

## SAFETY CONSIDERATIONS FOR KIDS

The evening news has turned into a horror flick for parents, teachers and school employees across the country. Stories of kidnappings, bus accidents and school violence threaten the perceived safety of the children in our lives. Both parents and schools want to keep children safe where they live, learn and play.

Although it is impossible to protect them from all the risks of today's world, together, as a community, we can empower children to make the best choices that reduce their risks of injury, accident or physical harm.

### Back to the Basics

Do the children you are responsible for know their safety basics? Consider this checklist to see if they have the basics down:

- ▲ Full name, parent names, address, phone number
- ▲ Fire escape
- ▲ How to call 911
- ▲ Safe zones, houses that are safe to go to when walking to and from school
- ▲ A "Secret Pass Word" for unexpected pick ups from school or field trips
- ▲ Check First—check with parent, teacher, school staff before leaving premises
- ▲ Say NO to drugs and alcohol
- ▲ Seat belts
- ▲ Bike safety
- ▲ Rules for media use—Internet, television, video games, music
- ▲ Home and medicinal poison safety
- ▲ Water safety

### School Days

- ▲ Restrict backpacks and purses to lockers
- ▲ Require student IDs to be worn daily
- ▲ Develop separate lunch and recess schedules for younger and older students
- ▲ Build positive relationships with students, a proven strategy in the reduction of school violence
- ▲ Limit entrances and exits
- ▲ Develop visitor sign in and screening policies
- ▲ Use volunteers to supervise areas of campus

### Playgrounds

Each year 200,000 children are treated in Emergency Rooms for playground-related injuries. To avoid injuries on your school or family playground equipment, consider the following guidelines:

- ▲ Train all playground aids and volunteers on proper safety and supervision techniques
- ▲ Teach children how to play safe
- ▲ Provide maintenance to equipment regularly
- ▲ Concrete rules for use of equipment and play
- ▲ Assess age appropriateness of playground equipment
- ▲ Maintain a thick, soft (mulch, sand, rubber mats, etc.) surface below all playground equipment

### Buses

School bus drivers are thoroughly trained to transport children safely; however, they have partners in their pursuit for the safest ride they can provide—the children they are transporting. Teach children a few general rules to follow when riding a bus:

- ▲ Look to the bus driver for an okay, and the flashing lights, before walking in front of a bus
- ▲ Stay back more than 10 feet from any bus
- ▲ Either ask the bus driver for help or wait until the bus has left before retrieving anything dropped under bus
- ▲ Wait for the bus on the sidewalk
- ▲ Teach parents to support school bus drivers and crossing guard's efforts by driving the speed limit in a school zone, stopping at flashing lights and being extra cautious at bus stops

### National School Bus Safety Week

Take School Bus Safety to the classroom. National School Bus Safety Week is the 3rd week of October every year. Take that time to educate students about the basic rules of bus safety described in this fact sheet. Incorporate safety as part of your discussions.