



# PARENTING POSTS

A newsletter for parents of kindergarten students.

## Keeping Your Child Safe

Kindergarten is a time when your child wants to be more independent and will attempt to do more on his or her own. Learning and growing in responsibility is important for young children. However, growing up also comes with the need for guidelines, supervision and safety training because children this age lack the appropriate skills and judgment for some tasks.

Kindergarten-age children are not old enough to be left alone. Children at this age should not be left unattended due to concerns about child safety, responsibility and even child neglect. As a parent or caregiver, you are responsible for providing a safe environment with appropriate supervision for your children.

### Safety Basics

Even if a child were home with a parent, a medical emergency may occur, so for everyone's safety, teach children the following skills:

- The ability to recite their full name, address and phone numbers with area code, as well as parent names and parent's place of employment
- How to use the telephone, including 911. Keep other emergency numbers posted as well as listing them in your phone. Develop a regular pattern of travel to and from school, parks, stores and homes of family members and friends.
- To use the "buddy system"
- Where to go in case of need or emergency by identifying "safe houses" in your neighborhood or town or "safe places" for farm and rural children
- What is and is not safe to play with around your home, garage and/or farm

### Talk to Your Children About Safety With Others

The advice you give your children about strangers will depend on their ages and personalities as well as on circumstances in the community. Watch your child's reactions to others, including people familiar to you. Strangers are not the only ones who pose safety concerns. If you child isn't comfortable with another person, find out why, privately, and do not push the relationship. Do not scare your children with safety training. Teach it like you would any other important topic and check for understanding.



**Enforce safety rules for your children and those whom you supervise. Safety rules are non-negotiable, save lives and prevent heartache. Take the extra care necessary to keep children as safe as possible and limit their exposure to harm.**

## **Consumer Product Safety Commission**

For up-to-date product safety information, contact the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission for information at (800) 638-2772 or on the Web at [www.cpsc.gov](http://www.cpsc.gov).

## **Biking/Wheel Sports/Pedestrians**

- Approximately 45 percent of children always wear a helmet when involved in sports or activities that require it. Let's work together to make that 100 percent! More children ages 5 to 14 are seen in emergency departments for injuries related to biking than any other sport.
- Nonmotorized scooters cause the most injuries of any toy among children ages 14 and younger.
- Children under 10 years of age are not mature enough or tall/large enough to be seen by motorists. Pedestrians younger than 10 should be supervised by an adult.

## **Encourage Helmet Use**

Helmets cut down on serious brain injury by almost 90 percent. Easy-to-follow information on purchasing and fitting helmets is available at [www.nhtsa.gov](http://www.nhtsa.gov) (National Highway Traffic Safety Administration).

Make fitting your helmet a routine part of every ride. Discard helmets that have been involved in a crash, are cracked/damaged or have expired.

## **Playground Safety ([www.cpsc.gov](http://www.cpsc.gov))**

- The majority of playground-related injuries (almost 80 percent) are caused by falls. Surfacing materials are important. At least 9 to 12 inches of loose shredded rubber, sand, pea gravel, wood mulch or wood chips need to be in place to minimize injury in a fall. These materials are protective to varying heights and need to extend out from the equipment. Poured rubber or rubber mats are also good shock absorbers.
- Check the playground equipment each time for cracks, worn or open "S" hooks, sharp points or edges, good spacing between equipment and guardrails where needed.
- Playgrounds should have age-appropriate, separate, equipment for children 5 years and younger.

## **Car Seats/Boosters/Back Seat**

Keep your 4- to 7-year-old children in forward-facing car seats with a harness until they reach the top height or weight limit allowed by the car seat manufacturer. Your child will sit in a booster seat using the lap and shoulder belt until he or she is a minimum of 80 pounds. Always follow the manufacturer's instructions that come with the seat. Buckle booster seats even when not in use so they do not become a projectile in case of a sudden stop or crash. Children 12 years of age and younger need to ride in the back seat. (See additional safety resources at [www.SafeKids.org](http://www.SafeKids.org).)

## **Online Safety**

Use parental controls on all electronic devices. Do not allow elementary-age children access to the Internet without constant adult supervision. "Predators" are online and children are vulnerable and trusting.

## **Balloons**

Of all children's products, balloons are the leading cause of suffocation. This is from uninflated balloons and pieces of balloons. Do not allow children to chew on or put pieces of a balloon in their mouth.

## **Lawnmowers and Tractors**

Death or serious injury can occur when children fall off a mower or tractor or get in its path and are run over. Keep children indoors or far away from these machines when in use. Never allow children to be passengers. Serious life-changing injuries are all too common.

**For more information on this and other topics, see [www.ag.ndsu.edu](http://www.ag.ndsu.edu)**

Published by the NDSU Extension Service and distributed through your county Extension office. To locate your local Extension office, go to [www.ag.ndsu.edu/extension/county-extension-offices](http://www.ag.ndsu.edu/extension/county-extension-offices).

**Cindy Klapperich**, Extension Agent—Sargent County Family and Consumer Sciences, and 4-H Youth Development

Courthouse, 355 Main St., Suite 5, Forman, ND 58032  
p: 701-724-3355, ext. 5 f: 701.724.3362

[cindy.klapperich@ndsu.edu](mailto:cindy.klapperich@ndsu.edu)  
[www.ag.ndsu.edu/sargentcountyextension](http://www.ag.ndsu.edu/sargentcountyextension)

North Dakota State University does not discriminate on the basis of age, color, disability, gender expression/identity, genetic information, marital status, national origin, public assistance status, sex, sexual orientation, status as a U.S. veteran, race or religion. Direct inquiries to the Vice President for Equity, Diversity and Global Outreach, 205 Old Main, (701) 231-7708.  
County Commissions, NDSU and U.S. Department of Agriculture Cooperating. This publication will be made available in alternative formats for people with disabilities upon request, (701) 231-7881.