
Back-to-School Safety Tips

Be sure to review the following safety tips with your child at the start of the school year. Don't assume that the school will discuss them.

- If your child walks to school, map out the safest route with them. Use roads where there are crossing guards. Avoid isolated woods and parking lots. Use the crosswalks.
- Stop, look and listen for traffic. Continue looking for cars until the street is crossed.
- If child rides a bus, review where your child should safely wait. Make sure the area is highly visible and a safe distance from passing traffic. When the bus arrives, remind your child to wait for the bus to stop, put on safety lights and driver to signal that it's safe to cross the street or approach the bus. Cross at least 10 feet in front of bus. Sit at all times on the bus to avoid injuries during sudden stops.
- Review bicycle/rollerblading/skateboarding safety guidelines. Emphasize the importance and potentially lifesaving role of helmets and other personal protective equipment.
- If your child is home alone after school, instruct them to lock the door and never open it for strangers. Instruct your child to tell callers that a parent can't come to the phone but a message can be taken. Better yet, if your child can use caller ID, instruct him or her not to answer the phone unless it is a family member or someone you are comfortable with them talking to.
- Instruct your child to never approach or enter a stranger's car. Refuse any offers of toys, candy, money or pets. Scream and run away as quickly as possible and tell an adult about the incident.
- Practice scenarios with kids to help them develop a plan for action. "A car stops and the man said he needs help with a sick puppy. What would you do?"
- Teach kids that it's okay to say no to an adult, whether it is a coach, teacher or relative, if they don't want to be kissed, hugged or touched in a way that makes them feel uncomfortable. Assure them that they can always talk to you about such events without you becoming angry.