PEDIATRIC NURSING · NGN NCLEX · 2026 TEST PLAN

Growth & Development *Preschool → Adolescent*

A high-yield, side-by-side review of physical, cognitive, psychosocial & safety milestones — with the clinical judgment cues the NGN loves to test.

HIGH-YIELD

Study Sheet · v1
Print · A3 · Portrait

AGES 3 – 6 YRS
Preschool

AGES 6 – 12 YRS
School-age

AGES 12 – 18 YRS
Adolescent

Stage 01 · 3-6 years — Preschool

"The magical-thinking years."

DEVELOPMENTAL THEORIES — CORE

ERIKSON	**Initiative vs. Guilt** — Encourage choices; avoid shaming.
PIAGET	**Preoperational** — Egocentric · magical thinking · animism.
FREUD	**Phallic** — Curiosity about bodies / gender roles.
KOHLBERG	**Preconventional** — Punishment & reward = right/wrong.

PHYSICAL GROWTH

- Gains **4–5 lb (2 kg)** & **2.5–3 in (7 cm)** per year
- All **20 primary teeth** present; first loss near age 6
- Vision **20/30** by age 4 → **20/20** by age 6
- Bladder control day & night usually complete

MOTOR & LANGUAGE

- **3 yr:** rides tricycle, jumps, 900 words, 3-word sentences
- **4 yr:** hops on 1 foot, throws overhand, 1500 words
- **5 yr:** skips, ties laces, draws 6-part person, tells stories
- Play = **associative → cooperative**, highly imaginative

FEARS & PSYCHOSOCIAL

- The dark, monsters, ghosts & **body mutilation**
- Separation anxiety still present; fears loss of control
- Time is concrete — **"after lunch,"** not clock time
- Believes illness = punishment (magical thinking)

SAFETY PRIORITIES

- **Drowning, burns, falls, poisoning, MVA**
- Booster car seat (≥40 lb, until 4'9"/8–12 y)

Stage 02 · 6-12 years — School-age

"The industry years."

DEVELOPMENTAL THEORIES — CORE

ERIKSON	**Industry vs. Inferiority** — Mastery & accomplishment build self-worth.
PIAGET	**Concrete Operational** — Logic · conservation · reversibility.
FREUD	**Latency** — Energy shifts to learning & peers.
KOHLBERG	**Conventional** — "Good-child" & rule-following morality.

PHYSICAL GROWTH

- Gains **4–6 lb** & **2 in (5 cm)** per year — steady
- Loses primary teeth → **permanent teeth** erupt
- **Prepubescent growth spurt:** girls 10–12, boys 12–14
- Fine motor skills refined; handedness established

COGNITIVE & SOCIAL

- Thinks in **concrete, logical** steps — loves rules & fairness
- Masters reading, math, writing; enjoys collections
- **Same-sex best friends**, clubs, team sports
- Play is **cooperative & competitive**

FEARS & CONCERNS

- Fear of **failure**, bullying, loss of control
- Fear of the unknown, death, disfigurement
- Body-image awareness begins; **modesty emerges**
- Separation from peers more distressing than parents

SAFETY PRIORITIES

- **Bike, skate & sport injuries** — helmets, pads
- Booster seat until 4'9" · rear seat until age 13
- Internet & social-media safety; stranger danger

Stage 03 · 12-18 years — Adolescent

"The identity years."

DEVELOPMENTAL THEORIES — CORE

ERIKSON	**Identity vs. Role Confusion** — "Who am I?" — peer group = mirror.
PIAGET	**Formal Operational** — Abstract · hypothetical · deductive.
FREUD	**Genital** — Sexual maturation & relationships.
KOHLBERG	**Post-conventional** — Principled reasoning emerges.

PHYSICAL GROWTH · PUBERTY

- **Girls:** breast bud (thelarche) → pubic hair → **menarche ~12.5 y**
- **Boys:** testicular ↑ → pubic hair → voice change
- **Tanner stages 1–5** guide physical assessment
- Rapid growth spurt; peak muscle & bone mass

COGNITIVE & SOCIAL

- **Abstract & hypothetical** thinking — can discuss consequences
- **Personal fable** ("it won't happen to me") → risk-taking
- **Imaginary audience** → intense self-consciousness
- Peer & romantic relationships central; seeks autonomy

FEARS & MENTAL HEALTH

- Fear of **rejection, being "different,"** loss of control
- Body image → **eating disorders** (screen girls & boys)
- **Depression / suicide** — 2nd leading cause of death 10–14 y
- Screen with **HEEADSSS** every visit

SAFETY PRIORITIES

- **MVAs =** #1 cause of death — seat belts, no

- Stranger-danger teaching begins
- Bike helmet; supervision near water & streets

VITAL SIGNS

HR	80–110 bpm
RR	22–34 /min
BP	90–110 / 55–70
TEMP	98.6 °F (37 °C)

★ NGN NCLEX Tip

Use **medical play with dolls**, simple concrete words, and apply **Band-Aids generously** — preschoolers fear their insides "leaking out."

Explain procedures **right before** they happen. Offer limited choices ("arm or leg?") to support initiative.

- Firearm safety education with caregivers

VITAL SIGNS

HR	75–100 bpm
RR	18–30 /min
BP	90–120 / 57–76
TEMP	98.6 °F (37 °C)

★ NGN NCLEX Tip

Use **diagrams, models & step-by-step teaching** — they think concretely. Let them **handle equipment**; it builds industry.

Respect **modesty & privacy**; praise effort, not just outcome. **Assent** should be obtained for procedures.

texting

- Substance use, vaping, firearms, STI / pregnancy
- Helmet laws; water & sport concussion awareness
- Confidentiality honored (limits: harm to self/others)

VITAL SIGNS

HR	60–100 bpm
RR	12–20 /min
BP	110–120 / 70–80
TEMP	98.6 °F (37 °C)

★ NGN NCLEX Tip

Interview **alone — without parent** for sensitive topics; state confidentiality limits up front.

Use **HEEADSSS**, respect autonomy, involve them in their plan. Address **"how will this affect how I look?"** — it's their top concern.

NGN

Clinical Judgment · 6 Cognitive Skills

How the NGN measures you — apply these at every age.

STEP 01 — Recognize Cues
What data is relevant? Age-appropriate norms vs. abnormal.

STEP 02 — Analyze Cues
What do the cues mean in developmental context?

STEP 03 — Prioritize Hypotheses
Which concern is most urgent? (Airway → safety → develop.)

STEP 04 — Generate Solutions
Choose stage-appropriate teaching & interventions.

STEP 05 — Take Actions
Implement with family-centered, trauma-informed care.

STEP 06 — Evaluate Outcomes
Did the child meet the milestone / respond as expected?

⚑ RED FLAGS

Developmental Red Flags

! Preschool (3–6 y)
No 3-word sentences by 3 · can't ride tricycle by 4 · can't hop on 1 foot by 5.

! School-age (6–12 y)
Academic failure · extreme isolation · persistent enuresis/encopresis · bullying signs.

! Adolescent (12–18 y)
No puberty onset by 13 ♀ / 14 ♂ · sudden weight change · SI, hopelessness, withdrawal.

! Any age
Regression of milestones · unexplained bruises or injuries inconsistent with history.

🗣 Therapeutic Communication by Stage

Preschool

DO
Concrete words · medical play · Band-Aids · choice of 2 · parent present.

AVOID
"The IV is a little stick" (literal!) · abstract time · long explanations.

School-age

DO
Diagrams, models, honest info, offer control, praise effort, respect modesty.

AVOID
Baby talk · surprise procedures · comparing siblings · ignoring privacy.

Adolescent

DO
Interview alone · confidentiality (with limits) · HEEADSSS · non-judgmental tone.

AVOID
Lecturing · dismissing concerns · siding with parents · violating privacy.