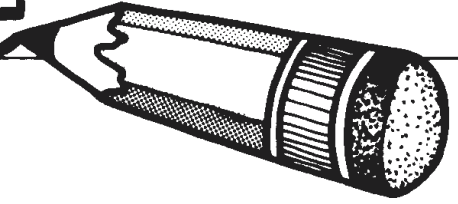


Parenting Pipeline

*A newsletter for parents of kindergarten children
from Iowa State University Extension*



- Teach them to use the telephone and the 911 system if it is available. Post emergency numbers.
- Teach them a regular pattern of travel to and from school, parks and stores. Teach that there's safety in numbers and to use the buddy system.
- Identify "safe houses" in your neighborhood in town or "safe places" for farm and rural children.
- Practice fire drills and other responses to emergencies at home.
- Teach what is and is not safe to play with around your home.

Keeping Your Child Safe

Kindergarten is a time when your child wants to be more independent and often may attempt new experiences. However, a child this age lacks the judgment of an older child and requires more supervision.

There is growing concern about the self-care trend with children. It is never appropriate to leave kindergarten children unattended. State law would call this child neglect. As a parent, it is your responsibility to provide a safe environment.

There are several ways you can assist your children in keeping themselves safe.

- Teach them to recite their name, address, phone number including area code and place of parent employment.

Talk To Your Child About Strangers

The advice you give your children about strangers will depend on their ages and personalities as well as on circumstances in the community. Here are some safety suggestions that will be appropriate for many children.

- Never go into a stranger's car or house.
- If a stranger calls out your name, hurry immediately to a place of safety.
- If someone tells you that your mom or dad is hurt, first check that this is true by telephoning your parents or talking to an adult you know. Never go with a stranger immediately.
- If grabbed by a stranger, scream, struggle and yell "I am being kidnapped!" or "Help! I don't know you."
- If you escape, keep running and don't stop or look back until you have reached another adult where you will be safe.
- Never accept candy, money or treats from anyone you don't know or trust. If you question accepting a treat, say, "Let me check with my (mom, dad, sitter, teacher)."

Watch your child's reactions to others. It's not only strangers who pose safety concerns. If your child isn't comfortable with an adult, don't push the relationship.

Remember, do not scare your child when training him about safety. It is important that you remain calm and check on the child's understanding of these procedures periodically.

Child Safety Alerts

Child safety requires parents to constantly keep up-to-date on product safety information. Parents can contact the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission for information at 1-800-638-CPSC or www.cpsc.gov.

Garage Doors

Children have died after being trapped under garage doors with automatic openers. Keep remote control devices secured in the glove compartment. Wall-mounted controls should be located so they can't be reached by children. Don't allow children to play with openers. Replace any opener that does not have an automatic reverse function. Most openers manufactured before 1982 don't meet this safety standard. Test the reverse feature at least annually to be sure it is functioning. Place a roll of paper towels or small cardboard box under the door. When the door hits the object, it must reverse back open to be safe.

Pools and Hot Tubs

Many of the children who drown in backyard pools could be saved if homeowners completely fenced in the pool and installed self-closing and latching devices on gates. Fences should be at least 4 feet high, and 5 feet or more is better. Don't place chairs or tables near the fence that might allow a child to climb over.

Always lock down the spa or hot tub cover when it's not in use, and completely remove the cover before using it. Children should never jump or dive in.

Never leave children out of eye-contact supervision in or near the pool or spa — not even for a second. Parents should carry a portable phone to the poolside and should not leave children to answer a phone inside.

Lawnmowers and Tractors

About 15 lives a year in the U.S. could be saved if adults didn't allow children to ride on mowers and tractors and kept children from playing in the area when machines are being used. Deaths occur when children fall off the machine or get in its path and are run over. Keep children indoors when power equipment is being used. Although the number of deaths may not seem high, serious injuries are numerous and may handicap or disfigure children.

Children's Balloons

Of all children's products, balloons are the leading cause of suffocation. This is from both uninflated balloons and pieces of balloons. Children attempting to inflate a balloon may suck the balloon into their mouth and draw it into their throat. Another hazard results when children chew on a balloon and accidentally draw it into their throat or when they pop it and put pieces in their mouth. Do not allow children to chew on or put pieces of a balloon into their mouth.

Unintentional Deaths and Injuries

Many children each year in Iowa and the United States are unintentionally injured or even killed. Parental attention to safety is important.

Injuries and deaths have been caused by fire, suffocation, ag machinery, bicycles, cuts, falls, motor vehicle crashes, drownings and other causes. Take the extra care necessary to make sure your child is safe and protected from harm.

Adapted for use in Iowa from Parenting Pipeline, North Dakota State University Extension Service, by Donna K. Donald, family life field specialist, Iowa State University Extension.

This newsletter is published for families with kindergarten children by Iowa State University Extension. For more information about parenting education, contact your local county extension office or access the Iowa State University Extension to Families website, www.extension.iastate.edu/families.

... and justice for all

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