

Back to school safety tips for kids

by Christine May, Reader's Digest
Traveling to School

When parents talk about school safety these days, they're usually referring to the surge in violence at schools. But research shows that school-age children are actually nine times more likely to sustain an unintentional injury - whether on the playground or in school - than to be the victim of violence while at school. In fact, an estimated 2.2 million children ages 14 and under are injured in school-related accidents each year, according to the National SAFE KIDS Campaign.

Accidents can be prevented if parents are on the lookout for potential hazards. To help you keep your kids free from harm, here are some safety tips:

Travelling to and from School

1. Plan a walking route to school or the bus stop. Choose the most direct way with the fewest street crossings and, if possible, with intersections that have crossing guards.
2. Walk the route with your child beforehand. Tell him or her to stay away from parks, vacant lots, fields and other places where there aren't many people around.
3. Teach your child never to talk to strangers or accept rides or gifts from strangers. Remember, a stranger is anyone you or your children don't know well or don't trust.
4. Be sure your child walks to and from school with a sibling, friend, or neighbor.
5. Teach your kids - whether walking, biking, or riding the bus to school - to obey all traffic signals, signs and traffic officers. Remind them to be extra careful in bad weather.
6. When driving kids, deliver and pick them up as close to the school as possible. Don't leave until they are in the schoolyard or building.
7. If your child bikes to school, make sure he wears a helmet that meets Canadian safety standards. Research indicates that a helmet can reduce the risk of head injury by up to 85 percent.
8. If your child rides a scooter to school, make sure she wears sturdy shoes, a helmet,

kneepads and elbow pads. Children under age 12 should not ride motorized scooters, according to recent recommendation.

9. Teach children to arrive at the bus stop early, stay out of the street, wait for the bus to come to a complete stop before approaching the street, watch for cars and avoid the driver's blind spot.

10. Remind your children to stay seated at all times and keep their heads and arms inside the bus while riding. When exiting the bus, children should wait until the bus comes to a complete stop, exit from the front using the handrail to avoid falls and cross the street at least 10 feet (or 10 giant steps) in front of the bus.

11. Tell your child not to bend down in front of the bus to tie shoes or pick up objects, as the driver may not see him before starting to move.

12. Be sure that your child knows his or her home phone number and address, your work number, the number of another trusted adult and how to call 911 for emergencies.

On the Playground

13. Check the playground equipment at your child's school. Look for hazards such as rusted or broken equipment and dangerous surfaces. The surface around the equipment should be covered with wood chips, mulch, sand, pea gravel, or mats made of safety-tested rubber or fiber material to prevent head injury when a child falls. Report any hazards to the school.

14. Avoid any drawstrings on the hood or around the neck of jackets and sweatshirts. Drawstrings at the waist or bottom of jackets should extend no more than three inches long to prevent catching in car and school bus doors or getting caught on playground equipment.

15. Teach children proper playground behavior: no pushing, shoving, or crowding.

16. Give your child some strategies for coping with bullies. He should not give in to a bully's demands, but should simply walk away or tell the bully to stop. If the bullying continues, talk to the teacher.

Bay St. Lawrence

Building a stronger community

from page one

economic, social and environmental priorities, initiatives that support the resiliency and sustainability of the community, training and learning opportunities to support community plans, initiatives that strengthen and build on resources within the community, and initiatives which enhance community leadership.

The Rural Communities Founda-

tion of Nova Scotia is a charitable foundation formed in 1999 to encourage sustainable development in Nova Scotia's coastal and rural communities.

Seven community groups across Nova Scotia received funding totaling \$284,880. The individual grants range in amount from \$15,121 to \$49,872.

Walking an effective way to manage stress

by Vince ForreSTALL

An information meeting will be held in the warm, safe, fun, friendly, social & historic environment - the Alexander Graham Bell Museum on Monday evening, October 3rd beginning at 7:00 pm to start-up a Walking Club in Baddeck & area.

The goals of the walking club will be decided at the meeting, but will include and promote physical activity leading to an active & healthier lifestyle for new and old friends. The club will be for all abilities from starters to those who wish to walk faster than most.

4.1 million Canadian's favourite leisure activities are walking & running, while the Ipsos Reid Recreation & Physical Fitness Syndicated Survey, April 13, 2010, for Victoria County residents, responded that walking was the number one choice for types of physical activity or exercise they participated in on a regular basis.

Walking is an easy and fun activity that provides instant benefits.

Medical studies show that walking just 30 minutes a day can benefit your heart, increase your life span, and help you control your weight, diabetes, prevent other disease and improve your mood, while giving you a sense of accomplishment that comes from getting out and doing something. Walking builds your confidence and it's an easy activity to participate in socially. The only financial investment is a good

pair of walking shoes.

By adding a walking program to your routine, your energy levels increase by improving the cardiovascular system to become more efficient requiring less energy to operate; by improving posture and reducing the muscular strain on supporting soft tissue; and by getting better quality of sleep. Activity is one of the most effective ways to assist in managing stress.

By adding walking you will make healthier eating habits. Activity reinforces the ability to make choices that are healthier.

Discussions during the information meeting will include the following: facility, participants, resources, leadership, name, brand, times & dates, etc.

If you are interested in being a participant and/or a leader of this great initiative we want and need you and your friends and or neighbours to attend the information meeting on October 3rd leading to a quality walking club in the area.

For further information, please do not hesitate to contact Victoria County Physical Activity Strategy Coordinator Vince ForreSTALL at 295-0387 or e-mail: vince.forreSTALL@countyvictoria.ns.ca. For an update on the Victoria County Physical Activity Strategy currently being developed for all residents visit: <http://www.victoriacounty.com/active-living.html>.



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