

Parenting Matters

Quarterly Newsletter

July 2008

For Colorado Parents

TOP SUMMER SAFETY REMINDERS

Summertime: the inviting warmth of the sun, fresh air, the aroma of barbeque, fresh-cut grass and chaotic sounds of neighborhood children at play. But dangerous possibilities lurk outside. **Parents must never presume their youngster recognizes - or stops to think about - what is safe and unsafe.**

Curious toddlers put everything in their mouth, move at the speed of light and are innocent about hazards. Older children race, jump and jostle with no thought of consequences. Child development experts tell us that children can not grasp the permanence of death until the age of 11.

To ensure your family has fun in the sun with minimal injury, be responsible, vigilant and safety-conscious. Here are some tips that might save tears, emergency room bills... or lives. Summer sun can heat your car's interior to 140 degrees. That's enough to blister young skin. Feel seats and buckles before loading kids in the car. Many parents store beach towels in their car to make a layer between their child's legs and a sizzling seat.

By Brenda Nixon

www.naturalfamilyonline.com

Habitually hydrate. Always have cool water with you, and offer it to your children about every half hour. Avoid beverages with sugar and caffeine; they don't quench thirst and are filled with unnecessary calories.

Be sun smart. The sun's rays are strongest between 10 a.m. and 3 p.m. Practice safe sun fun. Use SPF 15 sunscreen, even on cloudy days. If you're outdoors with a newborn (0 to 6 weeks) do not use sunscreen on her delicate skin. Instead protect her from the sun with a bonnet, sunglasses and lightweight cotton clothing. An umbrella can also help by creating shade.



Think outside the box. Check in and around sandboxes for sticks, glass or droppings from friendly creatures. Children may find your yard, driveway, garage and park an inviting place to play.



Deter drowning. Always be on guard when your child is around contained water sources: buckets of water, toilets, pools and ponds. Toddlers are top-heavy, so they easily fall headfirst.

Avoid playground problems. Remove strings from hoods and around the waist of your kids clothes to prevent catching on equipment and possible strangulation. Look for rusted nuts, bolts, screws and cracks or rotted wood on playground equipment.

Youngsters are more occupied with adventure than safety. Their endless energy means parents must practice safety first. Then everyone has fun, happy memories in the great outdoors.

PARENTING MATTERS, PREVENTION WORKS

Home Alone Safety for Latchkey Kids

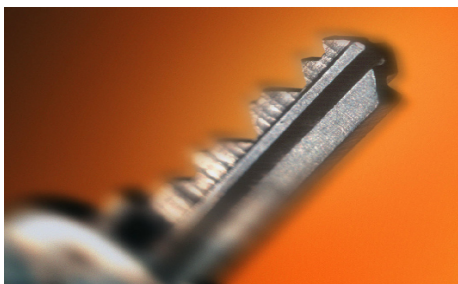
Today, nearly 50% of all children return from school to an empty home. Working parents need to help their children better handle the emotional and safety issues that face latchkey kids.

How to Safety-Proof Your Home for Self-Care Children:

- Eliminate accident hot-spots and fire hazards.
- Put appliances in good repair and smoke alarms in working order.
- Familiarize your child with locks and security devices.
- Prepare a basic first aid kit and train your child on its uses.
- Teach your child telephone basics.
- Prepare a list of emergency phone numbers to post near all phones.

Home-Along Safety Rules for your Child:

- Have a contingency plan in the event your child loses the house key.
- Tell your child not to go into the house if everything does not seem right...like an open door or broken window.
- Make sure your child does not leave the key in the lock, once inside.
- Once in the house, the door should be relocked and remain that way.
- Instruct your child on who to let in the house when home-alone...if anyone... and how to handle unexpected visitors or callers.
- Work with your child to find ways to play alone safely.



For more help on Home Alone Safety for your child

Local agencies and organizations may be able to offer help of programs for self-care children. Try contacting religious groups, local school districts, community centers, and groups, such as 4H.

MONEY TALKS
It's never too early to teach kids how to handle money

Source: Franny Van Nevel



AGE 3 - 5

- Teach children how to identify and count coins and bills.
- After a trip to the store, give kids your loose change and encourage them to save it to buy something inexpensive on a future visit.

AGE 6 - 10

- Start to give children an allowance. Most kids earn theirs by doing household chores. The national average weekly for 8 to 9 year olds is \$3.74; for 10 to 11 year olds, it's just over \$5, according to Consumer Reports.
- Encourage kids to save a certain percentage of their allowance. To add an incentive, offer to match the amount they save.
- Open a savings account in your child's name.



AGE 11 - 14

- Teach kids to be smart consumers. Show them how to comparison-shop and find out about stores' return policies. Also encourage them to keep receipts for easy returns.
- Increase the weekly allowance and introduce the concept of expenses. Teens should use part of their allowance to pay for dates, special clothing and entertainment.
- Encourage kids to supplement their income by doing odd jobs around the house, mowing lawns or babysitting for neighbors.



AGE 15 - 18

- Let teens earn their own money. The best way for a child to learn about money is to get her own job as soon as she's old enough.
- Allow your child to open a checking account with the money he's earned and teach him how to balance a check-book.
- Around age 18, kids may receive credit-card applications, so it's important to explain how credit cards work and how easy it is to fall into debt. Before your child opens an account, make sure he can handle the responsibility.

Available in Spanish by request

Parenting Matters

Published quarterly by Partners in Parenting
Colorado State University
Cooperative Extension
 Project Director
 Christine Cerbana
Editor: Bridget S. Ohl
 Questions or comments?
 Call us at (800) 457-2736

Healthy Habits for TV, Video Games, and the Internet

No doubt about it- TV, interactive video games, and the Internet can be excellent sources of education and entertainment for kids. But too much screen time can have unhealthy side effects.

That's why it's wise to monitor and limit the time your child spends playing video games, watching TV, and playing games on the Internet.

The American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) recommends that kids under age 2 have no screen time, and that kids older than 2 watch no more than 1 to 2 hours a day of quality programming.

It's also a good idea to make sure kids have a wide variety of free-time activities like reading, playing with friends, and sports, which can all play a vital part in helping them develop a healthy body and mind.

Here are some practical ways to make kids' screen time more productive:



TV Time

- Limit the number of TV-watching hours
- Try a weekday ban.
- Set a good example.

- Check the TV listings and program reviews.
- Preview programs.
- Use the ratings.
- Use screening tools.
- Come up with a family TV schedule
- Watch TV with your child
- Talk to the kids about what they see on TV and share your own beliefs and values
- Find out about other TV policies
- Offer fun alternatives to television

Video and Interactive Computer Games

- Look at the ratings
- Preview the games
- Help kids get perspective on the games.



Internet Safety

- Become computer literate
- Keep the computer in a common area
- Share an email account with younger children
- Bookmark your child's favorite sites
- Spend time on-line together
- Forbid kids from entering private chat rooms
- Find out about on-line protection elsewhere



Helping Your Teen Find a Job

There's a lot to learn about landing a good job and sometimes the job doesn't go to the most qualified candidate, but to those that have made the best impression. Here's some pointers to achieve greater success:

Narrow your teen's search by identifying her present skills and interests.

Organize personal information by helping her write a personal letter of introduction or a resume. Gather references in advance.

Research the jobs that are out there. Begin by contacting employers and networking with family and friends.

Be prepared for the interview. Know something about the company in advance. Dress appropriately. Follow up each interview with a personal thank-you note.

Learn from experience. If your teen doesn't get the job, try to find out why. Stay positive.

Summer's a Great Time for Activities With Your Children

Sometimes it's hard to think of activities to do with middle-schoolers. Here are some suggestions to keep you both busy this summer:

1. Cook out
2. Build something
3. Watch a video
4. Fix a household item
5. Call a relative
6. Plan a meal
7. Bake a dessert
8. Play a sport
9. Do something new



Source: Calender, Middle Ground, October 1997, NMSA, 2600 Cooperate Exchange Dr., Suite 370, Columbus, OH 43231

Encourage Your Child to Read During the Summer Months

Reading over the summer helps halt the backslide in reading skills many children have when they're "vacationing" from school-time learning.

Doing these things can keep your child's reading skills active:

- Set aside a period of time each day for all family members to read together, quietly to themselves aloud.
- If you can, subscribe to one or two magazines for your child.
- Make extra trips to the library for reading material.
- Send a reading "care package" to your child at camp.
- Suggest your child keep a reading log.
- Collect maps and travel brochures together to read before making family trips and excursions.
- Encourage your child to start a summer reading group.
- If your child is interested in a certain movie or video, suggest she read the book on which it is based first
- Read what your child reads and take time to talk about it.



PARENTING MATTERS, PREVENTION WORKS



Colorado State University, U.S. Department of Agriculture and Colorado counties cooperating. Cooperative Extension programs are available to all without discrimination.



Produced by PARTNERS IN PARENTING (PIP) A program of Colorado Family Education, Resources and Training with funding from the Alcohol & Drug Abuse Division and CSAP.

Colorado State University Extension
1311 South College Avenue
Fort Collins, CO 80523-4040
(800) 457-2736
CFERT.COLOSTATE.EDU



Non-Profit Organization
U.S. POSTAGE PAID
FORT COLLINS, CO 80523
PERMIT NO. 19