The most important thing parents hold sacred is their child’s health and safety. But it is also something that all of us have a tendency to take for granted at times.

We live in a dangerous world, and there are threats to our children everywhere you turn. In the home, out of the home, while driving, while at play.

Most of us will never have to deal with losing a child. For the parents who have, I’m sure that they’ve had thoughts that somehow it could have been prevented.

Safety is often neglected by parents. It frequently takes a back seat to everyday hassles in our busy lives, though we all know it shouldn’t. The threat of not only death, but more commonly, serious injury, lurks around every corner.

We hope you find this book an easy reference to keep your child safe. We also highly recommend our children’s books for safety. These books can be read to your children teach them in a fun way the most common risks and how to prevent them. From all of us here at Global Children’s Fund, we thank you for taking the initiative to learn how to keep your children safe from harm. Enjoy the book.

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Chapter 1

Becoming Safety Aware
What are the odds?
So what are the realistic odds of your child being injured or killed during their childhood? Well, just take a look. You may be surprised at just how often it actually happens. Accidental childhood deaths rarely make the news, but outnumber kidnapping victims by more than 100 to 1. Serious injuries are usually not noticed by many, while deaths make the headlines and catch the attention of parents. But don’t forget that some of these injuries permanently disable the child. Here are some alarming facts, to help you realize just how important safety measures are:

- Accidental injury is the leading cause of death in children in the United States.
- Every year, there are around 380,000 residential structure fires in the United States.
- Every year, about 800,000 children are reported missing.
- Approximately 5,000 children are injured each year from fireworks.
- Each year, approximately 15 children die, and another 200,000 children visit hospital emergency rooms due to playground injuries.
- Around 100 children each year are abducted and killed at the hands of a stranger.
- Accidental injuries cost the public about 480 Billion dollars per year on hospital and other related expenses.
- Every year, the poison control center receives about 1.1 million reports of unintentional poisoning for children 5 and under.
- There are approximately 33,000 sledding related injuries that require emergency room visits each year.
- Each year, approximately 50,000 children under 16 are seriously injured in skiing accidents.
- Around 150,000 children are treated in hospital emergency rooms each year for toy related injuries.
- Nearly 2000 children die each year in home-related accidents.
- Around 3.4 million emergency room visits due to home accidents or injuries each year.
- Each year, approximately 60 children are killed in accidental firearm deaths, and several hundred more injured.
- Around 1800 children die each year in auto accidents.
- Around 700 youngsters are struck and killed by a car in pedestrian accidents.
- Another 40,000 are treated each year in emergency rooms for pedestrian-car accidents.
- Drowning claims the lives of as many as 1,000 children per year, and another 4,000-5,000 drown and survive, but most often times suffering permanent damage.
- Annually, 1 in 14 students suffer medically treated injuries while at school.
- Each year, around 3.4 million visits by kids 14 and under to the emergency room are due to preventable injuries in the home.
- Around 2000 children 14 and under die each year from preventable home accidents. Around 80% of these are 4 and under.
- Around a dozen children each year die due to toy related injuries, and another 150,000 are treated in hospital emergency rooms.
- Around 1,000 kids choke to death each year.
- Most experts estimate that as many as 60-95 percent of these deaths could have and should have been prevented, with information and simple precautions that are available today.
Safety is an investment, not a chore
Consider the previous numbers to yourself and then consider the payoffs of safety training and prevention. Safety training makes up for itself in both time and money with the prevention of just one of those hazards, which is likely to befall your family at some point during your kids lives. Not to mention the added benefit of protecting your child from the most serious and deadly of those potential outcomes. Safety training with your children is not a chore, it is an investment, and one which will pay off tenfold. You can spend a little bit of time training your kids in safety, and a little bit of money to upgrade your child’s environment. Or, if you choose, you can spend that time and money down the road, sitting in an emergency room and paying ambulance and doctors bills. The choice is yours.

What are the most common risks?
Accidental death is the leading cause of all childhood fatalities in the United States. Here are the most common causes of deaths and serious injuries for children.

- **Auto accident**
  Approximately 1,800 deaths per year
  Approximately 220,000 injuries per year

- **Drowning**
  Approximately 1,000 deaths per year
  Between 4,000 and 5,000 drowning’s each year

- **Airway obstruction**
  Approximately 900 Deaths per year
  Around 18,000 hospital treated injuries

- **Pedestrian**
  Approximately 600 to 800 deaths per year
  Between 40,000 and 50,000 serious injuries each year

- **Fire**
  Between 500 and 600 deaths per year
  Approximately 100,000 emergency room treated burns each year

- **Bicycle**
  Around 150 deaths each year
  Around 280,000 Hospital treated emergencies

- **Accidental Poisoning**
  Around 100 children each year
  Around 115,000 hospital visits
  More than a million calls to poison control every year for accidental child poisoning.

- **Falls**
  Around 100 deaths each year
  More than 2.3 million hospital treated visits for falls each year
Guns
Around 60 deaths each year.
Several hundred emergency room visits for accidental shootings
8,300 emergency room visits for air gun injuries

Other Causes
Such as playground injuries, sports injuries, toy related injuries, and other causes
Around 500-600 deaths per year.
Several million injuries

Teaching without scaring
Generally speaking, most children will be able to handle this information without showing any fears from it. You will be teaching them about some scary situations, and it is possible for a child to become fearful if not handled correctly by the parent. Some suggestions for parents to teach this material without scaring their children are listed below.

• Remind children that you are teaching them these things so that they will be safe all of the time, and not because you think that something bad will happen to them. Chances are nothing like this would ever happen, but we need to work on being safe no matter what happens, just in case.
• Make sure you do not give children the impression that all the world is bad. Explain to them that most people are kind, caring people who love children and would not do anything to harm them. But there are also a few bad people out there who like to hurt children, and we need to be extra careful to keep the bad people from hurting us.
• Remind children that by learning this, they will be safe no matter what happens. They are learning how to keep safe in all these situations, so there is no reason to be scared.
• Avoid using words such as death or die, especially with young children. ‘Hurt’ or ‘harm’ is more effective, and something the child has dealt with. Young children do not even begin to understand or comprehend death until about age 6 or 7.

Handling any fears that may come up
Should your have child does end up with a particular fear over anything, take the following steps:

• Always respect a child’s fears. Never indicate in any way that a child’s fears are ‘silly’ or ‘babyish’ Even if they do seem futile, they are not to the child. Always respect a child’s fears.
• Follow these steps for putting a child’s fears at rest:
  1) Talk to the child to find out what’s really scaring them. Often times it may be something different than the obvious. Ask them questions to find out what’s really wrong.
  2) Have a talk with the child about why it scares them. Again, it may not always be the obvious.
  3) Help the child to overcome their fear by putting it into real terms, and talking about how they can keep safe from it. If the child is scared about a fire happening, you can remind her that as long as she follows the rules and knows how to get out, fire will never get her.
Chapter 2

Abduction Prevention
The problem
Child abductions that result in murder are rare, but they sure make the headlines. However, even one of these cases is too many. Each year, there are about 100 children who are abducted and later found murdered.

Nearly 3/4th of all children abducted in these instances, are dead within three hours of the abduction. It leaves authorities in a tough position to act in a child abduction. It also leaves it almost completely in the hands of the child to either avoid the abduction to begin with, or to escape and elude death at the hands of his or her attacker.

Most abductions like this are a crime of opportunity. Very few are planned out. So with a little bit of precautions training with your child, you can ensure that they survive any potential abduction.

Don’t take chances
Many times, children are abducted because parents take chances with their kids that they probably shouldn’t. Try to avoid things like...

- Don’t send children even on short errands to the store for mile, or similar type situations.
- Avoid having your children play outside in the yard after dark, unless there is a parent supervising. For that matter, have a parent around to supervise any time children are playing in the front yard.
- If children are ever on their own, keep them in pairs. A lone child is a much bigger target for an abductor.
- Get a watch going with other neighborhood parents, so that children are always supervised at the bus stop or walking to and from school. If it is possible, take turns walking the kids from the bus stop to reduce the threat of not only an abductor, but of a possible pedestrian accident.

Remember that most murder abductions are abductions of opportunity. Do your best to eliminate that opportunity to begin with.

Teaching children to be street smart
There are several ways that children can increase their safety chances when they are out and about in their neighborhood. Teach children these basic rules for being street smart, and make sure that you check with your children that these rules are being followed as much as possible. If your child wants to go somewhere, make sure it is arranged for another friend to go with her. On a regular basis, ask who your child played with, who they walked with, which route they took, etc. Safety starts with parents who press the issue.

- Teach your kids to always go with another friend or adult whenever they are out and about. There is safety in numbers, and it is always more difficult for a potential abductor to target two children as opposed to one. Rarely does this happen. They will go after a child who is all alone, so that they can snatch them quickly without any witnesses.
- Tell them to stay out in the open. Avoid going places where nobody else can see you. People sometimes look for kids in places where the child can’t be seen easily.
- Children need to pay attention to your surroundings. Keep an eye out for everything around you. Cars that go by, people that are out and about, etc. If you see anything that looks suspicious, stay away from it.
- If they walk to school, always direct them to walk along the same route. Discuss with them the best route to school, and always stay on that route, so that people know where to look in case you are missing.
About strangers

Children have a hard time with the concept of a stranger. They generally think of strangers as monsters in the dark, or shady looking individuals. This concept is especially important to push with younger children (3-6). Studies have shown that a parent not only needs to tell children to stay away from strangers, but they also need to teach the definition of a stranger.

- Clearly define who a stranger is. That a stranger is anyone who they do not know well. Strangers don’t look mean or different, they look like normal people. It is just anyone they are not familiar with. Strangers are mostly good people. But we don’t know them, and we can’t tell by looking whether or not they are good or bad. Because of this, we need to stay away from all strangers.
- Tell children that the only time they are allowed to talk to strangers is if they have their parents or another adult by their side.

Lures

Teach children that strangers sometimes might try to trick them to get them to go somewhere with them, so that they can take them away. This is called a lure. Teach children these concepts about a lure:

- Review some of these common lures listed below. Encourage a discussion on how they would feel if someone actually asked them:
  1) Would you like to come see my puppy?
  2) I’ve been going up and down the street looking for my lost puppy and haven’t been able to find him. Can you come help me look?
  3) I’ve got a gun in the car. Get in with me right now or I’ll shoot you.
  4) Your mom was in a car accident and she’s at the hospital, she sent me to come pick you up and take you there.
  5) I’m going to the school right now, would you like a ride?
  6) Excuse me, I was wondering if you could come show me the way to the police station.
  7) I found this backpack laying on the side of the road and I was wondering if you could come look at it and tell me who it belongs to.
- Tell children that they should never believe a stranger or go anywhere or do anything with a stranger, no matter what that person says. Even if they know your name or your parent’s name, or if they claim to know your parents, don’t believe them. Never go with a stranger.
- If someone in an unmarked car says they are a policeman, even if they are wearing a uniform or show you a badge, find an adult around to check them out before you go with them.
- Teach kids that an adult would never try to get a strange kid to go anywhere with them, because this is not normal behavior. If an adult is doing this, it is only because they are doing something they shouldn’t be.

If a stranger approaches them

The best way to keep safe in the event of an attempted stranger abduction, is simply to stay away to begin with. Teach children what to do in the event that a stranger approaches them:

From a car...
- Keep away from the car. Never walk to the window or get closer to talk to the person, no matter what he or she says. Stay as far away from the car as you can.
• Decline the persons offer. If you are close to home or a friends house, go there and tell someone what happened.
• If you are away from home, go into a business and tell them what is happening. If there are no businesses around, start running in the opposite direction while yelling “Help, stranger!” As a last resort you could go to any house and scream for help.
• Call the police.

If approached on foot...
• Decline the offer. Never do anything a stranger invites you to do.
• Start walking to the adult you are with or to the area with the most people, staying as far away from the person who approached you as you can. You could also shout out “mom!” and start running in that direction even if she isn’t there.
• Have someone call the police.

Teach children that if they ever feel as though they are in danger, they shouldn’t hesitate to run. Tell them to run to a friend’s house, business, or if they are in immediate danger, they can go into any house and scream for help. (Explain to them the difference between them going to a stranger for help and a stranger coming to them.)

Tell children that if they are ever grabbed by an assailant, they should scream “Stranger! Let go of me” or “Stranger, don’t touch me like that!” or “Stranger, don’t touch me there!” They should try biting, kicking, screaming, poking in the eyes, grabbing onto anything they can, anything to try to get away or keep the person from taking them.

**Code Words**
A code word is often used by some to serve as a password to identify the person as the one that is ok to go with. We do not endorse the use of code words for the following reasons: Although they have been shown to work before, there are many other effective means to deal with a potential abductor that are far safer.

Children sometimes forget their code word. They will ask for it, but go with whatever the person says because they forget their code word. There have also been times where it seems an abductor has been successful in guessing the code word. When children come up with code words to use, it is often a favorite food, a favorite animal, or other child favorite. It is not as foolproof as one might suspect.

Most importantly, there is no reason for code words. Unless you make a habit of constantly having other children come to pick up your child *without* telling them about it first, code words are unnecessary. Children should not be giving any extra time to a potential abductor by standing there asking for a code word. If someone they don’t know approaches them and asks them to come with them, the question should never be academic. Just run.

**Rules About friends**
Unfortunately, about half of the children abducted and murdered in the United States are taken by someone they have an acquaintance with, and sometimes know well. Nearly all of the children who are abducted and not killed are taken by a close family member or friend of the family.
• Try not to get in the habit of having other people pick up your child, especially without telling your child first. Parents who do this greatly increase the chances of someone they know snatching their child, for whatever reason they have in mind.
Teach children that if anyone they know ever tries to pick them up without you telling them about it first, they should ask another adult. This won’t necessarily prevent an abduction, but it will almost always deter anyone who is thinking of a murder. Also, doing this allows school officials, or anyone else a chance to verify and check the validity of the person trying to pick your child up. Something that otherwise may have been ignored.

**The golden rule**

Teach children this valuable rule: It doesn’t matter who it is or what the situation, if you are ever unsure about something or someone, ask for another adult’s help. Whether it be protection from sexual abuse or abductions, or even other safety issues for that matter, this is an invaluable rule for children to learn and get into the habit of doing.

If a friend picks you up and you are not sure, ask another adult first. If someone wants to do something with you that makes you feel funny, ask another adult first. If a friend wants you to do something with them and you are not sure, ask an adult first. Always ask whenever you aren’t sure.

**What to do if lost**

Children get lost all the time. Whether in a grocery store, mall, or large gathering, it will happen. Normally it is nothing more than a scary experience for the child and a nerve-wracking time for their parents. However, it is important that we prepare children for the chance that they may get lost. Not only will it lead to the experience getting resolved quicker, but more importantly, avoid the chance of a snatch.

- When going to amusement parks and other crowded events, carry a current photo of your children and designate a pre-planned meeting place in case they get separated.
- Tell children that if they are ever lost, they should look for a policeman, security officer, fireman, or somebody else in uniform to go to. If there are no policeman around, they should go into a store or business and tell someone who is working that they are lost and need help finding their parents.
- Tell children that they should try to stay as calm as possible if they ever do get lost. Remind them that if this ever happens, as long as they do what they are supposed to do, they will eventually find their parents again.
- To avoid getting lost in the first place, tell children that whenever they are in crowded places they should stay close to their parents and hold their hand if possible. Don’t go wandering off or leave to look at something, even for a minute, because all it takes is a few seconds for you to get separated from your parents and lost.

**Cell Phones**

As weird as it sounds to equip a child with a cell phone, especially to old fashioned folk, cell phones can be a wonderful tool in the fight for child safety. They are especially handy if you ever have your child walk home by themselves to an empty house, or ‘latchkey children’, as they are sometimes called.

- Instruct your child to call you as soon as they get out of school. Many parents even talk with their children about their day as they walk home from school, so that the parents can check up and at the same time be on the line to ensure a safe trip home.
- Once home, have your child call you again, to let you know that they are safe.
- Have them keep the cell phone on themselves even while at home, so if by chance an emergency should arise, they will always be able to call for help.
Home Invasions

Home invasions have made the news lately as an alarming form of child abduction. Someone will sneak into the house at night, and snatch the child from his or her room right underneath their parents noses. Even more troubling, victims of this type of abduction are rarely ever found alive again.

Teaching children what to do in this circumstance could very easily save many of these children. The problem is, during this type of abduction, children have no idea what to do. It is a scary situation, and they do what the abductor wants usually because of threats of death if they do not comply. An abductor will hold a knife to the child’s throat, or a gun, and tell the child that if they make a sound they will kill them. The child then walks with the attacker as silent as can be out of the house, and is usually never seen alive again.

Children need to be taught to not keep quiet during this ordeal. They need to scream, holler, call for their parents, and fight the abductor as much as they can. If the abductor was not planning on killing your child, they won’t do so simply because they don’t comply. They will run when they encounter an unwilling child who is making lots of noise. If the abductor was planning on killing your child, there is a chance they will if the child is not compliant, but there is a much more likely chance they will simply take off, not having the chance to carry out their plan as desired. Being silent is death. Kicking and screaming will in most cases result in the child’s life being spared.

- Try to get in the habit of locking your doors at night. Don’t make it any easier on someone than you have to. These people usually take the path of least resistance, and that will in most cases be a child who lives in a house where they are an easy target.
- Try sleeping with bedroom doors open at night, between your child’s room and your bedroom. (If you keep them closed for intimacy, open them up afterwards.) You don’t want your child to be screaming for help and not be heard.
- Tell children that if they were to ever wake up at night and find someone in their room, no matter what that person says, no matter what that person has, they should scream as loud as they can.
- Explain to them that people who say they will kill them are just saying that so that they go along with what they want. If they do listen to them and go with them, that person really might kill them. But if they scream and fight, the person will probably run away.
- Tell children to make as much noise as they can. If they put their hand over your mouth, move your head around and grab at their arm so you can make noise. Kick the walls or anything you can kick to make noise. Bit the hand if they hold it over your mouth. Whatever they can do to make noise.
- Teach children never to go anywhere quietly with anybody who wakes them up at night, even someone they know. Remember, more than half of all child murderers know the child and the culprit is usually familiar with the house. Another possible threat is caused by the abductor treating the child as a “friend”. They could convince the child to willingly sneak out of the house.
Chapter 3

Fire Safety
Understanding the danger
Each year in the United States, around 4,300 people lose their lives in house fires. Many more are injured. Around 3,600 youngsters are seriously injured or killed each year due to fire. Forty percent of these victims are under the age of 5, 70% are under 10, and children playing with fire is the leading cause of fire related deaths of children. In fact, fire or burns is the third leading cause of unintentional injuries in children. Every year, around 850 youngsters lose their lives in house fires. Smoke inhalation, not the fire itself, is the leading cause of death in fire related fatalities.

Once again, the most tragic thing about these numbers, is that nearly every single one of these children would still be alive......if a few simple steps were taken to insure child safety when it comes to fire. Please read this section carefully, and take to heart all of the things contained, to insure your family is never among any of those statistics.

Fire causes
A 3 year average study by the U.S.. Fire Administration, determined the following causes of fatal residential fires:

- Smoking: 24%
- Arson: 20%
- Heating: 13%
- Cooking: 11%
- Electrical problem: 9%
- Open flame: 7%
- Children playing: 7%
- Other causes: 9%

Most fatal fires start either in the sleeping area of the house or the Lounge, Followed closely by the kitchen area, followed up by all other area’s of the house.

The first line of defense...smoke detectors
Without a working smoke detector in the house, all of it’s occupants are sitting ducks in a fire. Many people mistakenly assume that if there was a fire in the house, they would be able to smell the smoke and wake up. Nothing could be farther from the truth. Smoke contains carbon monoxide, an odorless compound. It will not wake you up, no matter how good of a nose you have, but rather, it will put its occupants into a deeper sleep.

Studies show that 80 percent of fire fatalities are attributed to either a non-functioning smoke detector, or no smoke detector at all. The presence of a working smoke detector is the first and most important step in child safety.

- Make sure that your smoke detectors are in good working order, with good batteries. Make a habit of replacing the batteries in your smoke detectors twice per year. Most people find it easy to change their smoke detectors whenever they change their clocks. If not, around the holiday season and around the fourth of July make good times, as people are a little more focused on fire safety then.
- Do a test run in your house. Pick a night, after your children have gone to sleep, to set off your smoke alarms. See if they wake up. Many smoke alarms are simply not adequate to wake a child in sleep. If they don’t wake up, or if it takes a while for them to wake up, you will need to consider updating your system to something better. Or maybe a smoke detector closer to the sleeping area is needed. Check online for more advanced systems.
• One smoke detector is not enough. Equip your house with several...one in the kitchen, one each level, and outside the bedrooms.
• Let your children hear the sound of their smoke detector, so that they know what it sounds like.
• Explain to them that whenever they hear that sound, it means they need to get up right away and get out of the house as fast as they can.
• Let your children be active in helping you maintain the smoke detectors, so their minds can keep focused on safety. When it is time to change the batteries, let your children help you with a ladder, or hold smaller children on your shoulders to help you change them. Keeping them constantly reminded of the smoke detectors in their home helps to ensure quicker recognition if they ever go off.

**Being Prepared**

There are several things all families should do on a regular basis to be prepared, in the event of a fire...

• Come up with a primary and secondary escape plan for each member of the family, and go over it with your children. The first way should be out of their bedroom door and to the nearest outside main level door in the house. A secondary plan should be another way in case the primary path is blocked. Practice two different ways out from every room in the house.
• Practice that escape route periodically throughout the year, having your children do the fire crawl and pretend it was a real fire. Teach them as many different ways out of their bedroom as possible. For extra fun, put a blindfold on to simulate what it would be like in a fire. Make sure they can still find their way around. Practice this often, the kids will have a fun time with it.
• Have a predetermined meeting place outside of your home, so that in the event of a fire, everybody can go there and be accounted for. This is not only for the safety of your children, but also for the safety of firefighters. Firefighters have been killed entering fires to find a child, when the child has been out of the house the entire time, but simply ‘lost’ in the midst of all the commotion going on. Make sure everyone knows where they should meet if there is ever a fire.
• Consider the safety add-ons to your home contained in a later section of this chapter.

**If you see a fire...**

Teach your children, that if they ever see a fire, they should do the following:

• Teach them to scream fire at the top of their lungs.
• Get out of the building immediately. Do not get things, do not look for people, but get out as fast as you can.
• DO NOT HIDE! Too many children have died trying to hide from fires, especially children who accidentally started it themselves. Make sure that children understand, fire does not go away, it only gets bigger. They cannot hide from a fire, it will only get them. The only thing they can do to be safe is get out of the house.

**Teaching children not to play with fire**

Children playing with fire accounts for a large amount of childhood deaths from fire. Sadly, many of the children killed in a fire, started it themselves. It is suspected that around 250,000 fires are set each year in the United States by children under 18. It is important to give children a healthy fear and respect for fire, and emphasize how dangerous it can be.
Many parents don’t realize how young this curiosity with fire can start. Many studies suggest that this curiosity develops even before the age of 3, and there are a large amount of fires that are started by preschool aged children, experimenting with fire. It is important, from a very young age, that you reinforce with your children a healthy respect for fire.

- Make a habit of taking advantage of all the opportunities you have to talk with your children about fire. Whenever you hear on the news or read in a paper about something catching fire, use it to show them how easily fire can spread and how dangerous it can be if not used very carefully.
- Children in a home with smokers are twice as likely to curiosity play with fire than those in non-smoking households. If you have a member of your household that smokes, be sure to take extra precautions to explain to your children the hazards of playing with fire, and make sure you have a responsible smoker, who does not leave his or her lighter or matches lying around the house.
- Just a helpful fact: When children set fires in the home, the most common area is the child’s bedroom. They also tend to set fires in their closets and under their beds, in their bed under the sheets, or other dark places where they can see their creation. These are also usually the most dangerous places they could choose to start a fire.
- If you ever catch your child playing with fire, do not take the situation lightly. Too often, fire-setters who are not given proper guidance will likely do it again, becoming a risk to everyone around them.
- Make a habit of checking under beds and in your child’s closet for burned matches or any evidence that your child may be experimenting with fire.
- Model healthy fire handling yourself. Don’t play with fire or handle it irresponsibly in front of your children.
- Explain to your children that fire is not a toy. It is a tool for adults to use very carefully. Much like a power saw or a stove.
- Explain to them that fire is an unstable substance, and that it can get bigger very quickly if people are not extremely careful.
- Besides teaching children never to play with fire, tell them that if they ever see any matches or lighters laying around they should not touch them and tell an adult right away.
- Show your child some matches and a lighter, while explaining to them the dangers. Use this analogy: Hold the tools up, and explain to them that these are far more dangerous than a gun. Explain to them that, every year, these kill more children than guns do.
- Reward children for telling you if they ever find matches or lighters laying around anywhere. Give them praise for doing the right thing.

If a friend is playing with fire
A child does not have to be the one playing with fire in order to die from the results of it. Many children have been killed because a friend was playing with fire, and they went along, giving in to the other child’s wishes.

- Start off by asking them what they would do if a friend of theirs was playing with fire.
- Tell them that if they ever find anyone else playing with fire, they need to leave the room immediately, and tell the first adult they can find.
- Explain to them that it is much more important that they keep safe, and keep their friend safe, than if they do not tell anyone and end up getting hurt or letting their friend hurt themselves.
- Let them know that they can sometimes get a friend to stop unsafe behavior. If they see a friend who is playing with fire, they need to tell that friend to stop it right away, and let them know how dangerous it is. They need to threaten to tell, and most of the time their friend will choose to play something else.

- Tell children that if they are ever with a friend who wants to play with fire, even if they convince their friend not to, they should tell the parents about the situation so that their mom or dad can have a talk with them to keep them safe. And parents, if kids do the right thing by telling, don’t betray their trust by simply letting the other person know they ratted out their friend. Find a discreet way to have the necessary conversations with the other child.

**Inside a fire**

Being in a house fire can be a very scary experience for a child. If they have not been told what to expect, many children may panic under the pressure, or freeze up and hide. It is important you let them know what they will be dealing with.

A house fire will be dark. It is not like what you see in the movies. It will be pitch black, except for the flames, which will be a glowing orange through the smoke, and won’t provide much help for light. It will be hot. Floor temperature in a room with a fire is usually 100 degrees. At head level it can be as much as 800 degrees. Simply breathing in this air can scorch a persons lungs, killing them almost instantly. Explain to your children the following about fire:

- You probably will not be able to see very well. There will be a lot of smoke, and you might not be able to see more than a foot in front of you. It may also sting your eyes to open them. So if you need to, you can just take quick looks to make sure there is no fire where you need to go, and then shut them again.

- It will be a little bit scary. Just try not to be scared and do what you need to do, do what you were taught, and you will be safe.

- You will have to stay low everywhere you go. In a fire, all of the heat and bad smoke goes to the top, towards the ceiling. You will need to stay as low to the ground as you can.

- Teach children that fire is hot, fire is fast, fire is dark, and fire is deadly!

**The importance of time**

Time is an occupant’s worst enemy in a fire. Fire spreads extremely fast. A simple trash can flame can spread to the entire house in the matter of minutes or even seconds. A hesitation to get out the minute you hear the smoke detector could cost your life, especially since by the time the smoke detector goes off, the fire is often well underway. Children need to understand how important the concept of time is in a fire. Teach them:

- How quickly fire can spread, and how important it is to get out, and get out as quick as they can.
- Tell them not to bother to get dressed when they hear the smoke alarm. Just get out quick, exactly as they are.
- Do not bring anything with them or try to look for things. The only thing worth saving is themselves. It is the only thing we can’t get replace.
- Don’t try to look for where the fire is, just get out.
- Don’t go to your parents’ room or look for your mom or dad, or brother or sister. They will get out on their own. They just need to get out quickly. Their life could be lost in addition to their siblings life.
- Once you are out of the house, do not go back in for anything!!!! The firefighters will soon be there, and they can go back for anything you forgot with their special suits. Stay out, and stay away. Go to your meeting place with your parents. Tell the firefighters of any other people that may still be in the house.
• Give kids an illustration of how quickly fire can spread. Time them, during playtime or other activities, at intervals between 1 and 2 minutes. Let them know that’s how quickly fire can spread, and that is how quick they need to get out when they hear the smoke alarm or see a fire.

**Fire crawl**
There are two fire crawls you should teach children that are fairly simple. The most basic and most commonly used, is to get down on all fours like a dog, and then drop your forearms to the ground, and crawl on them with your nose to the floor. Like this:

![Fire crawl example](image)

The second type of fire crawl is only if the heat is too intense to have your rear end up in the air. This is similar, only instead of crawling on your knees, you press your legs flat on the floor, and use your forearms and leg motion to crawl around like a snake, like this:

![Fire crawl example](image)

Teach children the two different types of fire crawls, and practice with them. You can make some fun out of it by creating obstacle courses around your house for them to do the fire crawl with.

**The bed roll**
The difference between the temperature at bed level and that if a child sits up, can be as much as a few hundred degrees in a fire. Because of this, children should learn how to roll out of their bed in the event of a fire.

*First*
Turn over or roll in your bed so that your head is by the side and facing down to the floor.

*Second*
Put the hand that is closest to that side of the bed down, and slide themselves gently to the floor.

Have children practice this a couple times on their own bed to get used to it. If possible, set off your fire alarm while doing it, so that they learn to associate that sound with rolling out of their bed.

**Checking Doors**
A flash over occurs when a fire is suddenly supplied with fresh oxygen. It creates a explosion like force that will consume a room. When a fire is burning in a room with a door closed, there may be little or no smoke actually coming
out of the bottom of the door. After all, smoke rises. That door is creating a natural barrier to the other side. But when that door is opened, it will create an explosive force that will instantly ignite the room.

- Teach children how to test a door. Tell them to press the back of their hand against the door. If it feels hot to the touch, do not open it. If it feels cool or just a little bit warm, crack open the door slightly and peek outside. If everything is clear, proceed and close the door behind you. It’s important to close the door to slow the progress of the fire. Tell them to do this on every closed door they encounter.
- Teach children to always open doors slowly, putting their shoulder against the door. If they see the fire right outside or lots of smoke suddenly comes in, shut the door immediately and choose another way.
- Have your children test a door in your house under normal circumstances. Let them get a good idea for how it feels, so that they will not be unsure in a fire. Have them practice the technique for slowly opening it.

**If trapped**
If a child’s way out is blocked, then they should go to a secondary route. If there are no good secondary routes, they should...

- Get to a room with a window outside, and a door. If they can get to a room on the main floor, do it. Close the door, and go to the window.
- If not, return to their room, and close the door to their bedroom, to create a natural barrier for the fire to buy more time.
- Open the window to the room they are in. If they are on the first level or basement, and can climb out the window safely, do so.
- If they are not on the first level, they should open their window enough so that they can breathe and yell. They should stay at the window as long as they can and yell for help. Wave a towel or piece of clothing to let firefighters know where you are.
- You can teach older children to make an escape using a fire ladder if it is available.
- Teach children how to open windows in your house, and make sure they can do it. Be sure to emphasize they are only to do this in a fire, and let them know they are never to mess with the windows unless it is an emergency.

**Get out and stay out**
Emphasize the point over and over again, that once children get out of the house, they are to stay outside. They do not go back in for anything. Not if they forgot their doll or favorite toy, not if they can’t find their parents, even if their brother or sister may be inside. They should be told that the other children have the same training and they may already be outside. Once they are out of the house, they stay out. The only people who go back in are the firefighters.

- Explain to children how quickly fire spreads. Once they get out, there is no way they would have enough time to go back inside and get out again. They would die.....period.
- Explain to children that in a house fire, firefighters will be on their way. It is the firefighters job to go inside the house and put out the fire, and rescue anyone still inside.
Firefighters are your friends!
It’s unfortunate, but children are often times killed because they hide from a firefighter. A fire is a scary ordeal as it is. Then when they see a firefighter dressed in what looks like a big space suit who is breathing like Darth Vader and carrying an axe around, they can get even more afraid.

- Teach children that firefighters are their friends. Even though they may look scary, they are there to protect them. If they see a firefighter, they should crawl to them as fast as they can.
- Show them a picture of a firefighter in full uniform, and talk about what they look like. Then explain that this person is just a normal person who wears a lot of equipment to keep themselves safe.
- Go over what that equipment is and what it is used for. That the axe helps them to break down doors and walls in a fire so they can get to people to help them. That the suit they wear helps keep them safe in a fire. That their helmet and oxygen tanks help them breathe in all the smoke, and that is why they look and sound funny.

Simple Fire prevention tips
Many fires can be prevented from occurring in the first place. If there were only a few simple precautions made on a regular basis, a lot of property and lives would be spared

- Mind your Turkey Dinner!!! On Thanksgiving Day, the amount of fires and the deaths double from what they are on an average day.
- During the holiday season, Keep a natural tree in your house for the least time possible. Be sure to get a fresh tree that isn’t too dry, and take extra precautions around this potential bonfire sitting in your living room.
- If you see a fire start, you have 30 seconds to get it put out and contained. After that, you should consider evacuating the house and calling the fire department.
- After a natural disaster, such as a flood, hurricane, tornado damage, or severe thunderstorm, be sure to have your house checked over for any gas or electrical housings that may have been damaged in the storm. Try to turn off electricity at main breaker and natural gas where it goes into house, if possible. The electricity supply should be the first priority because a natural gas or propane can’t be ignited without a source of electricity.
- Be sure too keep all matches and lighters locked away from children.
- Do not smoke in the house.
- Never overload circuits or use too many octopus outlets. If your lights flicker or dim when extra appliances are plugged in, the circuits are overloaded, and you should move some of the electricity appliances over to another circuit. Consult a qualified electrician if necessary to add more outlets or circuits if needed.
- Be sure to replace any electrical appliance or cord if the cord is even slightly torn or frayed. It isn’t worth the risk. A fire is possible if the cord is exposed.
- Remove security bars from the windows in your house, if you have them. Or be sure that they can be easily removed from the inside in the event of a fire.
- Keep the stove clean of grease and build up. Also don’t lay any combustible material close by the stove, such as food cartons, napkins, etc. This is a common cause of kitchen fires.
- Never use candles or space heaters where a pet can tip them over and start a fire. Put out all candles before going to bed.
Fire prevention devices for your home
Here are some great things you can add to your house that increase your chances of surviving and minimizing damage in a house fire:

Fire extinguishers
A very helpful thing to have on hand in the kitchen and in the garage. (All purpose rated for both grease and electrical fires) Also consider adding one to your furnace room or in the hallway near your bedrooms.

Safety ladders
If you have bedrooms on the second floor, consider adding a safety ladder in every room. Keep it under the bed or next to a window to allow for quick escape in the event an occupant is trapped in a fire and must exit the window. Make sure all occupants know how to use the ladders.

Fire suppression systems, sprinklers
There are now many home sprinkler systems available. Contrary to popular belief, these are not manufactured to all go off at once, or to go off for small things like burning something on the stove. They raise your chances of survival greatly, and protect property as well. A system will cost a few thousand dollars, but it is well worth looking into.

Smoke alarms, the more the better.
Go smoke alarm happy in your house. Consider updating your system, or installing additional smoke detectors. The more you have, the higher your odds of surviving a house fire.

Carbon monoxide systems-detectors
Consider adding carbon monoxide detectors to your house as well. Carbon monoxide is a silent but deadly killer. These can be purchased at most local home or hardware stores. While these aren’t as effective as smoke alarms for fires, they are most effective for furnace combustion or leak problems and can save the entire families lives in the event of a malfunctioning furnace.
Chapter 4

Health & Safety
The information contained here is provided to parents as a quick reference and guidelines for handling various emergencies that may arise pertaining to the health or safety of your child.

This information was gathered from the most accurate data at the time of publication. However, it is not intended to be a complete training, nor is it intended to substitute for advice from a medical professional.

We highly recommend all parents take a class in adult/child first aid and CPR. These are invaluable skills that all parents should know. Please contact your local chapter of the American Red Cross for info and times on these classes, or look up information online by visiting www.redcross.org.

With those precautions in mind, here is a summary reference of first aid for you in the event of an emergency. Study this information well before the emergency happens, since you won’t necessarily have time during the emergency.
Assessing an emergency scene

Assessing an emergency scene is the first step to giving someone help in a crisis. This will help you in performing the right sequence of aid and possible hazards from taking the wrong steps. For instance, if approaching a car accident on a busy highway, you would need to assess the safety in getting to the victims. If a person has been exposed to electrocution, walking up and grabbing them yourself will do little good.

Make sure it is safe before you give assistance. Look all around the emergency scene to try and determine the cause of the injury, and look for signs that there could still be danger present.

Always call your 911 emergency number. In most cases this is the first thing to do. If possible, have someone else call while you wait by the victim. Instruct a specific person to call, so there are no mistakes about who was supposed to do it.

ABC’s

ABC’s, simply stand for airway, breathing, and circulation. It is the progression emergency responders use when coming onto an injured victim.

Airway

Clear the victim’s airway by lifting the head back and tilting the chin, so the victims face is facing slightly up and backwards.

Breathing

Check the victims breathing by looking, listening, and feeling for chest movement.

Circulation

Check for signs of circulation or pulse. If the victim is breathing, coughing, or showing signs of movement, they have a pulse. They could not do these things without one.

CPR

CPR, stands for Cardio Pulmonary Resuscitation. It is a combination of rescue breathing and chest compressions, designed to keep oxygen rich blood flowing to the brain and other parts of the body. Without oxygen and blood to the brain, permanent brain damage and death can occur in less than 8 minutes.

When it comes to CPR, many people think that you are performing the operation to get a persons heart started. In reality, most often, performing CPR will not start a persons heart, although in children, you are more likely to be able to do so than in adults. This is a common misperception, from watching too many TV shows that depict a person trying CPR to get the person’s heart started again, and then giving up after a minute. The main function of CPR, is to continue to keep the circulation of blood flowing to the brain, until paramedics can arrive to restart the person’s heart. You are basically pumping the heart for them, in an attempt to avoid brain death. When paramedics arrive, they can use electrical shock, and other more effective means of actually restarting the heart.

CPR is recommended for all parents. It is a good thing to know, and may be used more often than you think. It can be done in a day on the weekend, where instructors will teach you techniques, methods, and let you get real life practice on mannequins of infants, children, and adults. If you blow too much air into an infant, you can collapse their lungs, or if you try to perform CPR too lowdown on their chest, you can break off the sternum and cause a fatal
injury. We recommend all parents take a CPR course to become comfortable in performing these valuable techniques in an emergency. Doing them incorrectly can cause serious damage.

**Head injuries**

Head injuries are common place in children. Because of their activeness, and head to body ratio, their head takes a lot of thumping. Most head injuries involve common bumps, clunks, and bruises, but serious injuries are also *way* too common place. TBI, (Traumatic Brain Injury) is the leading killer and disabler in children. Each year it kills around 3,000, and disables another 29,000. Needless to say, the brain is the most important part of your body, and though cushioned inside the skull, it is still extremely sensitive and prone to injury.

**When to call the doctor:**

- If your child lost consciousness, even for any amount of time.
- If your child is an infant and sustained a bad blow.
- If your child will not stop crying.
- If your child becomes difficult to console.
- If your child isn’t walking normally afterwards.
- If he or she seems confused or delirious

**Signs of a concussion or internal injury:**

- Unconsciousness
- Abnormal breathing
- Serious wound or fracture to the skull
- Bleeding or clear fluid from the nose, ear, or mouth
- Disruption of speech or vision
- Pupils of unequal size
- Weakness or paralysis
- Dizziness
- Neck pain or stiffness
- Seizures
- Vomiting more than two to three times afterwards
- Loss of bladder or bowel control

If your child shows any of these signs after a head injury, call for emergency help immediately.

**If your child is unconscious:**

- Do not try to move him or her in case they have sustained a neck or spine injury.
- Call 911.
- Check vital signs, perform CPR if necessary
- If your child vomits or has a seizure, turn them to the side while trying to keep the head straight and restrict movement.
- Apply ice pack or cold pack while waiting for emergency crews if swelling of the wound needs to be minimized
If your child is conscious:

- Try to keep them calm or still as best as you can
- Apply a sterile bandage if there is external bleeding
- Do not attempt to cleanse the wound. This can increase bleeding, and cause serious complications if there is a skull fracture.
- Do not apply direct pressure to a head wound if you suspect a possible skull fracture
- Do not remove any objects stuck in the wound.
- Watch for signs of a concussion, such as feeling dazed, dizzy, light headed, or seeing stars; Trouble remembering things, such as what happened right before the injury, nausea or vomiting, headaches, blurred vision, sensitivity to light, slurred speech, confusion, difficulty concentrating or making decisions, coordination difficulties, or feeling overly tired. If your child shows signs of a concussion, take them to your doctor or emergency room immediately.

Hypothermia and Frost Bite

Too much of a cold thing can result in hypothermia and frostbite. Frostbite is relatively common, as are mild forms of hypothermia. But both have a potential to be deadly or debilitating, so parents should use extra caution.

Mild Frostbite:
Mild frostbite is common. It is shown usually by white, waxy, or grayish-yellow patches on the affected areas. The skin feels cold and numb. The skin surface may feel stiff.

Get the person inside and out of the cold immediately. Remove all restrictive clothing. You can warm your child’s frostbitten part by placing the hand or foot against your belly, or wrapping the frostbitten member in blankets. Monitor the child and the suspected frostbite, seek medical attention if needed.

Severe frostbite:
The skin usually looks waxy and pale. Blisters may also form. The person may have lost sensations to the affected part of their body. Deep frostbite needs to be treated by medical personnel. Get the person indoors and to a doctor or emergency room immediately. Do not rub the frostbitten area.

Hypothermia:
Symptoms of hypothermia include a change in the persons mental status or cognitive ability, uncontrollable shivering, cool abdomen, and low body temperatures. Extreme hypothermia may cause rigid muscles, dark, puffy skin, an irregular heartbeat, irregular breathing, or unconsciousness.

To treat hypothermia, get the victim indoors into a warm environment. Remove any wet clothing. If you suspect anything more than mild hypothermia, contact emergency help immediately. Handle the patient gently, and cover them with any insulation you can find, such as pillows, blankets, clothing, or if necessary, newspaper or another person. Be sure to cover the person’s head as well, as most heat escapes through the head.
**Heat stroke**

Minor heat stroke, or heat exhaustion, is commonplace in children. The easiest away to avoid heat stroke is simply to always make sure there is a lot of water around whenever doing outdoor activities or trips. Adequate water encourages normal sweating, which cools the body. Heat stroke can be a serious and life threatening condition.

**Signs of minor heat stroke or heat exhaustion:**
- Fatigue
- Weakness
- Dizziness or headache
- Nausea
- Pale, cool, moist skin

**Signs of serious heat stroke:**
- Cognitive impairment, such as confusion, delirium, or unconsciousness.
- Skin that is hot and dry, even under the armpits

**Treating heat stroke:**
- Call 911 if you suspect serious heat stroke
- Remove the child from the sun and into a cool room
- Remove unnecessary clothing. Strip the child to their underwear if possible
- Apply cool, wet towels around the child’s head and body, or sponge their body with cool water. (Not too cold, as this could cause shock)
- Offer the child plenty of fluids, although offer them slowly (sips).
- Do not administer any over the counter medications

**Dehydration**

It is important for parents to monitor the signs of dehydration, and to respond quickly. Younger children and infants should be watched very closely, as they are more likely to become dehydrated than older children.

**Signs of dehydration:**
- Dehydration usually occurs if your child has a fever, diarrhea, is vomiting, or sweats a lot during a hot day or physical activity. Watch very carefully for signs of dehydration during these high risk times.
- Your child has a dry or sticky mouth
- Your child has few or no tears when crying
- Eyes that look sunken into the head
- A ‘soft spot’ on your infants head that looks sunken
- Lack of urine or wet diapers for 6-8 hours in an infant
- Small amount of dark yellow urine in an infant
- Lack of urine for 12 hours in an older child, or small amount of dark yellow urine
- Dry, cool skin
- Lethargy or irritability
- Fatigue or dizziness in an older child
Treating dehydration:
- Allow older children to drink as much water as he or she wants.
- Water is the best fluid to drink at first. Gatorade or other fluids can be administered after an hour or two, but start with water.
- Remove the child from the source of dehydration, (such as the sun) if possible.
- In infants, continue breastfeeding, but stop formula. An oral rehydration solution can be given between breast-feedings or in the place of formula.

Bleeding
Blood is not an uncommon sight for parents of young children, as they are constantly hurting themselves with minor cuts and abrasions through normal play. Some cuts, however, can be life threatening. Here are some guidelines for handling everything from the minor to severe.

Proper treatment for small cuts:
- Rinse the wound thoroughly with water to clean out dirt and debris.
- Wash the wound with a mild soap and rinse thoroughly.
- Cover the wound with a sterile adhesive bandage or sterile gauze and tape.
- Examine the wound daily to ensure it is healing.
- Apply a new bandage if the old one gets wet.
- Call your child’s doctor if the wound is red, swollen, unusually tender, warm, or draining pus.

Proper treatment for a large cut:
- Wash the wound thoroughly with water, both to clean the wound and to get an idea of the size of the laceration.
- Place a piece of sterile gauze or a clean cloth over the entire wound. If possible, raise the bleeding body part above the level of your child’s heart.
- Never apply a tourniquet.
- Apply direct pressure to the wound for 5 minutes.
- Seek the help of a doctor or Emergency medical care to assess the need for stitches or emergency treatment.

Nosebleeds:
- Have the child sit up with his or her head tilted slightly forward.
- Do not have the child lean back as this may cause gagging, coughing, or vomiting.
- Pinch the soft part of the nose, just below the bony part, for at least 10 minutes.
- Call for emergency care if the bleeding is heavy, or accompanied by dizziness or weakness, or if the nosebleed persists after 20 minutes or is the result of a blow to the head or a fall.
- Consult a doctor if your child has frequent nosebleeds, may have put something in his or her nose to cause the nosebleed, or has recently started a new medication.

Signs of internal bleeding:
- Pain and tenderness in suspected site of the injury
- Swelling or discoloration
- Bleeding from the mouth, rectum, vagina, ears, or other orifice.
- Vomiting or coughing up blood
- Fainting or signs of going into shock
- Swelling of the abdomen or abdominal pain
Recognizing signs of shock

Shock is a state the body can enter into as a response of either serious trauma or intense pain. Shock is a very real and deadly condition, and should not be treated lightly. Shock can often occur as a deadly side effect to an otherwise non-fatal injury, such as a broken leg. Below are the most common symptoms of shock:

Symptoms of shock:
- Cold sweat
- Weakness
- Irregular breathing (see below)
- Chills
- Pale or blue colored lips
- Pale or blue colored fingernails
- A fast, but weak pulse
- Nausea
- Disorientation

Shock is a very serious condition and needs to be addressed immediately. Shock is an actual medical condition, that basically shuts the body’s systems down to deal with extreme pain or trauma.  Shock can result in death, whether or not the injury that caused the shock was life threatening. If you suspect your child is going into shock, call 911 immediately. While you are waiting for emergency crews, you should....

- Get your child to a comfortable spot
- Keep your child warm by covering with a blanket
- Do not offer the child food or drink
- Do your best to relax and calm the child.

Respiratory rate

This is the rate at which a person breathes. It increases with fever, illness, and shock. To count the respiratory rate in your child, remove their shirt, and count the number of times the chest rises in 1 full minute. Or do this for 15 seconds and multiply that number by 4 to get a rate per minute.

Normal newborn respiration rate: 40-60 breaths per minute
Normal 1-6 year old respiration rate: 18-26 breaths per minute
7 years to adult respiration rate: 12-24 breaths per minute
Broken bones
Broken bones are all too common in children. Most often, broken bones are not life threatening, though they do require you to seek immediate medical care.

Signs of a broken bone
- You or the child heard a “snap”, “grinding noise”, or “pop” during the injury
- There is swelling, bruising, or tenderness
- The pain is one that feels like “pins and needles”
- It is painful to move the injured area or bear weight on it.
- There is a protruding bone or disfigurement in the area (obvious visual signs of damage)

If you suspect a broken bone:
- Remove clothing from the injured part
- Apply a cold pack wrapped in cloth to the injured area
- Keep the injured limb in the position you found it.
- Splint the extremity if possible, by using soft padding near the injured part, and placing something firm like a board or rolled up newspapers to splint it. Keep the splint in place with first aid tape. Do not keep it too tight.
- Seek medical care immediately
- Do not allow the child to eat, in case for some reason surgery is needed to repair the injury

Burns
Burns are common among young children. Way too common. In 2003, an estimated 83,000 children ages 14 and under were treated in emergency rooms for burns. Most were thermal burns (52,200), followed by scald burns (21,000), with 6100 chemical burns and 1,400 electrical burns.

Children 4 and under are at the most risk for burns, with a burn injury death rate of more than double that of children ages 5-14. Worse yet, nearly all of these can be prevented through simple measures.

Caring for a heat burn:
- Remove the child from the heat source
- Cool the area with cold water or cold compresses until pain is reduced or alleviated.
- If the burn is serious, DO NOT apply ice or an ice pack ,as this could send the victim into shock.
- Do not attempt to remove clothing or any other items that my be stuck to the burn area. If necessary, cut the clothing from around the burn
- Do not try to break any blisters that have formed. Leave the burn area alone.

Caring for an electrical burn
- Call 911 immediately.
- Unplug the device that has caused the electrical burn. If necessary, cut off the main power supply to the outlet.
- Check the child for breathing and pulse.
- Perform CPR if necessary.
- Don’t give the child anything to eat or drink.
- Lay the child on his or her back unless another injury is suspected. In that case, do not move the child.
- Keep the child’s normal body temperature. Provide blankets if they are cold.
Elevate your child’s feet and legs.

**Burn Prevention:**
Simple burn prevention steps could prevent nearly every childhood burn from occurring in the first place:

- Keep all hot liquids safely out of the reach of children. Scald burns are the most common among younger children, because their curiosity has them reaching for things higher than them (such as on the stove or counter). They can easily pull off that cup of hot coffee, that pan on the stove, or another hot liquid right onto themselves.
- Turn pot handles toward the stove back when cooking, and use the back burners of the stove whenever possible.
- Drink all hot liquids in a spill proof container.
- Lower the setting of your water heater to below 120 degrees to avoid scald burns.
- Keep children out of the room when cooking, as grown-ups can be prone to accidents as well.
- Encourage use of hats during outdoor activities.
- Monitor children around all fire pits and fireplaces.
- Apply sunscreen to children frequently during outdoor activities. A sunscreen with an SPF of 45 is suggested for maximum protection.

**Insect bites and stings**
Most insect bites and stings are nothing more than irritating. However, they can often become complicated in children who are highly allergic, or by an insect or spider that is poisonous. Most often, insect and spider bites or stings can be safely treated at home. But you do need to monitor the situation closely.

**For insect stings or bites:**
- Remove the child from the area he or she was stung or bitten
- Try to locate the culprit. Especially if you suspect a spider bite, early identification of the insect in question can help determine the type of need for medical care.
- If a stinger is visible, remove it by gently scraping the skin horizontally with the edge of a credit card or your fingernail
- Wash the area with soap and water.
- Apply ice or a cool wet cloth to the area to relieve pain and swelling
- Honey applied to the sting area greatly relieves the pain
- If the area is itchy, apply a paste of baking soda and water, or calamine lotion. (Do not apply calamine lotion to the face or genitals)

**Signs of a severe allergic reaction:**
- Swelling of the face or mouth
- Difficulty swallowing or speaking
- Chest tightness, wheezing, or difficulty breathing
- Dizziness or fainting
- Abdominal pain, nausea or vomiting

**Signs that the child was bitten by a brown recluse or black widow spider:**
- Deep purple or blue area around the bite, surrounded by a whitish ring and a larger outer red ring
- Swelling or redness around the bite
- Joint stiffness or pain
• Muscle spasms, tightness, and stiffness
• Body rash
• Fever and/or headache
• Abdominal pain
• Pink or reddish urine
• General feeling of sickness/lack of appetite

Seek emergency medical care if...
• The child shows any signs of a severe allergic reaction
• The bite or sting is anywhere in the mouth
• If the child has a known severe allergy to the stinging insect
• If you suspect the child to be bitten by a Brown Recluse or Black Widow spider
• The child experiences a rash or swelling after a spider bite.
• The child was stung by a scorpion

Tick Bites
• If the tick is still attached to the child’s skin, remove it by using a fine tipped tweezers, and grasping the head of the tick close to the skin. Firmly and steadily pull the tick straight out of the skin. Patience is required to avoid breaking off the stinger portion. Do not twist the tick, or rock it from side to side while removing it.
• Put the tick in alcohol to kill it.
• Wash your hands and the site of the bite with soap and water.
• Swab the bite with alcohol and a Q-tip.
• Consult a doctor if the tick may have been on the skin for more than 24 hours, part of the tick remains in the skin after attempting to remove it, if the child develops a rash of any kind, if the area looks infected, or if the child develops symptoms like headache, fever, fatigue chills, or stiff muscle aches.

Snake Bites
Contrary to popular belief, most snake bites are completely harmless. Most species of snakes do not have venom, and their bites are often not even serious enough to break the skin. However, some snake bites can be life threatening.

Treating a snake bite:
• Try to identify the type of snake that has bitten the child.
• Wash the area with cool water.
• If you believe the spider to be poisonous, call 911 immediately.
• Clean the wound with a antibacterial soap.
• Apply cold compress to the bite area.
• Keep the victim as still as possible. Having the victim move and strain themselves will spread the venom more quickly.
• For any non-venomous bite that breaks the skin, consult a doctor to have them look over the bite.
**Animal Bites**

There is always the risk of infection from any bite or scratch that breaks the skin, and there is also the possibility of internal muscle or tendon damage from a bite that is deep enough. A series of painful, but needed rabies vaccinations may be needed by the child if the animal showed any signs of rabid behavior.

**Treating a bite:**
- Wash the area with soap and water
- Apply pressure with sterile antiseptic or anything else to the wound
- Cover any broken skin with a bandage or sterile gauze.

**Seek medical care if:**
- The child has a bite that punctured or broke the skin
- Was bitten by a stray animal, wildlife, or any animal that was acting strangely.
- Was bitten anywhere on the face, neck, hand, or near a joint.
- The bite is becoming increasingly painful or swollen
- The child is behind on immunizations or hasn’t had a recent tetanus shot
- When seeking treatment, have the following information ready: The type of animal, date of animal’s last vaccination, (if known), any unusual behavior by the animal, the animal’s location and any known information about the animal, and the child’s shot records.

**Allergic reactions**

Most allergic reactions are mild in nature, but some can become severe and life threatening. Allergic reactions can be caused by insect stings, food, medications, or environmental elements. If your child shows signs of a mild allergic reaction, such as itchiness, skin irritation, watery eyes, stuffy nose, or minor hives and bumps, make note of the reaction and do your best to avoid contact with the substance.

**Consult your doctor or emergency medical care if...**
- The child suffers swelling to the face or mouth
- Has difficulty breathing or is wheezing
- Has difficulty swallowing or talking
- Becomes dizzy, disoriented, or loses consciousness
- Suffers abdominal pain, nausea, or vomiting from the reaction
- If mild symptoms persist for several days
- If you are unable to determine what caused the allergic reaction
- Your child was exposed to a food or substance that in the past has caused a severe allergic reaction

**Severe allergies and your child’s school**

Child care workers in the normal hustle and bustle of the day, and in dealing with dozens of kids at a time can sometimes make mistakes. People are imperfect, and even the best of centers can have lapses. This, however, can be overcome with simple steps parents can take, so you can rest a little easier knowing your child is safe.

- Be sure to personally speak with all the teachers of the school or center about your child’s allergy, not just the ones in your child’s class, as people often substitute in different rooms.
• Remind teachers on a constant basis about your child’s allergy. Don’t assume that once is enough.
• Remind teachers before a field trip to be sure to bring the epipen if one is needed.
• Make a large poster to give to your child’s school for alerting people of your child’s allergy, so that it can be posted where everyone can see.
• For food allergies, specifically talk with the cook as well, as they are often more likely to remember than the childcare givers.
• Teach your child about his or her allergy as soon as they can talk, so that they can watch out for themselves as well.

Seizures
Many children will have seizures during their childhood. Although seizures can be a frightening experience for a child and their parents, they usually only last a few minutes, stop on their own, and are almost never life threatening.

Handling a seizure
• Gently place the child on the floor or ground.
• Remove any nearby objects
• Do not try to restrain the child, and do not try to put anything into the child’s mouth. This will cause more harm, and isn’t necessary
• Roll the child onto his or her side after the seizure in case they vomit, or try to keep the child on his or her side if they vomit during the seizure
• Call your doctor and let them know about the seizure.

Seek emergency medical care if...
• The child has never had a seizure before
• Has a seizure that lasts for more than 5 minutes
• Is having repeated seizures
• Stops breathing or turns a bluish color on the lips, tongue, or face
• Remains unconscious or unresponsive for more than a few minutes after a seizure
• Falls or hits their head during a seizure
• Has a heart condition
• Seems ill or has any other symptom that concerns you

Eye Injuries
Eye injuries are the most common preventable cause of blindness. Most injuries to the eye are nothing serious, and a routine part of growing up, but some will require medical attention.

Routine Irritations or injuries
• Do not touch, press, or rub the eye itself
• Wash your hands thoroughly before examining a child’s eye
• Flush the eye by gently pouring a steady stream of lukewarm water, (but do not heat the water) from a container or pitcher across the eye.
• Never try to remove any object except through flushing with water. Trying to remove it with anything else could damage the eye. If you cannot remove the object through flushing, then seek medical help.
• Have someone hold the child’s eyelids open, or pull back on the skin just below the eye to expose most of the eye for flushing.
• If irritation, redness, or swelling persists, then consult a doctor

For an embedded object:
• Do not attempt to remove the object!!!
• Call for emergency help immediately
• Cover the affected eye. If the object is small enough, use an eye patch or sterile dressing. If it is large, cover it by taping a cup around it, or by applying soft cloth around the object to keep it in place.
• Keep your child as calm as possible until help arrives.

Knocked out tooth
If a child loses a baby tooth or one is knocked out, it does not need to be saved, nor will medical personnel attempt to save it. However, a permanent tooth that is knocked out is considered a dental emergency. If this is the case, you should...

• Call a dentist, doctor, or your local emergency number immediately.
• Find the knocked out tooth.
• Handle the tooth only by its crown, (the exposed part) and never by its root.
• Gently rinse the tooth with milk. Try to avoid tap water, as it’s chlorine could damage the root.
• Insert the tooth back into its socket in the child’s mouth if he or she is old enough to hold it in place.
• You can also store the tooth in milk, or place it between your cheek and lower gum to keep it from drying out.
• Remember, time is valuable! A tooth has the best chance of survival if replaced within 30 minutes.

Fevers
A fever is a body’s natural response to fighting an infection or illness. A person’s normal body temperature is set at 98.6 degrees Fahrenheit. However, temperatures can fluctuate as children play or run around, or at different parts of the day.

How high is too high?
The best guess for this is to go with your gut instinct. Parents should always listen to their voice inside them and seek the help of a doctor in any circumstance they are not sure about. Most experts agree that medical help should be sought if a child has a fever higher than 104 degrees Fahrenheit, or an infant 3 months or younger has a temperature of 100.4 degrees or higher. Fevers are almost always a sign of another underlying illness, especially high fevers, so it is recommended that you consult your pediatrician anytime your child has a fever.

Ways of taking temperature:
There are many different ways of taking your child’s temperature. Digital thermometers usually provide the quickest and most accurate readings. These are available at most supermarkets and pharmacies. Electronic ear thermometers are quick, accurate, and easy to use in older children, but are expensive and aren’t as accurate for younger children. Plastic strip thermometers are usually inaccurate for telling an exact temperature, although they will let you know whether or not your child has a fever. Pacifier thermometers are usually inaccurate, and therefore not suggested. Glass mercury thermometers should no longer be used because of possible exposure to mercury.
Nausea and Vomiting

Nausea and vomiting are a normal part of any person's life. But as with a fever, too much of a good thing can also be dangerous.

Infants under 1 year:
- Avoid giving plain water, unless directed by a doctor
- Consult your pediatrician for specific advice

Children 1 and older
- Give clear liquids in small amounts every 15 minutes. Some things that are acceptable are ice chips or sips of water, flavored electrolyte solutions, such as Gatorade, or frozen electrolyte popsicles.
- Avoid milk and milk products
- If your child vomits, start over with offering a smaller amount of fluid.
- Do not force food. Allow your child to eat as he or she desires.
- Offer your child mild foods such as soups, crackers, toast, mashed potato’s, rice, or breads.
- Call your doctor immediately if your child shows any signs of dehydration as listed earlier.
- Also call immediately if your child is vomiting blood, (blood that mixes with stomach acid will be brownish and look like coffee grounds) or vomiting seems to be induced without any other normal symptoms that would accompany normal illness or the flu.

Poisoning

Approximately 100 children will die each year from accidental poisoning, and another 115,000 will be treated in hospital emergency rooms for poisoning. The poison control center receives more than a million calls for poisoning related to children 5 and under each year alone. Poisoning rates have declined greatly in latter years to do increased safety measures, but it still obviously remains a widespread problem. American consumers buy about a quarter of a million hazardous household products.

Recognizing symptoms:
- Your child is acting different than normal.
- Overly sleepy, overly active.
- You see signs of a possible poisoning, such as a pill bottle lying out or cleaning products tampered with or gotten into.

First aid for poisoning:
- The most important step is to try and identify what poison the child has consumed. Look around for any clues that will tell you, or, if the child is conscious, ask him or her. Also determine the means of poisoning. Most commonly, poisons will be ingested, but poisons can be inhaled or absorbed through the skin as well.
- Try to determine the amount ingested.
- Call Poison Control. There is now a national poison control number you can call, which automatically redirects calls to the local poison control center. That number is 1-800-222-1222. Follow their instructions.
- Remember, that speed and reaction time mean the difference between life and death. Act quickly!
- Keep a bottle of activated charcoal on hand, but use only at the advice of poison control. Inducing vomiting can make things worse with some poisons. Ipecac syrup is no longer recommended as a home treatment.
First aid for skin, air or eye poisoning:
If a fluid gets into the eye, hold your child’s eyelid open and flush the eye quickly and gently underneath a faucet with plain, running water. Have someone else contact poison control if possible while you are flushing the eye.
- For skin poisoning, flush the area with water and remove any contaminated clothing. Wash the skin and hair of the affected area thoroughly with soap and water. Have someone contact poison control while doing so.
- If you suspect air poisoning, carry or drag the victim outside or to fresh air immediately. Call 911, and perform emergency procedures as necessary.

Preventing poisoning:
- The easiest step is to keep poisons out of the reach of children to begin with. Follow guidelines in childproofing your home for tips on common household poisons.
- Talk with your children about poisoning. Explain to them the dangers of certain products around your house, such as alcohol, the medicine cabinet, vitamins, and other potentially hazardous substances.
- Follow all medicine guidelines extremely carefully when administering medication to your child. Never change the prescribed dosage on your own. When in doubt, contact your physician.
- Never mix household cleaning products. The fumes can become deadly when mixing otherwise harmless chemicals.
- Never call medicine or vitamins “candy”.
- Dispose of old medicines by flushing them down the toilet.
- When using weed killers or any pesticides, read the labels carefully, as overusing could cause poisoning.
- Keep extra watch on the children when circumstances are abnormal. A large amount of poisonings occur in other peoples houses, when company is visiting, or when a parent is sick.

As ridiculous as this may sound, keep children fed and watered. Hungry and thirsty children are more prone to put something in their mouth, or to improvise when nothing else is made available. I’ve heard of a child drinking a bottle of bleach water because she was thirsty.

Carbon Monoxide Poisoning
Carbon Monoxide is a dangerous, odorless gas. It is a toxic and deadly killer. It can kill you without you ever being aware of its presence. Carbon monoxide can be leaked from just about anything that uses gas or charcoal. As suggested in the fire safety section of this book, consider adding carbon monoxide detectors to your home to detect any dangerous levels of carbon monoxide.

Symptoms of carbon monoxide poisoning, which are often mistaken for the flu, are:
- Headaches
- Dizziness
- Disorientation
- Nausea
- Fatigue
- Sleepiness

If you suspect carbon monoxide poisoning, get everyone out of the house, and turn off all appliances if you can. Call your local emergency number if anyone is ill, and have the house checked out before returning.
Choking
Choking, or airway obstruction, Kills around 800 Children per year under the age of 14. It hospitalizes another 16,000. There are many things parents can do to reduce this risk.

If your child is choking, and can cough or talk...
- If your child is choking, and they are coughing or talking, do not do anything. If they are able to do either, their airway is not completely blocked. Stand by the child, comfort him or her, and encourage them to keep coughing to get the item out. Trying to perform the Heimlich, only works when the airway is completely, or almost completely obstructed. In other instances, aside from damage to the victim, you could actually lodge the item in their throat more by performing the Heimlich when not needed, thus creating a more serious situation.

If your child is choking, and unable to cough...
In this situation, the child’s airway is obstructed and he or she needs immediate first aid.
- For infants: Place the child over your forearm, angle them slightly down, and deliver 5 back blows. Don’t be afraid to give a little force to them. Then turn the child over and give 5 chest thrusts, by pushing down with two fingers in between the child’s nipples. Do not perform a finger sweep on an infant unless you can see the object.
- For children over 1 years of age, Perform the Heimlich maneuver by standing directly behind them, making a fist with one hand and placing it over their navel or belly button, Putting the other hand on top of your fist, and give quick, upward thrusts into your child’s abdomen.

Simple things to reduce choking threats...
- Slice hot dogs down the middle lengthwise before serving to children.
- Avoid serving children fruit with pits until they are old enough to be trusted with it.
- Avoid giving infants and toddlers foods like popcorn, peanuts, hard candy, even most soft candies such as Skittles, gumdrops, etc.
- Always monitor children around balloons, even older kids. Balloons are dangerous because they are something that children frequently put in their mouth, and if they end up choking on one, balloons are the most dangerous thing to choke on. Their smooth surface makes them hard to remove, and their flexibility makes them act just like a diaphragm.
- Teach children not to talk with their mouth full. This also increases chances of choking.
- Watch these other chokers: Beads, buttons, coins, marbles, balls, jawbreakers.
- Never let children eat candy or suck on anything while laying down. This puts the throat at a perfect angle for the item to be accidentally swallowed and get lodged in the child’s throat.
- When serving grapes to younger children, slice the grapes lengthwise down the middle to make them a non-choking hazard.
- Do not give children candy while playing or engaging in other physical activities.
- Keep all bags, Saran wrap, and similar plastics out of the reach of young children. Teach older children about the dangers of placing such items over their head or mouth.
Ears and nose...don’t stick nothin’ in those
I can’t tell you how many rocks, beads, or other small objects I’ve had to deal with that found their way into a child’s ear or nose. I think it is something that every child at one time feels they have to try. Be sure to teach your children the danger of putting anything of the sort in their nose or ears. Talk about the unpleasant experiences of getting the object back out again, and explain to them it can be very painful and cause permanent damage to themselves by sticking small objects in there.

First Aid Kits
Keep a first aid kit around the house and one in each car. Each first aid kit should include the following items

- First aid manual
- Emergency phone numbers
- Doctor and insurance information
- Allergy information for family members
- Antibiotic ointment
- Acetaminophen, ibuprofen, and aspirin
- Bandages and gauze of assorted sizes and roller gauze bandages
- Medical exam gloves
- Elastic wraps
- Adhesive tape
- Dry cold packs for icing injuries
- Thermometer
- Tweezers
- Small scissors
- Mouth barrier devices (optional)
- Soap
- Small flashlight
- Alcohol wipes or ethyl alcohol
- Safety pins
Chapter 5

Child Proofing Your home
Childproofing your home...Is it worth it?
So is it worth it to childproof your home? We think so. The benefits are keeping your child safe from injury or death, while saving money for costly hospital or emergency room visits.

Completely childproofing the average home, can be done for less than $250 in most situations. And we are talking complete childproofing. Safety gates, latches, added locking cabinets, the works.

However, you can choose not to childproof your home. In that case, You may save a little at first, but you are likely to spend more in the long run. A single trip to the emergency room will instantly drain what you would have spent in childproofing. Considering the amount of serious injuries inside the home each year, childproofing should be looked at as an essential thing to save money, let alone to keep your child safe.

The risk
Your home is certainly a hazard. About 2 1/2 million children are seriously injured or killed by hazards inside the home each year. There are around 3.4 million hospital emergency room visits due to home injuries. Common household injuries include burns, falls, suffocation, choking, poisonings, drownings, or accidental shootings.

Household poisons
Many household products you use around your house everyday are potentially fatal substances if ingested by children. Here are some of the following most common and dangerous household poisons:

- Toothpaste: The active ingredient in toothpaste is sodium fluoride, or sodium phosphate, which is poisonous in any amounts greater than what is used for brushing. It is why they tell you not to swallow the paste. This is a danger many parents don’t realize, and it is especially dangerous because the flavored toothpaste can often be used as improvised candy by a bored child. Ingesting half a tube of toothpaste can be lethal to a child.
- Cosmetics and make up: These can be toxic and are usually an alluring color to attract children.
- Household cleaners: Obviously, these can be quite toxic and should be kept out of the reach of children.
- Medicine: Once again, an obvious risk. Even certain vitamins can be dangerous in excessive amounts.
- Any health supplement containing iron.
- Pesticides, believe it or not, result in a huge amount of poisonings in young children. In 2003, children 6 and under were exposed 50,415 times, but experts estimate this as only one fourth to one third of actual numbers.
- Lawn and garden products, such as weed killers, insecticides and plant fertilizer.
- Swimming pool and hot tub chemicals
- Potentially hazardous plants that may be in your house or yard, such as lawn mushrooms.
- Art supplies and paint
- Pressure treated wood
- Mouthwash
- Liquor, alcohol, or beer
Childproofing Around the House

- Install outlet plugs or special childproof outlet covers throughout your house. They have specially designed outlet covers that swivel to cover the plugs. We recommend these because you won’t have to mess with plug covers when you need to use the outlet.
- Bolt large shelves to the wall using wall brackets to prevent them from tipping over on the child if they were to climb or pull on them.
- Get down on your hands and knees and crawl around your house, noticing things from your child’s vantage point. It may help tip you off to potential hazards that you might not have otherwise noted.
- Install childproof doorknob covers for any room of the house that you would like restricted from your kids, particularly closets with liquor or cleaning supplies.
- Remember that when it comes to childproofing a home, more is better. Keeping dangerous things up high is good, but keeping dangerous things up high inside a closet with a childproof knob is better.
- It is a good idea to set your water thermostat at temperatures below 120 degrees, to avoid accidental scalding.
- Keep furniture and other things children may potentially try to climb, away from windows. A fall through the glass can be fatal.
- When people visit, or when you visit other people, keep purses and handbags, which often have potentially deadly items inside, safely out of the reach of a curious child.
- Install emergency phone numbers, such as police, fire, poison control, etc., at every phone around the house.
- Keep all cords to lamps or other appliances tied or effectively clamped down to avoid children from pulling them over onto themselves.
- Use protective corners around all tables, fireplace hearths, and other sharp furniture, which is a leading cause of stitches in young children. A fall into one of these corners will likely be brutal.
- Use cord holders to fasten all longer cords safely against the wall.
- If you live in a home built before 1978, check for paint that contains mercury or lead.
- Position all stereo equipment and television sets safely against the wall. Check their stability to ensure they can’t be pulled over.
- Keep a VCR or other similar devices locked away to ensure your child can’t stick their hand inside them.
- Install safety gates both at the top and the bottom of any stairs in your home. Use ones which are hardware mounted and safety tested to resist force, as children frequently will climb or push on these.
- Make sure your child cannot fit through the railings of the stairs. If they can, place a guard on the railings.
- Install finger guard pinches on doors around the house.
- Install one piece door stops or remove the rubber tips from door stops, as the tip makes a perfect accessible choking hazard to young children.
- Keep your child away from a baby walker in any area of the house that has steps up or down, as it could cause a fall directly onto the child’s head.
- Install smoke detectors in the kitchen, outside each bedroom, on every level of the house, and in the furnace room.
- Check over all toys a baby could choke on, and try ridding your house of these items. If you have older children, emphasize the need to them of never letting the baby play with any of their toys, and the importance of keeping them out of the reach of their younger sibling.
- Install a carbon monoxide detector in the home near the furnace area.
- Place stickers on large areas of glass down low. Young children often forget and will try to run through it.
- Place non-skid backing on all carpets or area rugs, as this is a common form of tripping or slipping for both adults and children.
- Tie all drapes and blinds with cords up high, as these can present a strangulation hazard.
• Get at least one reliable, chord-less phone to use around your house. Bring it with you wherever you go so that you can answer the phone without leaving your little ones side.

• Try to keep household plants out of baby’s reach, as many are poisonous, as is the fertilizer put into them, both of which will make it’s way to a baby’s mouth, as everything else around them does.

• Make a non-smoking policy for your house. If you must insist on smoking inside, remove and empty all ash trays after use. Do not leave them out where a child can get into them.

• While many of these precautions may seem a little like overkill, they were only added after several problems with the item. When it comes to child safety, remember, anything is possible. Those chords on the drapes may not seem like a big hazard, but they have found their way to many children’s death certificates. That toilet bowl water may seem hard to drown in, but hundreds of children have done just that. As you get down on your hands and knee’s and look around the house, take every possible threat seriously. Children have a way of finding their mischief in seemingly impossible situations.

• Never underestimate the power of supervision. Most childhood accidents and injuries happen when the parent is distracted or not paying attention. Childproof your home, but also keep in mind that a good parents watchful eyes is the best weapon against all these things.

**In your child’s room**

• Secure all dressers and shelves to the wall to prevent them from tipping over on children climbing on them. Never let your child climb on furniture either.

• Avoid toy chests that children could become entrapped in, or have the lid fall on their head. Use toy bins instead.

• Try to keep your child’s bed safely away from the window. Children like to jump and play on their bed, and can fall through a window if they lose balance.

• Consider installing a window guard on any window that isn’t a safety exit.

• Make sure that night lights are not touching any fabric, such as bedspreads or curtains.

• Sleep your child in flame retardant sleepwear.

• Avoid the use of bunk beds. If one is used, make sure the top level is safe from a child rolling off of it. Consider adding your own guard rail to the top, spacing any bars a distance of 3 1/2 inches apart.

• If the bedroom is on a second or third floor, be sure to keep a fire ladder in each bedroom.

• Keep pillows and other soft cushioning on the floor near the side of the bed for children just getting used to “big kid beds”.

**In other bedrooms**

• Keep hair sprays, cologne, perfume, nail polish and remover, make up, and other hygiene items out of the reach of children.

• If you keep any firearms, keep them securely locked away in a gun safe. Never simply keep a firearm in a dresser drawer or under the bed.

• Never leave medications, razors, or other daily needs out where children can reach them.

**In the kitchen**

• Install child proof latches on all drawers in the kitchen.

• Consider installing an actual swivel lock on a cabinet door for storage of all your cleaning supplies and particularly dangerous items.

• Store food extracts, such as vanilla and almond, out of the reach of children. They are potential poisons.
Never store cleaning supplies and food together.
Always store cleaning products in their original containers. If they are moved, children might think they are something else.
Always try to cook on the back burners, and never the front if at all possible. Turn all pan handles back towards the back of the stove and not out where a child could yank at them.
Keep the trash compacter and dishwasher door latched when not in use. Install a lock on your dishwasher. Putting locks on drawers does little good if you leave the dishwasher open for children to reach the dangerous knives and breakable glasses inside.
Keep a multi-use fire extinguisher somewhere in the kitchen.
Store garbage in a manner that is inaccessible to young children. Kids this age love to dig in the trash, and many items in it there are hazardous and dangerous things, such as the sharp edges of opened cans, plastic wrapping, and more.
Install a stove lock.
Place knob protectors on the stove knobs to prevent curious children from fiddling with the levers.
Keep all chairs and step stools a safe distance from the stove.
Keep the coffee maker safely out of children’s reach, and make sure the cord is attached to the wall or out of reach.
Get spill proof containers for all hot drinks, and do not use anything but those containers. A likely threat for scalding is when baby gets to that cup of coffee mommy set down for just a minute while tending to her other duties.
Store all alcohol safely out of the reach of children, even beer.
Keep all garbage bags and sandwich bags in a locked drawer.
Keep all telephone cords out of the reach of children, or consider going to all cordless phones.
Make sure refrigerator magnets and other small objects that could be a choking hazard are stored safely out of reach.

In the bathrooms
- Put in place a water absorbent and non-slip matting or carpet both inside the tub and outside the tub to prevent falls. Falls make up a large amount of bathroom related deaths. A child will slip, fall, hit his or her head on the tub, and then drown in the water after being knocked unconscious from the fall.
- If you do not have a locking medicine cabinet, consider installing a lock, or adding a separate medicine cabinet with a lock to prevent children from getting into it. If this is not possible, at the very least install childproof locking devices on the cabinet. Do not assume because it is up high that children will not get into it.
- Keep toothpaste out of reach when not in use. Supervise children while brushing.
- Be sure to properly fasten all lids back on the medication bottles after use. Childproof bottles are great, but don’t work if the lid is not on.
- Keep mouthwashes out of the reach of kids. Many have enough alcohol to poison a small child if ingested.
- Toilet bowl cleaners and liquids often cause serious tissue damage if ingested. Keep these out of reach as well.
- Install child proof doorknob covers on all bathrooms, and train the family to keep the doors closed at all times.
- Toilet bowl latches can always be purchased, but most people will find this a much greater pain than simply keeping the door shut with the knob cover on it.
- Keep all hair curlers, hair dyers, and other electrical appliances unplugged and out of reach when not in use.
- Ensure all outlets have a grounded circuit breaker.
- Keep all perfumes, razor blades, and other items out of reach.
Your child’s toys and playroom
- Make a habit of checking periodically on consumer safety web-sites to ensure that products your child is using have not been recalled.
- Emphasize to other family members the need to keep your child’s playroom “sanitary” and free from potential choking hazards that could be brought in or dropped from a pocket.
- Avoid toys with strings that could prevent a strangulation hazard. Strings and cords should be shorter than 6 inches.
- Buy only age appropriate toys.
- Remember to monitor children while in playrooms. The playroom should not be used to park and leave the child to their own devices.

Outside and in the Yard
- Be sure to fence in your yard area, especially in the front of the house if used as a play area. The fence is not necessarily to keep things out or in, but to provide a barrier between your yard and the road outside. Children are much less likely to be struck by a car when playing in the yard, because that fence serves as a natural barrier to keep them from forgetting and chasing a ball or pet out into the road. It allows them time to stop and think about the situation. Most children are struck not because they don’t know how to cross the street, but because they forget in the middle of play.
- Have children wear shoes when playing outside.
- Check your lawn for mushrooms and other poisonous plants. Dispose of any that you find immediately.
- Use window well coverings to avoid hazardous falls into the window wells.
- Gate all outside stairs as well, as these can be just as hazardous as stairs inside the house.
- Do not use a lawn mower when children are present. Not only is there the danger of the blade, but there is the danger of them being hit with a rock or other object that is thrown out from the lawnmower and hurtled like a bullet.
- Do not allow children to play on the lawn for at least 48 hours after being treated with a lawn herbicide, pesticide or fertilizer treatment.
- Become familiar with all the plant life on your property, in case children ingest the leaves or plants.
- Install knob latches on barbeque grills, or store them in a manner that is inaccessible to children.
- Never leave children unattended near a gas grill.

Playground safety checklist
- Install a soft surface under all any playground equipment that you might have in your yard. Nearly 70 percent of all playground injuries are due to falls. We recommend playground wood chips, which are available at most landscaping companies. It should be poured to a depth of about 1 foot for a 6 foot high playground structure.
- Make sure that all swing-sets are firmly anchored to the ground, and cemented in wherever possible.
- Check over the equipment to ensure there are no gaps anywhere where a child's foot or arm could become trapped. If there are, fix the gap immediately.
- If building your own equipment, be sure to do so exactly according to manufacturer specs for placement of the bars, etc.

The garage
- Keep all chemicals in a locked cabinet in the garage, such as oil, antifreeze, pesticides, lawn treatment, etc.
• Keep all tools and gardening supplies safely out of the reach of children.
• Keep the garage door down when children are playing outside.

**Especially for babies**

• Realize how babies learn. They are sensory learners. They look, see, touch, taste. Anything that you don’t want them to either touch or put in their mouth, should not be anywhere around the child or accessible in any way.
• Buy all crib and room equipment according to current safety standards. Check periodically for recalls or defects in equipment. We provide a link on our website to look up children’s product safety information.
• Be sure to place the babies crib away from blinds or windows, or any other potential hazard that they could possibly get their hands onto.
• Sleep babies on their backs to avoid suffocation or SIDS (Sudden Infant Death Syndrome).
• Make sure the crib mattress fits tightly, and that there are no gaps that the baby could fall into and suffocate in. Avoid sleeping infants in adult beds, as there is almost always a gap where the child could roll into and suffocate, or roll off the bed and suffer a head injury.
• Avoid placing babies on top of soft cushionings such as sofas, soft cushions, water beds, or quilts, where they could suffocate if they either roll into the cushion or have their face wedged in between the soft surfaces.
• Keep the crib area clear of pillows or large stuffed animals that could suffocate a child.
• Keep the baby’s toys, pacifiers, and room free of any strings that could become entangled around the baby’s neck. This includes strings on pull toys.
• Install safety gates around all stairs.
• Try and keep your child’s room or play area a sanitary safe zone. Keep things out of it that could fall unnoticed and become a choking hazard, such as loose change, candy, adult food, etc.
• Inspect the floors of your house constantly for fallen items that could be a choking hazard.
• Always check the heat of bottle fluid on your arm before serving it to your child. Babies are still very sensitive. Serving a baby a bottle that is too hot, can burn their throat, causing it to swell and cut off their airway.
• Keep a baby’s bath water right at about 100 degrees Fahrenheit. Not hotter, not colder.
• Keep children away from radiators, heating vents, space heaters, fireplaces, stoves, and any other equipment that could burn them.
• Make sure no electrical cords are available for babies or toddlers to chew on or play with.
• Consider installing a baby monitor in your child’s room so that you can always monitor your little one.

**Special pool precautions**

• Fence your pool or hot tub in, and place the latch to open it high enough so that only an adult can reach.
• Never let children play unsupervised near a pool or any other body of water.
• Keep all pool chemicals or hot tub chemicals safely out of the reach of children.

• If needing to answer the door, take your baby with you.
• Always place infants on their backs to sleep.
**Baby safe habits**

- Always keep a hand on the child when changing a baby.
- Always strap children into high chairs or strollers. Also use the straps for swings and changing tables. These were added to the items for a reason.
- Carry the phone with you wherever you go, so that you never have to leave your baby’s side for even a second. Never leave a child of any age unattended in the tub. If you have to answer the door, wrap the child in a towel and bring them with you, or grab your portable phone before bath time to avoid telephone interruptions.
- Never let children play alone on fire escapes, raised porches, or balconies.
- Keep stairs free of debris. Children spend as much time going down and up stairs as they do going in and out of the house. Debris on the stairs could cause an injurious fall.
- Teach children to never play around windows or let them open them.
- When you open an upper level window, avoid opening it all the way. A screen will not protect against an accidental fall. Opening windows fully allows plenty of room for a child to accidentally fall or be pushed through it.
- Always supervise children when playing with dogs or other household pets.

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Chapter 6

Safety out and about
Bicycle Safety

Bicycles are a common form of recreation, and getting a bike has become a milestone in just about every child’s life. With learning to ride a bike come the normal bumps, bruises, and skinned knees. What many people don’t seem to realize is the life threatening injuries that occur from bicycles, which happen more often than you might think. Bicycles are the most dangerous consumer product you buy for your children. Every year in the United States, around 280,000 children between the ages of 5 and 14 will sustain injuries serious enough to be rushed to the emergency room. About 150 will die each year from those injuries. It is estimated, that between 135 and 155 childhood deaths could be prevented each year, by the simple use of a helmet. Another 39,000 to 45,000 head injuries could also be prevented. As of 2003 statistics, only 41 percent of children 14 and under wore helmets, and 35% of the ones who did wore them improperly.

- Make your child wear a bicycle helmet!!!!!! The majority of all deaths on bicycles occur from head injuries (85%). Many permanent injuries and deaths from bicycles are not caused by some massive collision with a car or a wall, but simply by the child falling off a bike at normal speeds and landing wrong on their head. Don’t make a helmet an option. Remember, perhaps only a hundred and fifty children die per year, but thousands more suffer permanent brain damage. 47% of the children hospitalized, (around 134,000 children) are treated for traumatic brain injury from bicycle accidents each year.
- More than half of children who don’t wear helmets, say it is because their parents do not make them.
- Get your child a helmet they will be proud to wear. Make helmets a show off item with your family. They sell many character helmets for younger children. As your kids get older, you can consider getting flames airbrushed on, or dragons, or whatever your child is into. Make it something they want to wear.
- Your child’s helmet should fit snug around their head. Have your child shake their head back and forth quickly after putting it on. If it moves during this, it may not stay on during a crash. Tighten it up. Never buy your child a helmet they can “grow into.”
- Avoid loose clothing when children are riding their bikes, as it could get caught in the pedals or spokes.
- Get a bike that is appropriate for your child. Bikes that are too big, or not built for the child, are a common cause of bicycle related injuries.
- Try to set aside pre-approved bike riding areas for your child, such as along bike paths, or in other areas away from traffic.
- Do not let your children ride their bike at night. Children riding at dawn, dusk, or night are four times as likely to be injured.
- Contact your local lawmakers and push for bicycle helmet laws. These have been shown to decrease injuries and fatalities by as much as 60%. If children could have their wheels temporarily confiscated by an officer for not wearing a helmet, all children would be much more inclined to keep theirs on.
- Teach children to never ride in traffic. Stay on the sides of non-busy streets or in parks or sidewalks.
- Have children always keep their helmet on, and let them know about how important it is. TBI, (Traumatic Brain Injury) is the leading killer and cause of disability in children. A fall from as little as 2 feet can result in TBI. Explain to them that brains do not heal like the rest of their body. A brain injury will often leave a child permanently disabled.
- Stay as far to the right of the road as you can when you ride.
- Always be looking for parked cars that might be ready to pull out, or cars with people in them that might open a door without warning.
- Watch for cars that are turning.
- Teach children, if they have to cross an intersection, to get off their bicycle and walk it across the street.
Keep an eye out for the surface you are riding on. Watch out for large rocks, sticks, cracks, potholes, sewer grates, loose sand or gravel, wet surfaces, patches of ice, and other such hazards. Slow down before any surface change, because you never know how it might affect your bike.

- Never do stunts on a street or in traffic.
- If you have to avoid an obstacle suddenly, always swerve away from the road.
- Follow all of the same precautions for any recreational device with wheels, such as skateboards, scooters, or roller skates.

**Skateboarding and wheel sports**

A helmet is just as vital in skateboard riding and roller-blades. We could not find a reliable statistic on the amount of deaths every year, but skateboarding deaths have been reported, both from falls and from collisions with motor vehicles. Around 15,000 people are treated for skateboard injuries each year in emergency rooms around the country.

- Many injuries are caused by rocks and other irregularities in the riding surface. To avoid this, have your children ride only in a designated skateboard park, where such objects are much less frequent.
- Believe it or not, skateboards have different ratings, for freestyle, slalom, or speed. Be sure to pick out one appropriate for your child’s level.
- Get your child full protective equipment, and ensure they wear it.
- Teach children how to fall when on a skateboard or roller-blades. It is one’s natural instinct, when losing balance, to often try and stand up straight to gain it. Instead, teach children to crouch down when they lose balance. The closer they are to the ground, the better their fall will be. Crouching can also help a person regain balance better. Try to get in the habit of falling with your forearm, not with your wrist or hand down. Fall on the fleshy parts of your body whenever possible. Teach your children to “get their butt down” in a fall.
- Teach your child to check their equipment before each use, as all pros do, for rocks or other things that might have gotten caught in the wheel.
- Have your child practice falling on a soft surface, such as a lawn, to get them comfortable with how to fall.

**Automobile Safety**

Every year automobiles are responsible for the deaths of thousands of children. Sadly, more than 2/3 of these deaths could have been prevented with the proper use of a seat belt or child restraint system. Some disturbing studies show that as many as half of all American children, (around 20 million youngsters) do not buckle up. Now consider that unbuckled children can and have been killed even in non-collision accidents at speeds as little as 10 or 15 miles per hour. If you swung a dashboard at the head of a 250 pound man, it can kill him. It can easily do the same to a small child.

- Ensure that you make a habit of having your children buckle up every time they get in the car. Insist on it.
- Restrain your child in a car seat when necessary. A seatbelt does not do any good if children don’t stay in it.
- Do not use a car seat after it has been in an accident.
- Make sure your car seat meets current standards.
- Try to stop by a fire station at some point. Most fire stations offer free child safety seat inspections and demonstrations, to ensure that you are buckling your child into it and your car correctly.
- Encourage children to wear seat belts all the time, even when they are going slow or only going a little ways.
- Talk with them about making sure they wear their seatbelts when they ride in other peoples cars as well.
- Use some scare tactics if you have to. Show them what can happen if they do not wear a seat belt.
 Give them this example. If they are not wearing a seatbelt, and someone gets in an accident, even not going very fast, it is like a baseball bat being swung at their head. Or, ask them if they would want to drive their bicycle as fast as they could into a brick wall. Then explain that would be like not wearing a seatbelt even when you are going slow in a car. Cars go much faster than bikes do, even when they are going slow.

Studies show that children who are raised in households where the adults don’t wear seatbelts, are much more likely not to wear them themselves. So set a good example for your children.

Pedestrian Safety

Cars are becoming an ever increasing danger for our children, as communities get more congested, people get in bigger hurries and drive faster, and more people get cars. Around 700 children die each year from pedestrian injuries. Another 40-50,000 are treated in hospital emergency rooms for pedestrian injuries, and suffer debilitating effects. Children 4 and under account for more than 40 percent of pedestrian injury-related deaths. Some other alarming facts to think about: Nearly two thirds of drivers still speed in school zones, and nearly half of all drivers violate stop signs where children walk.

- Teach children to stop, look and listen before they cross the street. They should stop, look all ways for traffic that is coming, (not just two ways), and then cross the street. They should continue looking around them even while they cross the street.
- Teach children to never chase anything out into the street. If a ball, pet, or anything else goes out in the street, never chase it. Stop and watch where it goes, then call an adult to go get it or cross the street very carefully yourself. Avoid this from happening by not playing any games near the street in the first place.
- Make sure that children understand, just because they see a car does not mean the driver can see them.
- Talk to them about how quickly cars can stop. That by the time somebody sees them, has time to react, and then puts on the brakes and the brakes work, it could take quite a while. Be sure they give themselves plenty of extra time anytime they cross the street.
- Try to get children under the age of 10 to never cross a street alone. Young children often have not developed enough judgment to calculate speed of oncoming cars and determine the adequate time needed to cross.
- Never let toddlers play outside in the front yard. Nearly 10 percent of all child pedestrian related injuries occur in driveways, and children ages 4 and under account for 80 percent of those.

School Bus Safety

School bus related accidents kill approximately 100 people per year, and injure another 18,000. Children inside the bus are relatively safe, and deaths from children inside the vehicle is rare, but it is everything outside the bus that is dangerous.

- If at all possible, try to provide supervision for your children while waiting at the school bus. Drive or walk them to the bus stop, and be there to pick them up upon return.
- Teach children to stay away from traffic while waiting for the bus. Never play around or play games that could cause a child to forget and run out into the street.
- Teach children proper behavior while in the school bus. School buses pose a threat to not only children, but also to others outside of the bus, such as other pedestrians and cars. Explain to them, that unruly behavior could distract the driver, causing an accident that could kill someone else.
- This proper behavior includes: Being quiet for the driver, sitting down on your seat, keep your head and arms inside the bus, and avoid horseplay that could distract the driver.
- If you have to cross the street in front of the bus, walk at least 10-20 feet ahead of the bus, and cross very cautiously. Be aware that other cars might try to pass the bus, so be on the look-out for cars coming from behind the bus as well.

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Chapter 7

Other Safety Issues
**Firearms**
Even despite efforts to keep firearms locked up and away from children, around 250 youngsters under the age of 14 are killed every year from accidental firearm deaths.

- We would discourage the use of firearms for family protection. Parents who purchase a firearm for their families protection are doing just the opposite, as you are about 6 times more likely to have an accident involving the gun and killing one of your own family members than you are to ever have to use that gun for protection. Even if you get by the 6 times greater accident statistic and actually do use it on an intruder, people who confront an intruder with a gun are more likely to die than the intruder.
- Explain to children that guns, under any circumstance, are not a toy, and they should stay away from them at all times. Explain that guns are unstable, and can sometimes go off even without someone pulling the trigger.
- Teach children the danger about bullets as well. Many children do not understand that a bullet without a gun can be just as dangerous.
- Tell children that if they ever find a gun, they should not touch it at all, and call an adult to help immediately.
- Drill it into kids heads that if they are ever in the room where a friend or sibling is playing with a gun, they should leave immediately and call for help. Most accidental firearms deaths and injuries hurt the other children in the room, not the one playing with the gun. No matter what the person playing with the gun may say. Children may often get ridiculed for being a wimp or a tattle teller in this situation, but they should just leave the area. Tell them it is more important that they are safe then it is to be ridiculed for not joining in.

**Dog Safety**
Believe it or not, there are over 4 million dog attacks on average every year in the united states. Most of them are on children. Fido makes a wonderful family pet. But he is also a potentially dangerous animal living in your home.

- Try not to leave your child unsupervised with any dog for any amount of time. Dogs should be treated as potentially dangerous animals, and should be supervised around children.
- Spay or neuter your dogs. Dogs who have not been spayed or neutered are three times more likely to bite than dogs who have been.
- The most dangerous types of dogs for children are German Shepherds, Pit Bulls, and Rottweilers. If you have any of these dogs, do not allow your children to play unsupervised around them.
- Remember, in every fatal dog attack on a child, the same words are uttered: He’s never showed any signs of this or bitten before....they got along great together....she loved that dog....
- The best types of breeds for children are Golden Retrievers and bloodhounds.
- Consider the use of a professional dog trainer for your pet, especially if your dog shows any signs of nipping at other people or other unruly behavior.
- The only time you can pet a strange dog is if the owner is right there and they say it is OK to pet them. Never pet a strange dog without an adult around.
- Always let a dog clearly see you and sniff you before petting it. Offer the back side of your hand down low and away from the dog. Let the dog come to you to smell you.
- Never go near dogs that are fighting, or dogs that seem hurt or sick. If you’re ever around a dog that is growling, showing it’s teeth, pulling back its ears, or barking at you fiercely, get away immediately.
- Tell your children that if they ever get attacked by a dog or any other animal, they should go to the fetal position by pressing their chin to their neck to protect their throat, falling to the ground, folding their legs up over their chest, tucking their head down into their chest, and covering their arms up over their face. After that, Stay still!
• If a dog attacks you and he has a hold of your jacket or coat, let him have it if he wants so that he can wrestle with it instead of you. You can also use backpacks or other things to shield his bites away from you.

• Teach your children ‘play nice’ rules for playing with dogs. Such as...
  1. Don’t put your face near the dog’s face.
  2. Don’t tease a dog by holding food up for him and then yanking it away.
  3. Don’t yank or pull on a dogs ears or tail.
  4. Never give dogs hugs around their necks. Dogs often perceive this as aggression.
  5. Don’t do anything that you wouldn’t want to be done to you.

• If a dog runs up to you or scares you, you need to “be like a tree”, standing still with your arms down by your side. Stay completely still, and do not look at the dogs eyes. Never run away or scream. That may make the dog instinctively chase you.

**Water Safety**

Water has always presented a danger to children. Drowning is the second leading cause of unintentional death in children 1 to 14. Every year in the United States, thousands of children drown, sometimes in nothing more than a bucket of water. Many others drown swimming in lakes, pools, or streams. A recent study suggested as many as 9 out of 10 drowning related deaths occurred while a child was being supervised. Children love the water, and trying to keep them away from it is pointless. But we can teach them how to be safe.

• Encourage the use of life jackets when doing any water sports, even with good swimmers.
• Keep an eye on the little ones. Children 4 and under account for 80 percent of home drownings, and have a death rate more than 3 times that of all other age groups.
• Nearly all accidental drownings in young children can be contributed to a lack of parental supervision.
• Young children can drown in as little as 1 inch of water.
• Take proper precautions if you have a home pool. Keep children away from it. More than half of all drownings with children ages 1 to 4 are pool related. Installation of pool or hot tub fencing could prevent as much as 90 percent of pool related drownings.
• Look for potentially hazardous bodies of water wherever you go, whether it be the park, a friend’s house, etc.
• Learn infant and child CPR.
• Enroll your child in swimming lessons at age 4. Just keep in mind, these lessons don’t make your child “drown proof”.
• Teach children to never play around flooded rivers or creeks. Floodwaters can be extremely dangerous.
• Never chase a toy into a river or stream. Call an adult to help get it for you.
• Never continue to swim if you start to get dizzy, tired, or weak. Get out of the water as soon as you can and rest.
• Teach children to always be cautious when swimming. Most older kids drown when they overestimate their swimming ability, or underestimate the risk of the waters.
• Never go out in a lake farther than you feel comfortable with. Remember you have to be able to swim the entire way back also.
• Never jump or dive into any type of water without first checking to see how deep it is. (Something I wish I had been told as a child)
• Keep an eye out for others around you, so that people don’t hit you while splashing around or playing, and knock you out. Never push others into water.
• Never swim underneath a diving board or platform.
• Always check the water carefully before going off a diving board or a platform, to make sure nobody or nothing else is in the water.
• Never, ever, swim alone.
Ice
Ice presents a danger to children. Several children are killed each year by underestimating ice, and their ability to walk on it. Frozen ponds make a great play surface for unsupervised children, who like to run and slide across the icy surface. But if they fall in, the coldness of the water, can numb their whole body, making it a bad situation for even children who swim. If the child gets completely submerged, it is also likely they will come up under the ice, not in the original break they fell into. In cold weather, the water can begin to ice together again almost immediately, trapping the child under the ice. Needless to say, it is dangerous.

- Don’t let children play unsupervised alone, during the winter especially! Not only is there a risk for this, but hypothermia, frostbite, potential sledding accidents, exposure to the elements., are all reasons to supervise your child when out during the winter.
- Never walk on a frozen body of water, whether it be a lake, pond, stream, or river, unless it is pre-approved by experts for winter sporting.
- Fill a bucket up with ice cubes, and then have your child stick their hand into it. Have them keep their hand under the water for a few seconds to see how cold it is. Use this demonstration to illustrate how much they never want to fall into a frozen lake or pond.

Teaching your child how to dial 911
911 is an effective tool for children to use. It has been used countless numbers of times successfully by children, not only to protect themselves, but to help get aid to a parent who may be in an emergency situation. Teaching your child how to use 911, even young children, might end up saving your own life.

- Teach children the number 911, and how to dial it, as soon as they learn to talk, or at about 2 1/2 years of age.
- Show them where the numbers are on the phone, and show them how to pretend dial it using toy phones or a real phone without touching the buttons.
- Explain to them that this is a number they can use if they need to get help, but only if it is a real emergency. Give them examples of what might be a real emergency that they would use the number for.
- Explain to older children how important it is never to play around with that number. Explain to them that once they dial it, it tracks their phone number, and if they are ever caught playing around with that number, the police will know who they are as soon as they dial.
- Make sure that children do not confuse the number 9-1-1, with 9-11. This has been a problem in the past, and could be even more so after the September 11th episode.

Teach Children Vital information
Begin to teach children their vital information at a young age. This should include:

- Their first and last name
- Their parent’s names
- Their address
- Their phone number
Fourth of July
Needless to say, fireworks can be dangerous. Even the seemingly harmless sparklers that parents equip their children with, burn at temperatures as high as 1,800 degrees Fahrenheit. Each year, fireworks injure as many as 6,000 youngsters. These injuries can include disfiguring burns, permanent loss of eyesight, lacerations, and fractures from exploding fireworks. The most common cause of injuries is the misuse of fireworks; Not being careful with sparklers, holding firecrackers too long, lighting the fuse too close to the firecracker, picking up ‘duds’ that then go off, etc.

- Never play around with fireworks yourselves. Children who see this type of behavior will be more likely to be careless themselves. Things like holding firecrackers in the hand and throwing them at the last minute, setting off bottle rockets out of any unspecified place, all set horrible examples for children.
- Only light one device at a time
- Keep children safely away from the fireworks. Fireworks can often leave the ground, and do not always function as intended, as is evident even in professional displays with very expensive products.
- Never try to re-light malfunctioning fireworks. Douse them with water and dispose of them properly.
- Keep a water supply around when using fireworks, to douse any flame that might start.
- Be extra careful waving around sparklers. The most common accident is kids waving a sparkler around through the air and taking out another child’s eye, or burning their face.
- Teach children to never handle or light fireworks. Explain to them that it is the responsibility of an adult to do that.
- Keep fireworks locked away from children as you would a gun, to ensure they do not attempt their own display without your permission.

Halloween
Halloween has a great potential for danger for children, but it might not always be what you think. Finding tainted candy is almost a statistical anomaly, in fact, I heard one source report that it has never happened. The threat of abduction is certainly there, but there do not seem to be any more abductions on Halloween than any other day. More likely, is the threat of a child being struck by a car, or the threat of fire.

We send children out, in restrictive costumes, often times dark colored, at night, in the dark, walking around the neighborhood. Keep in mind, children aren’t the only ones partying, and drunk drivers are also out in full force. Obviously, this is an increased danger. The number of child pedestrian deaths is four times higher on Halloween evening than on any other night of the year. Consider the following Halloween safety precautions for your family:

- Consider non-traditional trick or treating measures with your children. There are now dozens of other options right in your community, such as mall trick or treating, special events, etc. These are much safer than traditional forms, and often, they are much more time efficient and satisfying for both the parents and the children.
- Use battery powered lights in jack-o-lanterns. Avoid open flames.
- As a motorist, use extreme caution on Halloween. Enter all driveways and alleys carefully, and drive very slowly around neighborhoods, expecting children to dart out into the street.
- If you make your child’s costume, use fire retardant materials.
- Supervise all children under 12 while trick or treating. Make sure there is an adult with each group of trick or treaters who are 12 or younger.
• Establish a specific route to follow and a specific return time, so you will know if your child is missing and where to look.
• If your child’s costume is dark, consider putting a few strips of reflective tape on it to make your child visible to motorists.
• In picking out costumes, try to avoid costumes that restrict eyesight or movement.

For Children:
• Teach children to never enter the home of anyone, no matter what the person says. Use this time as an opportunity to talk about safety.
• Supply children with a flashlight, and instruct them to carry it around to help them see better, and also to use so that motorists can see them.
• Teach children to walk only on the sidewalks, not in the street. If there are no sidewalks, walk on the left side of the road, facing traffic.
• Teach children not to eat any of the candy along the way, to bring it home for you to check over first. Give children a snack before trick or treating to help them refrain.

The Holiday Season
The biggest hazard during the holiday season, and winter in general, is the hazard of fire. The highest risk of fire danger is in the months of December and January, where fire rates soar, doubling from summer months. This is due to the increase in heat sources, open fires, and holiday traditions which use lights, trees, lots of cooking, and open flames. Curiously, even children playing with fire peaks during the winter months for some reason. Be sure to take the following holiday precautions for your family:

• If you use a Christmas tree, try using an artificial and flame resistant tree. If you use a real tree, try to limit the time it spends in your house as much as possible. Remove it as soon after Christmas as you can.
• Get as fresh a tree as you can. Water it daily to ensure it keeps from drying out.
• Check over all lights you will put over the tree very carefully for damaged bulbs or frayed chords. Do not use if either are present. Because of their storage and use, lights have a tendency to develop flaws or defects in them.
• Monitor children around the holiday season too, especially when relatives are over and they have a tendency to be ignored in all the commotion. Continue to check for signs that your child may be playing with fire.
• Be especially cautious with Menorahs and candles. Any open flame is a huge fire safety threat. Open flames equal to smoking for the highest cause of fire occurrences. If you burn menorahs or candles, ensure that extreme caution is used as to where they are placed, and be sure to put the candles out every night at bedtime. Do not leave them lit throughout the night.

Winter Sports
Parents often do not realize the inherent danger in winter sports such as sledding and skiing. The bottom line is, in these winter sports, children are speeding down hills at speeds of 20-60 miles per hour. If a child strikes a hard object such as a rock at these speeds, it is the equivalent of being struck by a car.

Every year, about 33,000 sledding injuries are serious enough to require emergency room treatment. Most of these are children. And about 1/3 of all ski related injuries involve children under the age of 16.
Always have children wear a helmet when doing any winter sport. Parents often make children wear a helmet for bicycle riding, but forget about one when skiing or sledding, which can often times be just as dangerous.

Provide children with eye protection as well. Not only will it increase their vision and fun, it protects their eyes from foreign objects that may be in the snow.

Avoid metal sleds.

Check out and pre-approve any place your children want to go sledding. Walk the path first very carefully to ensure that there are not hazards present that could cause a serious injury.

Pick a sledding area that is gently sloped enough, with a flat area at the bottom of the run to allow for a gradual and gentle stop when done. Pick an area free of debris, and away from roads, trees, fences, or frozen bodies of water.

Remember sun protection during the winter too! Snow reflects the sun and can cause burning, even on cloudy days.

Keep children skiing on paths that are appropriate for them. Don’t try to push them onto slopes that are too hard. Not only does it increase their chance of injuries themselves, it pushes them on with much more advanced skiers, who often are not looking out for children and skiing much faster than your children can.

When doing any winter sport, being aware of the others around, and the obstacles around you, is the most important thing.

Never sled on a street or near the street. Make sure there is no danger of your kid going too far and sliding onto a street.

Always check the area first for any rocks or hazards that might be on the hill.

Avoid sitting head first in a sled. This greatly increases the risk of injury.

Bundle your kid up to stay warm!

Play-safe playground rules

200,000 children will visit the emergency room this year from playing on the playground. Around 15 or so will die on the playground. While much of these injuries have to do with the safety of the actual playground and how it was built, there are many things parents and kids can do to keep their kids safe while at play.

Scope out different playgrounds in your neighborhood, and check out how they score for child safety. Pick playgrounds for your children that are up to safety specs.

Here is what to look for: Soft cushioning material is underneath all equipment; Equipment has at least a 6 foot free zone in all area’s from other obstacles, such as tree’s, cement, or other equipment; Guardrails should be around all openings on platforms; Equipment should be maintained, with no loose bolts or protruding hardware.

Remove hoods or drawstrings that could become caught in equipment and cause a strangulation. Avoid baggy clothes.

Always make sure children are supervised by an adult while at play.

Make a habit of scanning all new playgrounds, and talking for a minute with your kids about area’s to be careful on them. It will help get them thinking about safety throughout their play.

Teach children to always be cautious about where the swings are in the playground. Explain to them the importance of staying away from kids who are swinging. Before you visit any playground, have your child point out to you where the swings are, and drive home that point to stay out of that general area at each playground you visit.

Get children in the habit of pushing resilient material (such as bark, pea gravel, or rubber chunks) underneath their swing before they get on and use it. The fall cushion material generally quickly gets pushed out from under the swing, making a fall on that area a potentially deadly event.
- Make sure children keep their shoes on. Many public playgrounds can become hang out spots at night for drug users and teenagers. Hypodermic needles, razor blades, and open pocket knives are just some of the things that have been found on playgrounds and injured children.
- Teach children to never rough-house on the top levels of the equipment, such as the jungle gyms, slides, or platforms.
- Teach children to use the equipment properly. Don’t climb on the outside of the guardrails, on top of the monkey bars, etc.
- Take off all backpacks before playing so that they do not get caught on the equipment.
- Stay off equipment when it is wet, as the metal and plastic becomes extremely slippery and dangerous.
- Teach children to watch out for smaller kids, or bigger ones, as the case may be.

**Horses**

Horses can be dangerous. My little sister had a friend, who unfortunately, was killed while horseback riding at the age of 10. She was thrown from her horse, and had a hard fall. Worst part was, she was riding alone. The fall stopped her heart. Had another person been there, there is a good chance she might have been revived. But as it was, she was not found until several hours too late.

- Never let children unsupervised around any animal, particularly large ones.
- Teach children respect for horses and other large animals.
- Teach them to never walk behind a horse, cow, or other large animal. A horses kick can kill a child.

**Hiking/Outdoors**

Ahhhhh, the great outdoors. What a way to spend a weekend. A safe weekend, that is.

- Keep small children at an adults side at all times to avoid attack by a mountain lion or cougar. Children are often considered prey by mountain lions, which are silent and quick.
- Make lots of noise when outdoors or hiking.
- Take extra precaution around outdoor grills and campfires. These areas are a potential burn hazard to children. Keep all kids and pets safely away.
- Learn how to spot potentially dangerous plants, such as sumac, poison ivy, or poison oak.
- Pack plenty of food and water for the trip.
- Be sure to pack lots of bug spray to keep mosquitoes, (The worlds most deadly creature), and other things at bay.
- Check your children for ticks on a regular basis.
- Bring extra clothes, temperatures in the mountains can vary by as much as 40 degrees or more.
- Be sure to check around your campsite for discarded needles, knives, razor blades, and other hazards. Campsites can sometimes be spots for partying drug users, and the aftermath they leave behind is often not cleaned up.
- Survey campsites ahead of time for any dangerous rivers or cliffs that would need extra precaution around your kids.
- Instruct children to never play near a campfire.
- Explain to them the importance of sticking by their parents or another adult in the wilderness.
- Teach children to never touch snakes or other animals they find in the wild. As a child, I loved snakes. I found one while camping, and was toting it back to our campsite. I was surprised when a startled park ranger told me to put it down. Turns out it was a baby rattlesnake.
- Teach children to make lots of noise when hiking, to avoid startling a snake, and give them plenty of time to leave. I remember a particular field trip, when we discovered two rattlesnakes along our path, luckily long before any children got anywhere near them. But snakes are a constant danger to hikers.
- Teach children what dangerous plants are, and teach them how to recognize them. Kids will usually enjoy learning.
- Teach children the dangers of drinking water out of a river or stream. Bring plenty of water, or, in an emergency, boil the water to kill the potentially deadly germs.
**Statistical References:**

Statistics for child injuries and deaths were compiled from the National Safe Kids Campaign, 2003 13 year report, the United States Fire Administration, and The National Safety Council. You can also check out their sites for more information or statistics on child safety:

- National Safety Council
  www.nsc.org

- National Safe kid campaign
  www.safekids.org

- United States Fire Administration
  www.usfa.fema.gov

**Other Resources:**

- www.keepyourchildsafe.org
  Our site, information on child safety and abuse prevention

- www.kidshealth.org
  Information on child health and safety.

- www.cspc.gov
  United States Consumer Product Safety Council

- www.childproductsafety.com
  Information on toys and child safety products
# Emergency Contacts:

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<tr>
<th>Service</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Poison Control</td>
<td>1-800-222-1222</td>
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<tr>
<td>Emergency #</td>
<td><strong>Dial 911</strong></td>
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<td>Local Fire</td>
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www.keepyourchildsafe.org