

Hearts & Minds: Neurodevelopment in Patients with Heart Failure & VADs

School Age (5–13 years old)

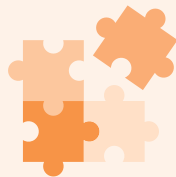


Children with Heart Failure/VADs are resilient, and each has unique strengths. Some may be at higher risk for certain difficulties. Look for:

- Attention difficulties, such as attention deficit/hyperactivity disorder (ADHD)
- Specific learning disorders, like reading or math learning disability
- Higher rates of anxiety and depression symptoms
- Risk for social challenges (maturity, independence, forming/maintaining friendships)

Resources

- IEP/504 Plan: initiate or continue supports through the school system—focus on interventions and accommodations at this younger age
- School-based therapies to support speech/language, fine and gross motor development—ask your cardiologist for a referral to your care center’s cardiac neurodevelopmental program if your child doesn’t qualify for therapies at school
- Social skills training can be provided through school, behavioral therapy, occupational or speech/language therapy
- Behavioral/Psychological therapy:
 - *Strategies for supporting attention*
 - *Managing disruptive behavior with parents/caregivers*
 - *Developing emotion identification skills*
 - *Direct coaching in relaxation*
 - *Coping strategies for mood and anxiety*



Helpful Tools & Tips for Home

- Make charts for bedtime/ morning routines and chores
- Setting up specific behavior expectations with positive reinforcement can be more effective than punishment
 - *For example: Earning screen time by completing chores, or choosing a treat after completing homework every day for a week*
- Use organizational tools:
 - *Labeled locations for commonly used objects in the home*
 - *Labeled and colored folders for homework*
 - *Begin using planners for homework and tests*
- Schedule playdates and extracurricular activities to help form friendships
- Encourage talking about feelings and learning different emotions
- Role play how to stand up for oneself and others



Having a child with medical issues can be stressful. See resources for caregivers at: div54cwsiq.wixsite.com/caregiverwellbeing/resources