

Bright Futures Parent Handout 7 and 8 Year Visits

Here are some suggestions from Bright Futures experts that may be of value to your family.

NUTRITION AND PHYSICAL ACTIVITY

Staying Healthy

- Eat together often as a family.
- Start every day with breakfast.
- Buy fat-free milk and low-fat dairy foods, and encourage 3 servings each day.
- Limit soft drinks, juice, candy, chips, and high-fat food.
- Include 5 servings of vegetables and fruits at meals and for snacks daily.
- Limit TV and computer time to 2 hours a day.
- Do not have a TV or computer in your child's bedroom.
- Encourage your child to play actively for at least 1 hour daily.

SAFETY

- Watch your child's computer use.
 - Know who she talks to online.
 - Install a safety filter.
- Know your child's friends and their families.
- Teach your child plans for emergencies such as a fire.
 - Teach your child how and when to dial 911.
- Teach your child how to be safe with other adults.
 - No one should ask for a secret to be kept from parents.
 - No one should ask to see private parts.
 - No adult should ask for help with his private parts.

SAFETY

Safety

- Your child should always ride in the back seat and use a booster seat until the vehicle's lap and shoulder belt fit.
- Teach your child to swim and watch her in the water.
- Use sunscreen when outside.
- Provide a good-fitting helmet and safety gear for biking, skating, in-line skating, skiing, snowboarding, and horseback riding.
- Keep your house and cars smoke free.
- Never have a gun in the home. If you must have a gun, store it unloaded and locked with the ammunition locked separately from the gun.

DEVELOPMENT AND MENTAL HEALTH

Your Growing Child

- Give your child chores to do and expect them to be done.
- Hug, praise, and take pride in your child for good behavior and doing well in school.
- Be a good role model.
- Don't hit or allow others to hit.
- Help your child to do things for himself.
- Teach your child to help others.
- Discuss rules and consequences with your child.
- Be aware of puberty and body changes in your child.
- Answer your child's questions simply.
- Talk about what worries your child.

SCHOOL

School

- Attend back-to-school night, parent-teacher events, and as many other school events as possible.
- Talk with your child and child's teacher about bullies.
- Talk to your child's teacher if you think your child might need extra help or tutoring.
- Your child's teacher can help with evaluations for special help, if your child is not doing well.

ORAL HEALTH

Healthy Teeth

- Help your child brush teeth twice a day.
 - After breakfast
 - Before bed
- Use a pea-sized amount of toothpaste with fluoride.
- Help your child floss her teeth once a day.
- Your child should visit the dentist at least twice a year.
- Encourage your child to always wear a mouth guard to protect teeth while playing sports.

Poison Help: 1-800-222-1222

Child safety seat inspection:
1-866-SEATCHECK; seatcheck.org

The Perkins Pediatric Clinic, LLC
Michael W. Perkins, MD
614 North Pine Street
DeRidder, LA 70634

phone: (337) 462-6000
www.perkinspediatrics.com



American Academy
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DEDICATED TO THE HEALTH OF ALL CHILDREN™

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Bright Futures Patient Handout 7 and 8 Year Visits

SCHOOL

Doing Well at School

- Try your best at school. Doing well in school is important to how you feel about yourself.
- Ask for help when you need it.
- Join clubs and teams you like.
- Tell kids who pick on you or try to hurt you to stop it. Then walk away.
- Tell adults you trust about bullies.

Playing It Safe

- Don't open the door to anyone you don't know.
- Have friends over only when your parents say it's OK.
- Wear your helmet for biking, skating, and skateboarding.
- Ask a grown-up for help if you are scared or worried.
- It is OK to ask to go home and be with your Mom or Dad.
- Keep your private parts, the parts of your body covered by a bathing suit, covered.
- Tell your parent or another grown-up right away if an older child or grown-up shows you their private parts, asks you to show them yours, or touches your private parts.
- Always sit in your booster seat and ride in the back seat of the car.

SAFETY

NUTRITION AND PHYSICAL ACTIVITY

Eating Well, Being Active

- Eat breakfast every day.
- Aim for eating 5 fruits and vegetables every day.
- Only drink 1 cup of 100% fruit juice a day.
- Limit high-fat foods and drinks such as candies, snacks, fast food, and soft drinks.
- Eat healthful snacks like fruit, cheese, and yogurt.
- Eating healthy is important to help you do well in school and sports.
- Eat with your family often.
- Drink at least 2 cups of milk daily.
- Match every 30 minutes of TV or computer time with 30 minutes of active play.

ORAL HEALTH

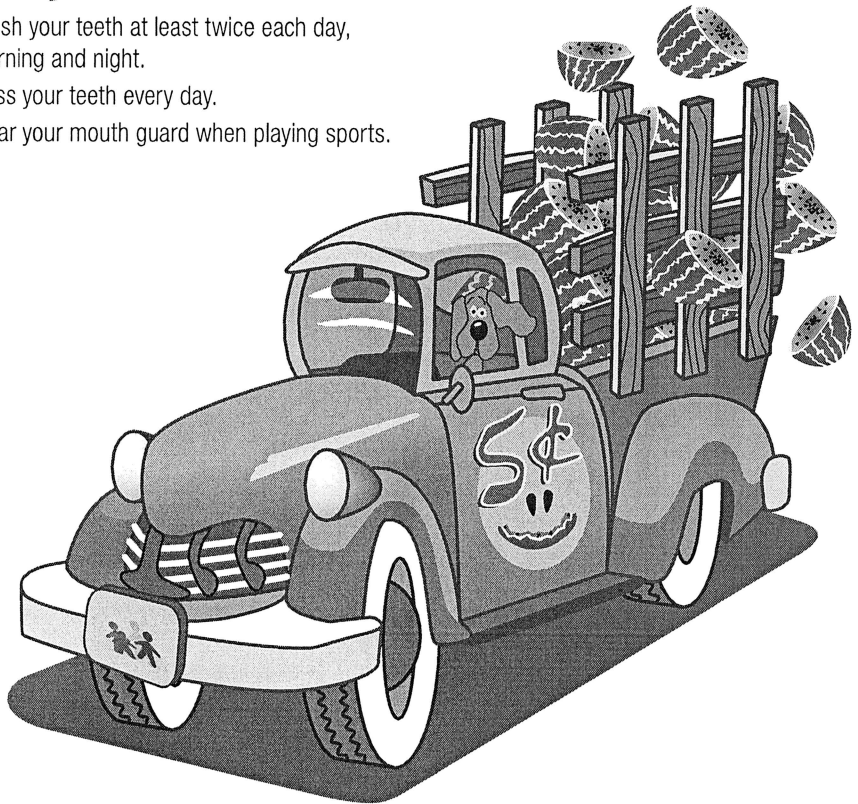
Healthy Teeth

- Brush your teeth at least twice each day, morning and night.
- Floss your teeth every day.
- Wear your mouth guard when playing sports.

DEVELOPMENT AND MENTAL HEALTH

Handling Feelings

- Talk about feeling mad or sad with someone who listens well.
- Talk about your worries. It helps.
- Ask your parent or other trusted adult about changes in your body.
- Even embarrassing questions are important. It's OK to talk about your body and how it's changing.



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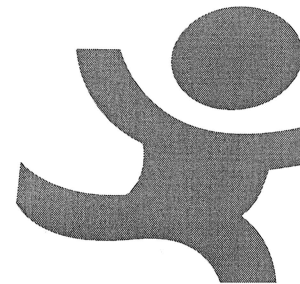
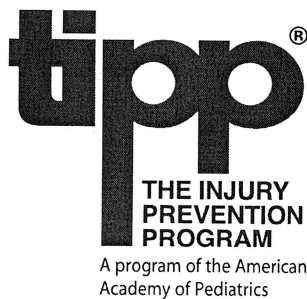
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8 Years



8 YEARS

Safety for Your Child

Did you know that injuries are the greatest threat to the life and health of your child? Injuries are the leading cause of death of school-aged children. **Yet you can prevent most injuries!**

At age 8, children are now taking off on their own. They look to friends for approval. They try to do daring things. They may not want to obey grown-up rules. But your child can learn safety rules with your help and reminders. Your child now goes out more without you and could drown, be hurt on a bike, or be hit by a car. And your child still can be hurt or killed while riding in a car if he is not buckled by a seat belt in a belt-positioning booster seat.

Sports Safety

Ask your doctor which sports are right for your child. **Be sure your child wears all the protective equipment made for the sport**, such as shin pads, mouth guards, wrist guards, eye protection, or helmets. Your child's coach also should be able to help you select protective equipment.

Water Safety

No one is safe alone in water, even if he or she knows how to swim. **Do not let your child play around any water (lake, stream, pool, or ocean) unless an adult is watching. Never let your child swim in canals or any fast-moving water.**

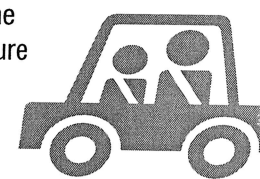
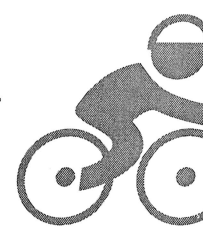
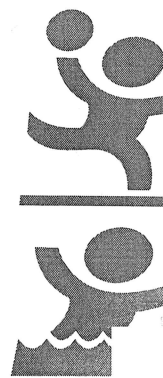
Teach your child to always enter the water feet first.

And Remember Bike Safety

Make sure your child always wears a helmet while riding a bike. Now is the time to teach your child "Rules of the Road." Be sure he or she knows the rules and can use them. Watch your child ride. See if he or she is in control of the bike. See if your child uses good judgment. Your 8-year-old is not old enough to ride at dusk or after dark. Make sure your child brings the bike in when the sun starts to set.

Car Safety

NEVER start the car until you've checked to be sure that your child is properly restrained in a booster seat. Your child should use a booster seat until the lap belt can be worn low and flat on the hips and the shoulder belt can be worn across the shoulder rather than the face or neck (usually at about 4 feet 9 inches tall and between 8 and 12 years old). Be sure that you and all others in the car are buckled up, too. Install shoulder belts in the back seat of your car if they are not already there. Serious injuries can occur with lap belts alone. **The safest place for all children to ride is in the back seat.**



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Firearm Hazards

It is best to keep all guns out of your home. If you choose to keep a gun, store it unloaded and in a locked place, with the ammunition locked separately. Ask if the homes where your child visits or is cared for have guns and how they are stored. Your child is at greater risk of being shot by himself, his friends, or a family member than of being injured by an intruder.



Would you be able to help your child in case of an injury? Put emergency numbers by or on your phone today. Learn first aid and CPR. Be prepared... for your child's sake!

SAFETY IN A KID'S WORLD

Dear Parent: Your child is old enough to start learning how to prevent injuries. The games below are designed to help your child think about safety. Read the messages with your child and talk about them together. Then take this safety sheet home and post it where everyone can see it.

It takes time to form a safety habit. Remind each other what it says. Make safety a big part of your lives.



Bike Safety

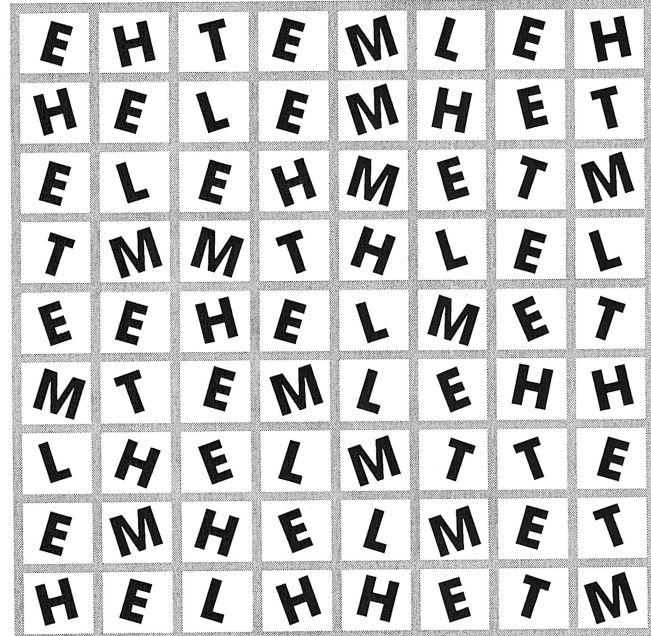
Always wear a 

when you ride your



Get the Helmet Habit!

Directions: Can you find the word "HELMET" in 9 different places (any direction)?



1. When turning or stopping,

2. LOOK both ways,

3. Always ride

4. Always stop at

5. When you ride on the sidewalk

6. Smart riders always

at street corners and driveways.

STOP signs and the curb.

wear their helmet.

watch out for people.

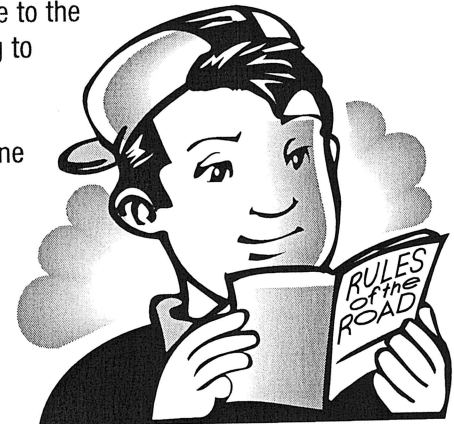
always use hand signals.

to the right.

"Rules of the Road"

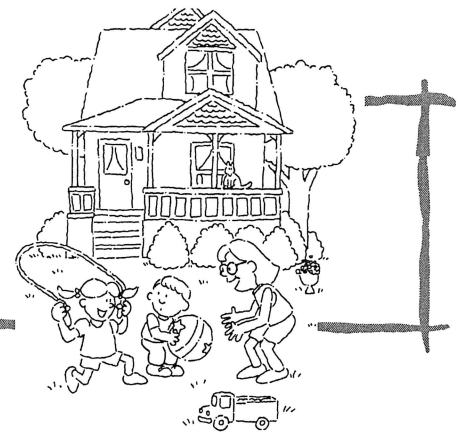
teaches you to ride your bike safely.

Directions: Here are 6 important "Rules of the Road." Draw a line from the first part of the rule to the correct ending to complete the sentence. The first one is done for you.



The information in this publication should not be used as a substitute for the medical care and advice of your pediatrician. There may be variations in treatment that your pediatrician may recommend based on the individual facts and circumstances.

Your Child and the Environment



Environmental dangers are everywhere. Most of these dangers are more harmful to children than adults. However, there are things you can do to reduce your child's contact with them. Read more to learn about how to protect your family from environmental dangers.

Where children live

Air pollution is not just a problem outside. There can be things in the air inside your home that can harm your child. There can also be hazards found in the dust and dirt in or around your home and yard. The following are examples of hazards found where children live:

Asbestos

Asbestos is a natural fiber that was often used for fireproofing, insulating, and soundproofing between the 1940s and 1970s. Asbestos is only dangerous when it becomes crumbly. If that happens, asbestos fibers get into the air and are breathed into the lungs. Breathing in these fibers can cause chronic health problems, including a rare form of lung cancer. Asbestos can still be found in some older homes, often as insulation around pipes. Schools are required by law to remove asbestos or make sure that children are not exposed to it.

What you can do

- ✓ Don't allow children to play near exposed or crumbling materials that may contain asbestos.
- ✓ If you think there is asbestos in your home, have an expert look at it.
- ✓ If your home has asbestos, use a certified contractor to help solve the problem. You could have more problems if the asbestos isn't contained or removed safely.

Carbon monoxide

Carbon monoxide (CO) is a toxic gas that has no taste, no color, and no odor. It comes from appliances or heaters that burn gas, oil, wood, propane, or kerosene. Carbon monoxide poisoning is very dangerous. If left unchecked, exposure to CO can lead to memory loss, personality changes, brain damage, and death.

What you can do

- ✓ Call the Poison Help number at 1-800-222-1222 if you suspect CO poisoning.
- ✓ See your doctor right away if everyone in your house has flu-like symptoms (headache, fatigue, nausea) at the same time, especially if the symptoms go away when you leave the house.
- ✓ Put CO detectors on each floor in your home.
- ✓ Never leave a car running in an attached garage, even if the garage door is open.
- ✓ Never use a charcoal grill inside the home or in a closed space.
- ✓ Have furnaces; woodstoves; fireplaces; and gas-fired water heaters, ovens, ranges, and clothes dryers checked and serviced each year.
- ✓ Never use a gas oven to heat your home.

Household products

Many cleaning products give off dangerous fumes or leave residues. These products can be harmful if they are not thrown out properly (for example, if they are left in the garage).

What you can do

- ✓ Only use these products when needed.
- ✓ Always have enough ventilation when using these products.
- ✓ Store them in a safe place.
- ✓ Bring empty containers to your local hazardous waste disposal center.

Lead

Lead is one of the most serious environmental problems to children. Your child can get lead in her body if she swallows lead dust, breathes lead vapors, or eats soil or paint chips that have lead in them. Lead poisoning can cause learning disabilities, behavioral problems, anemia, or damage to the brain and kidneys.

Lead is most often found in

- Paint that is on the inside and outside of homes built before 1978
- Dust and paint chips from old paint
- Soil that has lead in it (particularly around older homes or by businesses that used lead)
- Hobby materials such as paints, solders, fishing weights, and buckshot
- Food stored in certain ceramic dishes (especially if dishes were made in another country)
- Older painted toys and furniture such as cribs
- Tap water, especially in homes that have lead solder on pipes
- Mini-blinds manufactured outside the United States before July 1997

A child who has high lead levels may not look or act sick. The only way to know if your child has lead in her body is with a blood test.

What you can do

If your home was built before 1978, test the paint for lead. If lead paint is found, get expert advice on how to repair it safely. Unsafe repairs can increase your child's risk for exposure to lead.

- ✓ Don't scrape or sand paint that may have lead in it.
- ✓ Clean painted areas with soap and water and cover peeling, flaking, or chipping paint with new paint, duct tape, or contact paper.
- ✓ Make sure painted areas are repaired before putting cribs, playpens, beds, or high chairs next to them.
- ✓ Check with your health department to see if the water in your area contains lead.
- ✓ Always use cold water for mixing formula, cooking, and drinking. Run the water for 1 to 2 minutes before each use.
- ✓ Ask your pediatrician if your child needs a lead test. A blood test is the only accurate way to test for lead poisoning.
- ✓ Encourage your child to wash his hands often, especially before eating.
- ✓ Give your child a healthy diet with the right amounts of iron and calcium.
- ✓ Before moving into a home or apartment, check for possible lead problems.
- ✓ Never live in an old house while it's being renovated.

Molds

Molds grow almost anywhere and can be found in any part of a home. Common places where molds grow include the following:

- Damp basements
- Closets
- Showers and tubs
- Refrigerators
- Air conditioners and humidifiers
- Garbage pails
- Mattresses
- Carpets (especially if wet)

Children who live in moldy places are more likely to develop allergies, asthma, and other health problems.

What you can do

- ✓ Keep the surfaces in your home dry.
- ✓ Throw away wet carpets that can't be dried.
- ✓ Keep air conditioners and humidifiers clean and in good working order.
- ✓ Use exhaust fans in the kitchen and the bathroom to help keep the air dry.
- ✓ Avoid using items that are likely to get moldy, like foam rubber pillows and mattresses.

From-the-job hazards

From-the-job hazards brought into the home can be dangerous to children. This can happen when parents who work with harmful chemicals bring them into the home on their skin, hair, clothes, or shoes. People who work in the following places are most at risk:

- Painting and construction sites
- Car body or repair shops
- Car battery and radiator factories
- Shipyards

What you can do

- ✓ Find out if you or any adult in your home is exposed to lead, asbestos, mercury, or chemicals at work.
- ✓ If so, shower and change before coming home.
- ✓ Wash work clothes separately from other laundry.

Radon

Radon is a gas that can be found in water, building materials, and natural gas. It has no taste, no color, and no odor. Radon can seep into a home through cracks in the foundation, floors, and walls. High levels of radon have been found in homes in many parts of the United States. Breathing in radon doesn't cause health problems at first. However, over time it can increase your risk of lung cancer. Radon is believed to be the second most common cause of lung cancer (after smoking) in the United States.

WHAT YOU CAN DO

- ✓ Check with your health department to see if radon levels are high in your area.
- ✓ Test your home for radon. Home radon tests don't cost much and are easy to use. The results can be analyzed by a certified laboratory. You can't test yourself or your child for radon exposure.

Secondhand smoke

Secondhand smoke is also called environmental tobacco smoke (ETS). This is the smoke breathed out by a smoker or from the tip of a burning cigarette, pipe, or cigar. Children are exposed to secondhand smoke any time they are around

someone smoking a cigarette, pipe, or cigar. The chemicals in secondhand smoke can cause cancer. In fact, secondhand smoke has been linked to 3,000 lung cancer deaths each year in people who don't even smoke!

What you can do

- ✓ If you are a smoker, get help so you can quit! (Children whose parents smoke are more likely to try smoking than those whose parents give clear messages that smoking is not healthy.)
- ✓ Remove your children from places where smoking is allowed, even if no one is smoking while you are there.
- ✓ Make your home and car smoke-free.

What children eat and drink

Drinking water

Children drink 5 to 10 times more water for their size than adults. Most of this water is tap water. Tap water in most areas is protected by law. However, small water supplies, such as from private wells, are not.

Many people use bottled water because they think it's better than tap water. Some brands are better. However, other brands may only be tap water that's bottled and sold separately. Bottled water costs a lot more than tap water, but may be needed in some areas. Children need fluoride for good dental health. Only some brands of bottled water have fluoride, so read the labels.

Some of the things in drinking water that can make children sick include the following:

- Germs
- Nitrates
- Heavy metals
- Chlorine
- Radioactive particles
- By-products from cleaning products

The quality of water in the United States is among the best in the world, but problems do happen. County health departments and state environmental agencies are the best sources of information about the water where you live.

What you can do

- ✓ Find out where your water comes from. If you are on a municipal water supply, the water company must tell you what is in the water. If your water is not regulated or you have a well, have it tested each year.
- ✓ Always drink and cook with cold water. Contaminants can build up in water heaters.
- ✓ If you are not sure of your plumbing, run the water for 1 to 2 minutes each morning before you drink or cook with water. This flushes the pipes and reduces the chances of a contaminant getting into your water. In some areas more time is needed to flush water through the pipes. Ask your pediatrician or health department about recommendations specific to your area.
- ✓ If you have well water and a baby younger than 1 year, have your water tested for nitrates *before* giving it to your baby. Breastfeeding, using ready-to-feed formula, or using bottled water with powdered formula is wise until you know if your water is safe. If you have questions, call your local health department.
- ✓ If you think your water may have germs, you can kill most of them by boiling the water and cooling it before use. Do not boil water for longer than 1 minute. This can cause a buildup of toxins and metals in the water. Water filters installed on faucets or pitchers that have built-in filters may also help remove harmful contaminants from tap water.

Mercury

Mercury that gets into oceans, lakes, rivers, and ponds can get into the fish we eat. Mercury can also be found in many other places. Because mercury can be toxic, especially in large doses, every effort should be made to reduce exposure to children and pregnant women.

What you can do

- ✓ Don't eat shark, swordfish, king mackerel, or tilefish because they contain high levels of mercury. Also, limit your child's intake of canned light tuna, shrimp, pollock, salmon, cod, catfish, clams, flatfish, crabs, and scallops to 2 meals per week. Albacore (white) tuna should be limited to 1 meal per week. Pregnant or nursing women should also limit the amount of these fish they eat.
- ✓ Check with local advisories about the safety of fish caught in your area. If no advice is available, only give your child up to 1 meal per week of fish from your local waters.
- ✓ Remove mercury thermometers from your home. See if your community has a thermometer exchange program for the proper disposal of these thermometers.
- ✓ The material traditionally used to fill dental cavities contains small amounts of mercury. There is no scientific proof that this is dangerous to children. However, if this worries you, talk to your dentist about other treatment options.
- ✓ Talk with your pediatrician if your family uses mercury in folk remedies or in cultural traditions (such as Santeria [religion originating in Cuba]).

To do their part, drug companies have stopped using mercury as a preservative in vaccines (even though it was used only in very small amounts). All vaccines for children, except some influenza (flu) vaccine and Td (tetanus-diphtheria—containing) vaccines, are now free of mercury.

Pesticides

Pesticides are chemicals used to kill insects, weeds, and fungi. Many are toxic to the environment and to people. Too much exposure to pesticides can cause a wide range of health problems.

What you can do

- ✓ Wash all fruits and vegetables with water.
- ✓ Buy fruits and vegetables that are in season because they are less likely to be heavily sprayed.
- ✓ If possible, eat foods that are grown without the use of chemical pesticides.
- ✓ Use nonchemical pest control methods in your home and garden.
- ✓ Keep all pesticides out of children's reach to avoid accidental poisoning.
- ✓ Tell neighbors before you spray outdoors.

Are electric and magnetic fields safe?

All electric appliances like microwaves, computers, and TVs produce electric and magnetic fields (EMFs) when they are used. There is some concern that exposure to these fields may cause health problems, including cancer. However, more research is needed and a definite link between cancer and EMFs has not been made.

Until more is known about EMFs, reduce your child's exposure by

- Keeping your child away from microwaves while they are in use
- Having your child sit at least 3 feet from the TV screen
- Moving electric clocks, radios, and baby monitors away from your child's bed
- Not using electric bedding (blankets, mattress pads, heating pads, and waterbed heaters)

Where children play

Art supplies

Art supplies can cause health problems in children who use them. While older children can usually use these products safely, most younger children and some children with disabilities cannot. Harmful art supplies can include the following:

- Rubber cement
- Permanent felt-tip markers
- Pottery glazes
- Enamels
- Spray fixatives
- Prepackaged papier-mâché

What you can do

- ✓ Use only nontoxic art supplies.
- ✓ Read and follow all instructions carefully.
- ✓ Always use products in a well-ventilated room.
- ✓ Look for the ACMI (Art & Creative Materials Institute Inc.) nontoxic seal or other information on the label that says the product is safe for children.
- ✓ Talk with your school to make sure only safe art supplies are being used.

Insect repellent

Most insect repellents include a chemical called DEET (diethyltoluamide). This chemical is absorbed into the skin and can harm children.

What you can do

- ✓ Choose an insect repellent that is made for children. Make sure the brand you choose has no more than 30% DEET for infants older than 2 months and older children. Do not use DEET products on infants younger than 2 months.
- ✓ Apply insect repellent to clothing when possible, rather than directly on the skin.

Lawn and garden fertilizers

Lawn and garden fertilizers can be harmful if children come in contact with them while playing in the yard. Many of these products are made with chemicals (pesticides) that are known to cause health problems, especially in children.

What you can do

- ✓ Use these chemicals only when needed.
- ✓ Read and follow the instructions carefully.
- ✓ Keep your child off a treated lawn until it has been watered twice and the odor of the chemicals is gone.

Ozone

Ozone is colorless gas found in the air and is harmful the closer it gets to the ground. Ozone levels are highest in summer, in the late afternoon. Ozone pollution can cause breathing problems in children with asthma.

What you can do

- ✓ Keep your child indoors as much as you can when there's a health advisory or smog alert.
- ✓ Take public transportation, carpool, walk, or ride a bike instead of driving when you can, or buy a fuel-economic car. This will help reduce the amount of air pollution caused by cars.

Sun

The sun is the main cause of skin cancer in the United States. Children's skin can burn easily. Sunburns can be very painful and can cause a child to become sick. The sun's rays can also damage the eyes.

What you can do

- ✓ Keep babies younger than 6 months out of direct sunlight.
- ✓ Choose a sunscreen made for children with a sun protection factor (SPF) of at least 15.
- ✓ Use hats and sunglasses to protect your child's head and eyes from the sun.
- ✓ Try to keep your child in the shade between 10:00 am and 4:00 pm. This is when the sun's rays are strongest.
- ✓ Dress your child in lightweight clothing that covers as much of the body as possible.

To learn more

Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry

800/232-4636

www.atsdr.cdc.gov

American Lung Association

800/LUNGUSA (800/586-4872)

www.lungusa.org

Environmental Protection Agency

202/272-0167

www.epa.gov

Food and Drug Administration

888/INFO-FDA (888/463-6332)

www.fda.gov

Health Resources and Services Administration Poison Control Program

www.poisonhelp.hrsa.gov

National Coalition Against the Misuse of Pesticides

202/543-5450

www.beyondpesticides.org

National Pesticide Information Center

800/858-7378

www.npic.orst.edu

Remember

Whether it is inside or outside, children love to explore their environment. This natural curiosity is an important way for children to learn. Be aware of the possible dangers that your child may face. Keep in mind that not all environmental dangers can be avoided completely, and do what you can to reduce your child's exposure.

Hotlines

EMF InfoLine

800/363-2383

National Lead Information Center

800/424-LEAD (800/424-5323)

National Radon Hotline

800/SOS-RADON (800/767-7236)

Poison Help

1-800-222-1222

Safe Drinking Water Hotline

800/426-4791

Listing of resources does not imply an endorsement by the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP). The AAP is not responsible for the content of the resources mentioned in this publication. Phone numbers and Web site addresses are as current as possible, but may change at any time.

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From your doctor

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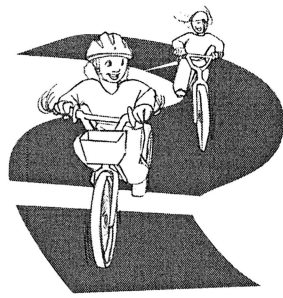


Illustration by
Billy Nuñez, age 16

FRIENDS ARE IMPORTANT: TIPS FOR PARENTS

HOW PARENTS CAN HELP

As your child is making new friends and spending more time with them, you can:

- Get to know these friends and their parents.
- Communicate expectations about friendships in a clear and open way.
- Help your child connect to school and the larger community.

Friendships are important, but your guidance and monitoring of activities are needed for your child to be safe and successful.

Friendships take on new meaning and importance as your child grows. Young people make and break friendships, explore the world around them, and begin to figure out who they want to be.

Friends will become more important to your child during this time. Friends help teach:

- Communication skills
- Self-confidence
- A sense of self

FRIENDS ARE SPECIAL

Friendships are some of your child's most important relationships. Close friendships involve intense feelings, learning how to trust, learning to criticize with honesty, and feeling secure outside of the family.

Friends help define personality and independence. Friendships teach young people how to deal with their own complex feelings and those of others.

With more friends and a wider range of interests and activities, your child may begin to spend less time at home.

**By knowing your child's close friends,
you will learn a lot about your child.**

GET TO KNOW YOUR CHILD'S FRIENDS

- Talk with them on the phone.
- Meet them at neighborhood or school events.
- Find out what they and your child do together.

Let your child know that friends are welcome in your home.

- Review "house rules" with your child prior to the visit.
- Let your child, the friend, and the friend's family know that an adult will be there.
- Know what's going on by seeing, hearing, and talking with them about what they are doing. Be informed, but keep a low profile.

Follow guidelines for when your child is invited to a friend's home.

- Find out about the friend's "house rules" and who else will be at home, like parents, another adult, brothers, or sisters.
- Ask about what they plan to do during the visit.
- Talk with your child about things that are important to you: no guns, violent TV and video games, alcohol, tobacco, and other drugs. Take this time to review behaviors that are healthy and those that are dangerous.
- Be sure to have the telephone number of where your child can be reached. If you want to call, go ahead and pick up the phone.
- If there is a change of plans, you need to be told.



GET TO KNOW OTHER PARENTS

- Talk with them on the phone.
- Meet them at neighborhood or school events.
- Greet them when dropping your child off at their home.

COMMUNICATION IS KEY

School-aged children need and want more independence. Good communication, with clear expectations, helps parents and children trust that what is going on is safe.

To communicate clearly and openly with your child,

- Make clear and consistent rules.
- Speak in a firm and loving voice.
- Agree on rules, like curfew time, and enforce the agreed-upon consequences when a rule is broken.
- Know where and with whom your child is spending time.

When plans change—and they will—let your child know that you need to be contacted for approval of any changes.

Staying in Touch

- If your child has a cell phone or pager, talk about its proper use.
- For emergencies, your child needs to know, and have written down, your home, work, and cell phone numbers.
- Have a back up plan. If you cannot be reached, your child also needs the contact information for an adult relative, neighbor, or family friend who can be called.

PROMOTE A SENSE OF BELONGING

Young people often do best when they belong to a group.

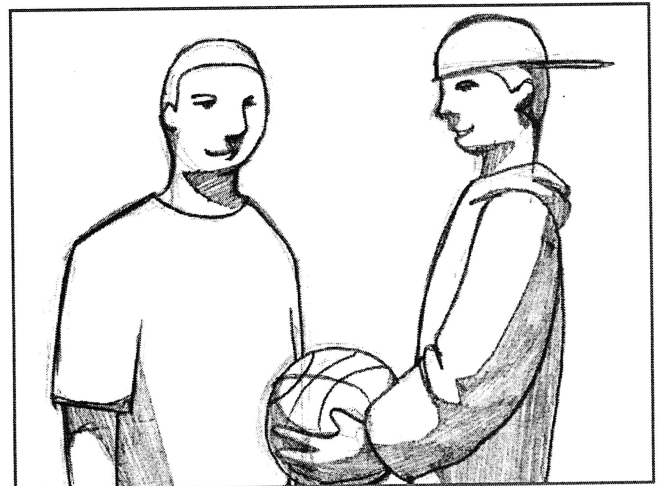
- Help your child use afternoons, weekends, and summers to find activities that will help develop this sense of belonging.
- Many young people are involved with a sports team, after-school music or arts programs, or Boys & Girls Clubs. Others join the youth group of a religious association.
- Support your child during this time of pursuing personal interests and exploring new opportunities. Know that your child's interests are likely to change frequently!

Sports—Besides playing, your child might help coach, be a student manager, become an official, or be a timekeeper. Talk about good sportsmanship.

- Being a good winner and a good loser.
- Keeping a positive attitude.
- Showing respect for players, coaches, officials, and the crowd. Discuss how important it is to set a good example while watching a game or event.

Clubs—Check with the school and local community groups to find out what is offered. You may be surprised to find out how many different programs are available.

- Get involved as a chaperone or adult member.
- Help your child think about the different activities that are available and to make good choices. But allow space for independent exploration. There is a fine balance here. If you become too pushy, your child may pull back and not want to talk with you.



As your child explores different options, safety is always a concern.

Find out:

- Where will the activity be? Indoors or outdoors? Far from or close to your home?
- How will the activity be supervised? By parents, an older brother or sister, or another adult?
- Is this a structured program or school-sponsored activity?

COMMUNITY SERVICE

Volunteering is a good way for your child to make friends. In turn, the whole community benefits from their talent and energy.

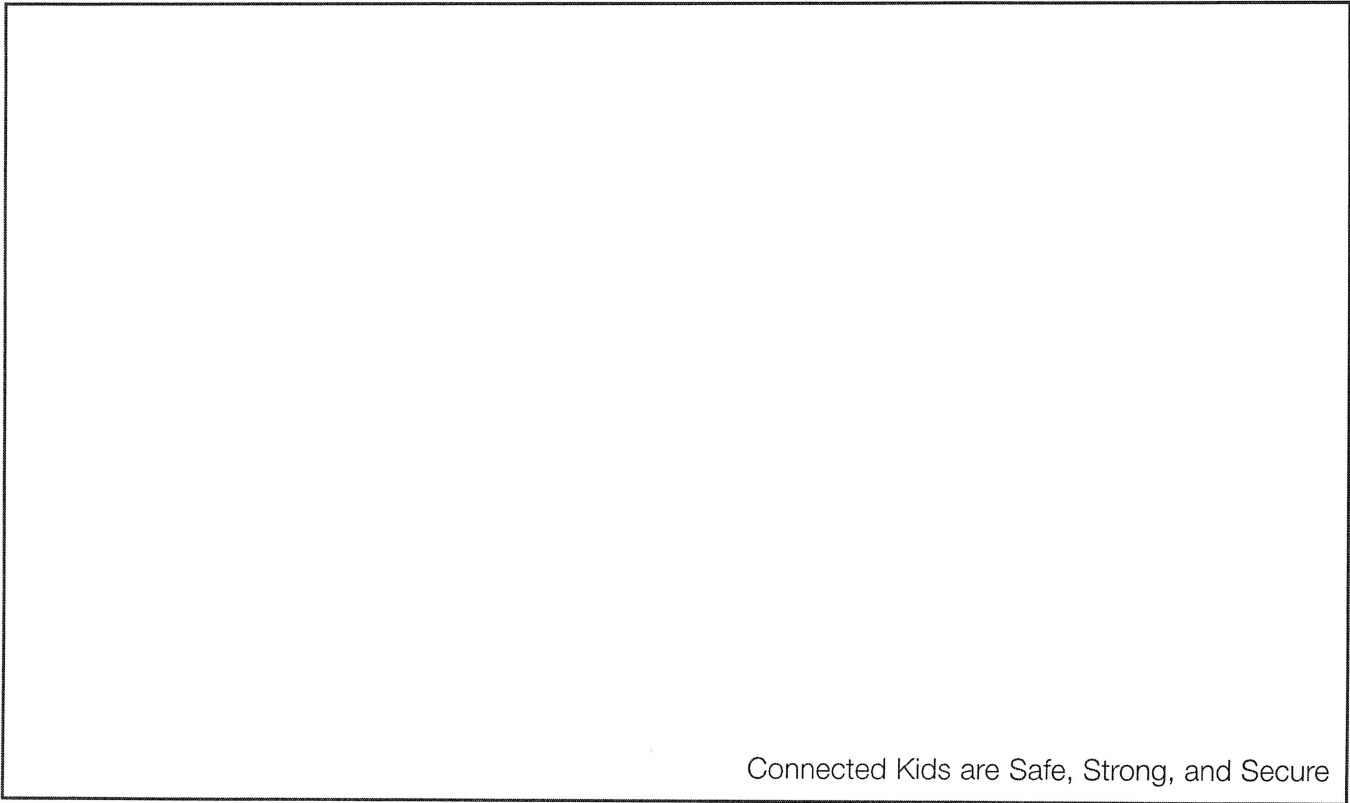
Help your child find ways to give back.

By helping others in the community, young people build self-confidence and learn how to work with others. They can:

- Help younger children learn to read.
- Assist their peers as tutors.
- Help paint a mural or build a playground.

One of the most powerful ways to have an effect on who your child is friends with is when you become involved.

Find community projects that you and your child can work on together. Volunteering may even lead to a paying job!



Connected Kids are Safe, Strong, and Secure

The information contained in this publication should not be used as a substitute for the medical care and advice of your pediatrician. There may be variations in treatment that your pediatrician may recommend based on individual facts and circumstances.

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This project was supported by Grant No. 2001-JN-FX-0011 awarded by the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention, Office of Justice Programs, U.S. Department of Justice. Points of view or opinions in this document are those of the author and do not necessarily represent the official position or policies of the U.S. Department of Justice.

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Graphic design and illustrations by Artists For Humanity, a non profit arts and entrepreneurship program for Boston teens.

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