

## **Safety for Elementary School-aged Children**

We appropriately teach our children to be careful of strangers, but need to remember that for every child kidnapped and murdered, thousands of children die due to accidents. In the United States in 2013, approximately 1500 children between the ages of 5 and 14 died due to unintentional injuries. The Global Children's Fund reports that the leading causes of death for children in this age group are: 1) Car accidents 2) Suffocation 3) Firearm deaths 4) Drowning 5) Fires and burns, 6) Pedestrian accidents 7) Falls. In that same year, almost 3,800,000 children in that age group were taken to Emergency Rooms due to accidents. The most common causes: 1) Falls 2) Strike injuries (being hit by or against an object or person) 3) Environmental factors (such as allergic reactions) 4) Motor vehicle accidents 5) Lacerations 6) Overexertion 7) Poisoning.

Fortunately, over the last 30 years, accidental deaths have been decreased between 50-70%, due to improved safety standards and education. However, most safety experts believe that the number of accidental deaths and injuries could be further reduced by 75-90%

A complete list of all the potential dangers our children face and how to prevent them is far beyond the scope of a simple webpage article. However, the following few tips have the potential to save families many tragedies and ER visits:

### **Auto Safety**

- All passengers (including adults-make sure you're setting a good example!) need to be in an age-appropriate infant seat, booster seat or seat belt. All restraints and safety devices should be installed and fitted properly.

- Teach your children to behave while on the road. Fighting, moving around or throwing things can be as much of a distraction to a driver as texting.

- Teach your children not to play in or around parked cars.

### **Water Safety**

- All children should have swimming lessons by age 3.

- All home pools should be fenced in (fence should be at least four feet tall), with self-closing and self-latching gates.

- Empty all buckets, tubs, kiddie pools, etc., when not in use. Turn them upside down to keep water from accumulating.

### **Gun Safety**

- All firearms and ammunition should be locked, preferably in separate locations.

- Teach your children to NEVER play with or even touch a firearm without appropriate training and supervision. If another child is playing with a firearm, teach them to GET AWAY and tell an adult.

### **Fire Safety**

- Make sure your smoke alarms are working and replace their batteries regularly.

- Have a family fire safety plan that you discuss and practice with your children.

-Teach your children to never play with matches, lighters or around fires. Teach them to “stop, drop and roll,” if a mishap occurs.

### **Street Safety**

-Teach your children how to be a safe pedestrian including: Look both ways before going into the street. Never chase a ball, pet or playmate into the street. Cross the street only at crosswalks

-When riding bicycles, scooters and skateboards, children need to wear helmets and closed-toed shoes, and other safety gear when appropriate.

-Teach your children the rules of the road (hand signals, ride with traffic, don’t swerve, etc.).

For more information and tips, go to the following websites:

<https://www.safekids.org/safetytips>

<https://www.healthychildren.org/english/safety-prevention/Pages/default.aspx>