

Glossary of Terms

Accuracy: the proximity of the measured value to the true value

Anthropometry: the external measurement of an individual

Arm span: the distance between the tips of the middle fingers when the arms are stretched out

Bias: a tendency or preference toward a particular perspective

Breech presentation: baby enters the birth canal with the buttocks or feet first rather than the usual head first presentation

Calibration: a comparison or validation of the height or length of an object with a known value

Caput succedaneum: diffuse swelling of the scalp in a newborn caused by pressure on the head during delivery

Cognitive deficit: impairment in thought processes or understanding

Contracture: stiffness of joint that prevents full extension

Diurnal variation: the fluctuation or decrease in height that occurs throughout the day related to changes in the spine and gravity

Flexor posture: a position of flexion (bending) made possible by decreasing joint angles

Frankfort horizontal plane: an imaginary horizontal line from the lower border of the orbit of the eye (the bony cavity containing the eyeball and its associated muscles, vessels, and nerves) through the highest point of the auditory meatus (opening of the ear canal); the line is parallel to the floor and perpendicular to the vertical surface

Frankfort vertical plane: an imaginary vertical line from the lower border of the orbit of the eye (the bony cavity containing the eyeball and its associated muscles, vessels, and nerves) through the highest point of the auditory meatus (opening of the ear canal); the line is parallel to the headboard and perpendicular to the horizontal surface

Genu valgum: the knees angle in and touch each other when the legs are straightened; sometimes referred to as “knock knees”

Growth velocity: rate of growth

Height: the maximum distance from the crown (the superior point) of the head to the bottom of the feet taken with the individual in the standing position

Inter-examiner reliability: the difference between measures performed by different examiners

Intra-examiner reliability: the difference between measures performed by the same examiner

Lateral position: side lying position

Leg length asymmetry: unequal leg lengths

Length: the maximum distance from the crown of the head (the superior point) to the bottom of the feet taken with the individual lying down

Length board: a measurement instrument with a horizontal surface, stationary headboard, movable footboard, and fixed ruler

Limit of tolerance: numerical difference between two or more measures that is accepted as reasonable accuracy for quality assurance purposes

Linear growth: increase in recumbent length and stature due to increase in the size of the skeleton

Lordosis: an inward curvature of the spine

Mastoid process: protuberance behind the lower portion of the ear

Mean: the average of two or more values

Medial: inner

Molding: a natural process by which a baby's head is shaped temporarily during delivery as it is squeezed through the birth canal by the forces of labor

Neural tube defects: birth defects of the brain and spinal cord

Occiput: the back of the head

Parallax error: error in reading an instrument because the examiner's eye and point of measurement are not in a perpendicular line to the plane of the ruler

Posterior cranium: the back of the head

Precision: the extent to which repeated measurements agree with each other or are reproducible

Recumbent: lying down position

Reliability: how close repeated measures are to each other

Replicate measure: to repeat a measurement

Scapulae: the shoulder blades

Scoliosis: the spine is curved from side to side

Spasticity: tightness of muscles

Stadiometer: a measurement instrument with a vertical surface, horizontal headboard, and fixed ruler or counter mechanism

Supine: lying down positioned on the back with the face up