

Keeping Your Kids Safe Is As Easy As Counting: A Top Ten List of Kids' Safety Steps

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(NAPSA)—Every day parents are barraged by stories of children getting hurt or injured in countless ways. Keeping kids safe, however, does not mean hiding them in a fortress-home. In fact, there are some surprisingly easy things parents can do to keep their kids out of harm's way.

As pediatricians and child safety experts, we have encountered more than our share of injuries, ranging from bumps and bruises to life-threatening ones. By simply exercising a little vigilance and getting educated, you can avoid most accidents.

As part of an innovative child safety and injury prevention initiative—funded by the Children and Families Commission of Orange County—Orange County, California—is leading the way by providing parents with the educational tools they need to protect their children.

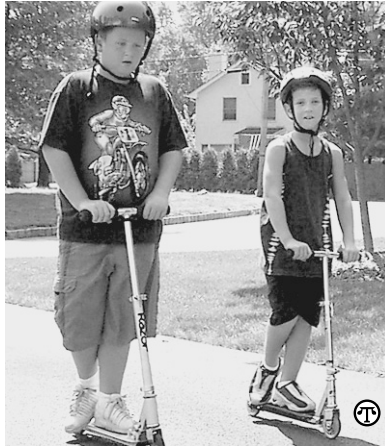
Each year, dozens of children are killed or injured in accidents throughout the country. The tragedy is virtually all of them could have been avoided. Studies show that drowning and vehicular-related accidents together comprise nearly 90 percent of all accidental deaths among children under age five.

"Touch Rule"

In the program funded by the Children and Families Commission of Orange County, we provide parents with fundamental skills they can immediately put to use—such as what we call "touch supervision."

Whether kids are swimming in a pool, crossing a street, or when you are simply backing out of your driveway, make sure your child is within arm's reach of you or another guardian at all times.

Here is a simple "Top Ten" list of additional steps parents can take as part of the Child Safety and Prevention Initiative:



1. Stay within arms' reach of children playing in or around a pool or other bodies of water—including a bathtub—at all times.

This means creating "layers of protection" such as a perimeter fence, door locks and alarms. Don't leave toys near a pool and appoint a responsible child-watcher near a pool or body of water.

2. Don't leave your children unattended in a closed vehicle no matter how quick your errand is.

In addition to the dangers of summer's sweltering heat, be aware of cold-weather dangers such as hypothermia or frost-bite, which can strike all-too-quickly in the winter months.

3. Know where your child is when you are backing out of your driveway, especially in large vehicles.

With many families adopting minivans and SUVs, it is important to always check blind spots before shifting gears.

4. Hold hands with your child when near or crossing streets.

All too often we lose track of what we are doing while waiting for a light to change. A short step off a curb can end in tragedy for a child.

5. Be aware when children are near open windows or ledges.

Prevent falls in and around your home with window locks, window guards and cabinet locks.

Keep your doors locked so your children cannot get out without you knowing.

6. Check to make sure your safety restraints meet the needs of your child and other kids.

Have the fire department, highway patrol, children's hospital, or your pediatrician make sure your child's car seat meets all safety requirements.

7. Keep all medicine, household cleaning and beauty products locked and out of a child's reach.

The leading cause of serious injuries to children is poisoning by medication. Medication and household products should be locked and out of reach. Be sure your childcare facility and the homes of grandparents, friends and other relatives are child-proofed, as well.

8. Make sure your child understands the danger of strangers. Children are coaxed into unknown automobiles everyday.

9. Always keep a first-aid kit on hand for cuts, scrapes and burns.

10. When your child is old enough to begin riding a tricycle, he or she should wear a helmet designed for young children.

By following these simple steps, you may avoid tragedy. Parents interested in more child safety information may visit the American Academy of Pediatrics Web site at www.aap.org or the Children and Families Commission of Orange County's Web site at www.occhildrenandfamilies.com.

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