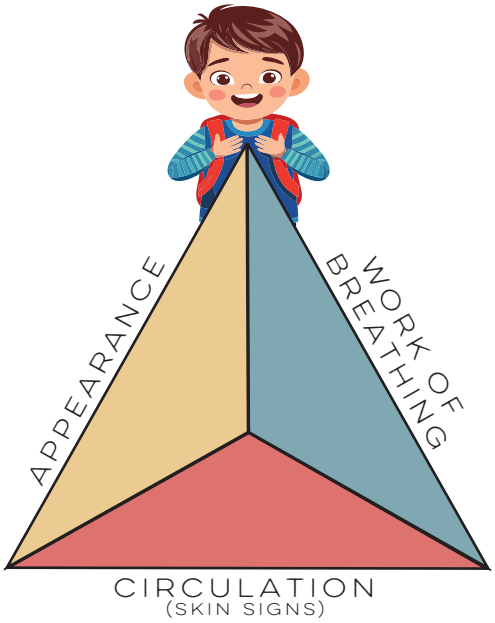
BOPN
EMERGENCY AND CRITICAL CARE EDUCATION

THE PEDIATRIC ASSESSMENT TRIANGLE



ONE BREAK

ONE BREAK IN THE TRIANGLE INDICATES THAT THE CHLD REQUIRES EVALUATION AND MAY BE AT RISK FOR DECOMPENSATION, BUTTHEY ARE NOT DECOMPENSATING AT THIS POINT.

EXAMPLE

A CHILD WITH INCREASED WORK OF BREATHING BUT NORMAL CIRCULATION AND APPEARANCE

ACTION

MONITOR CLOSELY AND PROVIDE SUPPORTIVE CARE AS NEEDED.

TWO BREAKS

THE PRESENCE OF TWO BREAKS IN THE TRIANGLE INDICATES THAT THE CHILD IS STARTING TO DECOMPENSATE.

EXAMPLE

A CHILD WHO IS LETHARGIC WITH GRUNTING AND MODERATE RETRACTIONS

ACTION

IMMEDIATE INTERVENTION IS REQUIRED TO STABILIZE THE CHILD.

THREE BREAKS

THE PRESENCE OF THREE BREAKS IN THE TRIANGLE INDICATES THAT THE CHILD IS DECOMPENSATING; CARDIOPULMONARY COLLAPSE IS IMMINENT.

EXAMPLE

AN UNRESPONSIVE CHILD WITH MODERATE RETRACTIONS AND MOTTLED SKIN

ACTION

IMMEDIATE LIFE-SAVING INTERVENTIONS (E.G., ADVANCED AIRWAY SUPPORT, RESUSCITATION) ARE NEEDED.

APPEARANCE

NORMAL	ABNORMAL
WATCHING PHONE/IPAD	WATCHING PHONE/IPAD
CRYING	CRYING
ENGAGED WITH PARENT OR ENVIRONMENT	ENGAGED WITH PARENT OR ENVIRONMENT
NORMAL MUSCLE TONE	NORMAL MUSCLE TONE

WORK OF BREATHING

NORMAL	ABNORMAL
WATCHING PHONE/IPAD	WATCHING PHONE/IPAD
CRYING	CRYING
ENGAGED WITH PARENT OR ENVIRONMENT	ENGAGED WITH PARENT OR ENVIRONMENT
NORMAL MUSCLE TONE	NORMAL MUSCLE TONE

CIRCULATION

NORMAL	ABNORMAL
WATCHING PHONE/IPAD	WATCHING PHONE/IPAD
CRYING	CRYING
ENGAGED WITH PARENT OR ENVIRONMENT	ENGAGED WITH PARENT OR ENVIRONMENT
NORMAL MUSCLE TONE	NORMAL MUSCLE TONE