

Parenting the Preschooler

 **Working for Wisconsin Families**

Joan E. LeFebvre
Area Family Living Agent
University of Wisconsin-Extension
Vilas, Forest, Florence Counties

Child Safety

What is the Leading Killer and Disabler of Children?

It's not AIDS, cancer, or any other disease. It's not a dangerous stranger. It's something familiar; something near home; something you wouldn't suspect.

It's **preventable injury**: traffic incidents, drownings, fires and burns, falls, chokings and poisonings.

The #1 health risk for America's children ages 14 and under is unintentional injury. Each year, nearly 6,700 children ages 14 and under are killed from unintentional injuries and more than 50,000 are permanently disabled. You can help protect your family from these needless tragedies by following basic safety steps.

Did You Know?

- Children have thin skin and scald easily. For example, a child exposed to 140°F tap water for three seconds will likely sustain third-degree burns.
- Three out of five bike-related deaths are from head injuries.
- A young child can drown in a bucket or toilet in as little as one inch of water.
- Ninety percent of children who die in home fires die in homes that do not have working smoke detectors.

Review the **Family Safety Check** together with your family to see how well you are doing.

Family Safety Check		
How many of the safety tips below can you say "yes" to?	Yes	No
1. Our family buckles up on every car ride.		
2. Our family wears bike helmets when bicycling.		
3. Kids under 10 never cross streets alone.		
4. Kids are always supervised in or near water.		
5. Our home has working smoke detectors and we check the batteries monthly.		
6. Our water heaters are set no higher than 120 degrees to prevent scald burns.		
7. If guns are in our home, they are kept unloaded and locked away.		
8. Kids are protected against falls from windows, stairs, furniture, and playground equipment.		
9. Household cleaners, medicines, and vitamins are stored out of young children's reach.		
10. Our home has emergency numbers near telephones and first aid supplies.		

Traffic Injuries. (Items 1-3)

- Use a safety seat until your child outgrows it (through age 4 and 40 pounds). When your child is 40 to 60 pounds, use a booster seat. Follow manufacturer's instructions carefully. When your child has outgrown the booster seat, always use a safety belt.
- Always wear a bike helmet properly when bicycling. A helmet should sit on top of your head in a level position and should not rock back and forth or side to side. Always fasten the safety strap.
- Teach children to stop at the curb or edge of the road, and to look left, right, and left again for traffic before and while crossing the street.

Drownings. (Item 4)

- Install four-sided, five-foot-high fencing with a self-closing self-latching gate around your pool or spa. Use personal flotation devices in open water. Drownings can happen in bathtubs, buckets, and toilet bowls in a matter of seconds.

Fires and Burns (Items 5-6)

- Install smoke detectors in all sleeping areas and on every level of your home. Replace batteries yearly. Plan and practice two different escape routes. Keep hot foods and liquids away from children. The water heater should be set no higher than 120 degrees F. Test the water temperature before placing children in the bathtub. Consider installing anti-scald devices.

Firearm Injuries (Item 7)

- Keep guns unloaded and locked out of children's reach. Lock and store bullets in a separate location.

Falls (Item 8)

- Install stairway safety gates and window guards on windows that are not fire emergency exits. Ensure that playgrounds have safe equipment and cushioned surfaces.

Poisonings (Item 9)

- Buy child-resistant packaging, but remember this does not mean "child-proof." Keep potentially poisonous substances and plants out of sight and reach of children.

Emergency Response (Item 10)

- Post police, fire, poison control center, and medical services telephone numbers near phones. Store Syrup of Ipecac (to induce vomiting in case of poisoning) with first aid supplies.

Safety Activities for the Entire Family

The Great Fire Escape Plan

1. Create a fire escape plan that includes two escape routes from each room.
2. Install smoke detectors in all sleeping areas and on every level of your home. Replace batteries yearly. Test detectors monthly.
3. Designate a family meeting place at a safe distance from the home.
4. Remind children to:
 - Keep low to the floor and crawl to the nearest exit since smoke and heat rise.
 - Touch doors before opening them; if the door is warm, it could mean there is fire on the other side--so use another exit.
 - Go to the outside meeting place.
 - Never go back into a burning building.
5. Hold family fire drills at least twice a year.

Buckle Up

Have all family members agree to wear a safety belt every time they ride in any vehicle. Make no exceptions. Remember, it's the law.

**You Are Your Child's #1 Lifesaver,
but only if you make injury prevention a priority.**

Source:

"Safe Kids Check America" Children's National Medical Center, Washington D.C. 1996.

Author: Joan E. LeFebvre, Professor, Department of Family Development, University of Wisconsin-Extension
Reviewer: Steve Small, Extension Specialist, Family Life, UW-Madison

For more information on Parenting and Child Development, contact:
JOAN E. LEFEBVRE, Area Family Living Agent, University of Wisconsin-Extension, P O Box 369, Courthouse, Eagle River WI 54521, 715-479-3653 FAX 715-479-3605 E-Mail joan.lefebvre@ces.uwex.edu
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