

# Rancho Los Amigos Scale



## What is the Rancho Los Amigos Scale?

The Rancho Los Amigos Scale is used to check brain recovery after a head injury. The scale has 10 levels. The levels are general. Your child may or may not fit each level exactly.

The rehabilitation (rehab) team, including doctors and therapists, will test your child to check his Rancho Scale level. Ask the rehab team to tell you about your child's level and to give you examples specific to your child.

## How is it used?

The Rancho Los Amigos Scale is used to check your child's progress during rehab. It focuses on your child's abilities and helps us design the rehab program that best meets their needs. Each child moves through the levels at their own pace. The pace and amount of your child's progress depends on where the brain injury is and how severe it is. It also depends on the time since the brain injury.

## What are the levels?

General level	Assistance level (help needed)	Child's ability level
<b>Level 1:</b> No response	Total assistance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Does not respond to stimuli (such as touch and sound)</li><li>• Appears to be asleep</li></ul>
<b>Level 2:</b> Generalized response	Total assistance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Shows general reflex response to painful stimuli</li><li>• May respond to stimuli with general body movement, increased heart rate or sounds</li><li>• May respond to all stimuli in the same way</li><li>• May take time before responding to stimuli</li></ul>

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# Rancho Los Amigos Scale, continued

General level	Assistance level (help needed)	Child's ability level
<b>Level 3:</b> Localized response	Total assistance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Has responses related to types of stimuli</li> <li>• Pulls away or makes sounds in response to pain</li> <li>• Turns head to sound</li> <li>• Blinks in response to a strong light shined in eyes</li> <li>• Follows object with eyes</li> <li>• May respond to simple commands, such as, "Squeeze my hand."</li> <li>• Responds at times and not at others</li> <li>• May respond to some people but not others</li> </ul>
<b>Level 4:</b> Confused/agitated	Maximal assistance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Is confused and agitated but alert and very active</li> <li>• May be aggressive</li> <li>• Has mood swings for no known reason</li> <li>• May do basic motor activities, such as sitting up in bed or reaching</li> <li>• May try to remove restraints or tubes</li> <li>• May try to get out of bed</li> <li>• Can only pay attention for a short time</li> <li>• Cannot remember things that happened not long ago (short term memory)</li> <li>• Does not cooperate</li> <li>• Has speech that is hard to understand or does not match the situation</li> <li>• May cry or scream out</li> </ul>
<b>Level 5:</b> Confused, inappropriate non-agitated	Maximal assistance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Is alert and confused but not agitated</li> <li>• May become agitated</li> <li>• Does not know who they are, where they are or what date/time it is</li> <li>• Has very poor short term memory</li> <li>• Has very short attention span</li> </ul>

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# Rancho Los Amigos Scale, continued

General level	Assistance level (help needed)	Child's ability level
<b>Level 5 (continued):</b> Confused, inappropriate non-agitated	Maximal assistance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Needs structure and cues</li> <li>• Follows simple commands</li> <li>• May do simple tasks that he could do before the brain injury</li> <li>• May have basic social interaction, like saying “Hi”</li> <li>• May have speech that is hard to understand or does not match the situation</li> <li>• Has more appropriate responses in familiar settings</li> <li>• Cannot respond to multiple requests or stimuli</li> <li>• Cannot solve problems, learn new information or control their behavior</li> <li>• Needs someone to watch them just in case they need help</li> <li>• May wander (walk without a purpose or without a place to go)</li> </ul>
<b>Level 6:</b> Confused and appropriate	Moderate assistance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sometimes knows who they are, where they are or what date/time it is</li> <li>• Follows simple directions</li> <li>• Does simple, familiar tasks, such as brushing teeth or basic self-care</li> <li>• Is better at remembering things that happened a long time ago (long term) as compared to not long ago (short term)</li> <li>• Has improved short term memory; can use memory aide</li> <li>• Is starting to problem solve with help</li> <li>• Has more appropriate responses and social interaction in familiar settings</li> <li>• Is unaware of safety risks</li> <li>• Needs someone to watch them just in case they need help</li> </ul>
<b>Level 7:</b> Automatic, appropriate response	Minimal assistance for daily living skills	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Knows who they are and where they are in familiar situations; needs help with date/time</li> <li>• Can do simple daily routines, such as get dressed</li> </ul>

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# Rancho Los Amigos Scale, continued

General level	Assistance level (help needed)	Child's ability level
<b>Level 7 (continued):</b> Automatic, appropriate response	Minimal assistance for daily living skills	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Learns at a slower rate but can pay better attention and is better at problem solving</li> <li>• Cannot to spot inappropriate social behavior</li> <li>• Is not aware of others' needs and feelings</li> <li>• May be oppositional or uncooperative; may not act as they should</li> <li>• Has some awareness of condition but thinks they can do more than they really can</li> <li>• Is not aware of the results from a decision or action</li> <li>• Needs little help for safety during routine activities</li> </ul>
<b>Level 8:</b> Purposeful, appropriate	Stand-by assistance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Knows who they are, where they are and what date/time it is</li> <li>• Can do familiar tasks with supervision little help or with someone watching them just in case they need help</li> <li>• Can remember better and pay attention longer; needs assistive memory devices</li> <li>• Has more trouble with reasoning and judgement than before the brain injury</li> <li>• Does not fully understand what they can and cannot do; needs someone to watch them just in case they need help</li> <li>• Thinks about results from actions with little help</li> <li>• Can spot inappropriate social behavior</li> <li>• Is self-centered but better at seeing the feelings of others</li> <li>• May be depressed and irritable; may argue and get angry easily</li> </ul>
<b>Level 9:</b> Purposeful, appropriate	Stand-by assistance on request	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Is more independent with familiar and basic tasks</li> <li>• Uses assistive memory devices</li> <li>• Knows limits but may need help with problem solving</li> </ul>

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# Rancho Los Amigos Scale, continued

General level	Assistance level (help needed)	Child's ability level
<b>Level 9 (continued):</b> Purposeful, appropriate	Stand-by assistance on request	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Can understand results from actions; may still need help</li> <li>• Has more appropriate social interactions; has better understanding of the needs and feelings of others; may need help</li> <li>• May still be depressed, irritable or easily frustrated</li> </ul>
<b>Level 10:</b> Purposeful, appropriate	Modified independent	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Can handle multiple tasks at a time; is independent with many tasks but may take more time to complete</li> <li>• Knows disabilities and uses coping skills; thinks of results</li> <li>• Has appropriate social interactions</li> <li>• May be depressed, irritable or easily frustrated if sick, tired or stressed</li> </ul>

## Common rehab words

Here is a list of some words that were used in the chart above. You may want to review these words and their meanings to help you better understand the Rancho Los Amigos Scale. Talk with your child’s rehab team if you have any questions or concerns.

- **Assistive memory devices** – something to help your child remember a schedule or task. This could be a chart, list, notebook or pictures.
- **Basic motor activities** – simple activities, such as sitting up in bed or turning over.
- **Complex commands** – commands that have several steps, such as, “Put toothpaste on a toothbrush, brush your teeth, and then rinse your mouth.”
- **Familiar settings** – places that are familiar to your child, such as home, school or other places they often go.
- **Oppositional behavior** – when the child often resists doing what is asked of them. The child seems angry or stubborn.
- **Stimuli** – sensory input, such as seeing, feeling or hearing.

**This teaching sheet contains general information only. Talk with your child’s doctor or a member of your child’s healthcare team about specific care of your child.**

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