



The Royal College of  
**Chiropractors**

# Core Competencies of the Paediatric Chiropractor [MRCC (Paeds)]

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The Royal College of Chiropractors





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## Introduction

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This document defines the core competencies required of a Paediatric Chiropractor. These apply in addition to the requirements of the General Chiropractic Council's Code<sup>1</sup> and associated guidance, and the Outcomes for Chiropractic Graduates<sup>2</sup> defined by the Royal College of Chiropractors' Forum of Deans.

Chiropractors who are full Members [MRCC (Paeds)] or Fellows [FRCC (Paeds)] of the Royal College of Chiropractors Pregnancy & Paediatric Faculty (RCCPPF) have, by definition, demonstrated achievement of these core competencies.

The core competencies defined here do not limit the scope of practice of Paediatric Chiropractors. Individuals may acquire additional competencies through formal study and continuing professional development activities.

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1. General Chiropractic Council (2016, amended 2019) The Code: Standards of conduct, performance and ethics for chiropractors. [https://www.gcc-uk.org/assets/downloads/GCC\\_Code\\_2016\\_with\\_B3\\_Amend\\_\(2019\).pdf](https://www.gcc-uk.org/assets/downloads/GCC_Code_2016_with_B3_Amend_(2019).pdf)

2. Royal College of Chiropractors (2022) Outcomes for Chiropractic Graduates. [https://rcc-uk.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/05/Outcomes-for-Chiropractic-Graduates\\_FCD\\_May-2022.pdf](https://rcc-uk.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/05/Outcomes-for-Chiropractic-Graduates_FCD_May-2022.pdf)



# 1

## Clinical evaluation and care of the paediatric patient



### 1.1 Case history and examination

Paediatric chiropractors must be competent to carry out age-appropriate assessment of infants (0-12m), toddlers (1-3y), pre-school children (3-6y), school-aged children (6-12y) and adolescents (13-18y). They must be able to:

- a) obtain a thorough, age-appropriate history,
- b) undertake a comprehensive, age-appropriate physical examination, including screening for relevant conditions,
- c) undertake an appropriate examination and understand the impact of neurological findings on development and behaviour,
- d) understand and refer, as appropriate, for relevant diagnostic tests,
- e) formulate a diagnosis and differential diagnosis from the history and findings.

### 1.2 Development milestones

Paediatric chiropractors must be able to assess and recognise normal v. abnormal development, including age-related milestones.

### 1.3 Musculoskeletal conditions

Paediatric chiropractors must be able to understand and diagnose the various musculoskeletal conditions encountered in practice for each age group; they must be able to differentiate between benign and serious musculoskeletal conditions.

### **1.4 Non-musculoskeletal conditions**

Paediatric chiropractors must be able to understand and recognise the various non-musculoskeletal conditions encountered in practice for each age group and take appropriate action.

### **1.5 Red flags**

Paediatric chiropractors must be able to recognise red flags and refer appropriately.

### **1.6 Mental health issues**

Paediatric chiropractors must be competent to identify common mental health problems in children and young people. They must be able to:

- a) apply appropriate screening tools for mental health issues as part of normal practice,
- b) make appropriate referrals for common mental health problems in children and young people.

### **1.7 Interpret history, examination and diagnostic findings**

Paediatric chiropractors must be competent to interpret history, examination and diagnostic findings. They must be able to recognise and determine:

- a) whether chiropractic care, including trial of care, is appropriate,
- b) indications and protocols for co-management,
- c) indications and protocols for appropriate referral.

### **1.8 Management planning**

Paediatric chiropractors must be competent to formulate management plans including treatment, co-management & referral. They must be able to:

- a) document the patient encounter and management plan,
- b) communicate the findings, diagnosis and management plan,
- c) use the evidence base to inform the management plan,
- d) take account of the child's needs, views and decisions as well as that of the parent/carer,
- e) manage the expectations of the child and parent/carer.

### **1.9 Safe and competent care**

Paediatric chiropractors must be competent to provide safe and appropriate care. They must understand and be able to:

- a) objectively determine and communicate risks versus benefits of chiropractic care,
- b) determine an appropriate package of care,
- c) use age-appropriate forces if applying manual therapy,
- d) advise on age-appropriate nutrition and supplementation, providing information from the current evidence base,
- e) advise on/signpost to relevant lifestyle and public health information,
- f) provide paediatric first aid, as appropriate,
- g) identify and report child neglect/abuse to the appropriate authority.



### 1.10 Integrated, collaborative care

Paediatric chiropractors must understand integrated, collaborative care, including:

- a) roles of various healthcare professionals in their area,
- b) professional inter-referral protocols and communication.

### 1.11 Monitoring progress

Paediatric chiropractors must be able to use validated tools, including PROMS, to evaluate and monitor progress of paediatric patients.



# 2

## Clinical evaluation and care of the pregnant patient

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### 2.1 Preconception and normal pregnancy

Paediatric chiropractors must understand preconception and normal perinatal care. They must be able to:

- a) recognise the importance of optimal foetal positioning, for the mother and baby,
- b) understand the importance of nutrition and exercise in pregnancy,
- c) understand the birth process and support women in their choice.

### 2.2 Red and yellow flags in pregnancy

Paediatric chiropractors must be able to recognise red and yellow flags in pregnancy, and refer appropriately.

### 2.3 Musculoskeletal conditions in pregnancy

Paediatric chiropractors must understand and diagnose musculoskeletal conditions in pregnancy that are commonly encountered in practice. They must be able to:

- a) apply appropriate techniques suitable for use in pregnancy, taking into account the unique vascular, hormonal and emotional factors present in pregnancy,
- b) make appropriate referrals.



# 3

## Professionalism



### 3.1 Ensuring patient health, safety and welfare is paramount

Paediatric chiropractors must participate in and promote activity to improve the quality and safety of patient care and clinical outcomes that are common in the pregnant and paediatric populations. They must be able to:

- a) place patient safety at the centre of the care process,
- b) promote and maintain health and safety in all care settings, including when providing treatment and advice remotely,
- c) recognise how errors can happen in practice and that errors should be shared openly and be able to learn from their own and others' errors to promote a culture of safety,
- d) routinely measure patient outcomes,
- e) audit clinical practice in order to assure appropriate standards of care are being applied.

### 3.2 Communicating with patients and their families

Paediatric chiropractors must communicate accurately and effectively with paediatric patients and their families/carers. They must be able to:

- a) communicate with paediatric patients in an age-appropriate manner,
- b) actively involve paediatric patients in their own care using appropriate educational materials designed for children (e.g. posters, books, leaflets, apps, online materials).

### 3.3 Consent and record-keeping

Paediatric chiropractors must be able to:

- a) understand, assess and apply the Gillick Competence in relation to consent for the paediatric patient,
- b) keep age-appropriate records of paediatric patient evaluation and care.



### **3.4 Providing high quality clinical care and practice, applying evidence-based standards and guidance wherever possible**

Paediatric chiropractors must be able to access and analyse reliable sources of current clinical evidence and guidance and have established methods for ensuring their practice is consistent with these.

### **3.5 Practising within scope, recognising professional limitations**

Paediatric chiropractors must be able to recognise and acknowledge their own personal and professional limits within the field of paediatric chiropractic and seek help from and refer appropriately to colleagues and/or other healthcare professionals.

### **3.6 Maintaining and developing professional knowledge and skills**

Paediatric chiropractors must understand the importance of professional development and lifelong learning in the field of paediatric chiropractic and demonstrate a commitment to this. They must be able to:

- a) keep up to date in their area of professional interest and practice,
- b) operate as reflective practitioners in order to identify and address their ongoing professional learning needs.

### **3.7 Maintaining appropriate relationships and boundaries**

Paediatric chiropractors must be able to:

- a) avoid becoming over-involved with the child,
- b) respect physical boundaries of the child,
- c) avoid potential to influence vulnerable and impressionable children.



### 3.8 Leadership and team working

Paediatric chiropractors must be able to learn and work effectively within a multi-professional and multi-disciplinary team and across multiple care settings (this includes working face-to-face, and through written and electronic means, and in a range of settings where patients receive care). Within their work as paediatric chiropractors, they must be able to:

- a) demonstrate their contribution to effective interdisciplinary team working with professionals from all care settings and specialties, and with other health care professionals, for the provision of safe and high-quality care,
- b) work effectively with colleagues in ways that best serve the interests of patients (this includes safely passing on information using clear and appropriate spoken, written and electronic communication),
- c) recognise and show respect for the roles and expertise of other health professionals from all specialties and settings in the context of working and learning as part of a multi-professional team.



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