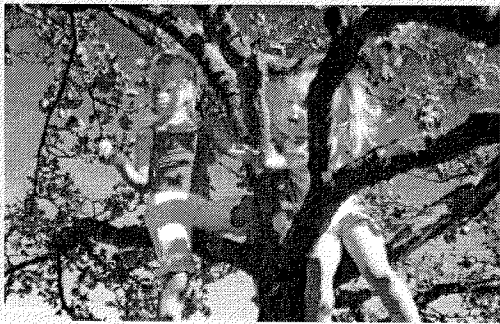




Spring and summer safety tips

Posted on 27 Apr 2012 by Tripp Underwood Posted in Kids' Safety, Parenting

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Tree climbing can be dangerous and should only be done under close supervision

The warm weather is finally here, which means many kids will be spending more time outside. Playgrounds are a great way for children to get exercise, but while there they should be watched closely to make sure the running and climbing doesn't end in injury. To keep kids safe while playing outside:

Make sure an adult is always watching

When possible, visit playgrounds built on a soft surface like rubber, bark chips or sand

Dress them in safe play clothes. Scarves, hood draw-stings, necklaces and other dangling accessories can get caught on play equipment. Also, helmets should only be worn during the activity it was designed for. Playing and running with a helmet could cause an accident because it could limit the child's range of vision.

Riding a bike, skateboard or scooter is another great summer activity, but only when done safely. Most accidents involving children and bicycles, in-line skates and skateboards happen because the child broke a traffic or safety rule. If your child uses a wheeled toy be sure he or she:

Knows the rules of the road:

Always ride on the right side of the road, going the same direction as traffic

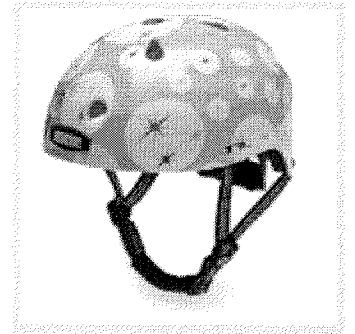
Use hand signals to let others know which way he is turning

Stop at all stop signs and red lights

Look both ways before crossing a street or sidewalk

Anytime your child uses a wheeled toy he should wear a helmet. Ideally the helmet should be bought new (new helmets are more effective than an old helmet that has been in a crash) and meet all safety standards. Look for ones approved by American **National Standards Institute**, the **American Society for Testing Materials** or the **U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission**.

And did you know there are different helmets for different activities? A bike helmet should only be worn while bicycling, but a multi-purpose helmet can be worn when skateboarding, roller-skating or riding scooters. Falls off bikes are different than falls off skateboards or in-line skates, so the helmets are designed differently to better protect the rider. Regardless of the activity, the right helmet should:



Have the proper straps. Front straps should go under the chin and make a 'V' just under the ears. Rear straps should be flat behind the head.

Fit well. Straps should be snug so the helmet doesn't move around on the head. As a rule, one finger should fit between the chin and the chinstrap when the child's mouth is closed.

Sit just right. To make sure the helmet doesn't get in the way of seeing, there should be enough room for two fingers to fit between the child's eyebrows and the helmet.

When the weather gets warm it's tempting to open your windows to let fresh air in. But windows that are open just five inches could be dangerous for children under the age of 10. Falling out of windows can cause very serious injuries. To avoid them:

Put store-bought window guards on all windows above the first floor. **Screens aren't strong enough to stop a child from falling through a window.**

Make sure your child cannot reach any open windows.

Set rules with your child about playing near windows.

Move furniture away from windows, open or closed. If a child falls off a chair or table into glass, it could cause him to break through the window.



Even if they are good swimmers, children need to be watched closely anytime they're in, or around, water. Small children can drown in as little as one inch of water so they need adult supervision around pools, lakes, oceans, wading pools, "kiddie pools," bathtubs, buckets, toilets and hot tubs.

Always keep kids in your direct line of sight when around water.

Reading, listening to music or having long talks with other people can limit your ability to pay attention. Children can drown silently and quickly, so adults need to be focused and alert when watching them swim.

If you own a pool, make sure it has a fence with a gate that

locks. It needs to be at least four feet high and surrounding all four

sides of the pool — the house should not be used as one of the sides.

Teach your child to swim. The American Academy of Pediatrics recommends that children begin swimming lessons at 4 years old.

Use safety equipment. When boating, both you and your child should wear a life vest at all times.

Falls and accidents aren't the only safety hazard kids face outdoors. Sunburns, animal bites and dehydration are common during the warmer months, but they can be easily avoided. Make sure your child:

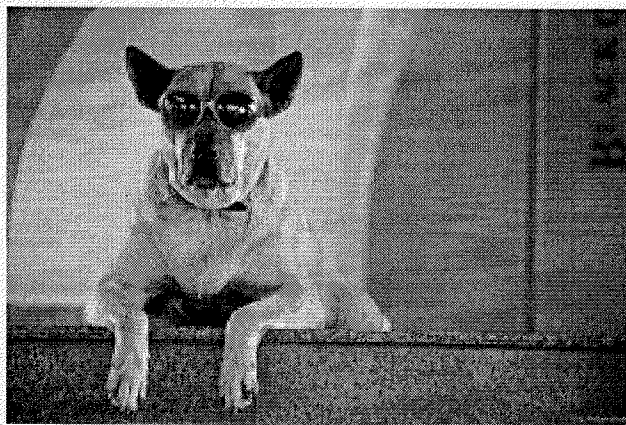
Has sunscreen covering all showing skin. Sunburns can happen even on cloudy days, so it's a good idea to have your child wear it anytime she is outside for more than a half hour. Sunglasses, hats and long sleeves keep UV rays from burning kids' skin and should be worn when appropriate.

Takes water breaks when playing in the heat, even if he's not thirsty. If a child complains about dizziness, headache, nausea or muscle cramps he could be overheated or at risk for heat illness. If your child has of any of these symptoms, have him lie down in a cool, shaded area with his feet slightly raised, with drinking water and a cool cloth on hand.

Bug bites can sting or be itchy, but if your child is allergic to them, it can be much more serious. Inspect repentant and bug spray can be helpful for keeping bugs away, especially in the early evening when many insects are most active.

If the child is playing in the woods, have him wear long sleeves and pants to avoid tick bites.

Like kids, dogs and other animals spend more time outside during the spring and summer. To avoid animal bites, teach your child these safety tips:



Always asking the owner if it's OK to pet the dog.

Let the dog see and sniff you before petting it.

Do not run toward or away from a dog.

If a dog you don't know comes up to you, stay still and look at the ground until it goes away.

If a dog attacks you and knocks you over, roll into a ball and cover your face with your arms.



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