The aim of the present study was to develop and validate the Children's Depression Screener (ChilD-S) for use in pediatric care. In two pediatric samples, children aged 9-12 (N(I) = 200; N(II) = 246) completed an explorative item pool (subsample I) and a revised item pool (subsample II). Diagnostic accuracy of each of the 22 items from the revised pool was evaluated in order to select the best items for the brief instrument ChilD-S. Areas under the curve (AUCs) of the revised item pool and the ChilD-S were compared. A diagnostic interview, the Kinder-DIPS, served as gold standard. For the purpose of screening for depressive disorders in children, the eight-item ChilD-S (AUC = 0.97) performed just as well as the revised 22-item pool (AUC = 0.94). For the ChilD-S the optimal cut-off point of >=11 yielded a sensitivity of 0.91 and a specificity of 0.89. The ChilD-S shows high potential for depression screening of children in pediatric care.