs			**1**	**2**	**3**
a. Surfactant/Curosurf	Competent Proficient Expert	III	o	o	o
b. Aminophylline/Caffeine	Competent Proficient Expert	II, III	o	o	o
c. Salbutemol inhaler	Competent Proficient Expert	II, III	o	o	o
d. Dexamethasone	Competent Proficient Expert	III	o	o	o

C. NEUROLOGY

			1	2	3
Assessment			**1**	**2**	**3**

			1	2	3
a. Fontanel assessment	Every neonatal nurse	I, II, III	o	o	o
b. Mental status	Every neonatal nurse	I, II, III	o	o	o
c. Motor movement/strength coordination	Every neonatal nurse	I, II, III	o	o	o
Equipment/Procedure			**1**	**2**	**3**
a. Assist with lumbar puncture	Every neonatal nurse	II, III	o	o	o
b. Perform lumbar puncture	Proficient Expert	II, III	o	o	o
c. Administer IV medication for seizures	Every neonatal nurse	II, III	o	o	o
d. Administer Intra-rectal medication for seizures	Every neonatal nurse	II, III	o	o	o
e. Calculate anti-seizure medication	Every neonatal nurse	II, III	o	o	o
Care of the patient with:			**1**	**2**	**3**
a. Seizures	Every neonatal nurse	II, III	o	o	o
b. Meningitis	Every neonatal nurse	II, III	o	o	o
c. HIE score	Every neonatal nurse	III	o	o	o
d. Coma	Every neonatal nurse	III	o	o	o
e. Flaccidity from genetic disease	Every neonatal nurse	III	o	o	o
Drugs			**1**	**2**	**3**
a. Phenobarbital	Every neonatal nurse	II, III	o	o	o
b. Phenytoin	Every neonatal nurse	II, III	o	o	o

			1	2	3
c. Diazepam	Every neonatal nurse	II, III	o	o	o
d. Tegretol	Every neonatal nurse	II, III	o	o	o
e. Valproic Acid	Every neonatal nurse	II, III	o	o	o

D. GASTROINTESTIONAL

Assessment			1	2	3
a. Abdominal bowel sounds/inspection	Every neonatal nurse	I, II, III	o	o	o
b. Nasal gastric tube placement	Every neonatal nurse	II, III	o	o	o
c. Nutritional status: weight/height	Every neonatal nurse	I, II, III	o	o	o
Equipment/Procedure:			**1**	**2**	**3**
a. Placing a nasal gastric tube	Every neonatal nurse	II, III	o	o	o
b. Confirming placement of nasal gastric tube	Every neonatal nurse	II, III	o	o	o
c. Assisting with cup feeding	Every neonatal nurse	II, III	o	o	o
d. Assisting with breastfeeding	Every neonatal nurse	I, II, III	o	o	o
e. Order appropriate formula	Proficient Expert	II, III	o	o	o
f. Write for appropriate fortifier to increase to 0.74 kcal/cc, 0.8 kcal/cc, 1 kcal/cc	Proficient Expert	II, III	o	o	o
g. Order special order formula	Proficient Expert	II, III	o	o	o
Care of the Patient with:			**1**	**2**	**3**
a. Possible Necrotizing Enterocolitis	Every neonatal nurse	III	o	o	o

			1	2	3
b. Gastro-esophageal reflux	Every neonatal nurse	II, III	o	o	o

E. RENAL/GENITOURINARY

Assessment			1	2	3
a. Vital signs: Temp, HR, RR if possible BP	Every neonatal nurse	I, II, III	o	o	o
b. Intake/Output	Every neonatal nurse	I, II, III	o	o	o
c. Weight	Every neonatal nurse	I, II, III	o	o	o
d. Skin assessment for edema/lesions/distention	Every neonatal nurse	I, II, III	o	o	o
Equipment/Procedure			1	2	3
a. Urine collection	Every neonatal nurse	II, III	o	o	o
b. Diaper counts	Every neonatal nurse	I, II, III	o	o	o
c. Urinalysis	Every neonatal nurse	II, III	o	o	o
d. Dipstick	Every neonatal nurse	II, III	o	o	o
e. Specific Gravity	Every neonatal nurse	II, III	o	o	o
f. Urine culture	Every neonatal nurse	II, III	o	o	o
g. Foley catheter	Every neonatal nurse	II, III	o	o	o
h. Catheterize for urine	Competent Proficient Expert	II, III	o	o	o
i. Suprapubic tap	Proficient Expert	III	o	o	o
j. Interpret urine result to infection	Proficient Expert	II, III	o	o	o

			1	2	3
k. Able to assess labs to diagnosis renal failure	Proficient Expert	II, III	o	o	o
Care of the Patient with:			1	2	3
a. Urinary tract infection	Every neonatal nurse	II, III	o	o	o
b. Exotrophy of the bladder	Every neonatal nurse	III	o	o	o
c. Agenesis of Kidneys	Every neonatal nurse	III	o	o	o
d. Hydronephrosis	Every neonatal nurse	III	o	o	o
e. Renal Failure	Every neonatal nurse	III	o	o	o
Medications			1	2	3
a. Lasix	Every neonatal nurse	II, III	o	o	o
b. Spirolactone	Every neonatal nurse	III	o	o	o
c. Prophylactic antibiotics	Every neonatal nurse	III	o	o	o

F. ENDOCRINE/METABOLIC

Assessment			1	2	3
a. Hypoglycemia	Every neonatal nurse	II, III	o	o	o
b. Hyperglycemia	Every neonatal nurse	II, III	o	o	o
c. Elevated AST/ALT	Every neonatal nurse	III	o	o	o
d. Elevated Total Bilirubin	Every neonatal nurse	I, II, III	o	o	o
e. Elevated Direct Bilirubin	Every neonatal nurse	III	o	o	o

			1	2	3
f. Hypothyroid	Every neonatal nurse	III	o	o	o
g. Hyponatremia	Every neonatal nurse	II, III	o	o	o
h. Hypernatremia	Every neonatal nurse	II, III	o	o	o
i. Hypokalemia	Every neonatal nurse	II, III	o	o	o
j. Hyperkalemia	Every neonatal nurse	II, III	o	o	o
k. Hypocalcemia	Every neonatal nurse	II, III	o	o	o
l. Hypercalcemia	Every neonatal nurse	II, III	o	o	o
Equipment/Procedure			1	2	3
a. Glucometer	Every neonatal nurse	II, III	o	o	o
b. Glucometer	Every neonatal nurse	II, III	o	o	o
c. Order glucose for hypoglycemia	Proficient Expert	II, III	o	o	o
d. Order appropriate glucose to monitor for hypoglycemia	Proficient Expert	II, III	o	o	o
e. Calculate mg/kg/min of glucose	Competent Proficient Expert	III	o	o	o
f. Change IV fluids in the presence of hyperglycemia	Every neonatal nurse	II, III	o	o	o
g. Change IV fluids in the presence of hypoglycemia	Every neonatal nurse	II, III	o	o	o
h. Calculate mEq/kg/day electrolytes	Competent Proficient Expert	III	o	o	o
i. Change IV fluids based on electrolytes	Every neonatal nurse	III	o	o	o

				1	2	3
j. Heel stick	Every neonatal nurse	I , II, III		o	o	o
k. Venous puncture for labs	Every neonatal nurse	I, II, III		o	o	o
l. Phototherapy	Every neonatal nurse	II, III		o	o	o
m. Fiber optic Phototherapy	Every neonatal nurse	II, III		o	o	o
n. Bili-blanket	Every neonatal nurse	II, III		o	o	o
o. Apply eye protection for phototherapy	Every neonatal nurse	II, III		o	o	o
p. Augment phototherapy with foil and sheets	Every neonatal nurse	II, III		o	o	o
q. Adjust phototherapy to correct height	Every neonatal nurse	II, III		o	o	o
r. Assist with exchange transfusion	Competent Proficient Expert	III		o	o	o
s. Perform an exchange transfusion	Proficient Expert	III		o	o	o
t. Order labs to assess ongoing hyperbilirubinemia	Proficient Expert	II, III		o	o	o
Care of the Patient with:				1	2	3
a. Physiologic jaundice	Every neonatal nurse	II, III		o	o	o
b. Pathologic jaundice	Every neonatal nurse	II, III		o	o	o
c. Breastmilk jaundice	Every neonatal nurse	II, III		o	o	o
d. Inborn errors of metabolism	Every neonatal nurse	III		o	o	o
e. Biliary Atresia	Every neonatal nurse	III		o	o	o

			1	2	3
f. Sepsis with multi-organ failure	Every neonatal nurse	III	o	o	o
g. Persistent hypoglycemia	Every neonatal nurse	III	o	o	o
h. Persistent hyperglycemia	Every neonatal nurse	III	o	o	o
i. Electrolyte abnormality	Every neonatal nurse	III	o	o	o
j. Hypothyroidism	Every neonatal nurse	III	o	o	o
k. Ambiguous Genitalia	Every neonatal nurse	III	o	o	o
Medications			1	2	3
a. 10% Dextrose	Every neonatal nurse	II, III	o	o	o
b. 5% Dextrose	Every neonatal nurse	II, III	o	o	o
c. 12.5% Dextrose	Every neonatal nurse	III	o	o	o
d. Neonatal TPN/lipids	Every neonatal nurse	III	o	o	o
e. IV fluids with electrolytes	Every neonatal nurse	II, III	o	o	o
f. Steroids – Adrenocorticosteroids	Every neonatal nurse	III	o	o	o
g. Regular Insulin	Every neonatal nurse	III	o	o	o

G. ORTHOPEDICS/DERMATOLOGY

Assessment			1	2	3
a. Joints – Inspection/Palpation	Every neonatal nurse	I, II, III	o	o	o

			1	2	3
b. Joint – movement	Every neonatal nurse	I, II, III	o	o	o
c. Skin – Inspection/Palpation	Every neonatal nurse	I, II, III	o	o	o
d. Circulation Check	Every neonatal nurse	I, II, III	o	o	o
Equipment/Procedure			**1**	**2**	**3**
a. Splints/cast	Every neonatal nurse	II, III	o	o	o
b. Apply skin barrier crème/lotion	Every neonatal nurse	II, III	o	o	o
c. Developmental Positioning	Every neonatal nurse	II, III	o	o	o
d. Traction for Hip Dysplasia	Every neonatal nurse	III	o	o	o
e. Harness for CHD	Every neonatal nurse	III	o	o	o
Care of the Patient with:			**1**	**2**	**3**
a. Hip dysplasia	Every neonatal nurse	III	o	o	o
b. Clubfeet	Every neonatal nurse	III	o	o	o
c. Brachial Plexus Injury	Every neonatal nurse	III	o	o	o
d. Fractured clavicle	Every neonatal nurse	III	o	o	o
e. Fractured bone	Every neonatal nurse	III	o	o	o
f. Skin breakdown	Every neonatal nurse	II, III	o	o	o
g. Premature skin management	Every neonatal nurse	II, III	o	o	o

Medication			1	2	3
a. Skin lotions	Every neonatal nurse	II, III	o	o	o
b. PCTML	Every neonatal nurse	II, III	o	o	o

H. HEMATOLOGY/INFECTIOUS

Assessment			1	2	3
a. Manifestation of infection on systems	Every neonatal nurse	II, III	o	o	o
b. Manifestation of anemia on systems	Every neonatal nurse	II, III	o	o	o
c. Manifestation of polycythemia on systems	Every neonatal nurse	II, III	o	o	o
Equipment/Procedure			1	2	3
a. Good handwashing	Every neonatal nurse	I, II, III	o	o	o
b. Universal precautions/Isolation	Every neonatal nurse	I, II, III	o	o	o
c. Blood count with differential	Every neonatal nurse	II, III	o	o	o
d. Blood culture	Every neonatal nurse	II, III	o	o	o
e. Lumbar puncture	Every neonatal nurse	II, III	o	o	o
f. Wound culture	Every neonatal nurse	II, III	o	o	o
g. Assessment of CBC, CRP	Every neonatal nurse	II, III	o	o	o
Care of the Patient with:			1	2	3
a. Abscesses	Every neonatal nurse	II, III	o	o	o

			1	2	3
b. Bacteremia/septic shock	Every neonatal nurse	III	o	o	o
c. Herpetic infection	Every neonatal nurse	III	o	o	o
d. Viral infection	Every neonatal nurse	III	o	o	o
e. Potential HIV infection	Every neonatal nurse	I, II, III	o	o	o
f. Syphilis	Every neonatal nurse	II, III	o	o	o
g. Hepatitis B	Every neonatal nurse	II, III	o	o	o
h. Gonorrhea	Every neonatal nurse	II, III	o	o	o
i. Osteomyelitis	Every neonatal nurse	III	o	o	o
Drugs			**1**	**2**	**3**
a. Ampicillin	Every neonatal nurse	I, II, III	o	o	o
b. Gentamicin	Every neonatal nurse	I, II, III	o	o	o
c. Penicillin	Every neonatal nurse	I, II, III	o	o	o
d. Cefotaxime	Every neonatal nurse	II, III	o	o	o
e. Ceftriaxone	Every neonatal nurse	II, III	o	o	o
f. Acyclovir	Every neonatal nurse	III	o	o	o
g. Metronidazole	Every neonatal nurse	II, III	o	o	o

			1	2	3
h. Imipenem	Every neonatal nurse	III	o	o	o
i. Vancomycin	Every neonatal nurse	III	o	o	o
j. Nevirapine	Every neonatal nurse	I, II, III	o	o	o
k. AZT	Every neonatal nurse	I, II, III	o	o	o
l. Ferrous syrup	Every neonatal nurse	II, III	o	o	o
m. Hepatitis B vaccine	Every neonatal nurse	I, II, III	o	o	o
n. Calculate mg/kg/day for drugs	Every neonatal nurse	II, III	o	o	o

I.   IV THERAPY/PLEBOTOMY

Assessment			1	2	3
a. Administration of PRBC	Every neonatal nurse	II, III	o	o	o
b. Administration of Whole Blood	Every neonatal nurse	II, III	o	o	o
c. Administration of Platelets	Every neonatal nurse	II, III	o	o	o
d. Drawing venous blood	Every neonatal nurse	II, III	o	o	o
e. Drawing blood from an umbilical line	Every neonatal nurse	III	o	o	o
f. Placing an IV catheter	Every neonatal nurse	II, III	o	o	o
g. Placing a butterfly catheter	Every neonatal nurse	II, III	o	o	o
h. Place an Umbilical venous catheter	Proficient Expert	III	o	o	o

			1	2	3
i. Correctly document umbilical venous catheter placement	Proficient Expert	III	o	o	o
j. Order appropriate IV fluids	Proficient Expert	II, III	o	o	o
k. Assess electrolytes	Proficient Expert	II, III	o	o	o
l. Order electrolytes appropriate based on assessment of electrolytes	Proficient Expert	II, III	o	o	o
m. Correctly order fluids and feedings daily	Proficient Expert	II, III	o	o	o
n. Diagnose and treat hypokalemia	Proficient Expert	II, III	o	o	o
o. Diagnose and treat hypo/hypernatremia	Proficient Expert	II, III	o	o	o
p. Diagnose and treat hypocalcemia	Proficient Expert	II, III	o	o	o
Care of the Patient with:			**1**	**2**	**3**
a. An umbilical line	Competent Proficient Expert	III	o	o	o
b. A peripheral line with dressing	Competent Proficient Expert	II, III	o	o	o

J. GENETIC

Assessment			1	2	3
a. Assess Temp, HR, RR	Every neonatal nurse	I, II, III	o	o	o
b. Assess fontanels	Every neonatal nurse	I, II, III	o	o	o
c. Assess nares, ears, mouth, tongue and eyes	Every neonatal nurse	I, II, III	o	o	o
d. Assess thorax and lungs	Every neonatal nurse	I, II, III	o	o	o
e. Assess heart sounds	Every neonatal nurse	I, II, III	o	o	o
f. Assess abdomen	Every neonatal nurse	I, II, III	o	o	o
g. Assess genital and rectum for patency	Every neonatal nurse	I, II, III	o	o	o

			1	2	3
h. Assess tone and motor movement	Every neonatal nurse	I, II, III	o	o	o
i. Assess extremities	Every neonatal nurse	I, II, III	o	o	o
Equipment/Procedure			1	2	3
a. Draw chromosomes	Competent Proficient Expert	II, III	o	o	o
b. Collaborate with collaborating team	Every neonatal nurse	III	o	o	o
c. Order palliative care after multi-disciplinary committee	Proficient Expert	II, III	o	o	o
Care of the Patient with:			1	2	3
a. Trisomy 21	Every neonatal nurse	II, III	o	o	o
b. Trisomy 13	Every neonatal nurse	II, III	o	o	o
c. Trisomy 18	Every neonatal nurse	II, III	o	o	o
d. Undiagnosed genetic defect	Every neonatal nurse	II, III	o	o	o
e. Patient being placed in Palliative Care	Every neonatal nurse	II, III	o	o	o
OTHER					
a.					
b.					
c.					
d.					
e.					
f.					
g.					

The information I have given is true and accurate to the best of my knowledge. I hereby authorize the Senior Fellow to release this Neonatal Skills Checklist to other hospitals for possible employment.

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Name   Date

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Name of Evaluator   Date

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Name of Evaluator   Date

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Name of Evaluator   Date

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Name of Evaluator   Date

Supplemental Legend:

Benner: Stage of Clinical Competencies. https://www.nyp.org/pdf/hr/Benner.pdf

European foundation for the care of newborn infants: European Standards of Care for Newborn Health. https://www.efcni.org/activities/projects-2/escnh/

University of Notre Dame (2015): Developmental Care Standards for Infants in Intensive Care. https://nicudesign.nd.edu/nicu-care-standards

World Health Organization: Survive and Thrive: Transforming care for every small and sick newborn. https://apps.who.int/iris/bitstream/handle/10665/276655/WHO-FWC-MCA-18.11-eng.pdf?ua=1