

Primary survey findings and triage categories – children

Criterion	Category 1 Immediate	Category 2 Emergency	Category 3 Urgent	Category 4 Semi-urgent	Category 5 Non-urgent
Airway	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Obstruction ■ Partial obstruction (e.g. stridor, drooling) with severe respiratory distress ■ Immediate risk of obstruction 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Partial obstruction (e.g. stridor, drooling) with moderate respiratory distress ■ Imminent risk of obstruction 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Partial obstruction (stridor only with activity, no drooling) with minimal respiratory distress 	No signs of obstruction	No signs of obstruction
Breathing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Respiratory arrest ■ Hypoventilation ■ Signs of severe respiratory distress: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Severe use of accessory muscles – Severe intercostal and subcostal retraction – Acute cyanosis 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Signs of moderate respiratory distress: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Moderate use of accessory muscles – Moderate retraction – Tachypnoea – Pallor 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Signs of mild respiratory distress: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Mild use of accessory muscles – Mild retraction – Normal perfusion 	No signs of respiratory distress	No signs of respiratory distress
Circulation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Cardiac arrest or severe bradycardia (e.g. HR <60 bpm in an infant) ■ Signs of severe shock: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Absent peripheral pulses – Pallor, cold, clammy, mottled – Severe tachycardia – Capillary refill >4 secs ■ Uncontrolled bleeding 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Signs of shock: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Weak/thready peripheral pulses – Pallor, cool – Moderate tachycardia – Capillary refill 3–4 secs ■ Signs of severe dehydration [>5 signs]* ■ Severe blood loss 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Mild haemodynamic compromise: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Palpable peripheral pulses – Pallor, warm – Mild tachycardia – Capillary refill 2 secs ■ Signs of moderate dehydration [3–5 signs]* ■ Moderately severe blood loss 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ No signs of haemodynamic compromise ■ Less than 3 signs of dehydration* ■ Mild haemorrhage 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ No signs of haemodynamic compromise ■ No signs of dehydration*

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* Signs of dehydration: Decreased tissue turgor; decreased capillary refill time; sunken eyes; absent tears; dry mucous membranes, decreased urine output or decreased wet nappies, tachycardia, weak pulse, reduced activity and looking unwell

EMERGENCY TRIAGE EDUCATION KIT

Primary survey findings and triage categories – children (continued)

Criterion	Category 1 Immediate	Category 2 Emergency	Category 3 Urgent	Category 4 Semi-urgent	Category 5 Non-urgent
Disability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Unresponsive or responds to pain only ■ Ongoing/prolonged seizure 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Decreased conscious state: GCS <13 ■ Severe decrease in activity/change in behaviour: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Lethargic (quiet, disinterested in surroundings, goes back to sleep after being disturbed) – No eye contact – Decreased muscle tone ■ Focal neurological signs ■ Severe pain ■ BGL <3 mmol/L 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Head injury with short LOC, now alert ■ Moderate decrease in activity/change in behaviour: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Lethargic (quiet, tired looking) – Eye contact when disturbed ■ Moderately severe pain 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Normal/no acute change to usual GCS ■ Mild decrease in activity or change in behaviour: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Quiet but eye contact and interacts with parents ■ Moderate pain 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Normal/no acute change to usual GCS ■ No signs of lethargy or decrease in activity or change in behaviour: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Smiling, playing ■ Mild or no pain
Exposure		Fever with signs of lethargy			
Other (secondary survey red flags)		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Major fracture ■ Amputation (including partial) ■ Suspected sepsis (physiologically unstable) ■ Suspected testicular torsion ■ Overdose or toxic ingestion 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Parietal, occipital or temporal haematoma following a fall in a child under 2 years ■ Limb – altered sensation, acutely absent pulse ■ Stable neonate ■ Sepsis (stable) ■ Child at risk of abuse/suspected non-accidental injury 		