

Everyday Tips to Help Keep Your Children Safe

Whether your children are in the classroom, on the playground, on the way to or from school, or at home, your child's safety is of utmost importance. Here are some tips to help your children avoid dangerous situations and injuries:

- When driving, insist that everyone in your car use a seat belt – even for a quick trip to the supermarket. Make sure that lap belts are worn snug and low across the hips and that shoulder harnesses are snug with no more slack than the width of two fingers.
- If you provide your children with bikes, be sure to also give them approved bike helmets (ones that display the ANSI or Snell safety approval label) that fit properly. A helmet should cover a child's forehead and not slide back when worn.
- Select right bike for each individual child, too. Some bikes require more skill than others. For instance, hand brakes are more difficult for children under 9 or 10 because they don't have the hand strength and coordination yet. Be sure the bike's measurements match your child's measurements. A bike that is too tall or too short can lead to injury. Ideally, the rider should be able to straddle the bike with both feet flat on the ground.
- Store all medicines, cleaning supplies, and toxic material in a locked cupboard. Never give medicines in the dark and always read the directions and dosage before giving any medicine. Be sure to remove all alcoholic beverages from your children's reach, too.
- Develop a family escape plan in case of fire or other emergency. Be sure your children know how to stop, drop and roll in case their clothing catches fire. To help prevent fires, keep matches, lighters and burning cigarettes out of your children's reach.
- If your children come home to an empty house after school, be sure each knows his or her full name, address and phone number, as well as your name and employer's phone number and how to call 911. Your children should also know:
 - how to carry a key so it is out of sight;
 - how to check in with you or a neighbor at a regularly scheduled time;
 - what to do if they think they are being followed;
 - how to get out of the house in case of a fire;
 - and how to answer the phone without letting callers know they are in the house alone.
- Be sure your children know never to enter a house if the door is ajar, a window is broken or anything looks suspicious.
- If your children walk to and from school, review the safest route and time it. Your children should also know to obey all traffic signals and markings, stay on the same route every day, look in all directions before crossing the street and to cross the street only at a corner or a crosswalk.
- Establish family procedures in the event of a storm, earthquake or other emergencies.
- If you children ride the bus, emphasize how important it is that they not engage in horseplay around the bus stop; board and exit following the driver's instructions; remain seated at all times, and to keep their hands and arms inside the bus.

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