

**ABC's of the school age child**

- AHA standard of 30:2 ratio of compressions to breaths.
- Airway/Breathing respiratory rates: **20–32/minute (closer to 20)**.
- Circulation: Heart rate: **70–110/minute** (moving closer to adult rates). (May be higher if child is crying or febrile.) Blood pressure: **83–112/45–71**. (BP will be elevated in heightened metabolic states.)

Physical characteristics

- Should have good fine and gross motor skills.
- Secondary sexual characteristics may begin to develop from ages 8–12. Girls usually develop sooner than boys. Parents may ask for information about development.

Safety

- Essential to reinforce safety outside the hospital before discharge. This includes using helmets when biking and wearing seatbelts.

Social

- Begin to rely more on peers. School age children may therefore take risks.
- More likely to follow directions if they understand the rationale.
- Younger school age children enjoy telling jokes and silly stories.
- May need reminders and direction for personal hygiene.
- Provide time limits to maintain control of situations.

Communication

- Encourage verbalization about hospital experiences (fear, pain, procedures, etc.).
- Provide simple, concrete explanations about equipment and procedures. Avoid surprises. (Use pictures or models to help with the explanations.)

Hospital considerations/family-centered care

- Allow child to make choices and assist with tasks as appropriate.
- Create an age appropriate coping plan (level 9) with the patient and family.
- Ask child for cooperation holding still during procedures. Praise child for cooperation and acknowledge the difficulty maintaining control during painful procedures.
- Can become responsible and successful at managing their health, but should not be relied on exclusively.
- Collaborate with the family to learn routines and comfort measures that work well at home.
 - Tools such as distraction, imagery, art, music, aroma, and massage can be helpful.
 - Advocate for adequate emotional and physical preparation before procedures.
 - Offer use of the treatment room in order to maintain safe havens (for example, the patient's room and playrooms) whenever possible.
- May become nervous about schoolwork or missing events at home. Encourage child to continue with school work as much as possible. Consider placing a school consult in EPIC if child is expected to be admitted for >3 days or has frequent hospitalizations/chronic condition.