

# The Safety Book For Kids

## Table of Contents

	<b>Page</b>
<b>BACKGROUND INFORMATION</b>	
Our Accident Epidemic	3
Child Safety	3
Personal Safety Plans	4
The Lifetime Odds Of Dying In An Accident: 1-in-30 for Males; 1-in-50 for Females	5
More Reasons To Have A 24-Hour Safety Attitude	5
About The Author	6
Book Awards	6
<b>DRIVING SAFETY</b>	
Car Seats (RESTRAIN YOUR CHILDREN)	7
Teenage Drivers (DRIVER'S EDUCATION)	8
<b>HOME SAFETY</b>	
Baby (THE FIRST SIX MONTHS)	9
Babysitting Tips for Parents (GETTING THE RIGHT SITTER)	10
Babysitting Tips for Sitters (SERIOUS BUSINESS)	11
Burns (HOT TUB ALERT)	12
Garage Door (GARAGE DOOR PERILS)	13
Grandchildren Visits (A FEW GRAND SAFETY TIPS)	14
Holidays (THE GIFT OF SAFETY)	15
Infants - Six Months to Two Years (WATCH OUT! BABY'S WALKING)	16
Internet (ACCESS DENIED)	17
Kitchens (A KITCHEN RECIPE)	18
Latchkey Kids (LACKING SUPERVISION)	19
Lawn Mowers (MOWER SOUND ADVICE)	20
Poisoning (POISON CONTROL)	21
Swimming Pools (POOL PERILS)	22
<b>LEISURE and GENERAL SAFETY</b>	
ATVs (AN ATV IS NOT A TOY)	23
Bicycles (TYKES 'N BIKES)	24
Brain Injuries (HEADS UP ADVICE)	25
Child Care (CHOOSING CHILD CARE)	26
Children - Two through Five (FEARLESS YEARS OF 2-5)	27
Children - Six through Twelve (THE 6-12 YEARS)	28
Diving (HEAD UP! HANDS OUT!)	29
Fireworks (EXPLOSIVE CONSEQUENCES)	30
Football/Soccer (GAMES OF HARD KNOCKS)	31
Halloween (FRIGHTFUL POSSIBILITIES)	32
Horses (JUST HORSING AROUND)	33
Inline Skates (WHEELS OF MISFORTUNE)	34
Kids' Sports (PLAY IT SAFE)	35
Kites (GO FLY A KITE)	36
Parties - Teen (DRINKING PROBLEMS)	37
Personal Watercraft (THIS IS NO TOY STORY)	38
Pets (SOME SERIOUS PET PEEVES)	39
Playgrounds (PLAYGROUND SAFETY)	40
School (SAFE SCHOOLING)	41
Sexual Abuse (ABUSE OF TRUST)	42
Summer Trips (SUMMER GETAWAY)	43
Teenagers at Work (PROTECTING TEENAGE WORKERS)	44
Toys (HOLIDAY GIFT IDEAS)	45
Trampolines (TRAMPOLINE WARNING)	46
Winter Precautions (FREEZE WARNING)	47

## More Safety Tips For Your Child's Personal Safety Plan

<b>Topics</b>	<b>Page</b>
Barbecue	48
Camping	
Choking	
Eye Protection	
Falls	
Fire Protection	49
Firearms	
Hiking	
Hobbies	
Home Appliances	
Medications	50
Power Tools	
Shopping	
Skin Cancer	
Spring Cleaning	
Snowmobiles	
Yard Tools	

### **Publisher's Note:**

Every effort has been made to ensure that the information contained in this book is complete and accurate. However, every hazardous situation presents unique issues and problems. Thus the ideas, procedures, and suggestions in this book must be viewed in context, and considered in light of your own good judgment. This book is not intended as a substitute for consulting with your physician and obtaining medical supervision as to any activity, procedure, or suggestion that might affect your health, or the health of your family. Accordingly, individual readers must assume responsibility for their own actions, safety, and health. Neither the author nor the publisher shall be liable or responsible for any loss, injury, or damage allegedly arising from any information or suggestion in this book.

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## Our Accident Epidemic

A few years into the future, a new drug-resistant virus suddenly appears in the United States, striking indiscriminately: newborns and senior citizens are felled; it takes a particularly heavy toll on teenagers and young adults. About 120,000 die each year, and millions more are disabled, some permanently. A person will leave home in the morning and, later in the day, a loved one will receive the terrible news that he or she has died or is seriously ill.

The disease quickly becomes headline news. There is no cure, but preventive measures are found and publicized. As these are developed, organizations create elaborate plans to inform their employees.

Still the disease rages. It is usually contracted as the result of an individual's failure to take proper precautions. Worse, many people are infected as a result of others' failure to follow the preventive guidelines.

This fictional virus would surely stir a national effort to find a cure. Yet today, something is causing widespread death and injury, and the response is surprisingly muted. We're talking about accidents, and our apparent willingness to tolerate such a huge casualty toll year after year, when good safety habits, practiced consistently, could save thousands of lives each year.

The only acceptable grade when it comes to safety is 100 percent.

## Child Safety

Children and youth are the most vulnerable members of society. A combination of inquisitiveness, lack of knowledge, and feelings of invincibility contribute to this vulnerability.

It is up to adults to protect children in their early years, and then to guide them in forming good safety habits as they acquire the knowledge to make decisions on their own.

Unfortunately, much work needs to be done as accidents are the leading cause of death from ages one through nineteen.

The principal causes of children and youth deaths, based on the most recent National Safety Council statistics, are:

Motor Vehicle	7,800
Drowning	1,300
Fires	700
Suffocation	700
Poison	400
Choking	200
Firearms	200
Falls	200
All Other	900
Total	12,400

In addition, 16.1 percent of boys, and 12.1 percent of girls, under the age of 15 visit an emergency room every year due to an accident. From ages 15-19, the percentages increase to 21.7 percent for males, and 16.2 percent for females. Some of these injuries can be life-altering. (Source - 2005 National Hospital Ambulatory Medical Care Survey. Latest statistics available.)

It wasn't too long ago that children rode their bikes through the streets without wearing safety helmets. Car seats for children were flimsy contraptions that offered no protection. Potent medicines didn't have safety caps to guard against curious children rifling through the medicine cabinet, and few parents gave serious thought to childproofing their houses.

Safety awareness has come a long way since then, yet most families still lack a systematic approach to safety. The information that is available comes to you in a variety of ways - magazines, newspapers, TV, and the School of Hard Knocks. Rather than the traditional piecemeal approach, these articles will give you and your family an organized and comprehensive way to address child safety issues.

## Personal Safety Plans

The key to a safer lifestyle is developing a Personal Safety Plan for each child.

Every child is different. To make a safety program truly effective, it must be tailored to the individual. Family size, ages of family members, type of home and furnishings, domestic activities, recreational interests, and personal travel all differ.

Using the articles in this book, you can develop a Personal Safety Plan for your child.

For the plan to really work, you must take the time to review the information periodically. For example, many activities are seasonal. Reviewing the topic with your child at the beginning of the season could pay big dividends.

The following are elements of a comprehensive Personal Safety Plan for you and your family to incorporate:

1. *Leadership*: There must be a safety leader within the family, one person who inspires and challenge the others to follow safety procedures. The leader establishes a safety policy and encourages setting standards for safe conditions and practices. The leader prompts the others and ensures that they are adequately equipped and educated. The leader also sets the example.

2. *Education*: Identify the hazards a child faces at home, in leisure activities, and on the road.

After developing the initial safety plans, encourage everyone to become a safety leader. A Personal Safety Plan for a child will not work unless each family member is committed to doing things safely. This effort also involves periodic reviews and updates of the Personal Safety Plan.

3. *Training*: Lack of knowledge or skill is the cause of many accidents. Training activities ensure that everyone acquires the knowledge needed for safety in all activities. Sometimes this occurs by formally teaching safe practices; at other times, it happens through self-study.

4. *Safety standards*: There are safety standards for homes, vehicles, and public areas. These standards were bought with someone's blood, and are the result of accident investigations. Someone must research the standards and verify that they are met. For example, be sure ground fault circuit interrupters are installed in bathrooms and the kitchen.

5. *Buying safe products*: Many tools and materials used in homes, hobbies, or other forms of recreation, have hazardous properties. Become familiar with them, tell family members about them, and buy the items that are least hazardous.

6. *Personal protective equipment*: Some hazards can be controlled with proper personal protective equipment; for example, bicycle helmets, skiing gear, and skateboard protective clothing. Be sure your child uses the equipment.

7. *Emergency preparedness*: Natural disasters and technological accidents can affect personal safety; and the effects vary from one situation to the next. As a family, consider potential disasters, make emergency plans, and hold emergency drills.

8. *Care of the injured*: First aid can prevent complications of injuries. Suitable first-aid kits need to be obtained and the family trained in first-aid techniques.

9. *Inspections*: Make periodic examinations of facilities, equipment, materials, and practices, to ensure that they continue to meet safety standards.

10. *Family meetings*: People need to be reminded about key aspects of safety and the prevention of accidents. Hold periodic family discussions to review safety in the home and in the activities family members participate in. To assure their involvement, let your child assume some of the leadership.

## The Lifetime Odds Of Dying In An Accident: 1-in-30 for Males; 1-in-50 for Females

The lifetime odds of being killed in an accident are approximately 1-in-30 for males, and 1-in-50 for females. As difficult as that may be to believe, the facts support the statement. Rounding the numbers for the sake of clarity, here's how they are arrived at:

Each year, approximately 2,000,000 males and 2,000,000 females are born in the U.S., and over 70,000 males and 40,000 females die in accidents. The number of people killed in each age bracket stays relatively constant every year, i.e., the number of one-year-olds killed is about the same, as with two-year-olds, and 55-year-olds.

During a male's lifetime, over 70,000 of his peers will be killed in some type of accident. Dividing 2,000,000 by 70,000+ gives us the 1-in-30 approximation. Likewise, dividing 2,000,000 by 40,000+ gives us the 1-in-50 approximation for females.

About 115,000 Americans are killed in off-the-job accidents each year, and approximately 5,000 die in on-the-job accidents. Here are annual fatality statistics from the National Safety Council's 2008 Injury Facts publication:

<u>Cause</u>	<u>Number of Deaths</u>
Motor-vehicle	44,700
Poisoning	25,300
Falls	21,200
Choking	4,100
Drowning	3,800
Fires, Flames and Smoke	2,800
Mechanical Suffocation	1,100
Natural Heat or Cold	800
All Other*	16,200
Total	120,000

\* Most important types included are: firearms, struck by or against object, machinery, electric current, and air, water, and rail transport.

### Major Causes Of Additional Male Deaths

Drunk Driving (9,000); Motorcycles (3,600); Pedestrians (2,000); Drug Overdoses (5,000); Drowning (2,000); Work-related (4,000).

### More Reasons To Have A Twenty-four-hour Safety Attitude

- The lifetime odds of being killed in a motor-vehicle accident are about 1-in-100.
- Accidents are the leading cause of death for people from ages one to forty-one.
- Accidents rob Americans of more years of life before they reach age sixty-five than any other cause of death, including cancer, heart disease, homicide, and AIDS.
- Over 20,000,000 people suffer temporary or permanent disabling injuries from off-the-job accidents each year

## About The Author

John Myre is the author of the award-winning family safety book, *Live Safely in a Dangerous World*. From 1992-2002, he was the editor and publisher of *Safety Times*, an off-the job safety publication for businesses and organizations. He founded the publication in 1992.

His prior experience includes thirty-four years as a financial and risk management executive with Southwestern Bell Corporation. A graduate of Washington University in St. Louis, he has achieved the Associate in Risk Management (ARM) designation. He has been a speaker at several safety conventions, has written articles for safety and risk management publications such as *Professional Safety* magazine and *Business Insurance* magazine, and is the author of the off-the-job safety chapter in *Safety and Health Management Planning* (Government Institutes, 1999).

More information about the book and Personal Safety Plans for the entire family can be found at <http://www.safetytimes.com>.

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The updated topics in this book were originally published in *Live Safely in a Dangerous World*.

## Awards for *Live Safely in a Dangerous World*

*Live Safely in a Dangerous World* is a proud winner of the 2006 Parent to Parent Adding Wisdom Award, the only award program to ever be honored by Disney.com.

In the 2003 Independent Publisher Awards competition, which included more than 1,500 books, *Live Safely in a Dangerous World* was selected as one of the Ten Outstanding Books of the Year. It won the award for the category "Most Likely To Save The Planet."

The book also received an Honorable Mention award in the 2003 *Writer's Digest* 10th Annual International Self-Published Book Awards competition, in the Nonfiction category. The book was one of 68 books honored. Over 2,100 books were entered.

In addition, a Chinese-language edition has been published in China.

# Restrain Your Children

*Karen was confident her husband had properly installed their daughter's safety seat in their small car. Still, she was conscientious about family safety, and when she learned she could receive a free child safety seat inspection at the local Safe Kids USA coalition, she jumped at the chance. A certified inspector found Karen's safety seat straps were threaded through the wrong slots, the harness clip was missing, and the seat was not strapped into the vehicle tightly enough. The benefits of the free inspection were realized a week later when a reckless driver crashed head-on into Karen's car, totaling it. Properly restrained in the back seat, her daughter suffered only a small cut on her mouth, and Karen wonders what might have been if she hadn't found time in a hectic schedule to put safety first.*

## A Crash Course On Safety Seats

**1. Child-safety seats reduce fatal injury in passenger cars by 71 percent for infants under age one, and by 54 percent for those from one through four, according to the National Safety Council.** But to work effectively, they must be used consistently and properly.

2. No single child safety seat is considered best for babies, and not all safety seats fit all vehicles. Try the seat in your car before you buy it, and place your child in it to see that she sits and is restrained comfortably and properly.

3. Send in the registration card to stay informed of problems or recalls.

4. Keep your vehicle owner's manual and child safety seat instructions handy for details about how to secure children. These instructions are the best source of information on correct use of the seat.

5. Set a good example by always wearing your seat belt. Praise your child often for sitting in the safety seat or wearing a seat belt.

6. Make it the rule your child can not ride until safely restrained.

## Proper Seating



## Arrangements

- Children under 13 should be properly restrained in the back seat.
- Infants should ride in a rear-facing safety seat as long as possible - until they are at least one year old and weigh at least 20 pounds. Consult the manufacturer's instructions about positioning your baby in the safety seat and determining the proper recline angle.

Note: If your vehicle has a passenger side air bag, do not use a rear-facing restraint in the front seat. The only exception is if there is no back seat and there is a switch to deactivate the passenger bag. If there is no switch, the child should never ride in that vehicle.

- Children who are at least one year old, weigh 20-40 pounds, and can no longer ride rear-facing should ride in forward-facing seats.
- Kids over 40 pounds should be secured in belt positioning booster seats until adult lap and shoulder belts fit correctly -- when they are at least 58 inches tall and weigh 80 pounds (with clothing on). Most kids under 11-years-old should use a booster seat after outgrowing a child safety seat.
- The lap belt should be snug over the upper thighs rather than the soft abdomen, and the shoulder belt should be snug across the chest and collarbone.

- To fit correctly in only a safety belt, kids must be tall enough to sit with knees bent at the edge of the seat without slouching. Shoulder and lap belts must be correctly used.
- If a child must ride in the front seat, make sure the seat is all the way back, the child stays belted, and sits back in the seat.

## Departing Thoughts

- Get a tight fit. A child safety seat should not move more than one inch from side to side or toward the front of the vehicle. You may need to kneel in the child safety seat while tightening the straps to achieve a tight fit.
- Each time you use a child safety seat, be sure:
  - The harnesses are snug and flat against the child's body, and the harness clip is at armpit level. An adult should not be able to fit more than one finger comfortably between the child's collarbone and the harness.
  - The lap harness rests low across the hips.
- Contact your local or state *Safe Kids USA* organization for information about child passenger safety events and services in your area. More information is available at [www.safekids.org](http://www.safekids.org), along with a listing of coalitions. If necessary, call *Safe Kids USA* at 202-662-0600 for information. ■

# Driver's Education

Teens and automobiles are a dangerous combination. **In fact, car crashes are the leading cause of death for young people between the ages of 13 and 19. About 4,000 teens die each year in passenger vehicle crashes, and hundreds of thousands are seriously injured. According to the Insurance Institute for Highway Safety, the crash rate per mile driven for 16-19-year-olds is four times the rate for drivers over 19 years of age. Risk is highest at age 16.**

For these reasons and more, you need to be sure your teen is adequately prepared to get behind the wheel of an automobile.

## Before Turning The First Key

Some states have a graduated licensing program. Even if your state does not, you may wish to follow a similar practice. Graduated licensing programs include 6-12 months in a learning phase, during which adult supervision is required. Then there's another 6-12 months in an intermediate licensing phase, during which unsupervised driving isn't allowed in high risk situations, e.g., at night or with other teens in the car.

The National Safety Council sells a video kit, *Coaching the Beginning Driver*, that contains valuable coaching and defensive driving examples (call 800-621-7619). And AAA has material with teen driving tips (call your local office).

- Although most teens prefer smaller cars, the death and injury rates are lower for occupants of larger cars. Bigger is generally better and high performance cars are not.
- Enroll your teen and yourself in a defensive driving course.
- Have the teen operate the controls while the car is standing still.

## Practice, Practice, Practice

While driver's education classes and driving schools are worthwhile, they may not provide the comprehensive car control skills a young driver needs to handle the challenges of today's driving. Parents can pro-



vide that extra time behind the wheel, however. When teaching your teen, start with the basics:

- Only one parent in the car.
- Keep the sessions short, usually no longer than an hour at first.
- Be patient! Keep a constructive, helpful tone. Avoid sarcasm.
- Teach by example. The way you drive while your teen is growing up is far more important than the advice you give.
- Confine early learning to quiet streets and large, open parking lots. Then move onto streets with slow speed limits where there will be minimal contact with other vehicles.
- Practice at night and in inclement weather, too, but not until the teen has learned to handle dry pavement. Large, vacant parking lots are safe places to learn to handle a skid and to cope with the diminished braking capabilities provided by hydroplaning.
- Demonstrate the particulars of an emergency highway stop.
- Only after many hours of practice and demonstrated ability on the part of the young driver, are you ready to move the classroom to more complex situations, e.g., highways, shopping malls and rural roads.

## Enforce YOUR Rules For The Road!

The teenage driver also needs to

know *your* rules of the road. Make sure he or she understands that:

- They will always wear a seat belt, as drivers or passengers. According to a recent study, **70 percent of 15-20-year-olds who died in passenger vehicle crashes weren't wearing seat belts.**

- Driving should have a purpose.

- There are restrictions on nighttime driving, and no driving between midnight and 6 a.m.

Weekend nights are the most hazardous. Give them a curfew.

- Use roads with lower speed limits the first two years. Stay off high-speed highways if possible.

- Consider a vehicle monitoring device.

- They cannot have more than one friend in the car. Peer pressure leads to risk taking and bad judgments. **In one study, 85 percent of teen drivers involved in crashes were accompanied by teen passengers, and the risk increases with each additional teen passenger.**

- No alcohol or drugs! This will be difficult to enforce, but it must be stressed time and time again. And if nothing else, get your teen to buy into the "designated driver" concept.

- Some experts recommend that teens not have their own cars during their first two years of driving.

- Set penalties for driving infractions.

- To encourage responsible driving, have your teen pay for part or all of the auto insurance.

- Sign a contract, with rules on using seat belts and the number and ages of passengers. Include consequences for breaking the rules.

- Develop guidelines that minimize distractions. No loud music or talking on the phone.

- Children should never be allowed to ride with inexperienced drivers - regardless of how responsible the drivers are in other areas of their lives. Spell out in advance who the unacceptable drivers are. ■

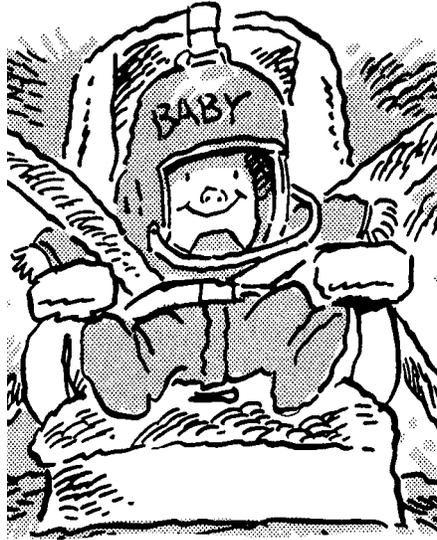
# The First Six Months

*Ann was only six weeks old when her mother placed her in the middle of a neighbor's bed. Her mother didn't think Ann could scoot very far, so she left her alone and went to another room to visit. A short time later there was a "thud" and a scream from the bedroom. Ann had scooted off the bed, onto the floor. Fortunately, the only damage was to her mother's state of mind.*

Sometimes it seems a miracle that kids live to be adults. **Each year about 700 children under one year old die accidentally from other than motor-vehicle incidents, according to the National Safety Council. About 300 of those deaths are due to suffocation.** Despite doting parents and safe home environments, children find ways of imperiling themselves. Here are some things parents and grandparents should watch out for.

## Cribs

- Don't use a crib manufactured before 1974, the year tougher standards took effect. Look for a crib with the seal that says it meets national safety standards.
- The slats on a crib should not be more than 2 3/8" apart.
- Do not use a crib with corner posts higher than 1/16" above the end panel. Children's clothing can tangle on them and strangle the child.
- The mattress should be the same size as the crib to prevent gaps in which arms or legs could be trapped. If you can fit two fingers' width between the mattress and crib, the gap is too wide.
- Do not use thin plastic material, which can cling to a child's face and cause suffocation, to cover mattresses or pillows.
- Never leave crib rails down when a child is in the crib.
- Be sure all hardware is securely in place. Check it regularly.
- Cribs should not contain large stuffed animals or pillows. Not only could these items serve as stepping



stones to help a child climb out, they can also suffocate.

- Put your baby to sleep on her back or side in a crib with a firm, flat mattress and no soft bedding underneath. About 30% of the 2,500 babies who die each year from sudden infant death syndrome may have suffocated when placed on top of pillows, comforters and other soft, fluffy coverings.
- Do not leave toys in bed with a sleeping child.
- Inspect every crib a child uses for safety.
- Never put infants (up to 12 months) to sleep on adult or youth beds.
- Do not place a crib near draperies or blinds where a child could become entangled.
- Do not hang objects with strings or elastics, such as laundry bags or toys, around the crib.
- Place crib bumpers around the bed. Cut off excess string length. Remove the bumpers when the child can stand.
- The National Academy of Pediatrics recommends babies not sleep with their parents. Deaths have occurred when a parent rolled over on top of a child.

## Mobiles

- Hanging crib toys should be beyond the child's reach.
- Avoid mobiles with small removable parts that can be easily removed and swallowed.
- Remove the mobile from the crib as soon as the child can push her way up to her hands or knees.

## Tables And Chairs

- Changing tables should have:
  - safety straps to prevent falls.
  - drawers or shelves that are easily accessible while you keep one hand on the baby.
- High chairs should have waist and crotch straps that are not attached to the tray. The tray must lock securely.
- Caps on high chair tubing should be firmly attached so a child can't remove and choke on them.

## Other Tips

- Never leave a child alone in a bathtub.
- Avoid clothing with ribbons or strings. Remove any drawstrings.
- Never leave the soft sides of portable cribs and playpens down.
- Be sure you can always hear a child who is crying.

## Carriers

- Choose a carrier seat with a wide, sturdy base for stability.
- Stay within arm's reach of the baby when the carrier seat is on tables, counters, couches and chairs.
- Do not set it on soft, plush surfaces that will make it unstable.
- Always use the safety belt.

## Pacifiers

- A pacifier's protective shield should be too large to fit into the baby's mouth.
- The shield should have ventilation holes in case the child does place it into her mouth.
- If the pacifier has holes or tears, dispose of it.
- Do not string a pacifier (or any other object) around your child's neck. ■

# Getting The Right Sitter

*Ann needed a baby-sitter for her two young children. Marisa and Kendall needed money for their summer vacation, and babysitting provided a viable income for the perky fifteen-year-old cousins. It looked like a good match for everyone involved. The girls seemed responsible, and the two young children were easy to handle. So easy, in fact, that when the girls' boyfriends stopped by one afternoon, it was easy to be distracted from their job. When a vigilant neighbor came to the door toting little Eric, who had wandered from the house instead of taking his nap, the girls were terribly embarrassed and quickly unemployed. And Ann resolved to be more careful in her next choice of a sitter.*

Trusting your children with others is a serious step. The following tips can help assure you're entrusting the right people to watch after your most precious possessions.

## Finding A Suitable Sitter

- Is the sitter at least 13 years of age and responsible enough to care for your child?
- Look for a sitter who has received training from local agencies such as the "Y" or a hospital. Ideally, find a sitter who is certified in infant and child CPR.
- Meet the sitter ahead of time for a personal interview. Introduce them to your kids to see how they interact.
- Ask the sitter for references, and call them to check on qualifications and competency.
- Pose "What if ..." questions that will show you his or her degree of preparedness for the job. Admitting they don't know an answer is seen as a more positive response than bluffing a wrong answer.

## Before You Leave Home

- Have the sitter arrive early so you can show her around your house. Be sure to point out: the location of telephones, hard-to-find light switches, the first aid kit or medicine



chest, extra keys, flashlights, and blankets. Practice using the door locks and the burglar alarm system.

- Also, instruct the sitter on the safety precautions you have taken: point out the baby gates, child resistant locks, smoke alarms, carbon monoxide detectors, electrical outlet covers, toilet locks, etc.
- Show them all the entrances to your home.
- If preparing a meal is part of the job, train the sitter in how to use the stove or microwave.
- If your child is allowed to ride a bike or scooter, skateboard or inline skate while you are away, tell the sitter where the protective gear is stored, and that it must be worn.
- Leave written information and guidelines, including:
  - who and when to call for help.
  - feeding, bathing, bedtime and special needs instructions.
  - safety tips appropriate for your children; update them as necessary.
  - your name, home address and home phone number.
  - how to reach your home from major intersections.
  - important phone numbers, including where you can be reached, the phone number (and relationship) of someone to call in case you cannot be reached, the doctor, ambulance, fire department, police, poison

control center, and veterinarian.

-phrasing for the sitter to use to answer the phone or doorbell.

## Set Clear And Rigid Rules

- Instruct the sitter to never leave your child alone - even for a second.
- Clearly establish areas which are "In Limits" and "Off Limits." For example, the sitter should know if it's permissible to play in the back yard or enter the basement.
- Allowing guests is not advisable. (Remember Marisa and Kendall?). Discuss whether it's okay to make phone calls to friends, watch TV or use the computer.
- Ask the sitter to keep the drapes or blinds closed at night and to keep both an outside light and inside light turned on.
- No smoking, drugs or alcohol are allowed.
- Tell her to get your child out of the house immediately if they see flames or smell smoke or gas.
- Show her your family gathering spot outside the house in case of an emergency evacuation.

NOTE: If you leave your child at your sitter's home, make sure you review the above information and check out the home beforehand to see that it is childproofed.

*Some information courtesy of the Safe Kids USA organization. ■*

# Serious Business

Remember the first time you supervised your baby brother or sister? Or were asked to watch the kid next door for a few hours? A little scary wasn't it? And it should have been. Taking responsibility for another person is a huge commitment. Still, it's a common practice, and it can be a good way for young people to earn money. The goal is to keep it a positive experience for all involved.

**Kids, before beginning your career, enroll in a babysitting class offered locally. Most teach basic child care techniques, such as feeding and diapering, plus first aid, age-appropriate activities, fire safety and home emergency skills.**

## Before The Parents Leave

- Get the names and phone numbers for emergencies, including fire and police departments, poison control center, the nearest hospital, a relative, a reliable neighbor, (and a veterinarian if applicable).
- Get the phone number where your employers can be reached. Know when they expect to return.
- Always leave your employer's name, address and phone number *at your own home* before going to babysit. And let your family know what time to expect you home.
- Get a schedule of activities (play time, feeding, bedtime).
- Tour the house with the parents. Know the locations of phones, emergency exits, first-aid supplies, fire-escape routes, and specific hazards that might attract children. Find out how to lock and unlock the doors.
- Find out where the items you will need are located, such as the children's clothing or playthings.
- Familiarize yourself with the potential hazards in the house, such as electrical outlets, appliances and exposed heating elements.
- Find out where the "danger" items are--medicines, bleaches, household



cleaners, and inappropriate toys. Keep them out of reach if parents have not locked them away in a secure place.

- Know who should be admitted to the home and who may take the child, such as relatives or friends.
- Know where a flashlight is kept in case the lights go out.

## On The Job

- Dress for the job. Wear low-heeled shoes and washable practical clothing. Do not wear jewelry or decorative pins.
- Unless instructed by the parents, do not bathe an infant.
- If you are changing the baby's diapers, place everything you need within immediate reach so you won't have to step away from the infant, even for a second.
- In case of accident or illness, don't try to be doctor or nurse except for minor cuts and bruises. Call the parents for instructions, or others on the emergency list.
- Keep children within safe play areas, preferably within your sight. Keep toddlers away from stairs.
- Cook only with permission from the children's parents, and only if you can do so safely.

• Never play the stereo or television so loud that you can't hear a child who is crying. If you must use the telephone, make your conversation brief.

- The safest place for a young child when you are not able to watch her is in the playpen.
- Stay with her when she is eating.
- Don't take the child outside unless the parents give you permission. Then, make sure the child is dressed properly for the weather.
- If you are playing with or feeding a baby, and the phone or doorbell rings, take him with you or put him in his crib, carriage or playpen before answering.
- Keep all toys and objects small enough to be inhaled or swallowed away from babies and toddlers.
- Remember, infants should sleep on their backs.
- In case of fire, get the children out first and then call the fire department from a neighbor's house.
- If someone calls, tell them the parents are unavailable, and take a number.
- If your employer has been drinking, arrange your own ride home. ■

# Hot Tub Alert

Why do kids do these things?

*Debra had just completed her masters degree work in psychology, and there was a jubilant mood in the house as she boiled a pot of hot water for tea. Her three-year-old son, Michael, was helping her make the chocolate chip cookies. When she lifted the pot off the stove and set it on the table, Michael leaned over and eagerly sucked at the steam rising from the spout. He screamed in pain, and Debra rushed him to the hospital, where they prescribed lots of cold water and ice and told her Michael was fortunate to have avoided serious injury.*

Why do kids do these things?

Even a psychologist can't tell you.

**What we do know is that each year approximately 15 children under age 15 die, and over 30,000 children are treated in emergency rooms for scald burn-related injuries, according to *Safe Kids USA*.**

Here are some ways to reduce the risk in your home.

## In The Kitchen

- When you are busy in the kitchen, your toddler should be in a playpen or high chair, away from hot liquids and splattering grease.
- Establish a stay away safe zone in the kitchen.
- Never carry or hold a child and hot liquids at the same time.
- Use extra caution when cooking with oil.
- Keep pans and pots on rear burners with their handles turned toward the back of the stove.
- Install a safety shield or guard on the stove.
- Keep hot foods 12 inches away from the table edge and hot pans at the back of the counter.
- Don't put hot containers on tablecloths or place mats that children can pull down on themselves. Only use tablecloths and place mats when children aren't around.



- Unplug appliances when not in use. Avoid dangling cords.

- Store snacks and other foods away from the stove so no one is tempted to reach across a burner.

- Microwaves present special dangers:

- Be careful when heating and removing liquids. The liquids may be scalding even when the container is not.

- Before serving food, check for even heating.

- Supervise children, particularly under age 7. Never let children remove food.

- Review microwave operations with a baby sitter.

## In The Bathroom

**Hot tap water accounts for nearly one-fourth of all scald burns among children and is associated with more fatalities and hospitalizations than other hot liquid burns. These burns most often occur in the bathroom, and tend to be more severe and cover a larger portion of the body.** To prevent tap water burns:

- Reduce the temperature of your hot water to 120 degrees F.

- When filling a tub, add the cold water first, then follow with hot until the tub is ready.

- After the bathtub is filled, put your whole hand in the water and move it quickly back and forth for several seconds. If it feels even a little bit hot, it is *too* hot for your child. Add more cold water and retest until it feels comfortable.

- Install anti-scald devices that stop water flow when the temperature exceeds 115 degrees F in your shower and bathtub fixtures.

- For extra safety, buy a bath thermometer. The water should not be higher than 100 degrees F.

- Never leave children unsupervised in a bath.

- Seat the child at the rear of the tub, preferably with her back to the faucet handles. Children will turn on the water if they can reach it.

- Don't use toys, as this implies the bathtub is a play area.

- Keep children away from hair curlers and curling irons. Each year thousands of children require emergency room treatment from touching these products.

- Put a slide-bolt latch on the upper half of the outside of the bathroom door, above a young child's reach. ■

# Garage Door Perils

Each year about 20,000 people are treated in hospital emergency rooms for injuries from garage doors, and a few children are killed. The fault can lie in childhood naiveté or mechanical failure. To protect the children in your home:

- The button inside the garage should be at least five feet high so young children cannot reach and activate it.
- Make certain the area around the garage door is clear of children before using it.
- Keep door opener controls away from children. They are not toys.
- Keep the door in full view when you are lowering it.
- Instruct children to never "race the door."
- Consider installing an electric eye that will cause the door to reverse if it senses anything in its path.
- Never stand under the door or walk through the doorway when the door is moving.



- Inspect your garage door and openers monthly. Check the hard-

ware for signs of wear. If it is properly balanced, the door should stay open when it is 3-4 feet off the ground, with the release mechanism disconnected.

- Lubricate moving parts as recommended in the owner's manual.
- Remove the pull down rope from electrically operated doors and disable the locks.
- Install restraining cables which can help contain an extension spring that breaks.
- Most automatic door openers have an automatic reverse mechanism that stops and reverses the door when it contacts an object. To test this critical safety feature, periodically place a roll of paper towels in the path of your descending garage door. The door should stop and reverse when it strikes the object. If it does not, call a qualified technician. Do not attempt to repair it yourself. The springs can be very dangerous.■

# A Few Grand Safety Tips

Grandchildren are truly a blessing. They rejuvenate and bring a great new sense of excitement and discovery. And there's always that wonderful feature that you can hand them back to *your* children when you're exhausted or can't handle them anymore. But there's also the serious downside of knowing that if anything happens on your watch, you've failed your own children. Grandparents face a lot of pressures, but there are ways to lighten the load. (And these tips also apply to nongrandparents when kids visit.)

**To underscore the importance of eternal vigilance, each year more than 2,000 children under 15 die and 4.5 million are injured in home mishaps, according to *Safe Kids USA*.**

## Put Yourself In Their Shoes

For younger kids, get down on your knees and crawl around the rooms and yard to look for things a small person could get into. Open doors and drawers. As you do, ask yourself these questions:

*-Is it poisonous?*

*-Is it a choking hazard?*

*-Could it start a fire?*

*-Could it fall over, or fall down?*

*-Could a child fall from it, or through it?*

*-Could a child trip on it?*

*-Could it scald or burn?*

*-Could it strangle or suffocate?*

*-Could a child drown in it?*

*-Could it electrocute?*

*-Could it cut?*

*-Does it contain alcohol?*

## Some Other Things To Do

- Post emergency numbers by all phones.
- Learn CPR and the Heimlich maneuver for children.
- Purchase hearth guards for a fireplace and corner guards for furniture with sharp corners.
- Place stickers on sliding glass doors at child and adult levels.

- Tie up dangling drapery and blind cords and appliance wires.

- Keep plants beyond a child's reach. Philodendron and dieffenbachia are poisonous. Learn the names of your plants so you can help the Poison Center if a child eats them.

- Cover electrical outlets with a one-piece safety cover; children can choke on small, individual covers.

- Unload guns, and lock up guns and ammunition separately.

- If you have a pool, install four-sided fencing and keep emergency equipment poolside.

## When They Visit

- Lock cabinets with childproof latches.

- Store matches, lighters, plastic bags and plastic wrap up high.

- Keep potentially "poisonous" products locked up, including medications.

**NOTE: Each year, more than a million poisonings among children under six are reported to U.S. Poison Control Centers. According to the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission, grandparents' medicines account for almost 20 percent of all drugs swallowed by children.**

- Don't feed kids under six hard candy, popcorn, nuts, hot dogs, raisins, or food with seeds or pits. Some foods such as peanut butter or fruits can be choking hazards in big portions. Provide small portions.

- In the kitchen, secure infants and toddlers in a playpen, or a high chair with straps.

- Remove the table cloth because the child could pull it off and be burned by hot foods and liquids.

- Use the rear stove burners, keep pot handles out of reach, and never leave the stove unattended.

- Don't drink hot liquids while holding a child.

- Give formula and food a personal test for proper temperature before feeding a child. Don't heat formula in the microwave.

- Lock liquor cabinets, or move the bottles out of reach.

- Place things you *want* a child to have, like healthy snacks, within easy reach.

- Watch the recliner. Fingers, arms, legs, and heads can get caught between the chair and the leg rest.

- Move furniture away from windows to prevent falls.

- Keep the bathroom door closed and the toilet lid down.

- Do not leave electrical appliances plugged in, especially near the sink or tub.

- Never leave a child alone in a tub, or near a pool or containers with water.

- Lower your water heater thermostat to 120 degrees F. And always test the water with your forearm or a bath thermometer before putting a child into it.

- Pick up any small items lying around that a child could swallow.

- Check toys for small parts, sharp edges or broken pieces.

- Lock up all tools and garden chemicals.

- Crib slats should be no more than 2 3/8 inches apart. Look for a certification seal to confirm the crib meets Juvenile Product Manufacturers Association standards. Use a firm mattress and crib sheets that fit snugly. Position the crib away from wall hangings, windows and cords. Dress infants in warm clothes. Don't use comforters, bulky blankets or pillows. Once she can pull herself up, remove stuffed animals she could climb out on and the mobile.

- Tie plastic dry cleaning bags in a knot and dispose of them safely.

- Store your purse on a top shelf, and remove potentially dangerous items from your dresser.

- Block off the top and bottom of stairways with safety gates.

- Be sure you can always hear a child who is crying. Make telephone conversations brief. ■

# The Gift Of Safety

The winter holidays are upon us. And while they were not created expressly for the benefit of children, youngsters take great delight in the festivities surrounding this magical time of year. However, the magic can quickly turn to disaster by simple oversight or poor planning. **One of the greatest gifts we can give our children is our concern for their safety.**

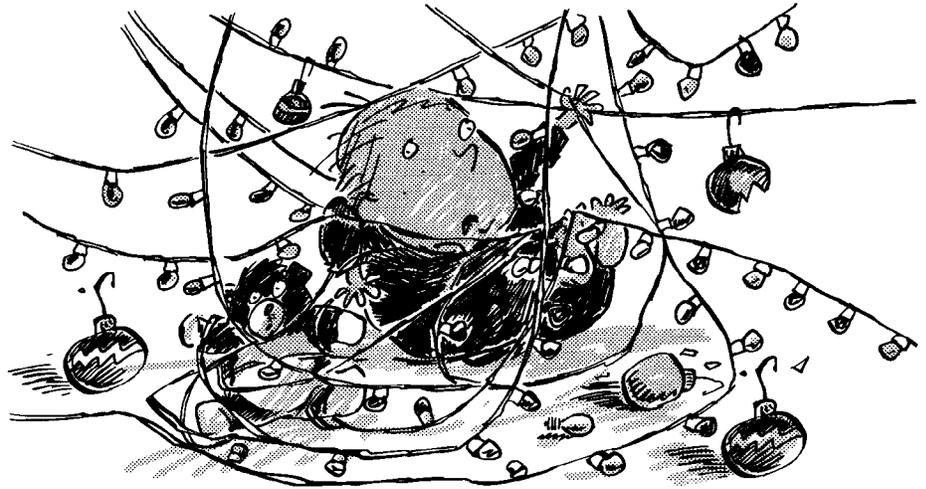
## Well Planned Decorations

Decorate your house with children in mind.

- Avoid room decorations that are sharp, easily breakable, or very small.
- Avoid trimmings or decorations that resemble candy or food. Children could mistake them for the real thing.
- Keep small ornaments, tinsel, small figurines and other decorations out of reach of young children.
- Place breakable ornaments, or those with small detachable parts, on upper tree branches.
- Keep lighting wires away from young children. Push the wires into the tree branches and clip the securely to the branches. Never allow children to play with light strings or other electrical decorations.
- Trim lower tree branches to prevent eye injuries.
- Keep candles, matches and lighters out of reach.
- Make sure all electrical decorations are safety tested. Look for the UL Label.
- Keep toddlers away from electrical fixtures. Use large outlet covers on electrical sockets that are not in use.
- Secure electrical cords so children can't pull or trip over them.

## Well Chosen Toys

- Be sure the toy matches the age, skills, abilities and interest of the child.



- Avoid toys that have sharp or metal edges, glass, cords and strings, or sharp points.
- Buy toys for infants and toddlers that are too large to fit in their mouth. Here's a valuable rule of thumb: If a toy or part can slide through an empty toilet-paper roll, it's too small for small children.
- Be sure eyes of dolls and buttons on stuffed animals are securely fastened.
- Do not allow children under age six to blow up a balloon, or be alone with one. Balloons are the most dangerous "toy" for small children.
- When purchasing toys for older children, consider the possibility they may fall into the hands of younger children.

## More Precautions

- Carefully supervise youngsters during holiday activities and parties.
- Keep toddlers away from the kitchen when cooking and baking are in progress. If they must be present, keep them in high chairs or play pens.
- If you build a fire, use a fireplace screen. Do not leave young children or the fire unattended.
- Keep "fire salts" that produce colored flames on wood fires away from children. They can make a child sick if swallowed.

- Keep round, hard foods and candies such as candy cane pieces, mints, nuts and popcorn out of reach of children under age five.
- Keep holiday plants away from children. Some are toxic. Call the poison control center if your child eats part of a plant.
- Keep alcoholic drinks and containers, baking ingredients with alcohol, and cigarette butts out of reach.
- Post poison control center and emergency phone numbers by all phones.
- If you travel to the house of a relative or friend, perform an immediate safety check. Look for such things as visible prescription drugs or poisonous products, unguarded appliances and stairs, toxic products under sinks, and unprotected electrical outlets.

Keep a close eye on your child. If it's someplace you go frequently, take along necessary safety devices for temporary use.

- When shopping with small children, sew or pin their name, address and phone number inside their clothing in case you become separated.

*Some of this information courtesy of Safe Kids USA. ■*

# Watch Out! Baby's Walking

Betty is one of the best grandmothers ever. But the day she entered the bedroom and saw the cord from the window blind entangled around her grandson's neck, she felt like the worst person alive. How could it have happened? She had cut the cords short, but still the child had pulled them into his crib. When Betty found the baby alive and well, she wept with relief. Then she moved the bed away from the window.

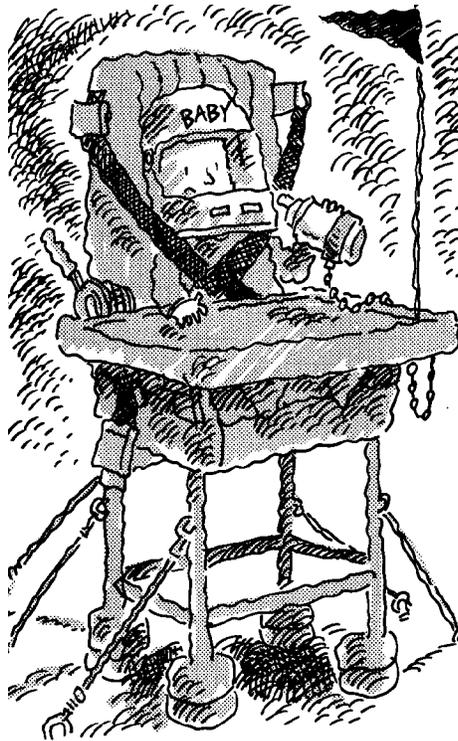
Between the ages of six months and two years, children are beginning to walk, run, climb, jump and explore everything. It's a wonderful time for their development, but a time when adults need to watch them like hawks. We can't allow for every danger a child will face here, but we can list some of the most common ones. **According to Safe Kids USA, the biggest threat to a child's life and health at this age is an accident.**

## Fire And Burns

- Cover unused electrical outlets with rotating-style safety plugs.
- Keep appliance cords out of reach by tying them up or taping them down.
- While working in the kitchen, keep children in playpens or high chairs.
- Turn pot handles to the back of the stove where they are out of reach of curious hands.
- Use place mats instead of table cloths, because toddlers may try to pull themselves up by grabbing hold of the cloth.
- Never carry a child and hot liquids at the same time.
- Turn your water heater to 120 degrees or lower to prevent scalding.

## Falls

- Move chairs and other furniture away from windows to discourage young climbers.
- Don't let toddlers play on or near stairs. Use permanent safety gates at the top and bottom.



- Remove or cushion sharp-edged furniture where a child goes.
- Avoid accordion gates with large openings; a child's neck could get trapped in the openings.
- **High chairs cause almost 10,000 injuries to small children each year.** Use restraining straps that run around a child's waist and between the legs to keep them from escaping from the seat and falling to the floor or getting their head caught in the structure.
- The American Academy of Pediatrics recommends that baby walkers not be used.

## Choking And Poisons

- Do not store household cleaning products under the sink. Keep them and all poisons locked up and out of reach.
- Small children use their mouths to explore the world. Keep them away from objects they can pick up and swallow, such as toys for older children, safety pins, coins, broken or deflated balloons, jewelry and batteries. Remove refrigerator magnets.

- Remove wall hangings and mobiles over the crib.
- Avoid all foods that could lodge in a child's throat, such as hot dogs, nuts, raw carrots, grapes, candies, gum, popcorn and food with pits.
- Learn how to save the life of a choking child. Consult your doctor.
- Use a small parts tester "choke tube" to see if small toys or parts present a choking hazard.
- If small children are present, keep potentially hazardous cleaning compounds capped while in use.
- Use safety caps on medicines and toxic household products.
- Keep all purses out of reach.
- Safely dispose of plastic cleaning bags immediately.
- Keep the number of your local poison control center by all phones.

## The Dangers Never Cease

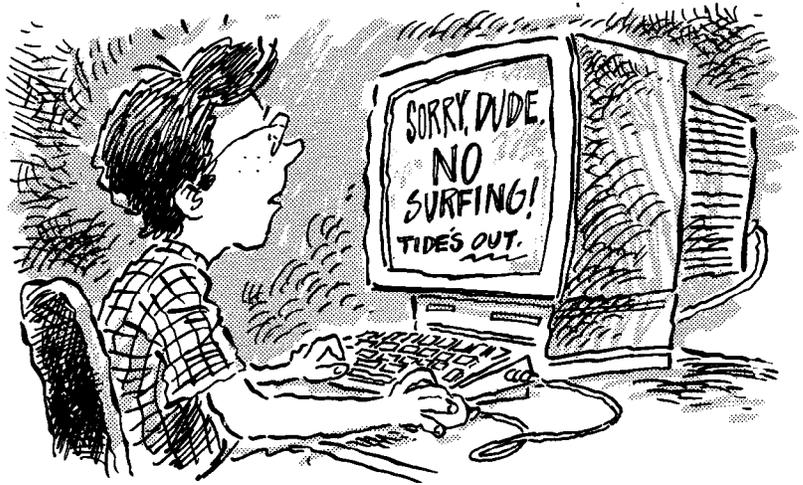
- Keep window cords out of reach. Cut looped chains or cords of window blinds in half and add large safety tassels to the ends.
- Never leave a child alone in or near a bathtub, pail of water, or any other water for even an instant.
- Lock all cabinets and drawers from the countertop down, and oven, dryer and dishwasher doors.
- Buy clothes with snaps, buttons, or Velcro instead of long, loose drawstrings which can snag and present a choking or falling hazard.
- Be sure you can always hear a child if they cry.
- Encourage grandparents and caregivers to childproof their homes.
- There are numerous products designed to keep your child safe. Some that you should consider are: toilet lid locks; bathtub products such as cushioned covers for spouts and knobs; anti-scald devices; cabinet and drawer latches; corner and edge bumpers; door guards; electrical-cord products; electrical outlet covers; medicine cabinet latches; stove guards; window blind products; and window locks.■

# Access Denied

Pokemon, Beanie Babies, Thomas the Train, and Harry Potter are examples of childhood interests that come and go. The Internet, however, is an interest that will forever be a part of their lives. It can be a source of entertainment and information for your children, and it will be a workplace tool as they grow older. Sadly, it also poses threats to their safety. Take a few minutes to review these suggestions on ways to make your child's Internet experience wholesome and productive.

## Tell Your Children

- Never give out identifying information such as name, home address, school name, or telephone number in a public message, such as a chat room or bulletin board.
- Always ask your parents' permission before using your full name, address, telephone number or school name anywhere on the Internet.
- Never send a person a picture of you without first checking with your parent or guardian.
- Never respond to messages or bulletin board items that are obscene, suggestive, belligerent, threatening, or make you feel uncomfortable. If you get such a message, don't respond. Instead, show it to your parents or a trusted adult. Sending a response just encourages the person.
- Never meet a new online "friend" without adult supervision. (Parents: If a meeting is arranged, make the first one in a public spot. Be sure to accompany your child.)
- Remember that everything you read online may not be true. Be very careful about any offers that involve your coming to a meeting or having someone visit your house. The biggest danger to your safety is if you get together with someone you "meet" online.
- Regardless of who asks, you don't have to provide any information that you don't want to share.



- Never give out your password to anyone, even if they say they're from your Internet service.

## Suggestions For Parents

- Set reasonable rules and guidelines for computer use by your children. Discuss the rules and post them near the computer as a reminder. Remember to monitor their compliance, especially when it comes to the amount of time spent on the computer.
- Be sure your child is using kid-friendly search engines. Check with your Internet service provider for suggestions.
- Keep the computer in view in the family room or kitchen – not in a child's room.
- Monitor your child's chat rooms and e-mail. Set and enforce time limits for chatting, e-mailing and surfing.
- Consider software that can monitor where your children have been online, block sites with objectionable words or images, limit computer time and prevent children from divulging too much information. Remember, however, that filters are not perfect. Even if filters were 100 percent effective, this kind of software is no substitute for your guidance and involvement.
- Find out the safeguards used at other locations your child visits.

- Young children should not be allowed to "surf the Net" alone.
- Get to know the service your child uses. If you don't know how to log on, get your child to show you.
- If your child receives a message that is harassing, of a sexual nature, or threatening, forward a copy of the message to your service provider and ask for their assistance.
- Get to know your child's online friends just as you get to know all of their other friends.
- Watch for these danger signs and take prompt action if your child:
  - Spends large amounts of time online, especially at night.
  - Has pornography on the computer.
  - Receives phone calls from people you don't know.
  - Makes calls to numbers you don't recognize.
  - Turns the monitor off or changes the screen when you enter the room.
  - Receives mail, gifts, or packages from a stranger.
  - Becomes withdrawn from the family.
- If you become aware of any incidents that could put your child at risk, or indecent material involving children, immediately call the police or the FBI. For additional information, visit the FBI's web site, [www.fbi.gov](http://www.fbi.gov), and search for "internet safety." ■

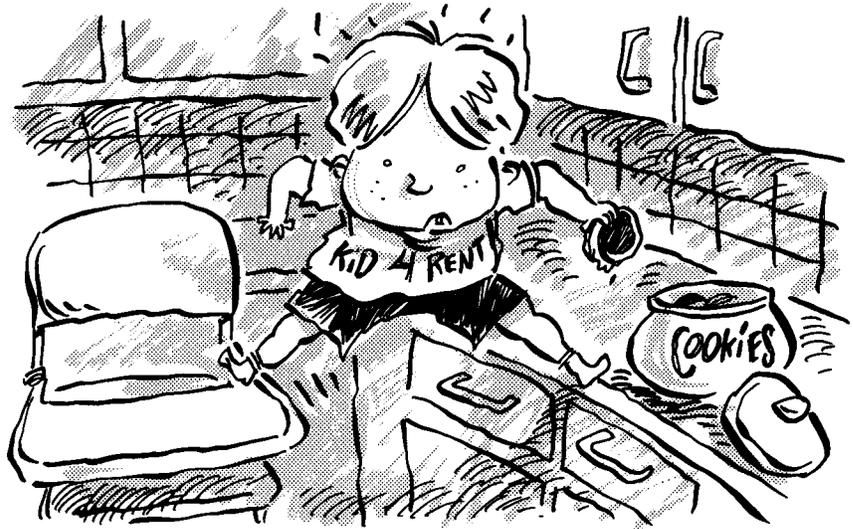
# A Kitchen Recipe

It was just an evening among friends, and the kitchen was a busy place. Six-month-old Greg had let it be known that the aroma from the kitchen was making him hungry also, so Kay offered to feed him while Greg's mother prepared food for the guests. While Kay was feeding him, she turned aside for a moment to talk. In that instant, Greg stood up (he was not strapped in because he was so young), and toppled to the floor, landing squarely on his head. Fortunately there was no damage to Greg's head, but it did knock some sense into the heads of the adults present on the need to be constantly vigilant when children are in the kitchen.

Kitchens are fascinating places for children. They are filled with warmth, good smells, wonderful tastes, and infinite shiny objects. Each of those attractions represents a potential hazard to the curious, unsupervised child. To keep young children safe in the kitchen:

## Kitchen Basics

- Never leave a child unattended in the kitchen.
- Store dangerous or poisonous substances and plastic bags in a high cabinet with childproof locks.
- Unplug appliance cords when not in use, and keep them tied up and out of children's reach.
- Store canned goods and dry foods in low cabinets, and put potentially harmful products in upper cupboards.
- Keep utensils in a safe place, preferably in a childproof drawer.
- Store knives in a secured drawer.
- Install stove shields, or remove control knobs to the burners and ovens when not in use.
- Insert childproof plugs in unused electrical outlets.
- Keep your trash can in a closed cabinet or pantry.
- Keep refrigerator magnets out of reach.



- Keep high chairs away from the table, counter, wall or any surface from which a child could push off.
- Don't put dishwasher detergent or sharp objects in your dishwasher until right before you turn it on.
- Never heat your child's formula in the microwave. The bottle may feel cool, but the milk inside may be hot enough to cause burns.

## Remove Temptation

- Don't store treats over the stove, or in a place a child can climb to reach. Store snacks in a low cabinet.
- Keep pets and small children out of the kitchen while you are cooking. If you feel you need to keep an eye on babies or toddlers, secure them in a high chair or playpen.
- Turn pot and skillet handles away from the edge of the stove and beyond a child's easy grip.
- Never hold a child while cooking, drinking or carrying hot liquids.
- Place hot foods and liquids away from the edges of counters and tables.
- Pay extra attention to items sitting on tablecloths or place mats so children cannot pull hot food or liquids down and scald themselves.
- Store matches in a fireproof container, out of reach of children.

## When To Start

Following are some tips and age-appropriate tasks from *Safe Kids USA* to help keep the kitchen a fun, safe place:

- Keep a close eye on the kids, and set strict safety rules.

### 3-5 years old:

Gather ingredients from the refrigerator and low cabinets; pour liquids into a bowl; stir ingredients together; rinse foods under cold water; use a cookie cutter.

### 6-8 years old:

Use a blunt knife to spread butter or frosting; peel vegetables; measure ingredients; set the table.

### 9-12 years old:

Use electrical appliances, such as a blender, food processor, mixer, can opener, and microwave with adult supervision; operate stove burners and select oven temperatures in the presence of an adult; help plan meals and follow recipes.

### 13+:

Operate the stovetop and microwave without adult supervision; drain cooked spaghetti into a colander; remove a tray of cookies from the oven. ■

# Lacking Supervision

Parents don't want to leave young children home without adult supervision, but for many family situations there is no choice.

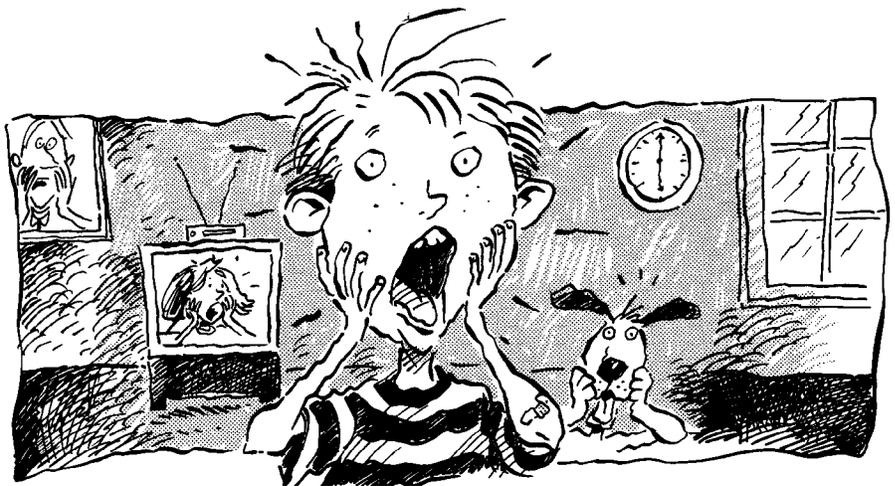
**According to the U.S. Census, one-third of all school-age children in the U.S. are, for some part of the week, latchkey kids. Over four million children are injured at home each year.**

## First Steps

Before you leave your child alone, check with your local child protection service on the legal age a child can be unsupervised. Contact your school district or the "Y" for possible latchkey programs.

To minimize the trauma to the child and parent:

- Send your child to a self-care or babysitting course.
- Engage in "role-playing" activities. Act out the situation and coach the child on proper behavior. Possible situations include: a fire emergency, a stranger at the door, a scary telephone call, a sibling who does not return from school, and an injury.
- Begin by leaving the child alone for a short time.
- Consider buying an easygoing dog for security and companionship.
- Develop and post clear house rules, from cooking to play to having guests. Buy snacks that do not have to be heated. Teach kids what appliances are off limits.
- Make the house look occupied. Turn on the lights and radio or TV.
- Decide whether you want your child to simply not answer the door, or say through a closed door, "My mom is busy. Can I take a message?" The same applies to phone calls.
- Be sure children can operate window and door locks and the alarm system, and that they use them when they are home alone.
- Sit down as a family to discuss fire escape routes from each room.
- Keep guns, ammunition, prescriptions, liquor, matches, lighters and cigarettes locked up.



- Point out potential hazards in the home and teach children how to avoid injuries from them.

- Make sure kids know where the smoke alarms and carbon monoxide alarms are located and what to do if one sounds. Also, review procedures for power failures and overflowing toilets.

- Create a survival kit for a weather emergency or black-out. Include a flashlight, portable radio, extra batteries, bandages, jug of water, and games to pass time.

- Show kids where the first aid kit is, and how to use the contents.

- Tell the child where you will be, how you can be reached, and when you will return home.

- Occasionally go home early and unannounced to be sure rules are being followed.

## The Telephone Connection

- Help children memorize important information, such as:

- Their full name, complete address and telephone number.

- Their parents' full names.

- The nearest intersection to their home, to help direct police and fire officials.

- How to report an emergency to 911 or the Operator.

- Post a list of important telephone numbers next to each phone, including parents' workplace; police and fire departments; poison control center; and neighbors or relatives.

- Purchase Internet filter and blocker programs. Tell children never to divulge personal data.

- When in doubt about whether to call 911, always place the call.

- Consider carrying a cell phone or a beeper for emergencies.

## Comings And Goings

- Take a "safety walk" through the neighborhood. Point out the safest route to and from school or other activities. Caution children against taking shortcuts. Tell them:

- Do not go into an empty home if they think they are being followed.

- Do not enter the home if there is anything unusual. Go to a friendly neighbor's home.

- Make a scene when threatened. Yell "fire" instead of "help."

- Do not wear their house key where it can be seen by others. Place the key on a chain around their neck, or pin it inside a pocket.

- Never talk to a stranger, particularly one who starts a conversation. Define "stranger" so children are not confused.

- Never accept rides or gifts from anyone unless they have a parent's permission.

- Check in with a parent as soon as they get home. ■



# Poison Control

**More than one million unintentional poisoning exposures among children under six are reported to U.S. poison control centers each year. Almost 90 percent of these incidents occur in homes and involve common household items.**

These are frightening statistics and unnecessarily high. The first and best antidote is caution.

## Good Advice And Bad Medicine

- Keep these telephone numbers by your phones: poison control center, doctor, and hospital.
- Always follow label directions. Poisoning can occur by eating, drinking or inhaling a substance, or getting it on the skin or in the eyes.
- Always read the label on any medication before giving it to a child.
- Discard drugs that are past their expiration date, or look or smell unusual. Contact your pharmacist for disposal instructions.
- Don't give drugs in the dark.
- To avoid overdoses, use a daily pill organizer.

## This Isn't Kid Stuff

- Lock up all medicines and keep medicines in child-resistant containers. However, don't rely solely on these containers. They are *child-resistant* not *childproof*.
- If you're interrupted while using a product, take the product or child with you, or lock up the item.
- Never leave open medications out of your sight.
- If you must keep medicine by the bed when kids are around, use a lockable tackle box.
- Grandparents: Put away and secure poisonous items before kids arrive. A disproportionately high number of childhood poisonings involve grandparents' drugs.

- Place purses, bags and suitcases out of reach.
- Teach children not to eat or drink anything unless it is given to them by an adult they know.
- Never refer to any kind of medication as "candy" even when trying to coax children to take it.
- Avoid taking medications in front of children. They will want to copy your actions.
- Child exposures often occur in late afternoon or early evening when supervision may not be as strict.
- Poisonings increase during periods when the household is disrupted (e.g. children visiting, holidays, personal crisis, moving).
- Be alert for repeat poisonings. Children who swallow a poison are likely to try again within a year.
- If you suspect a child has been exposed to a poisonous substance:
  - Remain calm, and keep the child calm.

-Look in the child's mouth.

Remove any remaining pills, pieces of plant, etc.

-Take the child and the poison to the phone. Call the poison center or your doctor. Be prepared to give your child's age, weight, the product name on the label, when it was eaten, the amount swallowed, and the child's condition.

Note: Most parents can identify the top three drugs used by children: alcohol, tobacco and marijuana. Few parents realize that inhalants are the fourth drug group most commonly abused. And remember, tobacco is often the "gateway" to other drugs.

- If you suspect your child is using illegal drugs, or abusing prescription drugs, seek professional help immediately.

## The Toxic Household

- Do not store household and cleaning products in the same place you store food.
- Keep all products in their original containers.
- Contact a local nursery or poison control center to find nontoxic plants to buy. More than 700 species of plants are harmful to humans. Ingestion of house plants is a leading cause of calls to poison centers.
- Store cleaning supplies or other poisonous products in cabinets with childproof locks, or closets that require a key to open.
- Never mix a "home brew" cleaning product without first checking the poison control center.

## Common Household Hazards

Alcohol	<b>Bathroom</b>
Tobacco	Bath oil
Detergents	Boric acid
Drugs and pills	Creams
Plants	Deodorants
<b>Kitchen</b>	Deodorizers
Ammonia	Drain Cleaners
Carpet cleaners	Hair remover
Drain cleaners	Hand, shaving, sun
Furniture polish	lotions
Metal cleaners	Mouthwash
Oven cleaner	Nail polish and remover
Plants	Rubbing alcohol
Rust remover	Shampoo, wave lotion,
Scouring powders	and sprays
Upholstery cleaners	Toilet bowl cleaner
<b>Bedroom / Purse</b>	<b>Basement / Garage</b>
Cosmetics	Antifreeze
Jewelry cleaner	Bug Killers
Perfume	Fertilizers
<b>Laundry</b>	Gasoline and oil
Bleaches	Kerosene
Disinfectant	Lighter fluids
Dyes	Lime
Stain remover	Lye
<b>Storage Places</b>	Paint
Batteries	Paint remover / thinner
Moth balls / sprays	Tree and lawn spray
Rat / insect poisons	Turpentine
	Weed killer
	Windshield cleaner■

# Pool Perils

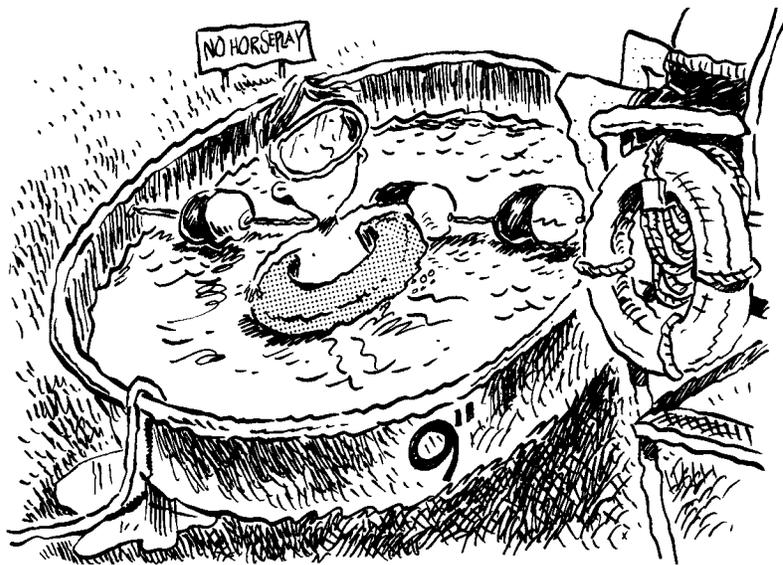
Swimming is great exercise and wonderful entertainment for children. Nevertheless, drowning is the second-leading cause of injury-related death in children. Each year, about 1,000 children drown and another 4,000 are hospitalized for near-drowning, usually in a pool owned by their family. Over 60 percent of children who drown in pools are under age four. These tragedies do not have to happen.

## Poolside Fortifications

- Install a fence at least four to five feet high, with vertical slats no more than four inches apart to keep children from squeezing through. It should have no foot or handholds that can help a young child climb it.
- The fence should completely surround the pool, and prevent direct access from the house and yard.
- The gate of the fence should be self-closing and self-latching as well. Never prop open a pool gate.
- Gate latches should be higher than your children can reach. And the latch should open away from the water, so that small children cannot use their weight to push it open.
- If the house forms one side of the barrier, then doors should be protected with alarms that produce an audible sound when a door is unexpectedly opened.
- Steps and ladders leading from the ground to an above-ground pool should be secured and locked, or removed when the pool is not used.
- Remove shrubs or trees that obstruct your view of the pool from inside the house.
- The CPSC recommends layers of protection, including fences, pool covers and alarm systems. To obtain barrier recommendations, go to <http://www.cpsc.gov/cpsc/pub/pubs/pool.pdf>.

## Poolside Precautions

- Keep a phone near the pool area. It is vital for emergencies, and you



will not be tempted to desert a child to answer a phone in the house.

- Keep a strong, lightweight pole at least 12 feet long with a blunt end poolside.
- Invest in a ring buoy firmly attached to a long throwing rope.
- Put ladders on both ends of the pool.
- Do not leave objects such as tables or chairs near the fence, where children can use them to climb into the pool area.
- The water depth should be clearly marked on the pool deck and, if possible, above the water line of the pool wall.
- Indicate the break between the deep and shallow areas with a semi-permanent float line.
- Always completely remove the cover before using the pool or spa. Beware: light weight, floating solar-type pool/spa covers are not safety covers. A child can become trapped under this type of cover.
- A motorized pool cover operated by a switch that meets the standards of ASTM International adds to the protection of your children but should not replace the fence between your house and the pool.

## You Can't Be Too Vigilant

Constant, vigilant supervision is

the key to poolside safety when children are nearby.

- Never leave a child alone near any body of water ... even for an instant.
- Do not assume a child can swim just because he or she has had swimming lessons.
- Do not rely on inflatable toys or water wings to keep a child afloat. They are not life jackets.
- Do not bring tricycles or wheel toys into the pool area. Children could accidentally ride them into the water.
- Forbid horseplay. Pools are for swimming, not wrestling.
- During social gatherings, designate an adult to supervise children. Rotate the assignment so the watchers stay alert.
- If a child is missing, check the pool first. Seconds count in preventing death or disability.
- Remove toys from the pool area when not in use. Toys can attract young children into a pool.
- Make sure the drains and drain covers meet current standards.
- Learn cardiopulmonary resuscitation, CPR. Baby-sitters and other caretakers should also know CPR.
- If you own a hot tub, many of these safety guidelines will apply. ■

# An ATV Is Not A Toy

*Hank knew better. But his little grandson, Steven, was so persuasive, and even though he was only eight years old, he was darned good at driving an ATV. What harm could there be in letting the little rascal drive himself and his sister two miles back to the barn while Hank followed in the pickup? It was a remote road, and Steven promised to drive slowly. It all would have worked out perfectly, except that Steven was too small to see over the rise as he approached the intersection. He never saw the car that struck the ATV, sending him and his sister to the hospital. No one died in that collision, but Hank "died a thousand deaths" as he watched it happen.*

Today, about seven million people ride ATVs for work and pleasure in the U.S. **Each year, about 150,000 injuries requiring emergency room treatment happen to people riding ATVs. In recent years, ATV-related deaths exceeded 800 annually. About 20 percent of the deaths occur to children under age 16.**

The American Association of Pediatrics suggests that no children under age 16 ride ATVs.

## Young Riders

Young people have a natural affinity for ATVs. They are small, fast, and look like great fun. At which age children should begin riding them depends on training and judgment. Before turning a young person loose on an ATV:

- Ask yourself if your child is *strong enough* and *mature enough* to operate an ATV.
- If the answer to both is yes, you must match your child to the proper size ATV. For instance, kids under the age of 16 should not operate an adult-sized ATV. Discuss this with your dealer. As a basic rule, kids:
  - 6 years to 12 years should drive an engine under 70 cc.
  - 12 years to 16 years - from 70 to 90 cc.



- Enroll your child in a special, hands-on training course, and take the course yourself. Visit the ATV Safety Institute at [www.atvsafety.org](http://www.atvsafety.org) for details.

- To be an effective coach and overseer, you must be familiar with the ATV. Your best source of information is the owner's manual. Review it with your child.

- To be sure your child knows the workings of his or her ATV:

- Have them show you the **location** of the parking brake, brakes, throttle control lever, engine stop switch, and shift lever (if equipped).

- Have them show you how the controls **work**.

- Ask them to operate the controls as if they are riding. And do it without looking at the controls.

- In short, be convinced your child can safely operate the ATV!

- Supervise your child's operation of the ATV at all times.

## Dress The Part

To ride safely, children should dress safely. Anytime he gets on an ATV, he should be wearing:

- A motorcycle helmet approved by the Department of Transportation. **This is the most important piece of protective gear.**

- Goggles or face shield.

- Boots. Over-the-calf style with

low heels to keep his feet from slipping off the footrests.

- Off-highway style gloves padded over the knuckles.

- Long pants.

- A long-sleeved shirt or jacket.

## Riding Tips

ATVs are good for sport and work, but they are used on terrain that can be unforgiving, like tree roots and rocks. Here are a few more tips to keep your child safe:

- Read and follow the owner's manual and warning labels.
- Inspect the mechanical condition of the ATV before riding.
- Practice in a safe area before driving on more difficult terrain.
- ATVs are intended for off-road use only. Never operate one on public roads or paved surfaces.
- Do not carry passengers.
- Use existing trails if possible.
- Do not operate the ATV at excessive speeds.
- Never ride beyond the limit of her visibility.
- Be alert for hidden wires.
- If a hill looks too steep to climb, it probably is.
- Ride only where they have permission to ride.
- Avoid three-wheeled ATVs, which are not made anymore. ■

# Tykes 'N Bikes

Kids love their bicycles.

**However, that affinity does not change the fact that about 250 children are killed and more than 350,000 children go to emergency rooms each year due to bicycle injuries, more than any other sport. Bikes are associated with more childhood injuries than any other consumer product other than automobiles. To keep the joy in biking:**

## No Helmet, No Bicycle

**Bike helmets reduce the risk of serious head injury by 85 percent. According to the Children's National Medical Center, universal use of bicycle helmets by children ages 4 to 15 would prevent between 135 and 155 deaths and between 39,000 and 45,000 head injuries each year.**

- The child should participate in the selection of the helmet to assure a proper fit. Do not buy one that a child can "grow into."
- A helmet should have a snug, but comfortable fit. It should have a chin strap and buckles that will stay securely fastened. A properly adjusted helmet covers both the front and back areas of the head.
- All helmets manufactured or imported for sale must meet a uniform Consumer Product Safety Commission standard. Look for the certification. However, helmets that meet ASTM, ANSI or SNELL standards provide adequate protection.

• Never buy a used helmet. Do not use a helmet that has been dropped, or involved in a collision.

• Don't use markers on helmets.

And keep this in mind: If parents wear helmets when they bicycle, about 98 percent of kids wear them, too. If parents don't wear helmets, the number drops considerably.

## Rules To Ride By

- Take a bicycle safety course.
- The American Academy of Pediatrics recommends that under



age 8, children should ride with adult supervision and off the street. The decision to allow older children on the street depends on traffic patterns and individual maturity.

- Check your brakes before you get on the bike.
- Ride on the far right and travel with the flow of traffic. It is never safe to ride against traffic.
- Stop at stop signs and red lights, and obey all traffic laws.
- Do not ride two abreast unless you are on a bike path.
- Stop at the end of the driveway to look for cars.
- Be predictable. Don't do anything that would surprise the driver of a car, like swerve or act foolish.
- Signal when making a turn. Let motorists know what you are doing by using proper hand signals.
- Don't ride too close to parked cars. The driver may open his door in your path. Leave at least 3 feet between you and parked cars.
- Avoid broken pavement, loose gravel and leaves.
- Don't ride at night, and in wet weather.
- Don't clown around. Never hitch a ride on a moving vehicle or do stunts or wheelies on a road with cars and trucks.
- Be seen. Wear light colored clothing when you ride, including a brightly colored helmet.

- Put reflectors on the front and rear of the bicycle, on the pedals, and on the wheels.

- Wear close fitting clothing to avoid getting caught in moving parts.
- Never wear headphones because they hinder your ability to hear the traffic around you.

## Finding The Right Bicycle

Parents, choose a bicycle that fits the child's size today, not one she will grow into later. The bike should fit the rider's ability and kind of riding. To be sure your child's bike is the right size:

-sitting on the seat with hands on the handlebar, your child must be able to place the balls of both feet on the ground.

-straddling the center bar, he should be able to keep both feet flat on the ground with about 1" clearance between the crotch and the bar.

-when buying a bike with hand brakes, be sure the child can comfortably grasp the brakes and apply sufficient pressure to stop the bike. Under ages 6-7, buy a bike with foot brakes.

- Look for rubber-treated pedals, or metal pedals with serrated rattrap edges. Avoid plastic pedals.
- Don't get a bike with gears for a small child. ■

# Heads Up Advice

Tommy now had the coolest bike on the block. It was sleek, shiny black, and made for speed. The bike came with a new helmet, but how cool was that? Girls were not impressed by helmets. He was a dashing figure until he hit the man-hole cover and flew face first into the street, knocking out his two front teeth and causing a concussion that sent him to the hospital for two days. Today his smile is a little crooked, but he keeps his safety helmet on perfectly straight.

According to the Brain Injury Association, every year in the United States 1.4 million people are treated for traumatic brain injury (TBI) in hospital emergency rooms. About 50,000 people die each year from TBI, and 80,000 experience the onset of long-term disability. Major causes of TBI are falls (28%), motor vehicle crashes (20%), struck by/against (19%), and assaults (11%). Alert parents need to know *how to protect* their children from brain injuries, and *how to identify* a serious injury.

## Some Of The Facts

Nearly 200,000 traumatic brain injuries occur on U.S. sports fields each year. An estimated 65 percent of the injuries occur to young people 5 to 18 years old.

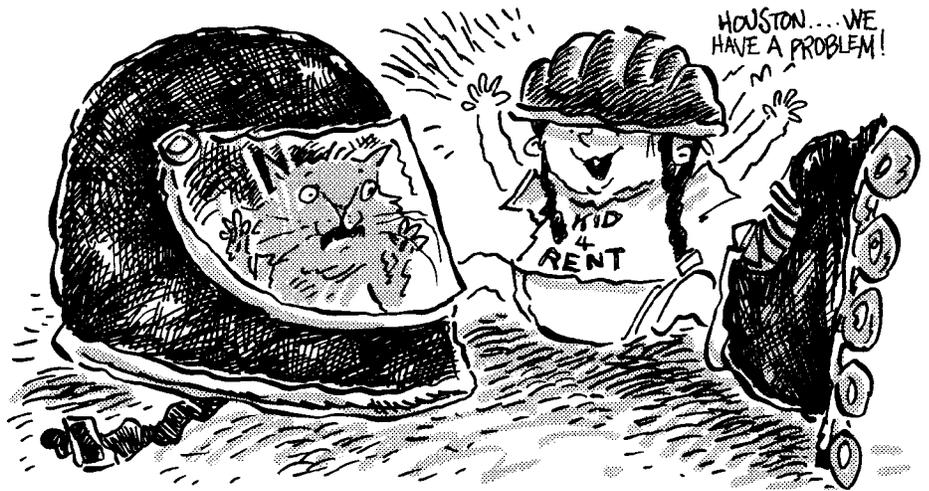
Repeated concussions not only impair memory and mental function over the long term, but may trigger "second impact syndrome," a sudden, fatal brain swelling.

There is no such thing as a "modest" concussion. And you don't have to be knocked out to suffer one. More than 90 percent of concussions don't involve loss of consciousness.

Experts agree that **nobody** who still has symptoms of a brain injury should be allowed to play again until all symptoms have cleared.

After a brain injury, the risk for a second injury is three times greater; after the second injury, the risk for a third injury is eight times greater.

## Helmets First



A properly fitted helmet is the most important piece of safety equipment for many activities. For example, medical research shows that 88 percent of cyclists' brain injuries can be prevented by a helmet.

- Different activities require different helmets.

- Bicycle helmets are OK for bicycling, inline skating, skateboarding and roller-skating.

- When around or riding horses, wear an equestrian helmet.

- Use motorcycle helmets on motorcycles, ATVs, snowmobiles and minibikes.

- Snow skiing and snowboarding require special helmets.

- Only buy helmets that meet the certification requirements for a particular activity. For details on helmet selection and fitting, talk to an expert, or contact a national association for the activity or the Consumer Product Safety Commission.

- The child should participate in the selection of the helmet. Do not buy one that a child can "grow into."

- Never buy a used helmet! Do not use a helmet that has been dropped or involved in a collision.

- If parents wear helmets, almost all kids wear them, too. If parents don't wear helmets, the number drops considerably.

## In The Event Of A Brain Injury

- After any fall or activity involving contact to the head, see a physician if any of the following symptoms are present: thinking problems; memory loss; dizziness; headache; nausea; sensory changes; balance, sleep or pain problems; changes in personality, mood or behavior; or trouble communicating.

- Ask your child's teacher(s) to call you if they see any symptoms.

- When your child leaves the emergency room or office following a brain injury, the doctor or nurse should give you instructions on caring for your child over the next 24 hours, and describe any important changes to watch for. If you do not get these "Head Sheet" instructions, ask for them.

- The effects of a "mild" brain injury may not be seen immediately. See a doctor who specializes in brain injuries right away if you notice these changes in your child:

- severe headache that does not go away or get better.

- seizures, eyes fluttering, body going stiff, staring into space.

- child forgets everything, amnesia.

- hands shake, tremors, muscles get weak, loss of muscle tone.

- nausea or vomiting that returns. ■

# Choosing Child Care

*Jay was a whiz at research. He had a Ph.D. in chemistry, and he prided himself in the thoroughness of his technical reports. He had no tolerance for sloppy documentation. All of which heightened his shock when he turned on the evening news and saw that his daughter's day care center had been closed down for a long list of safety violations. How could that be? Why hadn't he seen those problems himself? He was the master of research. Or at least he would be the master of research the next time he checked out a day care center for little Sarah.*

Current studies show that more than half of America's children under the age of six attend an out-of-home child care program. To find a good program for your child:

## Basic Research

- Begin by visiting the best center in your community, even if your child can't get in. It will give you a model of good-quality child care.
- The staff should be certified, and the center should be licensed.
- Child/staff ratios are an important factor in quality day care. The American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) recommends the following child/staff ratios: birth to 12 months (3:1); 13 to 30 months (4:1); 31-35 months (5:1); 3-year-olds (7:1); 4 and 5-year-olds (8:1).
- Each separate group of children should be no larger than twice the number of children per caregiver. For example, for kids 13 to 30 months, the group size should not exceed eight children.
- Look for a child-care facility where you see a great deal of positive interaction between caregivers and children, and among children.
- Don't rely on first impressions. Visit at stressful times, such as when kids are dropped off or picked up.
- Read the caregiver's parent handbook carefully.
- Review the procedures used to check the backgrounds of employees. A well-run center will make careful



checks of references, background and previous employment.

- Talk with other parents who use the facility.
- Trust your intuition and observations.

## Ask The Right Questions

Don't be afraid to ask questions. Some important ones are:

- What type of training and education do the caregivers have?
- How many staff members have left in the last three years? High turnover is disruptive to children.
- How long has the caregiver or center been operating?
- Is the facility accredited? Accredited homes and centers voluntarily follow much stricter standards.
- How often does the state inspect? Ask for documentation.
- Do the caregivers know how to maintain control?
- Are the staff members trained in first aid and CPR? Do they receive periodic retraining?
- Is there a basic exit plan? Have it explained to you. Are evacuation drills conducted regularly?
- Do they sanitize and disinfect changing tables after a child is changed?
- Do caregivers and children frequently wash their hands?
- Is bedding assigned for use by only one child and washed weekly?

- How do they clean the toys that go in a baby's mouth?
- Do they use a no-choke device to test baby toys?

- Are appropriate first aid supplies easily available, inside and outside?
- Is there a plan to get a badly injured child to an emergency room that is equipped to handle children?

## Look For The Right Things

- Are toys, games, play equipment, furniture, books, etc., in good shape, with no sharp edges? This indicates the facility has the children's best interest in mind.
- Do stairs have safety gates?
- Are fire exits clearly marked and accessible?
- Are smoke detectors and fire extinguishers located in appropriate areas? Are they regularly tested?
- Are hot water heaters and heat sources guarded to prevent burns?
- Is the kitchen clean? How about the eating area?
- Are windows screened and protected to prevent falls?
- Are sliding glass doors marked at both child and adult eye levels?
- Are matches, cleaning supplies, and poisonous or hazardous materials stored in child-resistant, locked containers, out of reach of children?
- Is there enough room for movement and play without danger or injury to the children?
- Are the electrical outlets not in use covered?
- Are outdoor toys such as swing sets in good working order?
- Are indoor and outdoor surfaces appropriately carpeted or cushioned? Rubber mats, sand or wood chips absorb the impact of children's frequent falls.
- Is there a fenced-in outdoor play area with a variety of safe equipment?
- Is the area free of hazards such as culverts, drainage ditches, and open sewers? Is it clean, with no broken glass or trash?
- Is the play area visible and accessible to supervising adults? ■

# Fearless Years Of 2-5

About the time of his second birthday, Tristan uttered his first sentence, "I need help." While he may not have understood the full wisdom of that statement, the truth is that young children need our constant help when it comes to safety.

**Each year, over 1,000 children from ages two through five die from unintentional injuries.** Children of this age group will run, jump and climb. They love to take "risks" and test their physical strength and skill, but they do not understand what dangers exist.

## Dangers Inside The House

With active young children, you need to be alert to these dangers (to name just a few) in your house, or a house you visit.

- Crawl through your house to look for hazards from their level.
- Keep lighters and matches out of sight and reach of children, preferably locked up. Teach children to tell an adult if they find them.
- Keep children away from space heaters and fireplaces.
- Never leave a child alone near water. If you must leave, take the child with you. Learn CPR.
- Keep young children out of the bathroom unless they are closely watched. Install a hook-and-eye latch on the door, out of a child's reach.
- Never leave water in a bathtub, bucket or pail.
- Set the water temperature at 120 degrees F. A third-degree burn can occur in only three seconds when water is 140 degrees F.
- Place plastic safety caps or covers on electrical outlets.
- Use unbreakable dishes.
- Make sure pot and skillet handles are pointed toward the back of the stove. Use the back burners.
- Don't store snacks above the range.
- Don't feed children foods that may block their airway, such as hot



dogs, nuts, popcorn, raisins, large chunks of meat, chunks of bread or peanut butter, hard fruit or vegetables, grapes or chewing gum. Also, keep toys with small parts and tempting small objects such as coins, jewelry, crayon pieces and marbles, safely away from young children.

- An adult must be present every time a child plays with a balloon.
- Discard plastic bags and balloon pieces safely and immediately.
- Use safety latches and locks to keep children from getting into cabinets and drawers.
- Keep medicines and hazardous products out of children's sight and reach, preferably locked up. This includes your purse.
- If a child places something poisonous in his mouth, call the Poison Center or your doctor immediately.
- Move chairs and other furniture away from windows.
- Securely install safety gates at the top and bottom of stairways. Buy gates with openings too small to entrap a child's head.
- Block the entrance to pet doors. Children may follow a pet outdoors.
- Install edge guards on sharp furniture and fireplaces.
- Stop using a crib when the rail is about two-thirds of your child's

standing height, and when there is evidence the child can climb out.

- Cribs should not contain large stuffed animals or pillows. They can serve as stepping stones.

## Dangers Outside, Too

- Use a car seat every time you drive with your child. Learn how to properly install the seat and fasten the belts. Have it checked by an expert. Children 12 and under should ride in the back seat.
- The *Safe Kids USA* organization recommends children under ten never cross the street alone. However, teach young children to:
  - STOP at the curb, and never run into the street.
  - LISTEN and LOOK for traffic to the left, to the right, and to the left again.
- Fence in your pool or hot tub on all four sides.
- Wear life jackets when boating.
- Do not allow young kids to play in driveways or near busy streets.
- When biking, avoid busy streets. Use bike helmets.
- When shopping, use seat belts to keep your child safely in her seat; use back packs; or shop where they have supervised play areas.
- Put 12 inches of sand, sawdust, or wood chips underneath play equipment. ■

# The 6-12 Years

How good is your memory? What do you remember between your sixth birthday and your thirteenth? Maybe the time you climbed the tree and jumped into the sandbox? Or the time you took the dare and rode your bicycle with "no hands" down Maple hill? How about that time you and Johnny found some cigarettes and decided to light one up?

Do any of these shenanigans sound familiar? Probably. Which is exactly why you worry about your own kids at a similar age. And you *should* worry. **Each year over 1,500 children in this age group die from unintentional injuries.**

It's impossible to warn of every danger facing inquisitive children, but we can alert you to some of the hazards. The rest is up to you.

## Basic Rules For You And Your Child

- Set the example, to encourage your children to do as you do.
- Teach personal safety habits in a calm and confident manner, without terrifying them.
- Tell children to:
  - never go with strangers.
  - run away when trouble arises.
  - say "NO" to inappropriate requests.
  - tell you if anyone touches them, or tries to touch them, in their "bathing-suit" areas.
- Get to know the families of friends your child may visit. Discuss safety issues with the parents, such as guns, swimming pools, older siblings, TV policy, dangerous animals, smoking, etc.
- Know where your kids play. Do not allow them to play near railroad tracks, quarries, ponds, abandoned buildings, roadways, new construction sites or other local hazards.
- Keep safety in mind when deciding on activities. Talk to the leaders to review safety procedures.
- Teach children when and how to use emergency phone numbers. If they have doubts about whether to call, they should call.



- Post emergency numbers near the phone: police, fire, where parents can be reached, a neighbor who can help in an emergency.
- If you decide to have a gun, keep it unloaded and in a locked place separate from the ammunition. Teach your kids gun safety rules.
- Children of this age group should not use power lawn mowers.
- Don't let children play with matches, lighters or fireworks.
- Fire is always a concern. Teach this one early: **Stop! Drop! And Roll!** if their clothing catches fire. Also teach and practice what to do when the smoke alarm sounds.

## Transportation Issues

**Motor-vehicle incidents cause about 60 percent of the deaths in this age group.** Insist children always wear safety belts.

- All children from about 40 lbs. to 80 lbs. and less than 4'9" tall should be properly restrained in a booster seat. A child who cannot sit with her back straight against the vehicle seat back cushion, with knees bent over a vehicle's seat edge without slouching, must use a booster seat.
- All kids in this age bracket should ride in the back if possible.
- Never let a child ride in a carpool without a safety belt.
- Always hold the hand of a child under 10 when crossing a street. Supervise children until they prove they are safe pedestrians.

- Plan and enforce the safest routes to school, friends' houses, play areas and stores.

**Each year about 350,000 children under 15 are treated in emergency rooms for bike-related injuries.** To avoid injuries:

- Buy a bike they can control.
  - Make them wear a helmet.
- Choose a new helmet with a federal label from the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC). A used helmet could have flaws. To test the helmet's fit, tighten the straps and wiggle it around. If you can slip it off without unbuckling it, try another helmet. Never reuse helmets after a fall.
- Teach them to ride on bike paths, sidewalks, or in protected areas, but not in the street. And never ride after dark.
  - Never carry passengers.
  - Avoid loose clothing that can catch in chains and spokes.

## Don't Toy With Safety

- Keep safety in mind when selecting toys.
- Buy the right size playground equipment for your child's age and size, and make sure there are 9 to 12 inches of safe surfacing beneath it.
- Don't buy items that shoot, propel or need to be thrown if you do not have the proper playing area. The CPSC recommends that children under 14 should not use high-velocity pellet or BB guns.
- To keep children from playing with the garage door, mount the wall switch out of the reach of children.
- Cover safety precautions and gear associated with inline skates, skateboards, scooters and any new toys. Bike helmets are okay for roller-skating, inline skating, skateboarding and scooters.

*Some information courtesy of Safe Kids USA. ■*

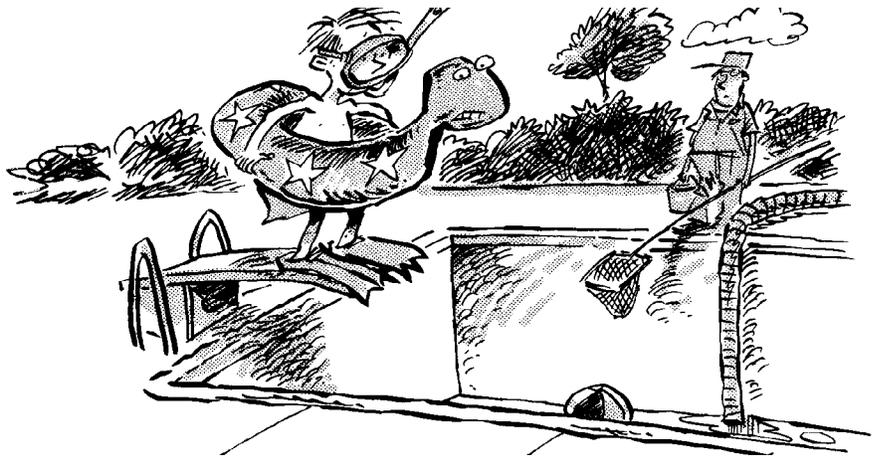
# Head Up! Hands Out!

*You couldn't even call it a dive. It was more like a lunge. Mary had been standing at the shallow end of the pool talking to a friend when Dave sneaked up behind her and pushed her into the water. Instead of jumping in feet first, Mary instinctively dived in, screaming good naturedly. In the midst of the fun, she banged her head into the bottom of the pool and severed her spinal cord. What began as a playful prank ended in a terrible tragedy and a lifetime of paralysis.*

**Diving incidents cause over 500 spinal cord injuries each year that result in some type of paralysis, according to the National Spinal Cord Injury Association. The most likely victim of these incidents is a young man, and alcohol is involved in about half the cases.** Before your child takes his next plunge, make sure he considers:

## **Look Before You Leap**

- Plan the dive. Check the depth of the water and make sure there is sufficient room to dive. There should be at least 25 feet of clear dive path in front of him.
- Never dive head first into six feet of water or less, where most diving injuries occur.
- Check the dive area for obstacles above and beneath the water. If a child is not certain what the conditions are below the water, do not dive.
- A child should never assume she knows the depth of a familiar piece of water. Droughts, shifting sediment, and tides may cause the depth to change.



- Always jump feet first on the first plunge, even if the child thinks it's safe to dive.
- Don't dive through objects such as inner tubes.
- Never dive or swim alone.
- Consider taking diving lessons from a qualified instructor.

## **Rules For Pools**

Many diving injuries occur in swimming pools, particularly backyard pools. To protect children, enforce these basic rules:

- Never dive or slide head first into shallow, above-ground pools.
- In an in-ground pool:
  - do not dive off the side of diving boards, slides or other pool equipment.
  - never dive or slide head first in the shallow end.
  - do a diving board test to gauge its spring before using it.
- Always jump directly forward from the edge of the pool or the diving board.
- For night diving, be sure the lighting is good.
- Never run or engage in horseplay.

- There are only two proper ways to use a pool slide: sitting, going down feet first; or, lying flat on your belly, head first. All other methods present a risk of serious injury. If headfirst slides are to be attempted, the pool slide must exit into deep water.

## **Survive The Dive**

- Keep dives simple. Don't attempt dives with a straight vertical entry. They take a long time to slow down and must be done only after careful training and in pools designed for competitive diving.
- Don't run and dive. That can give the same impact as a dive from a board.
- Plan a shallow dive.
- During the dive, a child must keep her head up, arms extended, hands flat and tipped up. Extended arms and hands help to steer up to the surface, and protect their head.
- When diving, your child must be ready immediately to steer up and away from the bottom, and arch her back.

# Explosive Consequences

*Danny and his pals had made a really neat discovery. If they held a soda bottle in their hands and lit a bottle rocket inside it, they could use them like weapons. They weren't totally dumb, either. They put on their sunglasses so nobody would get hit in the eye. They should have worn a coat of armor, too, because it wasn't long before two of the gang got hit in the face and were burned. The pain was bad enough, but it went away. The scars on their skin will be there a long, long time.*

**According to the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission, there are more than 10,000 emergency room cases related to fireworks each year. Sadder still, there are deaths. Injuries from the intense heat of fireworks, typically harming the eyes, head, hands, arms or legs, can cause blindness, lacerations, amputations, and burns. Many of the injuries involve children under the age of 15.** With the Fourth of July rapidly approaching, keep these things in mind:

## Do Your Homework

- Check with your local police department to learn what, if any, fireworks may be legally discharged in your area.
- Display (Class B) fireworks are those used for public displays. They are outlawed by the federal government for consumer use.
- Consumer (Class C) fireworks are legal for public sale in numerous states. These consumer fireworks include fountains, bottle rockets, cylindrical fountains, Roman candles, rockets with sticks, mines and shells, helicopter-type rockets, certain sparklers, party poppers, missile-type rockets, illuminating torches, toy smoke devices, revolving wheels and firecrackers with no more than 50 milligrams of powder.
- Remember! Even fireworks that are legal cause hundreds of blinding



injuries each year. **For example, bottle rockets can move as fast as 200 miles per hour, explode in midair and fly in any direction.**

What's safe about that?

- Find a safe and legal fireworks display conducted by licensed professionals. Even then:
  - stay in the designated watching area.
  - do not allow children to retrieve a souvenir shell, even one that has exploded. Shell fragments could contain dangerous explosives.

## Family Backyard Pyrotechnics

If community ordinances allow fireworks, here are precautions to take when using them:

- Always read and follow the manufacturer's directions.
- Store fireworks in a cool, dry area, hidden from children.
- Fireworks should only be lit outdoors on a smooth, flat surface, and away from structures and any flammable materials. Thousands of fireworks incidents cause millions of dollars in damage each year.
- Do not light fireworks inside a can or bottle.
- Don't assume consumer fireworks are harmless. **The heat from a sparkler (1,800 degrees F) can melt gold.** Imagine the harm it can do to a child's flesh or eye.

- Keep spectators at least 30 to 40 feet away before lighting fireworks. It is estimated that nearly 40 percent of fireworks injuries are to bystanders.

- Keep a water bucket or hose nearby for emergencies.
- Do not try to light a firework that misfired. Soak duds with water. Pick them up with a long-handled shovel, and put them in a nonflammable container.
- Wear hearing protection.

## If The Kids Use Fireworks

**Only adults should handle fireworks.** However, if you decide to let older children use fireworks under your supervision:

- Discuss safety procedures. Teach children to *Stop, Drop, and Roll* if their clothes catch fire.
- Show children how to put out fireworks by using water or a fire extinguisher.
- Never place your face or any other body part over fireworks.
- Never carry fireworks in your pocket.
- Leave the area immediately if friends are using fireworks without parental supervision.
- Do not dismantle fireworks, or try to make your own.
- Do not hold any fireworks in your hand once you have lit them.
- Do not throw fireworks. ■

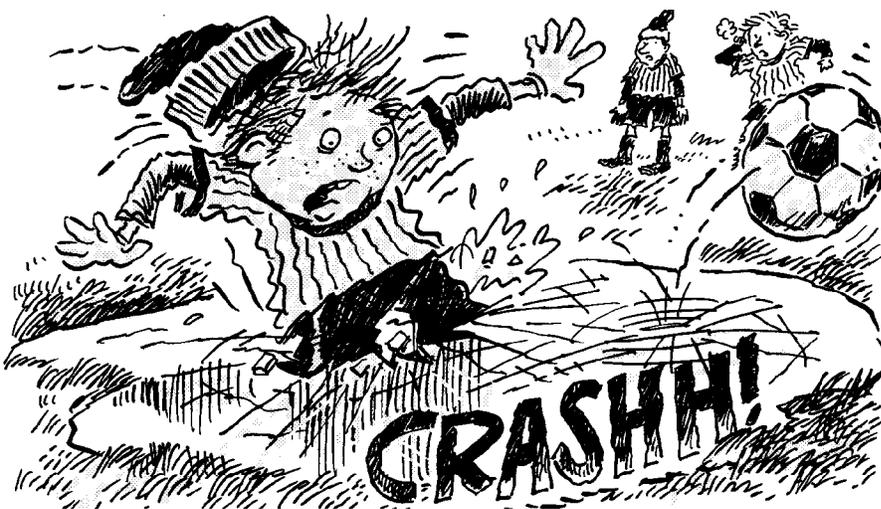
# Games Of Hard Knocks

*Chris was an eleven-year-old superstar. The adoring parents on his soccer team called him "Little Buzzsaw" for his speed and tenacity. When he crashed to the ground in a collision in the first half of the championship game, everybody expected he'd pop back to his feet and tear into action. When he hesitated, the cheers for "Buzzsaw!" started and Chris forced himself back into action. Pushed by the adults, he played on a broken ankle the rest of the game. Because of the extra strain on his young bones, an injury that usually takes six weeks to heal, took more than a year. Chris was never again the same "Little Buzzsaw."*

**The Consumer Product Safety Commission reports that football and soccer result in about 450,000 and 200,000 emergency room visits respectively each year.** Because adults are sometimes more childish in their thinking than the kids they supervise, parents must be vigilant.

## Youth Football

- Check on the rules and policies for equipment and supervision. Ask these tough questions:
  - Are there any weight and age requirements for players? Are birth certificates required?
  - Is protective equipment required for both practice sessions and games? Is it in good condition?
  - What are the rules and penalties for practicing without protective equipment? Are they enforced?
  - Who has training in first aid? Some groups require that a trainer be at all games and practices. It's advisable that coaches be CPR certified.
  - What is the emergency plan in case of injury?
  - What is the program's policy about cancellation due to weather or hazardous playing conditions?
  - Are the coaches teaching proper techniques? If a coach is teaching kids to block or tackle with their



heads ("spearing"), he should not be coaching. Remove your child.

- On hot days, a 15 minute water break every 30-45 minutes is recommended. Get in the shade and remove helmets and shoulder pads.
- Set the rules for informal games, and enforce them. Encourage kids to play touch football, or practice without blocking or tackling.

## Youth Soccer

- Make your child wear shin guards, which reduce the force from kicks to the leg by up to 70 percent. Remind her the pros wear them.
- Be sure your child is doing the proper stretches before a game or practice, including all leg muscles.
- Players under the age of nine or ten should only wear shoes with nubs on the bottom. No cleats.
- Researchers at the Institute for Preventative Sports Medicine (Institute) report that children who hit soccer balls with their heads can suffer symptoms of concussion, headaches, and small but measurable memory deficits. Heading the ball by players under 11 should not be allowed. For 11-14-year-olds, practice with a lightweight ball the size of a soccer ball, and thrown by the coach. Soccer helmets are available, but few players or coaches are using them at this time.
- Younger teams should use the appropriate size and weight ball during practice and play.

- The playing field should be free of holes, rocks and debris.
- Padded goal posts reduce injuries. Encourage their use.

- Do not allow children to jump up or swing on the soccer goal posts. Falls from goal posts, and goal posts falling onto players, have resulted in serious injuries and deaths. Many of these "moveable" goal posts are unsafe. For information on installing and moving goal posts, visit the Consumer Product Safety Commission website, [www.cpsc.gov](http://www.cpsc.gov), and search for the booklet "Guidelines for Movable Soccer Goal Safety."

## No Matter The Game

- Look for leagues with formal certification procedures for coaches. Don't be afraid to interview them as you would a babysitter.
- When it is hot, get plenty of liquids and avoid soft drinks. Sit in the shade when not on the field.
- Don't let injured children continue to play.
- Stop play and see a physician if kids experience headache, nausea, confusion, dizziness, or vomiting. These could be signs of concussion, and should be treated promptly.
- Train consistently and properly. Wear the proper equipment, and be sure it fits properly.
- For additional tips, contact the Institute at (734) 572-4577, or [www.ipism.org](http://www.ipism.org). ■

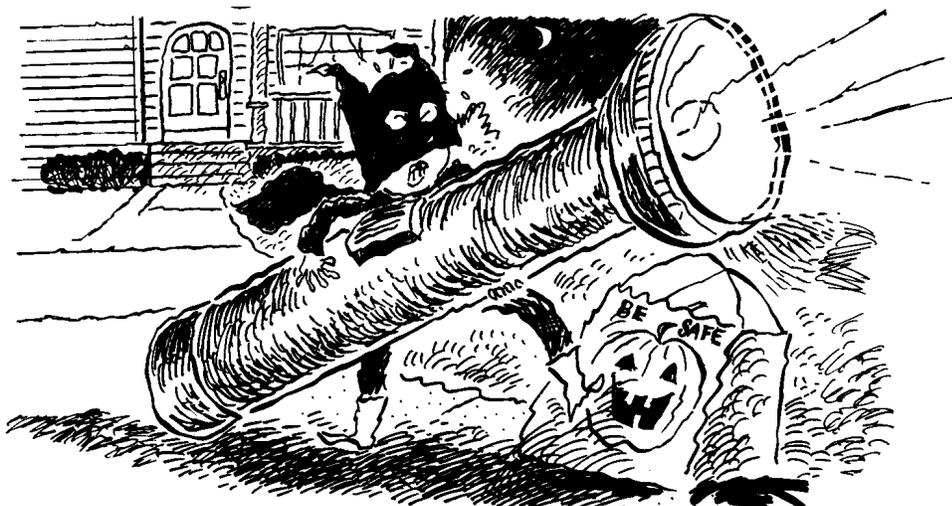
# Frightful Possibilities

Fall is the time of year for ghosties and ghoulies and things that go bump in the night. Sometimes those bumps are intended to be scary. Other times they are unintentional and terribly serious. Whether your children are out trick or treating or helping with the traditional fall garage cleaning, there are dangers lurking.

**According to Prevent Blindness America, emergency room statistics indicate that a child is more likely to be injured on Halloween than on any other day of the year.**

## A Word To The Parents

- No child should trick-or-treat alone.
- Plan and discuss the intended route. Stay in familiar areas.
- Accompany children under twelve on their rounds.
- When crossing the street with a child under ten years of age, always hold the child's hand.
- Cars pose the biggest threat to children after dark. To be seen, dress children in light colors, or sew or tape on reflectors or reflective tape to make them more visible.
- Costumes should be loose and comfortable, but not baggy or long enough to cause falls or to catch fire. No high heels.
- Purchase only costumes, wigs, and props labeled as flame resistant. Note, however, that these items may still burn.
- Capes and other costume accessories that might pose a strangulation hazard should be fastened with Velcro rather than fabric ties.
- Avoid costumes with wigs, floppy hats, or eye patches, which block vision. Beards should be fas-



tened so they do not hamper the child's vision or breathing.

- Wear makeup (nontoxic and FDA approved) instead of masks, which block vision. Follow instructions to remove the makeup.
- Don't put makeup near a child's eyes, and don't let a child sleep with makeup.
- Dab the makeup on a child's arms for a couple of days before Halloween to be sure they are not allergic to the makeup.
- Avoid pointed props such as spears, swords, or wands that could endanger children's eyes.
- For young children, pin a slip of paper with the child's name, address, and phone number inside a pocket, in case the child gets separated from the group.
- Inspect the candy before allowing a child to eat the treats.
- For children younger than six years of age, eliminate choking hazards, such as hard candy, jelly beans, or peanuts. Don't let a child stuff his mouth.

## Some Reminders Before They Go

- Establish a return time.
- Obey all traffic signals.
- Never dart out between parked cars or hidden corners such as alleys.
- Walk, don't run, from house to house.
- Stay off the lawns. Unseen objects or uneven terrain could trip them.
- Carry a flashlight or light stick so they can be seen.
- For better visibility, wear masks on top of their heads between trick-or-treat locations.
- Refuse to enter strange homes or apartments.

## Hosting Trick-Or-Treaters

- Around your home, remove any items children could trip over. Turn your outside lights on.
- Don't put candles in pumpkins. Use a flashlight for illumination.
- Secure all pets, especially dogs.
- Don't give out choking hazards such as gum, peanuts, or hard candy. ■

# Just Horsing Around

To watch the cowboy movies, you'd think falling off a horse was as painless as a walk in the park. Wrong, Red Rider! **The U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission estimates there are about 70,000 injuries associated with horses and riding each year, and 150 deaths. There are about 6,000 head or spinal injuries annually, and probably no horse riding incident caught the public's attention more than the tragedy that befell Christopher Reeve.**

Horses helped us settle the West, but it's not always easy to settle them. Whether a child is a novice or an experienced rider, here are some tips to stay safe in the saddle.

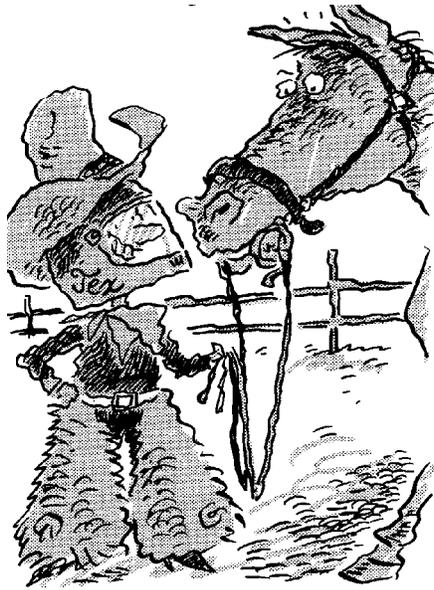
## Kids And Horses

Kids love horses. What child has not asked for a pony at some point? According to the American Medical Equestrian Association, before you grant your child's wish, he or she should have:

- The desire to ride.
- The muscle strength to hold the proper position in the saddle.
- The balance to remain on the horse.
- The ability to understand instructions and follow directions.
- Neck muscles strong enough to support fitted, approved headgear.
- A saddle that fits the child and the horse.
- Only then should you find the proper calm horse and the certified instructor who has the experience and patience to teach your child.

## Some Preliminaries For Your Child

• Falls are the most common of all riding injuries. Your child should always wear a properly secured, hard-shell riding helmet that has been certified by the Safety Equipment Institute. She should wear the helmet at all times when working around horses. **Studies show that head injuries could be reduced by a third, and severe head injuries**



**could be cut in half, if riders wear equestrian helmets.**

- Batting and bike helmets are not acceptable for horseback riding.
- Wear smooth-soled riding shoes that cover the ankle. The shoes should have at least a half-inch raised heel to prevent getting a foot caught in the stirrup and being dragged.
- Wear long pants to prevent chafing, and possible infections.
- Clothing must be snug to avoid becoming tangled with the saddle.
- Wear well fitting gloves to protect hands from blisters, rope burns and cuts.
- Don't wear jewelry, bracelets or flapping clothing that might startle a horse, or get caught.
- Inform the stable of your child's experience level. For a beginner, get instructions from a certified trainer and ask for a quiet, small horse.
- When approaching a horse, speak softly so the animal hears a child coming; walk where the horse can see the child; stroke him on the neck or shoulder first; and approach from the shoulder at an angle.
- Do not run, yell or play behind a horse.
- Avoid a horse's blind spot. Do not walk or stand directly in front of or behind a horse. When walking behind a horse, stay at least 15 feet away.

- Do not let a child feed a horse from her hand.
- Do not touch a strange horse unless its owner says the horse would welcome the attention.
- Walk around a horse, not under its body, neck or tie rope.
- An adult should carry a cell phone for emergencies, but keep it turned off.

## When Your Child Saddles Up

- You should check all leather pieces for wear or cracking.
- Check stitching for loose or broken threads.
- Inspect the cinch strap that secures the saddle to the horse's back. It should be solid and tight.
- Be sure the saddle and stirrups are properly adjusted. With their foot in the stirrup, there should be a 1/4" clearance between each side of the shoe and the stirrup.
- Mount in an open area away from objects your child could fall on or the horse could get caught up in. Use a mounting block if necessary.

Most injuries occur when a rider is unintentionally separated from the horse. To stay with a horse:

- Avoid riding on heavily traveled roads. Watch for traffic at all times. Wear light colored clothing.
- Ride single file on trails and roads. Keep at least one horse length between horses.
- Don't ride alone. The lead rider should warn of upcoming hazards.
- Ride on the soil. Make sure the footing is good.
- Watch for unusual objects in the horse's path.
- If there is a need to adjust equipment or clothing, dismount.
- Never tie or wrap your child to a horse. The Horsemanship Safety Association says a rider should always be able to escape the horse in three seconds or less.
- Never ride double.
- In a lightning storm, dismount and go to a low area, but not under a tree.
- Make sure an up-to-date first aid kit is available at all times. ■

# Wheels Of Misfortune

Millions of children participate in rollerblading, or inline skating. **Over 15,000 skaters under age 15 are treated in hospital emergency rooms every year.**

## Dress For Failure

Fractures to the wrist and lower arm account for nearly half of all injuries to skaters. Lacerations, abrasions, head injuries, and concussions are also a danger. The proper equipment can cut down on the danger when the inevitable spill occurs. Equipment includes:

- a helmet with a hard plastic shell and padding underneath. It should have a chin strap, and it should not block your vision or hearing. Be sure to purchase helmets that meet the recommended safety standards set by ANSI or Snell. An approved bicycle helmet will do.

- elbow and knee pads designed for skating. They should have a hard shell cover and fit snugly so they don't slide out of place.

- wrist guards. They should have a hard plastic splint on the top and bottom. Wrist guards and elbow pads help reduce the risk to these areas of the body by more than 80 percent.

- a good pair of gloves.

- Purchase the proper skates (or boot), based on your child's skating experience goals. For best results, an inline skate boot should fit snugly but allow for a little extra toe room in the front. Go to a store with knowledgeable sales people.

- Wear a thin liner of silk or polypropylene under a medium-weight athletic sock. Thick, all-cotton socks do not keep the feet dry and contribute to blisters and other foot problems.



## Don't Skate Around The Basics

- Before a child starts he must take a lesson, including how to fall safely, from a qualified instructor. Contact a local retailer, or visit the website of the Inline Skating Resource Center at [www.iisa.org](http://www.iisa.org).

- Achieve a basic skating level before taking to the road.

- Observe all traffic regulations.

- Skate on smooth, paved surfaces away from heavy traffic and crowds of people.

- Do not skate on surfaces that have water, dirt, sand, or gravel on them. Your child will lose traction and control of his skates.

- Avoid intersections at the bottom of hills.

- Do not skate at night. It is difficult to see obstacles, or to be seen by others.

- Skate on the right side of paths, trails, and sidewalks.

- Warn pedestrians when approaching from the rear.

- Inspect the boots each time a child skates.

- Rotate the wheels when they begin to wear unevenly.

- Skate defensively, especially on streets. Skaters are more invisible and vulnerable than bicyclists.

- You should check out a new route by bicycle or car before allowing your child to skate it.

## Skateboard Warnings

**Over 60,000 skateboarders under age 15 require emergency room treatment each year, according to the CPSC.**

Skateboarders with less than a week of experience have the most injuries, usually due to falls.

- A child must learn how to fall safely.

- Do not ride a skateboard in the street. And never hitch a ride on the bumper of a moving vehicle.

- Check out the area for your child for holes, bumps, rocks, and debris before he rides. Seek out parks and areas designated for skateboards.

- Never skate in the rain.

- Always skate with friends. If he is injured, he will need help.

- Wear closed, slip-resistant shoes, a helmet, wrist braces, gloves, and special padding for knees, elbows and hips.

- Before using a board, help your child check the board for hazards. Serious defects should be repaired by a professional. ■

# Play It Safe

Most kids are going to play organized sports, but they aren't always aware of the potential for injury. Accept the fact. However, that doesn't mean adults can't be involved in making play as safe as possible for our enthusiastic young athletes. Here are some tips to help make games fun and painless.

## A Set Of Helpful Standards

The National Alliance For Youth Sports (800-729-2057 or [www.nays.org](http://www.nays.org)) has developed the following standards for parents in developing and administering youth sports for children. Involved parents should:

- Consider and carefully choose the proper environment for their child, including the appropriate age and development for participation, the type of sport, the rules in the sport, the age range of the participants, and the proper level of physical and emotional stress.
- Select youth programs that are developed and organized to enhance the emotional, physical, social and educational well-being of children.
- Encourage a drug, tobacco and alcohol-free environment.
- Recognize that youth sports are only a small part of a child's life.
- Insist that coaches be trained and certified.
- Make a serious effort to take an active role in the youth sports experience of their child.
- Be a positive role model exhibiting sportsmanlike behavior at games, practices, and home, and give positive reinforcement to their child and support to the coaches.
- Demonstrate a commitment to their child's youth sports experience by annually signing a parental code of ethics.

## Keeping Sports Fun

- If you decide to let your child play on a "Select" team, recognize that your child may face additional pressures, and you may need to take



steps to keep sports at that level in perspective.

- While virtually all coaches want to make sports an enjoyable activity for kids, there are a few coaches who will use their position to exploit children. Following are questions for parents suggested by the Florida branch of the National Center for Missing & Exploited Children:

1. Does the organization do a background check on coaches?
2. What is the coach's philosophy about winning and sportsmanship?
3. Are there other adults who supervise off-site travel?
4. Do children use a locker room to dress, and are there multiple adults present in the locker room when children are using it?
5. Do you as a parent have input into the sporting activity?
6. Does the coach promise to make your child a champion player, or want to spend time alone with your child outside of scheduled activities?
7. Do you as a parent talk to your child about how he or she likes the coach or the sport?

## Where Does It Hurt?

In every sport there is a risk of injury. To reduce the risk:

- Take your child for a complete physical exam before taking part in any sport. Some children have seri-

ous physical conditions that can be aggravated by exertion.

- Become educated on the possible injuries that can occur in the sport. Talk with a sports medicine doctor or trainer to develop a fitness plan, and to get guidelines on preventing overuse injuries.

- Begin conditioning exercises before the season begins.
- Make sure your child has good equipment that fits well.
- Use eye guards and mouth guards for high-risk sports.
- Don't ignore pain. If a child says something hurts, see a sports medicine doctor.

- Buy a book on sports medicine and keep it handy. It will help you treat minor injuries at home. It will also help you oversee your child's general physical condition.

- Insist on safe playing facilities, healthful playing situations, and proper first aid applications. Know the answer to these questions: Where is the nearest hospital? How would I get there in an emergency? Who can I call for immediate attention if my child is injured?

- A trainer, parent or coach trained in CPR, and access to a telephone, should be available near the playing field.

- Children are especially vulnerable to overuse injuries because of the softness of their growing bones and the relative tightness of their ligaments and tendons during growth spurts. One way to avoid overuse injuries is to never increase intensity, duration, frequency or distance by more than 10 percent a week.

- Watch the weather. Heat illness can occur when it's hotter than 85 degrees with a humidity of 70 percent or more.

- Make sure your child drinks enough water during a sporting contest. If a child asks for water, give it to him or her. Their body is sending an important signal. ■

# Go Fly A Kite

Children, and grown men and women, have been flying kites for over 2,000 years. Ben Franklin did it, Charlie Brown tries to do it. Whether you are a seasoned kiter, or a novice, you will want to follow these important safety practices.

- Do not fly a kite in wet or inclement weather. The wet cord can conduct electricity. And if you are standing in wet shoes on wet ground, you are increasing your chances of electrocution.

- Learn how to launch and land a kite properly. Running is the worst way to launch a kite.

- Fly the kite in a safe area. The best places are level, open spaces, such as city recreational areas or beaches. Avoid terrain that is rocky or bumpy. It can cause you to trip and fall.

- Do not fly a kite in a street or highway.

- Never fly a kite near electric power lines, antennas or utility poles. Also avoid buildings, electric signs and railroad tracks.

- Do not use wire to fly the kite. Metal lines can carry an electrical



charge from a power line or atmospheric electricity. Use cord.

- When flying a large kite, use a reel and wear gloves. The pressure of controlling a strong kite can burn bare hands.

- If a kite lands in a tree, leave it there. Kites are inexpensive and replaceable. Your body parts are not.

(You may be able to free the kite by loosening the line and letting the wind blow it out.)

- Do not fly a kite in air traffic patterns, such as a local, rural airport.

- Be aware of bystanders who can trip you or be harmed by your kite's antics. ■

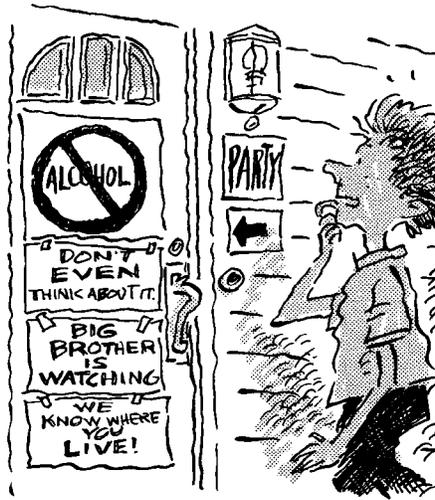
# Drinking Problems

*Her parents were so happy that Suzy had graduated from high school. Next was college, then a job, followed by marriage and children. The opportunities were endless. If there was ever a night worthy of a toast, this was it. And, of course, one toast led to another as the adults celebrated Suzy's bright future. Behind the scenes, Suzy and her friends sneaked in a couple toasts of their own. Later, while driving her friends home, Suzy, carried away by excitement and alcohol, took a turn too fast. The car flew off the road, killing two of her friends. Suzy's bright future was clouded forever.*

All too often, alcohol plays a prominent role in celebrations, and the results can be tragic. Here are some suggestions to help you keep a healthy perspective on your party attitude.

## For Parents Of The Teen Party Host

- Mothers Against Drunk Driving offer these suggestions for an enjoyable teen party:
  - Set your ground rules with your teen before the party. Stress shared responsibility for hosting the party. Plan the party together.
  - Notify police when planning a large party. This will help police protect you, your guests and your neighbors.



- Plan to be home, and conspicuous, during the entire party.
- Select a location that allows comfort and adequate supervision.
- Replenish the food trays and the drinks yourself. Your occasional presence will help keep a lid on unwanted activities such as drinking.
- Discuss the legal drinking age for alcohol with your child, and be sure you both enforce the law.
- Alert yourself to signs of alcohol or other drug abuse by teens.
- Notify the parents of teens who arrive at the party drunk or under the influence of any other drug to ensure the teen's safe passage home.
- Limit the party attendance (no party crashers!) and set start and ending times. Call the police at the

first signs of trouble.

## For Parents Of Teens Attending

- Know where your teenager will be. Get the address and phone number of the party host.
- Tell your child you expect a phone call if the location is changed.
- Contact the parents of the party-giver to:
  - verify the occasion.
  - offer assistance.
  - explain your rules for your child, including a curfew and your stand against drinking.
  - make sure a parent will be present, and will actively supervise.
  - be sure alcohol or drugs will not be permitted.
- If you don't like the answers you're getting from the host, don't let your child go.
- Tell your child never to ride home with a person who has been drinking or taking drugs. About forty percent of all traffic fatalities are alcohol related. During holiday periods the percentages increase significantly, to around fifty percent.
- Know how your teen will get to and from the party. If necessary, provide the transportation yourself.
- Establish a time your teenager should be home and enforce it. ■

# This Is No Toy Story

Roxanne and her teenage friends spent the afternoon taking turns on the two-seater personal watercraft (PWC). Riding the waves and splashing around were a great way to enjoy the bay. In a moment of inattention, Roxanne and her partner fell off. Before she could get out of the water, Roxanne was struck by another PWC and died at the scene.

**PWCs are not toys, but too many people treat them as if they were. About 65 people across the country die in accidents involving personal watercraft each year. Some fatalities involve children.**

The American Academy of Pediatrics recommends that no child under age 16 should operate a PWC.

## Before Your Teen Goes

- Take a boating safety course and regular refresher courses with your teen. To take a class, contact a local safe-boating organization, or visit the U.S. Coast Guard website at [www.uscgboating.org](http://www.uscgboating.org).

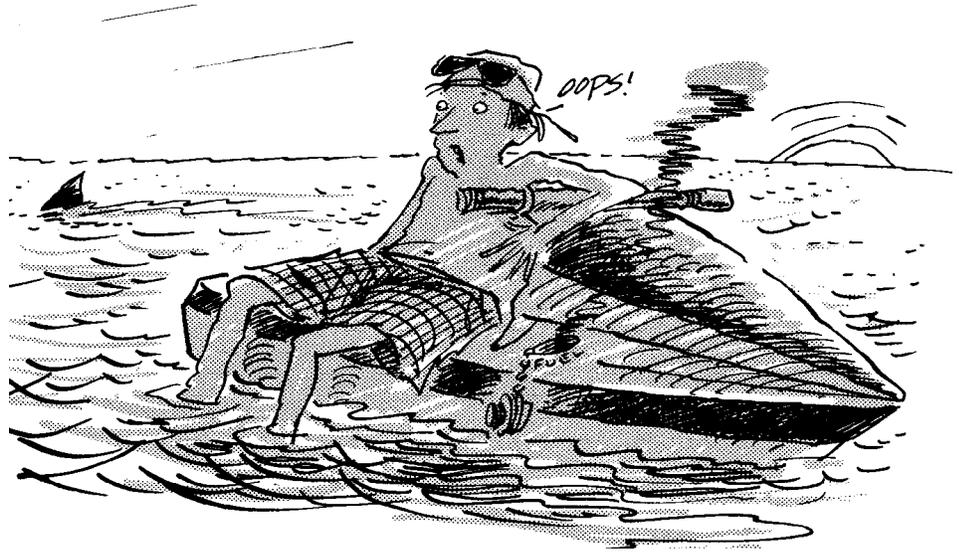
- Know the craft. Read the owner's manual to learn operating techniques and to develop riding skills. Share this information with your child.

- Check over the craft. Be sure:
  - the throttle and all switches are working properly;
  - the fuel and battery lines are properly connected;
  - there is enough fuel;
  - the cables and steering are functioning properly.

- Never exceed passenger weight or capacity.

- Have a Coast Guard approved fire extinguisher on board.

- Wear a life jacket and a wetsuit.
- PWC riders have an increased risk of abrasions due to contact with their PWC, other vessels, docks, rocks, coral, or the water's surface, particularly as speeds increase. A wetsuit also protects a child from hypothermia. Consider wearing a helmet, water shoes, gloves and other protective apparel. Normal swimming attire is not good enough.



- Know and obey navigational rules of the road and posted instructions.

- Practice reboarding before going out for the first time.

- Know local water conditions and where the obstacles are.

## When Your Teen Is The Operator

- Insist on training if you're renting a craft. Ask questions until you're confident the teen knows how to operate the controls. Be sure the instructor is competent to teach.

- Never drink and ride. At least 50 percent of all recreational boating fatalities involve alcohol.

- It is recommended that PWC operators have a valid driver's license. This indicates the young operator has demonstrated some degree of maturity, responsibility, and good judgment.

- Parents should guide and supervise a teenager's use.

- Your teen must take time to master the basic techniques before attempting more difficult maneuvers.

- Many craft have a lanyard connected to the start/stop switch. Never start the engine without attaching the lanyard to a life jacket or wrist.

## When Your Teen Is On The Water

- Ride with someone nearby in case she runs into trouble.

- Allow plenty of room to safely turn when she is near swimmers, divers, surf-boarders, boats, and docks. Remember, there are no brakes.

- Sailboats, commercial and fishing vessels always have the right of way.

- Watch out for sail craft; they cannot maneuver as quickly as a PWC.

- Stay to the right of *oncoming* boats. They must pass on the operator's left side. When *overtaking* a boat, pass on the right or left, but stay clear.

- Always stay within sight of land.

- Be especially alert around water skiers, since the PWC may distract the driver or skier.

- Wake jumping is dangerous. This is a distraction to that boat, and a potential hazard to oncoming craft. Also, the teen may be injured or damage the craft when landing. Crossing a wake should always be done cautiously and courteously.

- Don't allow a child to stay on the water too long. He will become tired and more prone to accidents.

- Never operate a personal watercraft after dark.

- Be especially alert at dawn and dusk. The sun's glare makes it harder for others to see your teen. ■

# Some Serious Pet Peeves

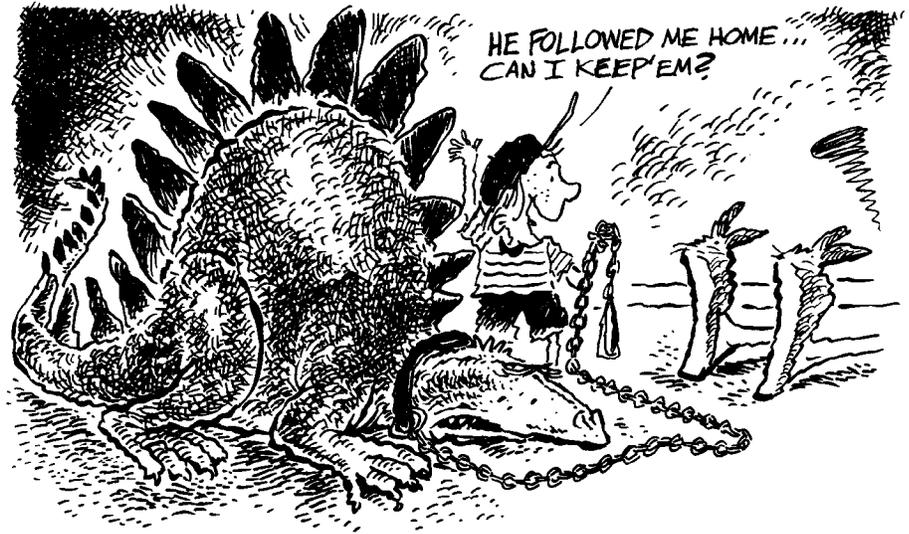
Ryan's family had a cat, two dogs, a rabbit, and a parakeet. Then his teenaged sister brought home a pet iguana. Over a brief time frame, young Ryan was: scratched by the cat, pounced on by the male dog and had a rib cracked, bitten by the female dog protecting her puppies, and messed on by the parakeet. He then contracted a mild case of infectious diarrhea from the new reptile. Bruised, battered, but undaunted, the ten-year-old adventurer stands ready to offer more pets a home. His parents might want to nix that idea.

Children love pets, and we endure a certain amount of aggravation and inconvenience for the pleasure of their company. However, a child should not have to sustain injury or disease. Here are a few suggestions for living in a world with animals.

## To Keep A Child Safe Around Dogs

Each year over 4 million Americans are bitten by dogs, about 800,000 seek medical care, and over 20 die. Knowing that:

- Consult a veterinarian to select a dog appropriate for your family.
- Keep your child away from a dog that looks frightened or angry.
- A child must never pet a dog that is chained or alone.
- A child should never pet or run up to a strange dog, or run past a dog.
- Do not allow a child to yell at a dog, or sneak up behind it. Frightened dogs will bite out of fear.
- Don't disturb a dog who's sleeping, eating or caring for puppies.
- Never grab anything away from a dog. It feels possessive about its toys, food, and bones and is willing to fight to keep them.



- Dogs are protective of their owner, yard, and house. Respect their territorial instincts.

- Ask permission before handling someone else's dog. If you receive permission, let the dog come to you and your child. Talk quietly. If he is friendly, let him sniff the back of your hands to get to know you. Then stroke the dog under the chin.

- Always stay calm and quiet around new animals.
- Teach children to play gently with a dog. Never leave children alone with a dog.

If you and your child encounter an angry dog:

- Do not stare it in the eyes.
- Try to remain motionless until the dog moves away. Then walk away slowly, sideways. Do not turn your back on the dog.
- Be firm. Say, No! to the dog and act as if you are in control of the situation.

## Little Tabby

- The risk of infection from cat bites is high. See a doctor for antibiotic treatment. Cat scratches require careful monitoring.

- Since cats can cause allergic reactions, keep them away from areas where your child spends a lot of time. If symptoms persist, consult a veterinarian for preparations that can be applied to the cat.

## Our Pets Have Pests

- Keep your cat indoors, and humanely confine your dog to reduce exposure to diseases and parasites carried by other animals.
- Wash children's hands thoroughly after handling pets, or cleaning up after them.
- Children can become very ill if they eat dirt or sand contaminated with infected dog or cat feces. Keep kids away from areas with possible feces. Cover sand boxes when not in use.
- Reptiles harbor salmonella, which can be very dangerous for children under 5.
- When cleaning accumulated bird droppings, keep kids away to prevent breathing dust.
- Follow your veterinarian's advice about examinations and vaccinations. ■

# Playground Safety

Urging kids to "Run along and play" should not amount to sending them off to harm themselves. Sadly, that's too often the result. **According to the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC), more than 200,000 children are treated in hospital emergency rooms each year as a result of injuries related to playground equipment, and about 15 children die.** Here are some suggestions to help your kids "Run along and play *safely*."

## Safety At Home

- Buy well-made equipment and assemble it correctly. Place it on a level surface and anchor it firmly.
- **About 70 percent of all playground injuries are caused by falls.** The surface under any playground should be made of wood chips, shredded wood mulch or rubber, sand, or pea gravel, and should be at least 12 inches deep. This use-zone surface should extend six feet from the play area's perimeter.
- Swing seats should be made of soft materials, like lightweight canvas, soft rubber, or plastic.
- Do not use swings in the shape of animals. They have been associated with several deaths a year. Also, the CPSC recommends full-bucket seats for younger children.
- Do not buy equipment with open "S" hooks, sharp edges, or openings between 3.5 and 9 inches. A child's head may get caught in openings that size, and he might strangle. This hazard has been especially common on rings and guardrails.
- Install playground equipment at least six feet from fences or walls, and in shady areas or facing north.
- Place protective caps on all exposed screws or bolts. Check for loose nuts and bolts monthly.

## Do An Inspection In The Park

- Check out your public playground carefully before using it.



- Be sure there are open spaces, fences, or hedges to prevent kids from running into areas with cars.
- Make sure the use zones have the recommended surfaces. The use zone in front and back of a swing should extend out at least twice the height of the swing, as measured from the ground to the crossbar.
- Surfaces 30 inches or more above the ground need guardrails.
- The highest climbing platform for preschool children should not exceed six feet. For school-age children, eight feet is the limit.
- Swings should be spaced at least 24 inches apart, and at least 30 inches from the supportive structure.
- Moving equipment should be separated from other equipment by 12 feet, with no accessible parts that can crush or pinch fingers.
- Ideally, preschoolers should have separate areas.
- There should be no sharp points or edges that can cause cuts.
- All "S" hooks should be closed.
- Be sure sliding equipment has a platform, so kids can climb down if they want. There should be a bar across the top to force kids to sit down before sliding. Also, there should be no V-shaped openings, or open areas close to the tops of slides, where clothing could get caught.
- Avoid areas with exposed concrete footings, tree roots, or rocks.

## Play An Active Role

- Approximately 40 percent of playground injuries are due to inadequate supervision. Be sure an adult actively supervises your child.
- Do not allow horseplay.
- Make sure your child plays on age-appropriate equipment. Equipment is specifically designed for ages two through five, and five through twelve.
- Children from two through five should not play on the following equipment: chain or cable walks, free-standing arch climbers or climbing equipment with flexible components, fulcrum seesaws, log rolls, long spiral slides (more than one turn), overhead rings, parallel bars, swinging gates, track rides, and vertical sliding poles.
- Do not allow children to twist the swings, swing empty seats, or walk in the path of moving swings.
- Do not allow your child to play on hot metal surfaces, or equipment with rust, chipping, splinters, cracks, or other signs of decay.
- Never dress kids in scarves, or loose or stringed clothing, when they are going to be on playground equipment. The loose items can get caught and strangle a child.
- For more information, contact the National Program for Playground Safety at [playgroundsafety.org](http://playgroundsafety.org), or (800) 554-7529. ■

# Safe Schooling

Kids can find a lot of things to be frightened of at school. There's algebra, for instance, and chemistry, biology, *Great Expectations*, bullies, and that awful green stuff they serve in the cafeteria. However, some of the most serious threats to their safety occur just getting to and from the school building each day. While we can't promise our children a safe world, we can take steps to minimize their risks.

## Walking To School

Parents, about 300 children between the ages of 5 through 14 die each year after being struck by a motor vehicle. Whether they are walking to school or to a friend's house, it is vital that your child knows some basic rules.

- To protect your child, walk with her to choose the most direct, safe route with the fewest streets to cross. Keep in mind that *Safe Kids USA* recommends children 10 and under never cross the street alone.

- Select routes where as many youngsters as possible will merge at one place when crossing a hazardous street. It's usually more protected. If a shorter route is less safe, explain why it is not acceptable.

- Always use the "buddy system" when walking to and from school.

- Walk in well-lighted areas.

- Go straight to and from school. No loitering along the way.

- Cross at the corners. Stop at the curb. Listen and look left, right, and then left again before crossing.

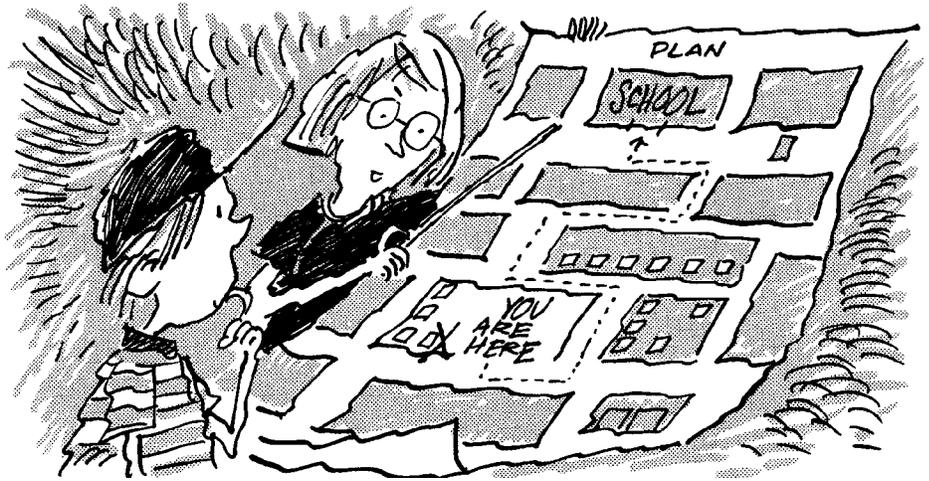
- Also, look over your shoulder for vehicles that might make a turn.

Keep looking in all directions while crossing.

- Do not go between parked cars.

- Do not assume that a crosswalk is automatically safe. *Be alert!*

- Cooperate with the police, school safety patrols, and adult crossing guards. Try to cross only at intersections with a crossing guard.



- Obey all traffic signals.
- Walk across the streets, don't run. Allow yourself plenty of time. Go only when the coast is clear.
- Face traffic when walking on roads without sidewalks.
- In bad weather or when it is dark, wear something white or reflective and/or carry a light.

## Riding The Bus

**Remember!** All school buses are surrounded by a ten-foot area known as the "Danger Zone." In this area, it can be difficult for the driver to see you.

Parents, teach kids these rules from the National Safety Council for getting on and off the school bus:

- Leave home early enough to arrive at your bus stop on time.

- While you wait for the bus, stay away from traffic. Stand at least six feet away from the curb.

- Do not roughhouse or engage in other careless behavior.

- When the school bus approaches, line up away from the street or road.

- Wait until the bus has stopped and the door opens before you step on the bus.

- Don't crowd your friends when getting on and off the bus.

- When you are on the bus, never put your head, hands, arms or legs out the window.

- Before stepping off the bus, check to see that no cars are coming from the right.

- Take three giant steps away from the school bus after getting off, and never walk next to the bus.

- Stay away from the bus's rear wheels at all times.

- Don't pick up a book or dropped object after leaving the bus. Get the driver's attention first.

- If you have to cross the street in front of the bus, walk at least 10 feet ahead of the bus along the side of the road until you turn around and see the driver. *Make sure the driver can see you!* Wait for a signal from the driver before you cross the street. When the driver signals, walk across the street. Watch for traffic as you walk. Do not cross the center line of the road until the driver signals it is safe to keep walking.

## At School

- Check playground equipment. Make sure it is anchored properly, and is at least six feet from fences and walls. Wood chips, pea gravel or rubberized pads under the equipment should be at least 12 inches deep.

- **And, parents, about that bully:** Confront bullying right away by keeping written records, and insist that schools protect children. ■

# Abuse Of Trust

*Vince was thrilled when his son, Eric, was chosen to play on their community's select soccer team. Twelve-year-old Eric would receive excellent athletic training, play the highest levels of competition, and learn valuable lessons that would stay with him into adulthood. Unfortunately, not all the lessons Eric learned playing soccer were positive. The coach of the team was caught abusing several of the boys and finished the season behind bars. Eric himself was unharmed, but his confidence in adults was badly shaken and he quit the sport.*

**Although studies vary, Prevent Child Abuse America supports the estimate that at least 20 percent of American women and 5 percent to 16 percent of American men experienced some form of sexual abuse as children.** Generally children are sexually abused by adults who are known by them or their families, or related to them. Children between ages 7 and 13 are especially vulnerable.

## What Parents Should Know

- No profile fits all offenders. However, be aware of people who:
  - Treat children as property by grabbing them or forcing attention and affection.
  - Relate to children in a sexual or seductive manner.
  - Use gifts and favors as the main way of relating to children.
  - Entice children into their homes or activities with them, or show excessive friendliness.
- Know your children's caretakers and check their references.
- Regarding special activities:
  - Make sure the organization does a background check on adult leaders.
  - See that adults supervise off-site travel.
  - Be sure several adults of the same sex as the children are present when children use a locker room.
  - Be cautious if the adult leader

wants to spend time alone with your child for any reason.

-Talk to your child about how he or she likes the adult leader. If the child doesn't like the adult or the activity, it may be a signal of something more serious.

- Be wary of Internet contacts.

## What Kids Should Know

• Give children clear and accurate information about sexual abuse.

Teach them:

-That most people are honest and safe, but occasionally people can be dangerous.

-It is not okay for an older person to touch or look at their private parts, and it is not okay for them to touch or look at anyone else's private parts.

-The anatomical names of the private parts of their bodies. Their naiveté can make them vulnerable.

-They have the right to say "NO" to a request for an inappropriate touch.

-They have a basic right to body privacy and ownership over their body.

-To always talk to adults about things that confuse or scare them.

-To tell you if they feel uncomfortable being alone with someone.

-It is okay not to hug, touch or kiss someone if they feel uncomfortable with that touch or person.

-To run away if someone tries to sexually abuse them.

-When home alone, don't open the door or talk to unfamiliar callers on the phone.

-To accept gifts only if you approve.

-How to reach a responsible adult at all times.

-Always have a BUDDY when they play or go somewhere.

-Don't play alone in deserted areas, or use public restrooms alone.

-Never get into or near a car with someone in it unless they are with you or a trusted adult. And never accept a ride from someone without

checking first with you.

• Practice "what if" exercises at home that prepare your child for dangerous situations by formulating an appropriate response.

• Explain the difference between "real love" (hugs) and "fake love" (inappropriate touching).

## Handling Disclosures

Some (but not all) signs of possible sexual abuse include sudden changes in behavior (fears, phobias, hypersensitivity, compulsion, withdrawal, depression); disturbed sleeping patterns; child says an adult is bothering them; fear of being left with a caretaker; dramatic problems at school; child suddenly acquires new toys or money.

- If a child tells you about confusing or sexual touches, **stop, listen, and believe** them. Also:
  - Let children know you love them and are very sorry it happened.
  - Tell them it is not their fault, and you are proud of them for having the courage to share this.
  - Then get help for the child.

For more information, contact:

Prevent Child Abuse America at (312) 663-3520, or [www.preventchildabuse.org](http://www.preventchildabuse.org), or affiliated state chapters.

Other organizations providing more specialized services include:

Childhelp USA  
(800) 422-4453  
[www.childhelpusa.org](http://www.childhelpusa.org)  
24-hour national child-abuse hotline that offers crisis counseling and referrals.

VOICES in Action  
[www.voices-action.org](http://www.voices-action.org)  
International organization for adult survivors of child sexual abuse. ■

# Summer Getaway

*Chevy Chase is paid to look foolish in a theme park. Tom and Debbie did it for nothing. From the minute they arrived at Disney World with son Michael and his pal, David, they lost control of the day. Chalk it up to too much adrenaline, and not enough planning. First, Debbie wore the wrong shoes. Cute but painful. Two hours later she's hobbling from blisters. Danny's parents didn't say he was allergic to hot dogs, or that he sunburned easily (and badly). And then there was the two hour episode when everybody got separated from one another and wandered aimlessly trying to link up because they hadn't established a meeting place. Thank goodness they weren't on a real African cruise. They would have ended up crocodile bait.*

Whether it's a holiday with the kids (or grandkids), or a long vacation, it's no time for safety to take a holiday.

## Traveling With Kids

- Pack entertainment and snacks for children so the driver isn't distracted. Plan for extra rest stops.
- Take along a first aid kit and book, and medication for motion sickness, nausea, diarrhea and upset stomach.
- If the hotel doesn't have a sprinkler system, it doesn't deserve you ... or anybody else. Find a safer place to rest.
- Ask for a room near exits on the lower floors. Keep the door locked.
- Familiarize yourself with your surroundings. Identify exits. Practice the fire escape route for your room with your family.
- Not all rooms are kid ready. Check for problem areas, such as cords. Bring along socket covers and other devices you currently use around the house.
- Check your room's water temperature to be sure it won't scald the kids.



- Keep poisonous and breakable products out of a child's reach.

## Summer Amusement

- Don't try to squeeze in too many activities in one day. Pace yourself.
- Wear comfortable shoes with good traction. Dress in distinctive shirts or hats.
- Wear a wide-brimmed hat, sunglasses and age appropriate sunscreen.
- If your itinerary includes a theme park:
  - Make sure everyone knows the exact location of your car. Write it down for each child.
  - Obey all instructions regarding safety procedures, height, weight, age, etc. Don't be foolhardy.
  - Walk, don't run. Watch for slick surfaces and tripping hazards. Use handrails.
  - Note location of ride exits. Let children know where you will meet after a ride, or if they get lost.
  - It's best not to let children roam alone, even in the most well-supervised environments.
  - Don't force or tease a scared child onto a ride.
- Make sure there is one adult for every two children in your group.
- Children should know the full name of their parents and their home address. If you are from out of town,

pin a piece of paper in their pocket with the name and address of the hotel or relative with whom you are staying.

## Waterparks

Waterparks are a popular way to cool off, but basic water safety tips still apply.

- Be sure the area is well supervised before a child enters the water, and keep your eye on the child. Tell older kids to use the buddy system.
- Stay in physical touch with toddlers at all times.
- If the child is not a good swimmer, use a Coast Guard-approved life jacket.
- Read all signs, and follow the directions. Ask questions if you're not sure about something.
- Don't dive and don't run.
- When you go to a new attraction, note that the water depth may be different, which may affect how a child uses the attraction.
- On water slides, go down face up and feet first. Don't count on being able to catch the kids at the end of the slide. Sometimes the water is too deep to stand in.
- Wear sunscreen and drink lots of water.
- On "Lazy River" rides, ask for a smaller inner tube.■

# Protecting Teenage Workers

Yes, child labor laws have improved conditions for young workers. And employers by and large are more enlightened and trustworthy. **Nevertheless, the U.S. Department of Labor finds that about 160,000 workers under the age of 18 are injured each year, 55,000 suffer injuries severe enough to require emergency room treatment, and 35 die from work-related injuries.** Those are alarming numbers which can be reduced. By following the tips presented here, work can be safer for your child.

## Laws And Parental Rules Of Thumb

Teens below the age of 18 cannot work in the following hazardous nonfarm jobs, as determined by the Secretary of Labor: driving a motor vehicle or being an outside helper on a motor vehicle; manufacture and storage of explosives; slaughterhouses; jobs that require use of power-driven machines and cutters; radioactive operations; mining; logging and sawmilling; brick and tile manufacturing; roofing, excavation and demolition. For more facts, visit [www.osha.gov/SLTC/teenworkers/index.html](http://www.osha.gov/SLTC/teenworkers/index.html)

- Visit a school career center. Guidance counselors know what companies are good places to work.
- Go to the library and research a potential employer by reading articles and company profiles.
- If the employer is small and family-owned, ask for references.
- Forbid your teen from working late at night, including the weekend. Some safety advocates say teenagers shouldn't work after dark; others put the cutoff at 10 p.m., after which most violent incidents happen.
- Meet the coworkers and bosses. Be sure working conditions are safe, break areas are in visible places, and parking lots are lighted.
- Be sure your teenager receives thorough training on job hazards, and how to prevent injuries.



- After a workday, ask about the day. Listen for anything that makes your teen nervous. It's important to ask tough follow-up questions.
  - Take any concerns seriously.
  - Be alert to possible fatigue. The combination of school, homework and a job can result in the teen being less alert at work or when driving.
  - Tell your son or daughter to call the police and you immediately if an attack occurs. Reassure them that it's important to disobey a boss or lose a job if they are at risk.
  - Talk over any concerns with management. If no action is taken, forbid your teen from working there. It probably is not a good company.
- ### For Teens On The Road
- Have your parents take you to and from work.
  - If parents aren't available, car pool with another reliable adult. Introduce that person to your parents and get their name, address, and phone number.
  - If you drive yourself to work:
    - Keep the doors locked.
    - Never make eye contact with other drivers, or rude gestures.
    - Have a security guard or trusted adult walk you to your car.
    - Always check surroundings in a parking lot and under the car.
    - Go back inside and tell an adult if you see or feel anything suspicious. If necessary, wait.

- On public transportation:
  - sit by the driver. Report anything suspicious to drivers, who are trained to deal with such situations.
  - don't talk to strangers.

## Advice For The Young Worker

- Make eye contact with people coming into the workplace. Don't look down. That makes you look preoccupied and vulnerable.
- Get to know your coworkers. Check out anyone who seems suspicious. Ask others about the person. Note: The law prohibits employers from revealing confidential information. But, court records are open.
- Be aware of your surroundings. Know where coworkers are.
- Do not go into secluded rooms alone. Find a buddy who always knows your whereabouts.
- Tell your parents or supervisor any rumors about someone's perverse or inappropriate behavior.
- If someone makes threats or sexual innuendoes to you or a coworker, report it immediately to a manager and your parents.
- If someone hurts you physically or sexually, call the police and your parents immediately, even if the boss tells you not to.
- Trust your instincts. If they say something is wrong, it probably is. ■

# Holiday Gift Ideas

We hate to put a chill on the holiday spirit, but when buying gifts for the kids in your life, please remember: **Each year, over 100,000 children under the age of fifteen are treated in hospital emergency rooms for toy-related injuries.** So, to keep your kid's holidays *happy*:

## Some General Guidelines

- Balloons are the most dangerous "toy" for small children. Do not allow children under the age of six to blow up a balloon, or be alone with one. Choking on balloons and pieces of balloons, small balls, small parts of toys, and tiny batteries is the **leading cause of toy-related deaths.**

- Buy toys with safety in mind. When selecting a toy, ask yourself:
  - Will the child use the toy only in the way it is intended to be used?
  - Is it chewable, breakable, detachable, flammable, or too noisy?
  - Do any parts pull off easily?
- Always check to see that eyes, noses, ribbons, and buttons on dolls and teddy bears are securely fastened and cannot be bitten or chewed off. When re-sewing, dental floss makes a strong "thread."
- Be sure the toy matches the child's age, skills, abilities, and interest.
- Select well-built, good-quality toys and equipment from reputable manufacturers and dealers. Quality toys last longer, require less repair, and are subject to regulations.
- Consider how much adult supervision will be required, if the supervision will be available, and how to keep the toy out of reach when no supervision is available.
- When buying for older kids, consider the possibility toys may fall into the hands of younger children.
- If wheels (tricycles, bikes, scooters, skates, skateboards) are on your gift list, include the necessary safety equipment (helmets, wrist guards, and knee and elbow pads). Insist on their use.



- Children should know how to safely handle riding toys before being left unsupervised. Inspect the riding area for hazards.
- Electric toys are for kids eight or older. Check electrical toys regularly for loose or exposed wires.
- All plug-in electrical toys should carry the Underwriters Laboratories (UL) mark.
- Organize toys, with no small pieces lying around. They can be tripping, choking or poking hazards.
- Buy a toy chest with a spring-loaded support that allows the lid to remain securely open. Be sure all chests have air holes that will not be blocked when placed against a wall; and there is a gap between the lid and sides when the lid is closed.
- Inspect toys regularly for safety

## Gifts To Avoid

- Age labeling is provided for safety and developmental reasons. Read instructions carefully and follow suggested age levels. Some toys to avoid include:
  - For kids under three, toys with small, removable parts. Use a small-parts tester to measure the size of the toy or part. If the piece fits entirely inside the tube, it is considered a choking hazard. You can buy testers at toy or baby specialty stores.

- Small toys that look, smell, or taste like anything resembling food.
- Toys with long ropes, chains, strings, or elastic bands that could encircle children's necks, especially if they will be placed inside a crib.
- Toys with sharp points or edges that can jab or cut.
- Toy cap guns. The caps can ignite and cause serious burns.
- Propelled toys, such as toy darts and projectiles (and BB guns until the child is old enough to take a gun training course). **Each year over 20,000 kids get treated for injuries related to non-powder weapons, such as BB or pellet guns.**

## Toys That Make Safe Gifts

To make your shopping easier, here are some age-appropriate recommendations for toys from *Safe Kids USA*.

- Under age one:** activity quilts, floor activity centers, crib gyms, soft dolls or stuffed animals without button noses and eyes, and squeaky toys.
- Ages one to three:** books, blocks, fit-together toys, larger balls, push-and-pull toys, pounding and shaping toys.
- Ages three to five:** non-toxic art supplies, books, pretend toys (play money, telephone), teddy bears or dolls, and outdoor toys, such as soccer balls or tricycle with helmet.
- Ages five to nine:** craft materials, jump ropes, puppets, books, and sports equipment. After age eight: electrical and battery-operated toys. Don't allow children under eight to change batteries.
- Ages nine to fourteen:** handheld electronic games, table and board games, model kits, musical instruments, and outdoor and team sports equipment. Never buy hobby kits, such as chemistry sets, for a child younger than 12.
- For additional suggestions on toys, visit *Safe Kids USA* at [www.usa.safekids.org](http://www.usa.safekids.org) and click on the Toy Safety link. ■

# Trampoline Warning

*Jim was ready to take his next big leap in life. He was a leader in school and a gifted scholar, and he had earned a full scholarship to one of the country's best universities. Before he could take that big jump from high school to college, he and some friends decided to make some smaller, playful ones on a friend's backyard trampoline. One of Jim's jumps went wrong, there was no one nearby to catch him or break his fall, and he catapulted from the trampoline onto the ground, breaking his neck and his life's momentum. Instead of the medical career he had planned, Jim is a quadriplegic working in the legal profession.*

**According to the American Academy of Orthopaedic Surgeons, over 250,000 people seek medical treatment for trampoline injuries each year.** As you might expect, most of them are children. Life takes many funny bounces. Through vigilance, we can help avoid many of its most dangerous landings.

## Consider This Purchase Carefully

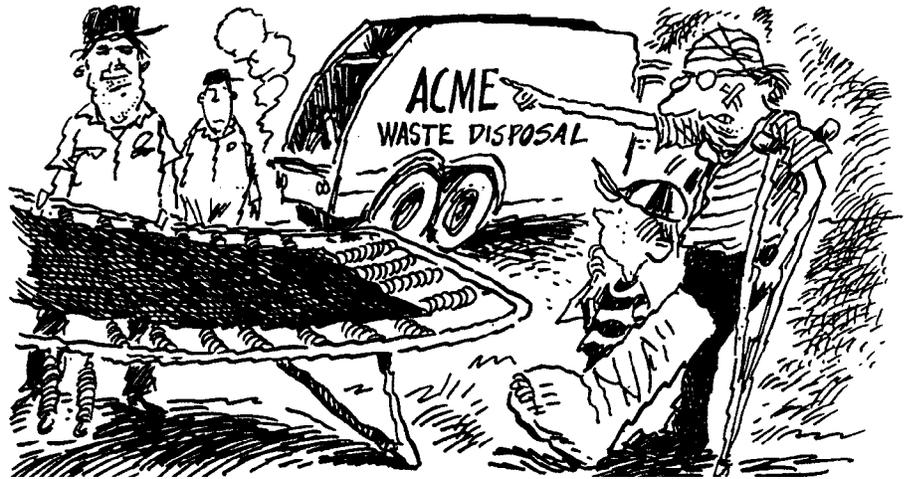
**The American Academy of Pediatrics recommends that parents "never purchase a home trampoline or allow children to use home trampolines," and suggests they be banned from schools.**

- If you decide to buy a trampoline, some experts recommend you buy one that is no higher than twenty-one inches. Most injuries occur on full-size trampolines.

- Be sure the trampoline has shock-absorbing pads that completely cover the springs, hooks and frame. The pads should be securely attached to the frame.

- Be sure the covering over the springs between the frame pad and the jumping bed is a color that contrasts with the color of the bed.

- Inspect a new trampoline carefully before using it, and check the condition of all parts every time you use it. Possible hazards include:



- punctures or holes worn in the bed; deterioration in the stitching in the bed; a sagging bed; ruptured springs; missing or insecurely attached frame pads; a bent or broken frame; sharp protrusions on the frame or suspension system.

- Consider purchasing a net enclosure, which can help prevent injuries caused by falling off.

- Put the trampoline on a level surface, away from structures and other play areas.

- Keep trampolines fenced in and inaccessible to outsiders.

- Don't use a ladder with the trampoline because it provides unsupervised access to small children.

- For nighttime use, make sure lighting is ample and evenly distributed over the entire apparatus.

## Play It Smart

- Be sure anyone playing on the trampoline has first received proper instructions and guidelines for its safe use.

- Learn the "Stop Bounce" before attempting other skills. The "Stop Bounce" is achieved by bending your knees and hips as your feet contact the bed when bouncing.

- Only one person should be performing on the trampoline at a time. Many injuries occur when multiple jumpers collide.

- Don't get carried away. Keep your bounces low until you can control

your position and consistently land in the middle of the trampoline.

- Save the complicated jumps for an accredited facility under professional instruction. For instance, **somersaults or high-risk maneuvers should not be done** unless the participant is a skilled gymnast, and is using protective equipment.

- Don't jump if you're tired or affected by alcohol or drugs.

- To avoid mat burns, wear socks, pants, and a shirt.

- Climb, don't jump, off the trampoline.

- Never play on a trampoline in wet weather.

## Supervision Is Paramount

- Always have adult supervision when children are present.

- Always have four "spotters" at ground level to break the fall of anyone who might tumble from the apparatus. A spotter must be big enough to protect the jumper.

- Place spotters at the four sides of a rectangular trampoline, or around a circular trampoline. Their functions also include:

- assuring the jumper stays in the middle of the trampoline bed.

- gently pushing the jumper back to the center of the bed if he or she comes too close to the springs.

- telling the jumper to stop if he appears out of control. ■

# Freeze Warning

There is nothing prettier than a frozen world twinkling in the sun, but there are also few things more treacherous.

## Helping Kids Stay On Their Feet

- Remind your child to be very cautious with her first step onto slick surfaces. Sometimes it's hard to detect slippery surfaces, particularly at night. Use a flashlight.

- Walking on snow or ice, take it slow. A child should keep his body position slightly forward and put his feet down flat, not on the heels. He should bend his knees and take short, slow steps. Or, move his feet forward without lifting them from the ground.

- Always wear shoes with good traction. Snow boots, hiking boots, and tennis shoes are the best choices.

- If possible, walk on the grass.

- If your child must walk in the streets, remind her to be careful around intersections; cars might slide through them.

- Keep looking ahead to avoid slick spots.

## When Children Slide And Glide

**The U. S. Consumer Product Safety Commission estimates that there are over 7,500 sled injuries and 40,000 ice skating injuries each year to children under age 15. These injuries include many serious head injuries and some fatalities.**



### Sledding

- Sled on spacious, gently sloping hills. Avoid sledding on overcrowded hills.

- Check slopes for bare spots, holes, and other obstructions that could cause injury, especially hazards that might be hidden by snow.

- Avoid slopes near streets and roads where your momentum could carry you into traffic.

- Be sure there is a level run-off at the end of the slide path so the sled can glide safely to a halt.

- Do not sled at night unless the run is well lighted.

- A child should ride a sled sitting, or lying down with his head to the rear. Snow disks and plastic sliders are designed for upright use.

- Always wear a helmet.

- If a spill is unavoidable, roll off the sled. Remember, don't collide head first!

- After the ride down, get off the slope and use a safe path to go up.

### Ice Skating

When playing on the ice, follow these general guidelines:

- Skate in special, designated areas, such as indoor and outdoor rinks, or frozen, shallow ponds.

- The Canadian Red Cross recommends eight inches of ice thickness for skating groups.

- Never skate alone. Carry a cell phone for emergencies.

- Stay off the ice during thawing periods.

- When in doubt, check with local authorities. If you can't get a ruling, keep your child off the ice.

- Make sure their skates fit children now. Kids lose control in skates that are too big.

- Keep blades properly sharpened.

- Always wear a helmet. Children should also wear knee pads and wrist guards.

- Your child should not try to break a fall with her hands, which could shatter a bone. Instead, try to land on her backside. ■

## More Safety Tips For Your Child's Personal Safety Plan

### Barbecue

- Keep children and pets away from a hot grill. Never leave a lighted grill unattended.

### Camping

- Teach children not to disturb or provoke any animals.
- Teach and practice the STOP, DROP and ROLL method of putting out a clothing fire.

### Choking

**Choking accounts for 75 deaths each year for children under six years of age. Anyone can choke on food, and at the same time nearly anyone can come to the rescue of a choking person.**

• If you don't already know the procedure of the Heimlich maneuver, find a professional who can teach it to you. Try the YMCA or Red Cross. Remember, special procedures are needed for infants.

#### Children

- Children under the age of six should not blow up balloons, nor should they be alone with balloons.
- Teach children to never suck or chew on balloons.
- Keep balloons safely out of reach when it is not play time. Safely dispose of broken balloons.
- Remind children how to eat properly, with small bites and thorough chewing.
- Don't let them run with food in their mouth.

#### Infants And Toddlers

In general, children under four should not eat foods that are firm and round. If not chewed properly, the foods could be inhaled into the trachea (or windpipe).

- Avoid foods such as hot dogs, whole grapes, raisins, raw vegetables, nuts and seeds, hard candies, popcorn, large chunks of meat, and chunks of peanut butter and hard fruit.
- Bread can be dangerous to toddlers. Give it in moderation.
- Don't offer chewing gum.
- Avoid toys with small parts that could disassemble and be swallowed. Use a toilet paper tube as a size guideline. If older children have such toys, be sure they are kept away from small children.■

### Eye Protection

- Children's sunglasses should also block 99 to 100 percent of UVA and UVB rays, and have shatter-resistant polycarbonate lenses.
- Check lenses and frames before buying kid' glasses. Many can be a breakage or injury hazard, especially inexpensive, novelty types.
- Pad or cushion sharp corners and edges of furniture and fixtures. Remove items that cannot be protected. This also applies at grandma's house and other homes.
- Avoid toys with sharp points or edges, shafts, spikes, or rods.
- Keep toys for older children away from young children.
- Keep nails, glue, and tools away from a child's reach.
- Do not allow children to play with darts, BB guns, and games or toys with projectiles.
- Teach children not to run with pointed scissors, pencils, or other sharp objects. Keep the point end pointed toward the ground.
- Do not let children throw pointed objects, rocks, sand, or dirt; or play with firecrackers, matches, or flammable materials.
- For more tips, ask your eye doctor, or contact Prevent Blindness America at (800) 331-2020, or [www.preventblindness.org](http://www.preventblindness.org).

### Falls

- Make porches and balconies off limits to young children, and use safety gates. Make the openings small so a young child cannot fall through.
- Move chairs and furniture away from windows where young children might use them to reach a window.
- Windows in rooms used by small children should have fire-safe guards.

## Fire Prevention

**Playing with matches and lighters is the leading cause of fire deaths for children under age six.**

- Teach children to respect fire as a tool, not a toy. If they play with matches or lighters and don't respond to your efforts to redirect their interests, seek professional counseling.
- Keep matches and lighters out of sight and reach of children, preferably in a locked cabinet. Teach children to bring them to an adult if they find them.
- Use only child-resistant lighters.
- Never let children use matches or lighters.
- Never use a heater in a room where children or incapacitated adults are unsupervised.
- Never leave small children unattended near a fireplace or stove.

## Firearms

**The Centers for Disease Control estimate that more than 1.2 million latch-key children have access to loaded and unlocked firearms.** There are guns in nearly half the homes in the United States, so it is likely children will come into contact with firearms.

- Answer your child's questions about guns openly and honestly. Don't make a gun an object of curiosity.
- Teach gun safety when your child acts out "gun play," or starts asking questions about guns.
- Make sure your child knows the difference between a toy and a real gun, and between "pretend" on TV and real life.
- If you keep a gun, enroll your child in a gun handling training course.
- Ask friends and relatives if they keep a gun. Urge them to follow safe practices. Don't allow your child to visit unless they do.
- If your child sees a gun, he should follow this three step safety measure:
  1. STOP, don't Touch.
  2. LEAVE the room immediately.
  3. TELL a trustworthy adult.

## Hiking

- Provide a whistle for children.

## Hobbies

Kids love the arts, too. Unfortunately, that fun can be dampened if they come in contact with materials that are toxic and dangerous. (And don't be reluctant to ask the teacher if she is aware of these concerns.)

- Make certain the product is clearly marked for children.
- Use products that have **no hazard statements** and **no precautionary statements** for children grade six and under. The word "nontoxic" should be on the label, but follow the same hygiene practices you would if the product were toxic.
- Older children must be supervised when using products labeled with warnings.
- Get Material Safety Data Sheets if you intend to use a product in creative ways, e.g., melting crayons.
- Young children should use only water-based marking pens, not permanent markers.
- No product containing lead should be used by children.
- Teach children to use cutting tools safely, and to not place anything in their mouths.

## Home Appliances

While most home appliances are purchased for adult use, the fact is many of us share our homes with children or grandchildren. Children would love to play with those "toys" they see us using. Our job is to see they don't.

- Keep small appliances as far away from prying hands as possible.
- On major appliances, use latches designed to lock out youngsters.
- Use the back burners of the range as much as possible. Install a range guard, and turn pot and skillet handles away from the edge.
- Always keep the dishwasher closed and locked. Store knives and sharp utensils with the pointed edge facing down.
- Garbage disposals that work by a wall switch should have a safety lock switch installed.
- Trash compactors should only work with a key, and it should be kept away from children.
- Keep your deep freezer locked, and the key hidden.

### **Medications**

- Children aren't just small adults, so never estimate the dose based on their size.
- Never let children take medications unsupervised.

### **Power Tools**

- Keep children and onlookers out of your work area.

### **Shopping**

• On a parking lot, keep a watchful eye on kids, who might not understand parking lot hazards. Take small children by the hand.

- Children should never wait in the car while you are shopping.

**There are over 20,000 trips to emergency rooms each year due to falls from shopping carts, most of them involving young children. These are serious injuries, involving concussions, fractures, and occasional fatalities.**

- To avoid such injuries:

-Use a back pack.

-Shop where they have supervised play areas.

-Have your child wear a safety belt in the cart. However, strapped-in children can still be subject to injuries from tip-overs. Carts with infant carriers are more likely to tip over due to a high center of gravity.

-Don't let kids hang on the carts.

- When riding escalators:

-Hold on to the handrail.

-Don't put packages on the steps or balance them on the rails. Use the elevator if your hands are full.

-Don't take carts, strollers, or wheelchairs on an escalator.

-Never allow kids to ride the escalator unattended. Show them the proper way to use it. Explain that feet, fingers, or clothing can get tangled in the escalator. Do not let them sit or drag their feet along the side. A shoe can get caught between the step and the side panel.

- Consider using a leash.

- Carry current photos of your kids in case you get separated.

### **Skin Cancer**

• Regular use of an SPF-15 sunscreen throughout childhood and adolescence may reduce the risk of the most common skin cancers by almost 80 percent.

- Use special sunscreens for babies. All babies should wear hats.

- Never expose children under the age of six months to the sun, nor use sunscreen on them.

### **Snowmobiles**

• The American Academy of Pediatrics has stated that operating snowmobiles is inappropriate for children under age 16.

### **Spring Cleaning**

- Keep cleansers and tools out of the reach of kids and pets.

### **Yard Tools**

- Keep children away from the area where you are working, especially in front of the tool.