



for Parents

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A PROGRAM OF CONNECTICUT CHILDREN'S MEDICAL CENTER

Walk this way



Your children want to grow up to be just like you. They imitate the way you talk, the way you perform everyday household tasks, and – that's right – even the way you walk.

The most important thing you can do to teach your kids safe pedestrian behavior is to practice it yourself: crossing streets at corners, using traffic signals and crosswalks whenever possible, and making eye contact with drivers before crossing in front of them.

Children ages 5 to 9 are at greatest risk of traffic related pedestrian death and injury. In many instances, parents overestimate their children's pedestrian skills. Most children are struck in streets or driveways near their homes when darting out between parked cars, walking on the edge of the road, or crossing in the middle of the block.

Practice these skills with your children hundreds of times. Supervise them until they show you they are safe pedestrians.



SET LIMITS

- **Don't allow a child under age 10 to cross streets alone.** Adult supervision is vital until your child demonstrates traffic skills and judgment.
- **Require children to carry a flashlight at night, dawn and dusk.** Add retro-reflective materials to children's clothing.
- **Prohibit play in driveways, unfenced yards, streets or parking lots.**
- **Make sure your children take the same route to common destinations (such as school) every time.** Walk with your child to find the safest path. Look for the most direct route with the fewest street crossings.

TEACH YOUR CHILD SAFETY

Practical, skills-based training has been demonstrated to improve child pedestrian behavior. Take the time to teach your child to:

- **Look left – right – and left again before crossing the street.** Cross when the street is clear, and keep looking both ways while crossing. Walk, don't run.
- **Understand and obey traffic signals and signs.** Cross at corners, using traffic signals and crosswalks when available. Do not enter the street from between parked cars or behind bushes or shrubs.
- **Stop at the curb, or at the edge of the road if there is no curb, before crossing the street.** Never run into a street without stopping - even for a ball, pet or any other reason. Darting into the street accounts for the majority of child pedestrian fatalities.
- **Walk facing traffic, on sidewalks or paths.** Walk as far to the left as possible if there are no sidewalks.
- **Watch for cars that are turning or backing up.**

SOURCE: NATIONAL SAFE KIDS CAMPAIGN

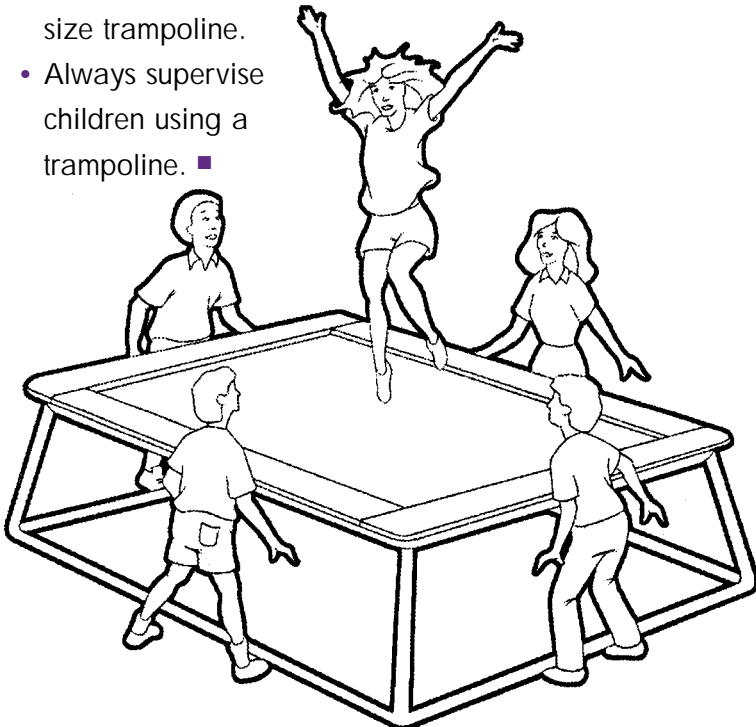
Trouble on the trampoline

The Consumer Product Safety Commission estimates that in 1996 there were 83,000 hospital emergency department-treated injuries associated with trampolines. About 75% of the victims were under 15 years of age, and 10% were under 5 years of age. Since 1990, the Commission has received reports of six deaths involving trampolines.

Almost all of the trampolines associated with injuries were at private homes, usually in backyards. Most of the injuries occurred on full-size trampolines.

Here are the steps you can take to help prevent serious trampoline injuries, including sprains, fractures, scrapes, bruises and cuts.

- Allow only one person on the trampoline at a time.
- Do not attempt or allow somersaults.
- Do not allow the trampoline to be used without shock-absorbing pads that completely cover the springs, hooks and frame.
- Place the trampoline away from structures and other play areas.
- Do not use a ladder with the trampoline because it provides unsupervised access by small children.
- No child under 6 years of age should use a full-size trampoline.
- Always supervise children using a trampoline. ■



Safe school days

When you hear people talk these days about school safety, they're usually referring to the recent violence. However, studies indicate that school-age children are nine times more likely to sustain an unintentional injury than to be the victim of violence while at school.

In fact, an estimated 2.2 million children ages 14 and under sustain school-related injuries each year, and in elementary schools 80% of students will see a school nurse for an injury-related complaint over a two-year period.

Being aware and involved makes a big difference in protecting your children from school-related injuries. Since you can't be with your kids throughout the school day, Connecticut SAFE KIDS recommends that you teach your child how to protect him or herself:

- **At the bus stop:** Arrive early, stay out of the street and avoid horseplay, wait for the bus to come to a complete stop before approaching the street, watch for cars, and avoid the driver's blind spot.
- **On the bus:** Stay seated at all times and keep heads and arms inside the bus while riding.
- **Getting off the bus:** Wait until the bus comes to a complete stop, exit from the front using the handrail to avoid falls, and cross the street at least 10 feet (10 giant steps) in front of the bus.
- **On the playground:** No pushing, shoving or crowding. Know and use only the equipment appropriate for your age. ■

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