

CUPS Assessment for Pediatric Trauma			
Category	Assessment	Actions	Example
Critical	Absent airway, breathing, or circulation	Perform rapid initial interventions and transport simultaneously	Severe traumatic injury with respiratory arrest or cardiac arrest
Unstable	Compromised airway, breathing, or circulation with altered mental status	Perform rapid initial interventions and transport simultaneously	Significant injury with respiratory distress, active bleeding, and shock
Potentially unstable	Normal airway, breathing, circulation, and mental status; high-risk mechanism of injury	Perform initial assessment with interventions; transport promptly; begin focused history and detailed physical exam during transport if time allows	Minor fractures; pedestrian struck by car but with good appearance and normal initial assessment; history of loss of consciousness
Stable	Normal airway, breathing, circulation, and mental status <i>AND</i> low-risk mechanism of injury*	Perform initial assessment with interventions; do focused history and detailed physical examination as needed; transport	Small lacerations, abrasions, or ecchymoses

*Children who appear stable and have a higher-risk mechanism of injury should be considered potentially unstable.

Based on CUPS Assessment Table © 1997 N. D. Sanddal, et al. *Critical Trauma Care by the Basic EMT, 4th ed.*

Mechanisms and Patterns of Blunt Trauma Injury	
Higher-Risk Mechanisms*	Resulting Patterns of Injury
Unrestrained passenger in motor vehicle crash	Head and neck injuries Internal injuries to abdomen and chest Extremity injuries
Hit and thrown by motor vehicle	Head and neck injuries Internal injuries to abdomen and chest Fractures of the lower extremities
Struck by air bag	Head and neck injuries Eye and facial burns
Run over by motor vehicle	Internal injuries to abdomen and chest Fractures of the pelvis and lower extremities
Diving into shallow water	Head, neck, and cervical spine injuries
Moderate fall (5–15 feet)	Head and neck injuries Fractures of upper and lower extremities
High fall (15 feet or more)	Head and neck injuries Internal injuries to abdomen and chest Fractures of upper and lower extremities
Fall from bicycle (child not wearing helmet)	Head and neck injuries Lacerations to scalp and face Fractures of upper extremities
Handlebar injuries from bicycle crash	Internal injuries in the abdominal area Internal bleeding
Lower-Risk Mechanisms	Resulting Patterns of Injury
Restrained passenger in motor vehicle crash	Head and neck injuries Lacerations to scalp and face Internal injuries to abdomen and chest Injuries of the lower spine
Low fall (5 feet or less)	Fractures of upper extremities
Fall from bicycle (child wearing helmet)	Fractures of upper extremities

*A well-appearing child with a high-risk mechanism of injury should receive a minimum CUPS assessment of P—never S.