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SAFE KIDS IN THE NEWS

Ways to Help Your Children Stay in the Game Injury-Free (CNN Health) [| TOP](#)

April 8 / Sabrya Rice, CNN

(CNN) -- Mackenzie Riley is only 13 years old, but her schedule is busier than many adults. Besides being on her middle-school yearbook staff and taking piano and voice lessons once a week, she is also the co-captain of her seventh-grade basketball and volleyball teams.

"I like playing sports a lot," Mackenzie says. "I like the teamwork and having us all come together." This year she is also adding softball and track to the mix.

Mackenzie's parents, Todd and JoAnna Riley, attend many of her games, so during last year's basketball season they knew immediately when something was wrong. "We noticed that as she was playing she asked to sit down more, which is not something she typically wants to do," recalls JoAnna Riley.

Mackenzie started complaining of pain and bruising in her foot during the games, but she often felt better afterwards, so her parents didn't think much of it. "We thought we could treat it on our own," admits JoAnna, "so we gave her anti-inflammatory and pain relievers to help those aching bones."

But Mackenzie continued to have problems and her parents' concerns grew. "The longer it went on, the more we thought it wasn't something that was going to go away on its own."

Halfway through the season, the Riley's decided it was time to see specialist. Mackenzie got a diagnosis of plantar fasciitis, a condition that develops gradually over time and is most common in people between ages 40 and 60. But for Mackenzie, the condition developed despite her young age due to a combination of her being flat-footed and from overuse from continuously playing sports that put a lot of stress on her feet.

Major sports injuries increasing among children

According to Safe Kids USA, more than 30 million American children participate in extracurricular sports each year, and the American Academy of Orthopedic Surgeons estimates that more than 3.5 million children age 14 and younger seek medical attention each year as a result of sports injuries.

Dr. Charles Giangarra, chief of athletics and orthopedic sports medicine at Marshall University in West Virginia, and the physician who treated Mackenzie, says the push to be competitive is causing "significant problems" in young people. He says his practice is seeing more and more pediatric patients with serious injuries previously associated with adults. But that's not all.





"It's not uncommon for me to see a 10-year-old whose parents ask me to give them permission to play in the youth football championship -- because another doctor has disqualified the child due to an injury," Giangarra wrote in an email.

Let's face it though, what parent doesn't at least wonder if their little leaguer could be the next Derek Jeter or their little gymnast the next Shawn Johnson? "We have to remember, though, that a child is not just a small adult" says Dr. Paul Sethi, president of the ONS Foundation for Clinical Research and Education, a group that works to prevent sport injuries in young athletes.

"Their bodies are not the same." The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention says that pediatric sports injuries are largely preventable, and their experts agree. Here are five ways parents can help make sure their child stays in the game injury free:

1. Diversify your child's sports portfolio

"It's not a good idea to play the same sport all year long," warns Sethi. He says having your child play several sports which work different parts of the body helps avoid overuse injuries. "If your child plays tennis for half the year, then consider putting them in soccer the other half of the year," he says.

2. Don't let your child play if he or she is in pain

Dr. Charles Metzger, an orthopedic surgeon and author of a recent study looking at overuse injuries in minor league baseball players, advises that "if you know your child is taking Motrin or Tylenol to soothe pain, take them out of the game." He says "playing through pain" means the underlying problem is not being addressed, which can lead to future complications.

Giangarra has another way of looking at it. "If you're experiencing pain, then whatever being done is either being done wrong or your body is not handling it," he says, adding "It's your brain's way of protecting you."

3. Know the pitch limits (for baseball)

In a study presented this year at the American Academy of Orthopedic Surgeons conference, researcher Dr. Charles Metzger found that of children ages 7 to 15 involved in youth baseball for one season, 14 percent had developed problems within the ligament that helps in the rotation of the shoulder, a precursor to the more serious injuries such as labral tears, painful injuries to the shoulder joint often seen in Major League Baseball players.





Little League International, the national organization representing youth baseball players, has specific pitch limits -- and escalating rest requirements based on the number of pitches thrown -- to help protect children from overuse injuries. Some examples of pitch limits:

- Ages 9-10: 75 pitches per day
- Ages 11-12: 85 pitches per day
- Ages 13-16: 95 pitches per day

[Little League International's pitch limits and suggested rest schedule](#)

"There's nothing as detailed as this for other sports," says Dr. Cynthia LaBella, medical director for Children's Memorial Hospital's Institute for Sports Medicine in Chicago. "So certainly a parent who is proactive can go to the game, get out their counters and keep track from the sidelines."

The group [Stop Injury Now](#) has tips for how to prevent overuse injuries in other sports.

4. Learn the coach's 'injury philosophy'

"If you can't attend an event, your child's care is usually the responsibility of the coach," says Giangarra. He encourages parents to ask the coach specifically about his or her philosophy on dealing with an injury.

A few questions he recommends:

- What is your experience coaching a child with an injury and how did you handle it?
- What is your philosophy on informing the parent when a child complains of pain?
- Do you have any previous medical experience?

"If a coach is afraid to answer such questions, this could be a serious red flag for the parent," Giangarra says.

5. Be familiar with the common injuries for your child's sport

Children have growth plates in areas like their shoulders, knees, elbows and heels that have not yet fused and often are affected by the sports they play. If they are damaged, it can lead to permanent damage. Knowing the types of injuries common in your child's sport(s) can help you observe the early warning signs of injury, and where to look for them.

"Sports involving running, cutting, jumping and quick changes in direction are associated with lower-extremity injuries, just as sports involving overhead activities usually are associated with upper extremity injuries," explains Giangarra.





Here are some examples of sport-specific overuse injury locations:

- Baseball: May develop pain in the elbow and shoulder.
- Soccer and football: May develop pain in the ankles, knees and heels.
- Gymnasts: May develop pain in the wrists.
- Tennis: May develop pain in the shoulder.

Becoming familiar with these is a good idea, but experts warn against looking only for injuries in these areas, especially if your child plays multiple sports. "Anytime they complain of pain, especially in the joints, they should be evaluated," says LaBella. No matter where the problem is located, if it returns after they rest, get them checked out, she says.

[Nationwide Children's Hospital injury prevention tips](#)

As for Mackenzie Riley, the condition she had, if left untreated, could have led to lifelong chronic problems or initiated other issues in the foot, knee, hip or back, which could potentially keep a thriving young athlete out of the game for good.

Fortunately for Mackenzie, her injury was caught before it turned into something more serious. Now she has to do more stretches and wear special shoes to help prevent more injury, and she has to take seasonal breaks between sporting activities.

Mackenzie is taking it all in stride. "I had to cut back a little bit, but I know that in order for it to get better taking a break is something I have to do."


<http://www.cnn.com/2010/HEALTH/04/08/children.sports.injuries/>

West Jordan Woman Honored for Dedication to Helping Children (Salt Lake Tribune, Utah) [TOP](#)

April 7 / Katie Drake, The Salt Lake Tribune

Whether teaching English as a second language or checking car seats for an infant's first road trip home, May Romo has always been devoted to helping children.

Now the West Jordan woman has been honored with the Pete Suazo Lifetime Community Service Award for her dedication to others.





The awards are presented by the University of Utah College of Social Work in honor of the late state senator, an advocate for civil rights and social justice. Suazo worked tirelessly for Utah's Latino population, and sponsored legislation to protect Utahns from discrimination based on race, gender and class.

The award is especially meaningful to Romo, who knew Suazo.

"He was a real advocate for the little guy," Romo said.

Romo kept abreast of Suazo's career in the Legislature, and was inspired by his recurring sponsorship of a hate-crimes bill. Though the bill never passed, Suazo never gave up, a lesson Romo has tried to carry into her life and career.

Romo currently works with Salt Lake County's Safe Kids Coalition, which focuses on injury prevention. She plans safety fairs and educates the public on issues like bike helmets, car seats and swimming pool safety. Last year she was named Safe Kids Coordinator of the Year by the Washington D.C.-based program.

"She's been very innovative in ways to educate our community on how to keep their children safe," said Salt Lake County Mayor Peter Corroon, who applauded Romo's efforts to work with other local agencies like the Unified Fire Authority.

Romo has served the community in other ways. She worked as a mentor for elementary-school girls for several years, helping them with homework and taking them to after-school activities.

A job at Easter Seals got Romo involved in providing respite care for families of disabled children. She recruited retired teachers and nurses to stay with the children while their parents ran errands or took a small break.

The award has made Romo even more motivated to help the community. She is currently working on a campaign to help parents recycle old car seats. She worries her efforts to get kids into proper car seats has created a plethora of old, non-degradable seats in Utah's landfills, and she is determined to curb the environmental impact.

Though Romo appreciates the award, she feels it is undeserved. She said she only serves as a mediator for wonderful programs that already exist, but that people might not know about.

"I'm a community broker," Romo said. "I just connect all the pieces."

http://www.sltrib.com/news/cj_14833354





Toddler Drowning Prompts Warning to Parents (Herald Sun, Australia) [TOP](#)

April 7 / AAP

KIDSAFE Victoria has urged parents to improve their awareness of water safety after one toddler drowned and another had to be resuscitated yesterday.

A 22-month-old girl died after being pulled unconscious from a backyard pool in Narre Warren South, while an 11-month-old boy from Tarneit was resuscitated by paramedics after being found unconscious in a bath.

Kidsafe national president Mark Stokes said almost 60 per cent of children under five who drowned in the past year had lost their lives in backyard swimming pools.

Dr Stokes said parents had to ensure children were supervised at all times near water in or outside the home.

"[Kidsafe Victoria](#), who spearheaded the introduction of compulsory pool fencing in Victoria a decade ago, believes there is a need to renew an increased awareness of the dangers of water around the home including spas, ponds, baths, wading pools and buckets where small babies can fall in head first," he said in a statement.

"For every young child who drowns, another three or four will be admitted to hospital after a near drowning incident - some of these children will suffer permanent brain damage.

"We are urging parents to constantly audit their own home for water safety issues and undertake an audit if they take their children visiting or on holidays on farms or country areas where there are creeks, dams and troughs of water."

More information is available on the accident prevention foundation's website: www.kidsafevic.com.au.

<http://www.heraldsun.com.au/news/breaking-news/toddler-drowning-prompts-warning-to-parents/story-e6frf7jx-1225850750823>





5 Second Walk Around Car Could Prevent Child Deaths (WIBW.com, Kansas) | [TOP](#)

April 5

Safe Kids Kansas reminds parents to spot their tot before starting the engine.

TOPEKA, Kansas - It's springtime, and that means more children are playing outside. Unfortunately, in that rush to get to the store before it closes, or in the frenzy of getting the entire family in the car to go to Grandma's house, the focus is often on what is in the car – not what is around it. Safe Kids Kansas encourages anyone driving a [vehicle](#) to walk completely around it to check for children, pets, or toys before getting in and starting the engine.

In the United States in 2007, it was estimated there were 5,000 injuries and 205 deaths to children under age 14 as a result of being hit by a vehicle in a driveway or parking area. These incidences are known as "backovers" or "frontovers," depending on direction.

"We believe these injuries and deaths are preventable as too many result from a driver not seeing children who might be playing, running after, or standing near their vehicle," says Cherie Sage, State Director of Safe Kids Kansas. "What is truly tragic about these stories is that oftentimes, the drivers are friends or even family members."

Parents and caregivers can follow these simple, low-tech tips to help make sure that children remain safe around [vehicles](#):

- Before getting in the car and starting the engine – walk all the way around the parked vehicle to make sure children and pets are not under or behind it. When possible, engage older kids as helpers to accomplish this.
- Ensure that young children are always accompanied by an adult when getting in and out of a vehicle.
- Talk to your children and identify a safe play area for them to use far away from parked or moving vehicles.
- Identify a safe spot for children to go when nearby vehicles are about to move.
- Know where the children are. When walking near moving vehicles, in driveways, in parking lots, or on sidewalks – make sure to firmly hold the hand of each child that is with you.
- Avoid using driveways as play areas if moving [cars](#) have access entering or exiting these areas.



· Supervise children at play. Remind them not to play in neighbors' driveways or alleys where drivers may not be expecting or watching for children.

"Every vehicle has blind zones, in front and in back, regardless of how large or small that vehicle is. So, no matter how important it is at that moment for you to get to your destination on time," says Sage, "taking a five-second walk around your car to make sure that children are not in harm's way could [save](#) your family and your child from a lifetime of physical and emotional pain."

To [learn](#) more about keeping your children safe in and around cars, visit www.usa.safekids.org. and search for "Spot the Tot".

Safe Kids Kansas, Inc. is a nonprofit Coalition of over 70 statewide organizations and businesses dedicated to preventing accidental injuries to Kansas children ages 0-14. Local coalitions and chapters cover Allen, Anderson, Atchison, Butler, Clay, Coffey, Dickinson, Doniphan, Douglas, Elk, Ellis, Finney, Geary, Harvey, Jackson, Jefferson, Johnson, Labette, Leavenworth, Marion, Marshall, McPherson, Meade, Mitchell, Montgomery, Pottawatomie, Riley, Saline, Sedgwick, Shawnee, Smith, Sumner, and Wilson counties, as well as the city of Emporia and the Metro Kansas City Area (Wyandotte county and several Missouri counties.) Safe Kids Kansas a member of Safe Kids Worldwide, a global network of organizations whose mission is to prevent accidental childhood injury. The lead agency for Safe Kids Kansas is the Kansas Department of [Health](#) and Environment.

Visit us at www.safekidskansas.org.

<http://www.wibw.com/localnews/headlines/89911522.html>

Law Boosts Child Safety (Akron Beacon Journal, Ohio) [TOP](#)

April 4 / Betty Lin-Fisher, Beacon Journal business writer

Enforcement begins of state's new rules for special seats, belts for 4- to 8-year-olds

Discounts available to buy booster seats

Starting this Wednesday, Ohio's law requiring booster seats goes into full enforcement mode. The law, which took effect in October, requires that children ages 4 to 8 ride in a car booster seat unless they are 4 feet, 9 inches or taller. Another part of the law requires that children 8 to 15 wear a seat belt.

For six months, officers were only issuing warnings, but starting Wednesday, a violator can receive a ticket and a fine that may not exceed \$75. Not having a child in a booster seat is considered a secondary

A decorative graphic at the bottom of the page consists of a light blue wave-like shape that curves upwards at both ends and downwards in the center, creating a sense of movement and flow.



enforcement violation, which means a motorist can be ticketed only after being pulled over for another moving violation.

"Regardless of the law and regardless of the enforcement nature of the law, riding in a vehicle is the most dangerous thing you're going to do with your child and something you do every day," said Kevin Thomas, vice president of the AAA Akron Auto Club. "Finding the right restraint device or using the right restraint device is absolutely critical."

State law already required that children younger than 4 and lighter than 40 pounds ride in an approved child-safety seat. That law is a primary enforcement violation, which means a motorist can be stopped by an officer if the child is not restrained, Thomas said.

A booster seat does what its name implies. It literally "boosts" the child higher in the seat so the seat-belt system can work the way it's supposed to. The seat-belt system in vehicles is designed to go over bony parts of the body, and the shoulder strap fits snugly across the chest. This is to focus the impact during a crash on the sturdiest parts of the body, instead of the soft-tissue areas of the belly and neck.

Lisa Pardi, injury prevention specialist for Akron Children's Hospital and coordinator of the Safe Kids Coalition of Summit County, said booster seats can make a child look bigger from the outside and give kids a better view.

During a coalition event last week where the group gave away booster seats provided by Goodyear at Van Devere Chevrolet, Pardi said the group even gave a booster seat to some children who were small but were not required to be in one because of their age.

"It's not a negative and doesn't have to be a negative thing," Pardi said. "It's allowing that safety belt to fit them properly."

According to the Ohio Department of Public Safety, car crashes are the leading injury-related cause of death for children ages 4 to 8 in Ohio. Booster seats have been proven in studies to reduce the chances of significant injuries for children ages 4 to 7.

Child safety advocates and physicians have said modifications that parents or grandparents sometimes allow for comfort — such as tucking the shoulder strap under the arm — can actually cause further harm in a crash.

Two types of booster seats are available. Many children already use a combination child seat/booster seat, which uses a harness while the child is a toddler. It can be removed to use the seat as a booster seat. That's often called a high-back booster seat.





A low-back or no-back booster seat is a small chair that looks like a booster seat in a restaurant. The child would use the car's back seat and headrest with that type.

Both booster seats use the vehicle's seat-belt system and aren't secured into the car — they are just used to lift the child to the appropriate level. Child-safety experts said the type of seat used is a matter of preference for children and their caregivers.

Booster seats typically cost \$20 to more than \$50, with the low-back or no-back versions being more affordable.

The Safe Kids Coalition offers a discount program to purchase car seats for consumers who need assistance. Call 330-543-8942.

<http://www.ohio.com/business/89861757.html>

Fire Officials Urge Window Safety for Kids (InsideNova.com, Virginia) | [TOP](#)

April 3 / Kim Hylander, Prince William Fire and Rescue

PRINCE WILLIAM COUNTY, Va.—During this time of the year, door panes and window panes are replaced with screens to welcome spring's cool breeze. But before you insert those window screens, think safety first.

Screens were designed for keeping bugs out and letting air in; not to keep in kids. According to Consumer Product Safety Commission, children are at greater risk of dying or being severely injured from window-related falls than falls associated with other products. Most often (70% of the time), fatalities from window-related falls occur during the spring and summer months between noon and early evening when children are at play.

Research conducted by the Home Safety Council indicates that within a single year, more than 110,000 emergency rooms attend to children with window-related falls. Older children, over the age of 5, are at risk from falls associated with furniture, stairs, baby walkers and playground equipment; whereas toddlers, children under the age of 4 are at risk of window-related falls. According to Safe Kids USA, playground equipment, windows and baby walkers are just a few of an array of products associated with fall-related injuries that have doubled the hospitalization rate when compared to other product-related injuries.





National Window Safety Week starts today and runs through April 11. During this weeklong event, the National Safety Council urges the public to get involved, year round, in our homes, schools and neighborhoods in an effort to prevent injuries and death caused by window-related falls. To keep our little ones safe, follow these window safety tips:

Keep windows locked when they are closed.

Never let children open windows by themselves.

Keep children away from open windows.

Teach children to never lean out a window

If you must have open windows, open them from the top.

Prince William County Department of Fire and Rescue (<http://www.pwcgov.org/fire>) would like to remind the public that windows play a vital role in fire safety and should serve as an alternative exit when planning a home fire escape plan. However, when left open and unattended, windows pose a threat to young children. It is our responsibility, yours and mine, to take the necessary precautions in safely securing windows to ensure the safety of our children.

http://www2.insidenova.com/isn/news/local/article/fire_officials_urge_window_safety_for_kids/55083/

HB10-1147: Helmet Bill Advances Further (State Bill Colorado) [TOP](#)

April 3 / Debi Brazzale, COLORADO NEWS AGENCY

A measure heard Thursday by lawmakers requiring kids to wear helmets while riding their bikes, skateboards or scooters is again moving forward, passing on a party-line vote through the Senate Education Committee.

House Bill 1147 would authorize law enforcement to issue an “informational” traffic citation - a card containing safety information about wearing a helmet, not an actual ticket - to any child over 2 years old who is on a public roadway or public place and who is not wearing a helmet.

Sponsored by Bacon

Senate Education chair Bob Bacon, a Democrat from Fort Collins, is the senate sponsor of HB1147, which narrowly passed the full House earlier this month by one vote.

“I think we can go a long way in mitigating some of these (brain) injuries with this bill,” said Bacon.

Leslie Feuerborn, speaking for Children’s Hospital, told the panel enacting a helmet law for kids will not



only saves lives but could save the state some money because approximately 15 percent of brain injuries from biking and skateboarding accidents treated at Children's were covered by Medicaid.

Feuerborn went on to cite a study done by State Kids Worldwide - a global network of organizations aiming to prevent accidental childhood injury - which concluded that 53 percent of 8-12 year olds said parental rules would motivate them to wear a helmet and 49 percent said they would be motivated to wear a helmet if a law was passed. Feuerborn said most parents she's involved with would welcome such a law.

"Enacting a helmet law provides parents with the leverage that they often need to get their kids to wear helmets," said Feuerborn.

<http://www.statebillnews.com/2010/04/hb10-1147-helmet-bill-advances-further/>

Coroner Warns: Local Child Deaths on the Rise (WTVM, Georgia) [TOP](#)

April 2 / Lindsey Connell

COLUMBUS, GA (WTVM) - Muscogee Coroner Bill Thrower says he is concerned.

"The infant deaths that I've seen over the past 7 years seem to be on an increase to me. If we don't start now, looking into this problem that I think is growing, we're going to find ourselves in a position that we don't want to be in," he told News Leader 9.

And the numbers speak for themselves.

In 2006 and 2007 there were 27 child deaths in Muscogee County

In 2008, 23.

Then, in 2009 the number sky-rocketed to 32.

As for 2010, we're only four months in and the coroner has already handled 11 deaths of children under the age of 17.

And they're not cases of abuse or neglect. He says most of the deaths were the result of Sudden Infant Death Syndrome, Sudden Unexplained Infant Death Syndrome and accidents- many of which officials say could have been prevented.

When it comes to keeping your kids safe, health officials say there are simple things you can do.

A decorative graphic at the bottom of the page consisting of a light blue wave-like shape that curves upwards at both ends and downwards in the middle, set against a white background.



For example, when you put your baby to sleep they say you should remove any stuffed animals, pillows or soft bedding from the crib and put your baby on their back to sleep on top of a firm mattress.

When it comes to the crib itself, make sure you can't fit a soda can in between the crib slats.

"You should try to prevent co-sleeping. That means that the child needs to be in their own sleep area, their own crib," explained Jacquetta Jackson, Training Specialist for Safe Kids Columbus.

"You never know who they may have been as an adult- what they could have done for the society in general, what they could have done for the whole world," Thrower added.

With summer right around the corner, the Thrower is also trying to prevent accidental drownings among children.

He reminds parents that kids should never be unattended around water no matter how good of a swimmer they may be.

Health officials are urging parents to go through their homes and "baby-proof" them as much as possible.

Here is some more information from Safe Kids Columbus, the local group that works to prevent accidental childhood injury, the leading killer of children 14 and under.

SIDS and SUIDS

Safe Kids Columbus is pleased to be an active partner in the Coroner's office efforts to reduce infant mortality in Muscogee County.

Our organization currently focuses on preventing childhood injuries in children ages 14 and under by offering community education in the areas of motor-vehicle safety, bike safety, water safety, home safety, and pedestrian safety.

Safe Sleep Tips for Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS) and Sudden Unexplained Infant Death Syndrome (SUIDS):

- Remove pillows, soft bedding and toys out of your baby's crib.
- Put your baby "back to sleep" (face up) on a firm mattress.
- Make sure you can't fit a soda can between the crib slats.





- Make sure the crib's corner posts are the same height as the end panels.
- Keep bed, cribs and other furniture away from windows so kids can't climb up.
- Don't allow smoking around your baby
- Keep your baby's sleep area close to, but separate from, where you and others sleep.

Where can you find Recall information?

-U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission

For Safe Sleep brochure and pamphlets, and door hangers, call Safe Kids at 706-321-6183.

<http://www.wtvm.com/Global/story.asp?S=12249934>

Toddler Dies After Balcony Fall (Brisbane Times, Australia) | [TOP](#)

April 2 / AAP

The death of a year-old toddler in a fall from a Queensland apartment has prompted a warning from Kidsafe that balconies are as potentially deadly for small children as backyard pools.

The youngster fell more than seven metres from an apartment block at Alexandra Headlands on the Sunshine Coast on Thursday.

An emergency crew worked frantically to save him, but he died later that night in Brisbane's Royal Children's Hospital.

Dr Mark Stokes, national president of child accident prevention group Kidsafe, said that because of an upsurge in apartment development across the country, hundreds of thousands of small balconies were literally potential death traps for young children.

"Most of these small balconies usually have a combination of table and chairs, which if left against the safety railing can act as a simple set of steps for toddlers," Dr Stokes said.

"A toddler can easily climb onto a chair and then onto the top of the table, placing them in a very dangerous situation.





"They are top heavy, have no understanding of the danger of heights and there is no barrier to stop them falling."

He said apartment dwellers without children must be aware of the potential danger when visitors arrive with young children.

"A number of deaths and serious injuries have occurred in the past 12 months with children falling from apartment balconies and open windows," Dr Stokes said.

"Kidsafe is urging all people living in apartments with tables and chairs to implement their own safety plan by keeping the table and chair combination away from their balustrades and treat the balcony the same as a backyard swimming pool by not letting children on the balcony without supervision."

<http://news.brisbanetimes.com.au/breaking-news-national/toddler-dies-after-balcony-fall-20100402-rj6w.html>

RISK AREA NEWS

Blind Zone Dangers (CBS Early Show) [| TOP](#)

April 7


Watch the video: <http://www.cbsnews.com/video/watch/?id=6371205n&tag=mg:earlyshow>

With Booster Seats, Safety More Important Than Embarrassment, Local Mom Says (Dayton Daily News, Ohio) [| TOP](#)

April 2 / Kim Margolis

Xenia Twp. mom shares story of her 8-year-old, hurt severely in lap belt.

The booster seat law goes far, but parents Matthew and Jennifer Laird think parents should do more if they can.





The law only requires that children between 4 and 8 who are shorter than 4 foot 9 inches use booster seats. It does not say what type of seat belt should be used with them. Using the lap belt only to secure the child is acceptable, but the Laird family says both lap and shoulder belts should be used if the car is equipped with both.

The family has a stark cautionary tale involving their twins and a car accident. The twin using a shoulder and lap belt with a booster seat was much less severely injured than the twin who was secured only by a lap belt and booster seat.

Last year, Jennifer Laird was driving in Cedarville with her three daughters all in the backseat. Sophia, 3, was in a car seat. Twins Aleacia and Isabella, 8, were both in booster seats. The backseat of the car only had shoulder belts on the sides, so with Isabella in the middle, she was only able to use a lap belt.

When Jennifer Laird had a head-on collision, Sophia and Aleacia received mild concussions and facial lacerations.

But Isabella had traumatic brain injuries, brain surgery, was in a coma for days, in the hospital for seven weeks and had months of therapy to learn how to walk again. She had trouble with focus, memory and writing.

“I don’t care how old my child is, I don’t care how embarrassing it is,” said Jennifer Laird, who also received critical injuries in the crash. “There is just no complaining about booster seats.”

Isabella is perfectly healed now, but she and sister, Aleacia are very petite 9-year-olds and Jennifer Laird jokingly says the girls might be in the seats until they are sophomores in high school.

“If you care, you will do it,” Matthew Laird said. “And all parents love their children down to the bone. They’ll just let other factors take away what’s important.”

The law went into effect last fall, but for the past six months only warnings have been issued. Starting Wednesday, April 7, officers can write tickets of \$25-\$75 for the offense.

Jessica Saunders, community relations manager at Dayton Children’s, conducts fittings of all types of child restraints. She pointed out that booster seats help seat belts work more effectively. Instead of a the shoulder belt sliding across the child’s neck or face and the lap belt wrapping around the abdomen, the booster aligns the seat belt with the tough parts of the child’s body like the hips and shoulders.

“You can fix a hip but it’s harder to fix a spine or abdomen injury,” Sanders said.





From 2002-2007 motor vehicle crashes killed 89 children ages 4 to 8 years old in Ohio and injured 21,327 in that age group. That trend bore out at Dayton Children's.

"We were seeing little kids who were fine because they were in car seats, but the 4 to 8 age group were the ones on the operating tables," Saunders said.

The law requires only that a federally approved booster seat be used. Beyond that, it does not matter if the booster costs \$19.99 or \$70.

Saunders does say purchasing a seat at a second-hand shop is not a good idea because you cannot know if the seat was involved in an accident, which can undermine the effectiveness of the seat.

"Just make sure the seat you get fits your kid," Saunder said. "That can be in any price range."

The Ohio Department of Health offers child safety seats to eligible low-income parents. Call 1-800-755-GROW (4769) to see if you are eligible.

<http://www.daytondailynews.com/news/dayton-news/with-booster-seats-safety-more-important-than-embarrassment-local-mom-says-634043.html>

