

# Don't Take A Vacation From Safety

Summer is a carefree time for children, but it can also be a dangerous time. While children are enjoying the long break from school, parents should take extra precautions to ensure their safety.

Older children – typically those 10-14 years of age – are the most vulnerable to accidental injury during the summer months because they generally have less adult supervision and tend to engage in more risky activities. Younger children – those 5-9 years old – also are at risk because they lack the maturity to make safe decisions.

**Did You Know?** Each summer, trips to the emergency room nearly triple as more than 3 million children across the country need medical attention for accidental injuries. (source: [Cox News Service](#))

## General Supervision

Kids generally want to be outside when school is out and the weather is nice. Keep the following in mind:

- 1) Roads and parking lots are for cars, not kids. Anywhere there is a moving vehicle there is a danger to children.
- 2) Kids may object to safety helmets because they're inconvenient or don't look "cool." Insist that they wear them anyway when riding a bike, scooter, skateboard or skates.

**Did You Know?** The [American Academy of Pediatrics](#) reports that 85 percent of bike-related injuries are preventable if the riders wear helmets.

- 3) Remember the sunscreen! An SPF of 15 or higher is generally recommended for children. Consult a physician if your child has very light skin or is susceptible to sunburn.

## 4) Older children

Before they leave, make sure they tell you:

- *where* they are going;
- *what* they'll be doing;
- *whom* they'll be with; and
- *when* they will be home.

(They should contact you if their plans change.)



If children are home alone, they should have all of the necessary emergency contact numbers. (See our guidelines on preparing children to stay [home alone](#).)

### 5) Younger children

Little kids require constant supervision. Even if you have a fenced-in yard, they should always be within eyesight.

Avoid playgrounds which have asphalt or concrete under the equipment. Grass is better, but still does not provide the best cushion from falls. Look for playgrounds which have wood chips or some kind of rubberized material under the equipment.

Inspect the playground equipment before allowing your child to use it.

### Pool Safety

- Enroll your child in swim lessons.
- Kids should never be left alone in or near a pool, pond or lake. Small children should only swim when an adult is present, preferably a lifeguard who knows CPR.
- Have your child take frequent breaks to diminish fatigue.
- If you own a pool, the [Consumer Product Safety Commission](#) offers additional safety tips.

**Did You Know?** Drowning is the second leading cause of injury-related deaths among children. (source: [Centers For Disease Control](#))

### Running Errands

Never leave your child unattended in the car while you go to the grocery store, post office, or on any other errand. It may be convenient for you, but it is dangerous for your child.

Leaving a child in a car unattended could lead to:

- Injury or death due to hyperthermia (heat exhaustion or heat stroke);
- The child wandering away;
- The child attempting to operate the vehicle;
- Someone abducting the child.

**Did You Know?** More than 30 children in the U.S. died last year after being left alone in a hot car. Yet, in a poll of young parents, 1 in 5 still believe it is acceptable to leave kids alone. (source: [National Safe Kids Campaign](#))

