Figure: Steps in the diagnosis of asthma in children aged 1-5 years

EPISODIC WHEEZING WITH INCREASED WORK OF BREATHING

HISTORY AND PHYSICAL EXAMINATION

Table: Findings that increase or decrease the probability of asthma in children

Supports asthma diagnosis?

TREATMENT TRIAL

Trial reliever and/or preventer as indicated

Table: Classification of preschool wheeze and indications for initiating preventer treatment in children aged 1–5 years

See: Treatment trial for preschool wheeze

Clear response to treatment?

PROVISIONAL DIAGNOSIS OF ASTHMA

Manage according to frequency and severity of symptoms.

Monitor and review response regularly.

INVESTIGATIONS FOR SPECIFIC ALTERNATIVE DIAGNOSIS

Table: Findings that require investigation in children

Table: Conditions that can be confused with asthma in children

Alternative diagnosis confirmed?

Consider referral

ALTERNATIVE DIAGNOSIS