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## **SAFE KIDS IN THE NEWS**

**IMMI Employee Receives Indiana Child Safety Advocate Award (School Transportation News, Indiana) [TOP](#)**

May 26 / Ryan Gray


Vits, a 12-year employee of IMMI, was recognized on May 14 at the 2010 Indiana Injury Prevention Conference for spearheading the engineering team that developed the patented SmartFrame technology in 2002 that provides school bus compartmentalization and meets federal standards for occupant protection.

But Vits is also the face of the company at school bus, Head Start and child passenger safety conferences and trade shows nationwide, providing educational support on best practices for child securement and on the company's line of products. For example, he is a frequent speaker at state and national conferences and is a fixture at the various NHTSA eight-hour Child Passenger Safety Restraint Systems on School Buses workshops.

"The air miles do add up," he joked.

He added that he focuses on bridging the gap between the school transportation, Head Start and child passenger safety worlds to foster communication, as the two modes of school buses and passenger vehicles differ greatly in how to safely and appropriately secure children in car seats and seat belts.

The award sponsored by Safe Kids Indiana and the Automotive Safety Program came amid a new national report released by Safe Kids USA showing that accidental injury remains the nation's leading





cause of child death, despite the accidental injury death rate of U.S. children 14 and under declining by 45 percent since 1987.

"We're losing too many children to an epidemic that can be prevented," said Mitch Stoller, president and chief executive officer of Safe Kids USA. "The 45 percent drop demonstrates tremendous progress, but we can't lose sight that accidental injury remains the leading killer of our nation's kids and that many of these injuries can be prevented."

Other Child Advocate Safety Award winners included Marilyn Cox of Riley Hospital for Children in Indianapolis and Wendy Nash of Memorial Children's Hospital in South Bend.

<http://www.stnonline.com/home/latest-news/2397-immi-vits-child-safety-award>

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## **Swimming Pool Safety, Maintenance Tips (The Gazette, Canada) | [TOP](#)**

May 26 / Ian Howarth

A backyard pool can be a fun and safe place for families but there is a responsibility that comes with both the maintenance and supervision of young ones who may not have a sense of the dangers involved.

Denyse Boxell, of Safe Kids Canada, revealed some eye-opening statistics about unsupervised children and outdoor pools. More than half the incidents of children drowning involve a backyard pool, she said, and most of those incidents are preventable with proper security and parental vigilance.

"Most of these drownings occur when the child was not even supposed to be anywhere near the pool," Boxell said. "Kids are just there because of curiosity, not because it was swim time." Boys 5 and younger constitute the greatest risk group for backyard pool drownings (75 per cent); in almost half those incidents, there was no adult supervision. Safe Kids Canada reported 58 drownings last year for the under-14 category - half of them in backyard pools.

Boxell said that most municipalities in Canada require backyard pools to be surrounded on three sides by at least a four-foot-high fence. She recommends that parents go further than a fence that surrounds the backyard, and also include a fence that encompasses the pool itself.

"And make sure the fence is self-closing and self-latching at the top of the gate, where little hands cannot reach," Boxell added.





Parents should make sure there is no patio furniture, chairs or ladders near the pool that could facilitate the curiosity of a young child bent on circumventing the pool security fence.

The Patrick family in Dorval has a five-foot fence surrounding their in-ground pool and a large cedar hedge that serves as double protection around the pool.

"Our vigilance was constant (while the children were growing up)," said Shannon Patrick. "I was the on-duty lifeguard when my daughters and their friends were swimming."

There are numerous pool fencing options out there to bring comfort to the parents of young children. Protect-A-Child Pool Fence Systems has franchises in and around the Montreal area. Their website is [www.clotureprotegeenfant.com](http://www.clotureprotegeenfant.com).

In addition to safety concerns, pool owners need to observe rules of general maintenance. With summer approaching, this is a busy time of the year for pool-maintenance companies like Piscine Pro's Franz Hartmann. Getting the pool operational is something pool owners may leave up to a contractor, who will shock the pool into summer shape and drop by weekly during the summer to follow up. Many owners choose to do the upkeep themselves and water-testing kits are available at pool retailers along with pool accessories.

Hartmann, however, will clean out the fall leaves, vacuum two seasons worth of sludge, prime the pump and get it in what he called "swim-clean shape."

"Through regular swimming pool maintenance," he said, "we can ensure healthy and enjoyable times in the pool."

That, after all, is what a backyard pool is all about!

<http://www.montrealgazette.com/business/Swimming+pool+safety+maintenance+tips/3071363/story.html>

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**[Volunteers Float Life Rings in St. Petersburg to Push for Pool Safety \(Tampabay.com, Florida\) | TOP](#)**

May 26 / Stephanie Hayes, Times Staff Writer

ST. PETERSBURG — The boys played in the back yard on scooters, their parents watching from the kitchen window.





It was August 2006, and the family had just moved from Boston to Florida. The swimming pool in the back of the family's Old Northeast home was surrounded by a gate. And Jud, who had turned 4 the day before, was afraid of the water.

What could happen?

Stacy Cummings glanced out the window, and for a split second, didn't see Jud. Panic washed over her.

"I just had this motherly feeling that something was wrong."

She and her husband dashed outside. The pool gate had not been locked.

Jud was at the bottom of the pool.

•••

In the past 10 years in Florida, 744 children have drowned.

Most of the time, it happens in the safety of a home. Pinellas County alone has more than 65,000 backyard pools.

It happens to good families, people who watch their children and take safety precautions. But kids are mobile, and they fall through loopholes — the doggie door, the unhooked gate, the gap in the fence.

The approach of Memorial Day brings a new campaign called Florida Safe Pools. The goal is to promote swimming lessons, yes, but to really push for extra layers of protection between the child and the pool.

"Parents do watch their children," said Wendy Loomas, a co-chair of the campaign. "What they need is a little extra time, in case their child gets away from them."

Tuesday, representatives from St. Petersburg Fire and Rescue, the Pinellas County Health Department and All Children's Hospital gathered at St. Petersburg's North Shore Pool. They put 74 plastic floats in the water to represent the number of kids who drown in Florida each year.

"Drownings happen every single day," said St. Petersburg firefighter Pat Vines. "They don't take a break depending on the month."

The volunteers showed off new safety equipment, like childproof door locks, pool screens and alarms that sound when a child hits the water.





Fences should be at least 4 feet high, taller if possible, they advised. Have a phone by the pool. And parents should always be vigilant — don't text or talk on the phone or read a novel.

"Our campaign is all about the layer of barriers that families need," said Jean Shoemaker, Safe Kids coordinator at All Children's Hospital. "We've seen too many children who have gotten into the pool and ended up in a less-than-positive situation."

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The image of her son at the bottom of the pool is one Stacy Cummings can't forget.

"It will never leave my mind," she said.

She and her husband immediately dove in, pulled him out and started performing CPR. They called 911.

"We have no recollection of how we got to the phone to call 911, but it made all the difference," said Cummings, 40.

Firefighters and paramedics from St. Petersburg's fire station four showed up and started working on Jud. When he took a breath, one of the workers cheered.

"Atta boy!"

In the hospital, doctors put Jud into a coma. He went on to spend a year recovering from a traumatic brain injury from the accident. He couldn't walk or sit or chew food.

Now he's 7 and healthy. He visits the firefighters every year on the anniversary of the accident.

And he tells his friends about it so they'll stay safe, too.

*Stephanie Hayes can be reached at [shayes@sptimes.com](mailto:shayes@sptimes.com) or (727) 893-8857.*

<http://www.tampabay.com/news/article1097500.ece>

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## Life Jackets and Active Supervision Are Essential to Boating Safety (Kansas City infoZine, Kansas) [TOP](#)

May 25

National Safe Boating Week is May 22-28

Topeka, KS - infoZine - Whether it's during vacation or part of an ordinary day, boating can be fun for the entire family – as long as everyone remains safe. In 2005, 21 children ages 12 and under were killed in boating incidents. Of the children who drowned while boating in 2003, more than 60 percent were not wearing life jackets. The United States Coast Guard reports an estimated 85 percent of boating-related drownings could be prevented by the use of life jackets.

“On a boat, everyone should wear a life jacket at all times,” says Cherie Sage, State Director of Safe Kids Kansas. “Look for a life jacket approved by the United States Coast Guard. ‘Water wings’ and other inflatable swimming aids such as inner tubes do not prevent drowning.”

Safe Kids Kansas recommends that children ages 14 and under wear life jackets not only on boats, but near open bodies of water or when participating in water sports. Kansas law requires children ages 12 and under to wear life jackets while boating, and children under 13 are required to wear life jackets on any recreational vessel in waters under Coast Guard jurisdiction.

Safe Kids Kansas urges parents and caregivers to wear life jackets on boats or other watercraft as well. “Your children will pick up and embrace your safety habits,” says Sage. According to a 2005 study by Safe Kids Worldwide, children are much more likely to practice safe habits when they witness similar behavior by parents and caregivers.

Safe Kids Kansas also reminds parents and caregivers:

- Always wear life jackets when in or around open bodies of water and on boats. Make sure the life jacket fits snugly. Have the child make a “touchdown” signal — if the life jacket hits the child’s chin or ears, the life jacket may be too big or the straps are too loose.
- Enroll your kids in swimming lessons taught by a certified instructor, but don’t assume swimming lessons or life jackets make your child “drownproof.” These precautions are important, but they’re no substitute for constant and active adult supervision.
- Don’t let kids operate or ride on personal watercraft (such as jet skis).
- Never drink alcoholic beverages while boating — a large portion of boating accidents that occur each year involve alcohol consumption by both boat operators and passengers.



- Nobody should swim near a dock or marina with electrical hookups or lighting — swimmers can be electrocuted in the water and drown.
- Make sure the boat operator has passed a boating safety course approved by the Coast Guard before letting your child and your family ride in the boat. For more information about safe boat operations, contact the Coast Guard Infoline at 800-368-5647 or visit [www.uscgboating.org](http://www.uscgboating.org) .
- When there are several adults present and children are swimming, use the Water Watcher card strategy, which designates an adult as the Water Watcher for a designated amount of time (e.g. 15-minute periods) to prevent lapses in supervision. To download a Water Watcher card, visit [www.safekids.org](http://www.safekids.org) .
- Install a carbon monoxide detector on your motorboat to alert you to dangerous levels of exhaust fumes.
- Learn infant and child CPR. In less than two hours, you can learn effective interventions that can give a fighting chance to a child who has fallen into water and become unconscious. Many local hospitals, fire departments, the Red Cross, and recreation departments offer CPR training.

National Safe Boating Week is an annual educational campaign, coordinated by the National Safe Boating Council [www.safeboatingcouncil.org](http://www.safeboatingcouncil.org) , running the week prior to Memorial Day.

<http://www.infozine.com/news/stories/op/storiesView/sid/41307/>

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### **Labels Urged for Food That Can Choke (New York Times) [TOP](#)**

May 24 / Laurie Tarkan

On a July afternoon in 2006, Patrick Hale microwaved a bag of popcorn for his two young children and sat down with them to watch television. When he got up to change the channel, he heard a strange noise behind him, and turned to see his 23-month-old daughter, Allison, turning purple and unable to breathe.

As a Marine, he was certified in CPR, but he could not dislodge the popcorn with blows to her back and finger swipes down her throat. He called 911, but it was too late: by the time Allison arrived at the hospital, her heart had stopped beating. An autopsy found that she had inhaled pieces of popcorn into her vocal cords, her bronchial tubes and a lung.

“Neither one of us knew that popcorn was unsafe,” said her mother, Christie Hale of Keller, Tex.





Now, the [American Academy of Pediatrics](#), the nation's leading pediatricians' group, wants that to change. Saying that food should be subject to as much scrutiny as toys, it [is calling on the Food and Drug Administration](#) to require warning labels on foods that are known [choking](#) hazards, and to evaluate and monitor food for safety.

"You have a SuperBall that by government regulation has to carry warnings telling people it's a risk to young children and you can't market it to them, yet you can have the same identical shape and size gumball and there are no restrictions or requirements," said Dr. Gary Smith, director of the [Center for Injury Research and Policy at Nationwide Children's Hospital](#) in Columbus, Ohio, the lead author of the pediatricians' policy statement on food hazards.

At the same time, the academy is urging manufacturers to redesign some of the most dangerous foods — especially the hot dog, a leading choking hazard. That call has been widely ridiculed on the Internet; many commenters said parents should modify the hot dog themselves — by cutting it. And Janet Riley, president of the [National Hot Dog and Sausage Council](#), said of a redesign, "It's not going to happen."

But the food designer Eugene D. Gagliardi Jr., who invented Steak-ums and popcorn chicken, has come up with a new hot dog that is soon to be marketed on the East Coast. It looks the same in the package, but has eight deep slits that open when cooked, causing it to break apart into small pieces when eaten.

The pediatricians' group began studying the issue nine years ago, when 17 children around the world, including several in the United States, choked to death on a gelatinous candy that had to be sucked out of a plastic cup the size of a coffee creamer. The F.D.A. eventually banned its sale.

"That product should never have come out on the market," Dr. Smith said. "Children had been dying in Canada, Japan and the U.S. for years, and we hadn't picked up on it" — until reports of a cluster of deaths in Northern California.

There are no recent nationwide figures on food choking. In 2001, about 17,500 children 14 and younger were treated in emergency departments for choking, and 60 percent of the episodes were caused by food. In 2000, 160 children died from an obstruction of the respiratory tract.

Children under 4 are at the highest risk, not only because their airways are small (the back of a toddler's throat narrows to the diameter of a straw) but also because of the way their eating abilities develop. Front teeth usually come in at 6 or 7 months — so babies can bite off a piece of food — but the first molars, which grind food down, do not arrive until about 15 months, and second molars around 26 months.

"Between the ages of 3 and 4, they're developing their ability to chew adequately and prepare for swallowing," said Dr. Nisha Kapadia, a pediatric resident at Johns Hopkins Children's Center.





When young children chew foods like peanuts, raw carrots and popcorn, some is ground down and some is not, and they tend to swallow unchewed bits of food that can block the airway or be inhaled into the bronchial tubes and lungs.

The [pediatrics](#) group says that while vigilance is important, parents cannot always prevent choking. “I see the parents when they bring their children into the E.R.,” Dr. Smith said. “Virtually every time they say, ‘I can’t believe this happened to my child — I was standing right there.’”

Some advocates say the government should put hazardous foods off limits to young children.

“The F.D.A. needs to set a uniform standard for cautionary information on food that should not be consumed by children under 5,” said Bruce Silverglade, legal director of the [Center for Science in the Public Interest](#), an advocacy group that lobbied unsuccessfully in 2003 for a bill to require the [Food and Drug Administration](#) to develop [food labeling](#) regulations.

In a statement, the agency said it was reviewing the pediatrics academy’s new policy and was considering steps to prevent further deaths, but it declined to elaborate.

Some food manufacturers have voluntarily put warning labels on packages. “Two-thirds of hot dogs already have labels,” said Ms. Riley, of the National Hot Dog and Sausage Council. But Mr. Silverglade said that was not enough.

“Even if up to two-thirds are labeled, it’s shameful that one-third are not,” he said.

Cautionary labeling, when it exists, is not always obvious to consumers. After her daughter died, Ms. Hale went to the supermarket and found that some brands of microwave popcorn had a small warning on the bottom of the box.

“What person reads the bottom of a box?” she asked.

The Hales, who both retired from the [Marines](#) after their daughter’s death, sued the popcorn manufacturer for wrongful death and settled out of court. (A confidentiality agreement prevents her from naming the manufacturer.)

In 2003, three years before Allison’s death, Mr. Silverglade’s group sent letters to nearly 100 manufacturers, including popcorn makers, urging them to use standardized clear labeling to caution against choking.

“We received about two responses, and even those companies hadn’t made any promises,” Mr. Silverglade said.





A conversation on the Web site [CafeMom.com](http://CafeMom.com) revealed a wide range of opinions about when a child can safely eat popcorn, with many mothers saying they allowed it for their 15- to 24-month-olds.

"He only eats it when I eat so I can make sure he doesn't choke," one mother wrote.

But being present will not necessarily prevent choking. "Although the A.A.P. does not give a specific age cutoff," Dr. Smith said, "I believe it is prudent to wait until at least 4 to 5 years of age before introducing high-risk foods, including popcorn."

Toys and other objects are also serious choking hazards, especially coins, balloons and balls. The pediatrics academy is also calling for tighter regulation of products sold on eBay and other online sites and in retail toy bins or vending machines, which are often poorly marked.

The group has also urged its members to do a better job of counseling parents on avoiding high-risk foods.

"Parents often think, 'My child is mature enough to handle a grape or a hot dog,'" said Chrissy Cianflone, director of programs for the advocacy group [Safe Kids USA](http://SafeKidsUSA.org). "Parents need to understand that there are physical and cognitive developmental limitations."

She and others say keeping small objects and unsafe food out of a child's mouth is the only way to prevent choking accidents, as Allison Hale's parents can testify.

"Not a day goes by," Ms. Hale said, "where my husband doesn't feel like it's his fault and he did something wrong."

#### **Correction: May 26, 2010**

Because of an editing error, an article on Tuesday about choking hazards for children omitted some of the steps to take if a child is choking and seems unable to cough out the obstruction. Besides having someone call 911, health authorities recommend acting quickly to remove the object. [If a child is older than 1 year old](#), perform the Heimlich maneuver. [If the child is younger than 1](#), rest the child face down on your knee and slap the back between the shoulder blades five times.

<http://www.nytimes.com/2010/05/25/health/25choke.html?pagewanted=2&sq=Safe%20Kids%20USA&st=cse&scp=1>

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## **It's Deadly: Never Leave Your Child Alone in a Car (Cumberland Times-News, Maryland) [| TOP](#)**

May 24

Soon daytime temperatures in our area will be in the 80s and 90s on most days. Along with the high temperatures comes the need to be vigilant about leaving children unattended in a vehicle.

A new campaign, Never Leave Your Child Alone, has been launched by the Maryland Institute for Emergency Medical Services System and Safe Kids Maryland. The goal is to have parents and caregivers take precautions so that a child does not become sick — or worse, die — from the effects of being left in a super-heated car interior.

All drivers who have children should make it a habit to check the back seat every time they get out of the vehicle, and never leave a child alone — even for one minute.

Every year, an average of 37 children die because they are left alone in a vehicle.

Between 1998 and 2010, 450 children died from heat stroke because they were unattended in vehicles that became too hot for them to survive.

A child's core body temperature rises three to five times faster than an adult's. In just 10 minutes a car's temperature can increase by 19 degrees, and it continues to rise.

More than 50 percent of the children who died from heat stroke were forgotten by a caring adult who became distracted when leaving the vehicle. Thirty percent of kids who died from hyperthermia were left unattended or gained entry into an unlocked vehicle and became trapped and overcome by heat.

The campaign encourages anyone who sees a child unattended in a vehicle to call 911.

To see a demonstration of how quickly a car heats up in moderate temperatures, log on to [www.ggweather.com/heat](http://www.ggweather.com/heat).


<http://times-news.com/opinion/x2023218909/It-s-deadly>

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## **Youth Study Shows Urban-Rural Gun Threat Is Equal (VolunteerTV.com, Tennessee) [| TOP](#)**

May 24 / Sara Shookman

Researchers in Philadelphia found children in rural areas are as likely to die by gunshot as those in city.





KNOXVILLE, Tenn. (WVLT) -- If you think your children may be safe from guns in the countryside, think again. Children and guns can be a dangerous combination, anywhere, according to findings from the journal Pediatrics.

"When a child dies because of a weapon being utilized, it's devastating for that family, the 'What-if' 'We should have's', and that community," said Susan Cook, Safe Kids coordinator East Tennessee's Children's Hospital.

A study out Monday shows firearms deaths are a problem across the board. Researchers in Philadelphia found children in rural areas are as likely to die by gunshot as those in city.

"It really just reinforced what we had an idea of already. That it's an equal issue. It's just different, as far as the mechanism that the firearm is happening," said Cook.

Homicides are more likely in youth in urban counties. But gun suicides and accidental fatal shootings in rural areas are just a probable -- about four deaths in 100,000 children.

"Where in the city, you're having more of the homicide, in the rural areas you are really looking more at unintentional and actually suicide type events," she said of East Tennessee deaths.

"The chance of mishandling a gun might be more prominent because of the history of hunting and living in the country. In a rural area, the households may be more likely to house firearms," said Tommy Whitehead. Whitehead is a regional education coordinator for the Tennessee Wildlife Resources Agency.

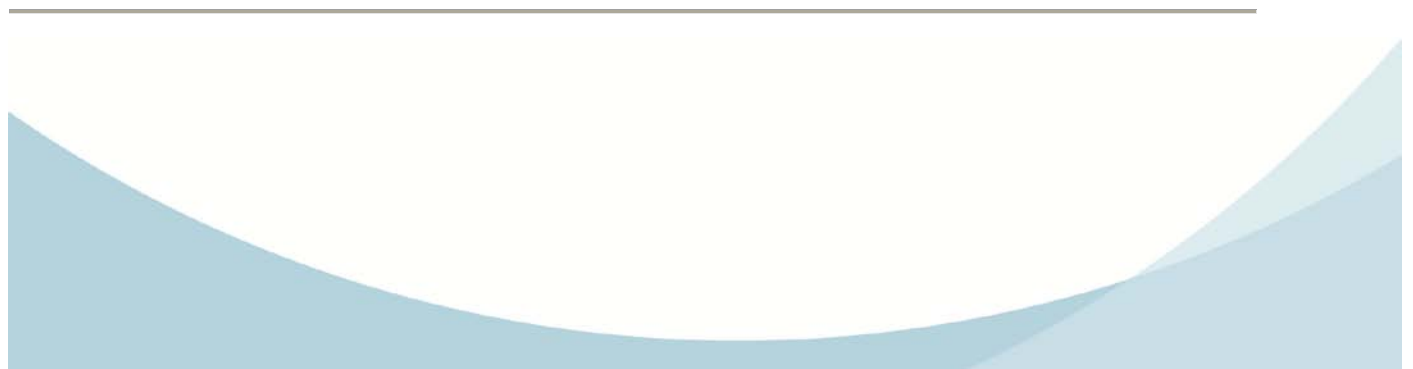
TWRA targets prevention strategies to rural areas as well. "Our main goal is to reduce the number of incidences in the field. To eliminate a number of those just by education," said Whitehead. "Store your ammo and your firearm separately. Of course, you can use the trigger locks with help increase that security feature."

Trigger locks often come with weapons when purchased. You can also pick one up for free at your local police department. Gun storage lockers are also advised.

"You do not want a small child to be able to access a gun ever," said Cook. "You just want to be proactive, that's not something you ever want to be reactive on."

For more information on the study or gun education, click on the link below.

<http://www.volunteertv.com/home/headlines/94773374.html>





## Your Health: Pool Safety Guidelines for Tots Evolve (USA Today) [TOP](#)

May 24 / Kim Painter

In one week, millions of families will observe a delightful Memorial Day tradition: They will take their kids to pools and beaches. Most will leave refreshed and ready for more summer fun. None will expect a tragedy. But tragedies and near-misses happen every summer as hundreds of children drown and thousands are injured in the water.

"We love these places and they are a lot of fun, but we have to realize there are dangers there," says Kathleen Reilly, a spokeswoman for the U.S. [Consumer Products Safety Commission](#). The commission is leading a new pool safety campaign, which launches today (see [poolsafely.gov](#)).

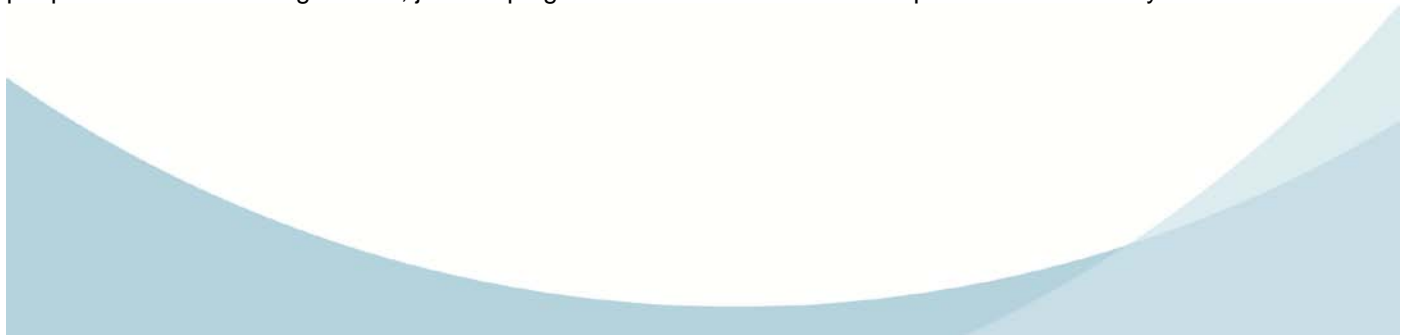
Also today, the American Academy of Pediatrics publishes new safety guidelines in the journal *Pediatrics*. For the first time, the doctors' group says that swimming lessons may help prevent drowning in some children ages 1 to 4 but that parents must decide whether kids are physically and emotionally ready to learn. The group has long recommended lessons for children over age 4. And it still says no studies support lessons for babies under age 1.

"The official party line has always been that kids under 4 are not ready" and that lessons might give parents a false sense of security, says Jeffrey Weiss, a pediatrician at Phoenix Children's Hospital and lead author of the new policy. But now that studies suggest early lessons might be helpful, the group has relaxed its stance, he says: "We're telling parents it's their call. We're not saying everyone should run out tomorrow and sign their 2-year-olds up for lessons." Lessons won't "drown-proof" any child, he adds.

The academy, the safety commission and other groups urge multiple layers of protection around pools and other bodies of water. Among their tips:

- If you own a pool, enclose it in a four-sided fence at least 4 feet high.
- Make sure any pool you use, in public or your own backyard, is equipped with safe drain covers that prevent suction injuries and deaths (these are now required by federal law in public pools).
- Learn cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR) and water-rescue skills. Have a phone handy.
- Supervise children constantly and closely.

How closely? Liz Lewis, a mother of four from Sumter, S.C., found out the hard way on Memorial Day 2005. Lewis says she was standing next to her 4-year-old son, Kai, in a friend's pool, surrounded by other people. Kai was bouncing around, just keeping his head out of the 3-foot-deep water. "I turned my back to





talk to the other adults standing around the pool," she says, and "two or three minutes" later, an older child pulled Kai out of 8 feet of water. "He was swollen, he was gray, his eyes were rolled back and he was not breathing."

Fortunately, the pool owner had just taken CPR lessons and started working on Kai as someone else called 911. "By the time the ambulance came, he'd coughed up all the water and he'd started breathing," Lewis says. Kai fully recovered.

But Lewis says she tells the story so that other parents will know "your eyes and ears need to be on the children at all times."

That means "no eating, no drinking, no conversing with your friends, no working on your BlackBerry," says Chrissy Cianflone, director of programs for Safe Kids USA, a non-profit advocacy group. The group's website ([safekids.org](http://safekids.org)) includes a "Water Watcher" tag parents can print out to designate who is on duty at any moment.

Vigilance matters because drowning rarely happens as it does in the movies, with screaming and flailing, Cianflone says: "Usually it's so quick and quiet that when parents recognize the silence, it's too late."

[http://www.usatoday.com/news/health/painter/2010-05-24-yourhealth24\\_ST\\_N.htm?loc=interstitialskip](http://www.usatoday.com/news/health/painter/2010-05-24-yourhealth24_ST_N.htm?loc=interstitialskip)

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## **CPSC Launches National Campaign to Change the Way People Think and Act About Pool and Spa Safety (PR Newswire, Florida) [TOP](#)**

May 24 / CPSC

*Pool Safely* Campaign Aims to Reduce Child Drownings and Entrapments

CPSC, Olympians Hold Press Event to Release New Death and Injury Data

FORT LAUDERDALE, Fla., May 24 /PRNewswire-USNewswire/ -- The U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC) today kicks off the *Pool Safely* campaign ([www.poolsafely.gov](http://www.poolsafely.gov)), a first-of-its-kind national public education effort to reduce child drownings and non-fatal submersions, and entrapments in swimming pools and spas. At a press conference at the Fort Lauderdale Aquatic Complex today, Olympic swimmers Jason Lezak and Janet Evans joined Inez Tenenbaum, Chairman of the CPSC; U.S. Rep. Debbie Wasserman Schultz (D-FL); and Nancy Baker, mother of Virginia Graeme Baker, to officially launch *Pool Safely* and release the CPSC's annual submersion and entrapment reports.





(Logo: <http://www.newscom.com/cgi-bin/prnh/20030904/USCSCLOGO>)

Today, CPSC released its annual reports on children's submersion and entrapment incidents which showed:

- From 2005-2007 there was an annual average of 385 pool and spa-related drownings for children younger than 15; about 78 percent, or 299, of these children were younger than five.
- From 2007-2009, there were an estimated average of 4,200 pool or spa emergency department-treated submersions for children younger than 15; and children between the ages of 12 to 35 months represented 47 percent of estimated injuries for these years.
- About 54 percent of the estimated injuries for 2007-2009 and 74 percent of the fatalities for 2005-2007 involving children younger than fifteen occurred at a residence.
- Most reported fatalities occurred on the day of (73 percent) or within a week of (additional 23 percent) the submersion incident. Just four percent of fatal victims survived beyond a week of the submersion; these victims had severe injuries and required intensive medical care.
- There were no reported entrapment fatalities for 2009. CPSC did receive eight reports of entrapment incidents in which seven people were injured during 2009.

For the complete reports see: Pool and Spa Submersions 2010 (<http://www.cpsc.gov/library/foia/foia10/os/poolsub2010.pdf>) and Circulation/Suction Entrapments 2010 (<http://www.cpsc.gov/library/foia/foia10/os/entrap10.pdf>). The years for reported injury and fatality statistics differ as a result of the lag in fatality reporting.

"It is important to keep in mind that these numbers represent family tragedies. Preventing child drownings year round is a priority for the CPSC," said Chairman Tenenbaum. "The *Pool Safely* campaign will start a national conversation with parents and children, pool owners and operators and industry professionals about the simple safety steps they can take to protect themselves and their families in and around pools and spas. These incidents are preventable, so our mission is to change the way families think and act about pool and spa safety."

The *Pool Safely* campaign is a key part of the CPSC's efforts to carry out the requirements of Section 1407 of the *Virginia Graeme Baker Pool and Spa Safety Act (P&SS Act)*, federal legislation signed into law in 2007 mandating new requirements for pool and spa safety. It includes a requirement for a national public education campaign designed to raise public awareness, support industry compliance, and improve safety at pools and spas.

"I have been involved in the issue of pool safety throughout my career and today marks a key milestone in the ongoing fight to reduce accidental drowning," said Congresswoman Debbie Wasserman Schultz, author of the Virginia Graeme Baker Pool and Spa Safety Act. "Educating communities on the potential dangers of swimming pools is a critical tool in saving the lives of our children. I am so pleased to have





worked with my colleagues in Congress to provide the funds needed for implementation of this important campaign."

The *Pool Safely* campaign will deliver an important and simple message: just adding an extra safety step in and around the water can make all the difference. Your greatest water safety assurance comes from adopting and practicing as many water safety measures as possible, including: barriers that completely surround the pool with self-closing, self-latching gates; staying close, being alert, and watching children at the pool; learning and practicing water safety skills (knowing how to swim and perform CPR); and having the appropriate equipment (compliant drain covers, alarms, barriers and sensors).

The campaign will highlight the need to implement a "personal system of safety" that consists of adding as many proven water safety practices as possible in and around pools and spas.

"As a parent of young children, I know there's no single, sure-fire way to ensure their safety around pools and spas," added Janet Evans, five-time Olympic medalist in swimming. "Whether it's enrolling them in swimming lessons or simply watching them at all times, there is always one more thing I can do. The *Pool Safely* campaign offers a variety of simple steps we can all take to protect our children in pools and spas."

*Pool Safely* will serve as an information hub, delivering campaign tools and resources to various outreach channels. CPSC has taken the lead by partnering with national, regional and local organizations in the children's safety and drowning prevention communities. By engaging key partners, the campaign will reach the widest possible audience and build a sustainable network that will ensure the campaign's messaging is delivered for years to come.

"Knowing how to swim helped me win gold in the water, but it takes adding as many water safety steps as possible to ensure a safe environment for children in and around pools and spas," said seven-time Olympic medalist in swimming Jason Lezak. "No matter how responsible you already are, there is always one more safety step you can take to protect your child. That is how you can *Pool Safely*."

"I understand the need to bring together the public and dedicated partners in the water safety community to begin a national conversation about water safety," said Nancy Baker, the mother of Virginia Graeme for whom the Act is named. "I am honored to be involved in the *Pool Safely* campaign and look forward to working together to promote additional water safety steps we all can take in protecting our loved ones in and around pools and spas. Simple steps save lives."

The *Pool Safely* campaign – a national public education effort by the Consumer Product Safety Commission – is proud to partner with leading organizations, including American Red Cross, YMCA of the USA, Safe Kids USA, National Drowning Prevention Alliance (NDPA), World Waterpark Association (WWA), and Abbey's Hope. For more information, visit the website at [www.poolsafely.gov](http://www.poolsafely.gov) or follow the campaign on Twitter @poolsafely.



CPSC Recall Hotline: (800) 638-2772

CPSC Media Contact: (301) 504-7908

SOURCE U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission

<http://www.prnewswire.com/news-releases/cpsc-launches-national-campaign-to-change-the-way-people-think-and-act-about-pool-and-spa-safety-94741579.html>

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### **Safety Groups Warn Parents of Pool Dangers (The Miami Herald, Florida) [TOP](#)**


May 23 / Sarah Larimer, Associated Press Writer

MIAMI -- As the summer months approach and children trade backpacks for boogie boards, safety advocates are urging parents to be aware of the dangers of swimming pools in parks, aquatic centers and outside their own homes.

The Consumer Product Safety Commission on Monday is set to release its annual childhood drowning report, which presents estimates of deaths and injuries associated with pools, spas or hot tubs. The release of the report coincides with the launch of a national campaign that is geared toward reducing similar incidents across the country.

"We truly believe that by adding a few simple steps that make the backyard or public pool safer, we can save lives and keep kids having fun in the water," Inez Tenenbaum, chair of the CPSC, said in a statement.

Included in the report's findings:

- An annual average of 385 pool- or spa-related fatalities involving children under the age of 15 were reported to the CPSC from 2005 to 2007. Of those reported drownings, an annual average of 299 were children under the age of 5.
  - Of the estimated number injuries involving children younger than 15 that occurred annually from 2007 to 2009, about 54 percent occurred at a residential location.
  - Seven people were injured in entrapment incidents in 2009, according to reports received by the CPSC.
- 



On Monday in Fort Lauderdale, Tenenbaum is expected to be joined by Olympic swimmers Jason Lezak and Janet Evans, and U.S. Rep. Debbie Wasserman Schultz to kick off the Pool Safety campaign, which will continue throughout the year.

Also attending the launch event will be Nancy Baker, whose daughter, Virginia Graeme Baker, drowned in June 2002. Baker described her daughter as a humble, sweet and loving child who didn't take risks like her twin sister. The 7-year-old girl, a good swimmer and the granddaughter of former Secretary of State James Baker, died after being trapped by the suction in a hot tub.

"I couldn't pull her off of this thing," Nancy Baker said of the incident, which happened at a graduation party. "I didn't even know what was holding her there. I didn't know of entrapment."

A federal law aimed at strengthening pool safety now carries Virginia Graeme Baker's name.

Chrissy Cianflone, director of programs for Safe Kids USA, said parents should make sure adequate barriers and fences are installed around pool areas, learn CPR, and keep a careful eye on children who are in and around the water. Even children who have taken swimming lessons should be closely watched, Cianflone said. Often, she said, parents will say they are supervising their child, but are actually focused on other distractions.

"Drowning is a silent killer. It can happen in a matter of seconds," Cianflone said. "Children drown very quickly and very silently. It's not like you see in the movies. ... They're going to go under and usually people recognize that something is wrong when they don't hear anything, when there's silence. And that's when it's too late."

<http://www.miamiherald.com/2010/05/23/1643942/safety-groups-warn-parents-of.html>


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## Summer Swim Season Also Brings Drowning Risk (CBSNews.com) [| TOP](#)

May 23 / AP

Annual Consumer Agency Report Reminds Parents of Dangers to Young Children; Hundreds Die Each Year

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**Related:**

[CDC: 1 in 8 Swim Pools Closed, Many Too Dirty](#)

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<http://www.cbsnews.com/stories/2010/05/23/health/main6512768.shtml>

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### **Authorities Offer Bike-Safety Tips at Start of Cycling Season (KTUU.com, Alaska) [| TOP](#)**

May 23 / Christine Kim

ANCHORAGE, Alaska -- With school out for the summer, the Anchorage Police Department says it's important to keep in mind that more children are out bicycling on the streets -- and they're staying out a lot later.

As the sun shines longer and the grass looks a little greener, you can expect to see more kids like 3-year-old Sebastien Miller enjoying the outdoors. When it's time to go for a ride, there's one item he knows he has to bring.


"A helmet -- and it has turtles on it," Miller said.

With a lot more activity outside, helmets are visible all along the Tony Knowles Coastal Trail. The Alaska Injury Prevention Center says up to 88 percent of bike crash head injuries are preventable by wearing a helmet.

"One of the things we try to do is, whenever we go out, make sure he's wearing his helmet," said Matt Miller, Sebastien's father. "And so we have that on today, and try to watch him pretty closely because there's a lot of traffic out here."

As people pass by, two nursing students from the University of Alaska Anchorage are surveying bikers about their knowledge of helmet laws. They say it's all about education.

"The children are great -- they're wearing helmets and the parents are keeping them safe, but it would be good if they were a good example and were wearing those helmets too," said UAA nursing student Kim Richardson.





According to Safe Kids, children sustain more than 275,000 non-fatal bicycle injuries each year.

On Thursday, 6-year-old Amara Young was riding bikes with two older children when [she came off a dirt path in front of a car that hit her](#). Police say Young is now in critical but stable condition -- and that it appears she was not wearing a helmet.

"They're not paying attention, most of the time, to what may be behind them, what may be coming up next to them," said APD spokesperson Marlene Lammers. "So that's why we want to encourage drivers to be very diligent, especially when they're coming up alleyways."

Being aware of your surroundings is a tip Lori Hickman, a mother of two children, says is important to keep her kids safe.

"Watching for cars and other people, making sure they're paying attention," Hickman said.

And no matter where you are, APD says to make sure your child is wearing a helmet -- because any child under the age of 15 is required by law to wear one while cycling.

The Anchorage Fire Department and Safe Kids have programs that give out bike helmets for free. You can contact AFD at its main number, 267-4936.

Contact Christine Kim at [ckim@ktuu.com](mailto:ckim@ktuu.com)

<http://www.ktuu.com/Global/story.asp?S=12529601>

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## **Campaign Seeks To Stem 'Epidemic' of Young Athlete Injuries (Greenwichtime.com, Connecticut)** [| TOP](#)

May 22 / Amanda Cuda

Dr. [Robert Stanton](#) remembers when sports injuries among children and adolescents were relatively uncommon.

Stanton, an orthopedic surgeon and sports medicine specialist practicing in Fairfield, said there was a time when he and other doctors would see a few young athletes every year with a sore shoulder, or maybe some other sports-related issue. But today, it's not unusual for kids who haven't even started high school yet to seriously hurt themselves playing sports. "Every one of us (working in this field of medicine)





is seeing more and more of this," said Stanton, also the president-elect of the [American Orthopaedic Society for Sports Medicine](#). "It's almost become an epidemic."

According to Safe Kids USA, a nationwide network of organizations working to prevent unintentional childhood injury, more 3.5 million children aged 14 years and younger receive medical treatment for sports injuries each year. Athletics-related injuries among high school students average about 2 million each year, according to the [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention](#).

The numbers are alarming enough that doctors like Stanton felt it was time to intervene. In April, the American Orthopaedic Society for Sports Medicine launched the Sports Trauma and Overuse Prevention campaign. The initiative, also known as [STOP Sports Injuries](#), is a national effort to educate students, coaches, athletes and others about what they can do to prevent injuries. The effort will focus on sports that have the highest rate of injuries. These include baseball, competitive cheerleading, dance, gymnastics, running, softball, soccer and football. However, Stanton pointed out, "almost every sport has an injury rate."

The campaign has a web site, [www.STOPSportsInjuries.org](http://www.STOPSportsInjuries.org), where athletes, doctors, parents and coaches can download information about sports injuries, and tips for preventing these ailments. STOP also has recruited a group of athletes and business leaders, dubbed the [STOP Council of Champions](#), to promote the campaign. The council includes professional golf legend [Jack Nicklaus](#), professional football player [Howie Long](#) and Olympic speed skaters [Bonnie Blair](#) and [Eric Heiden](#). Locally, Stanton said he hasn't yet reached out to local leaders about the STOP campaign, but plans to enlist local organizations, such as the Bridgeport Bluefish, to aid in the effort.

The goal of STOP, Stanton said, is to lower the number of sports-related injuries, and keep youth athletes on the field and out of the operating room. "What orthopedic surgeons in general do is fix things, like broken bones," he said. "But it's also our responsibility to help prevent injuries."

How much is too much?

There are several reasons why Stanton and other doctors see more children and adolescents suffering from sports injuries. For one thing, an increasing number of kids are playing sports. According to the [CDC](#), high school sports participation alone rose from 4 million athletes during the 1971-1972 school year to 7.2 million athletes in the 2005-2006 school year. Stanton also said he's seeing children starting sports at younger ages. Not only that, but these young people often specialize in a single sport, meaning their bodies are repeating the same sets of motions over and over. That puts young athletes at risk for injuries due to overuse.

There are two main types of sports injuries: acute and overuse. Acute injuries are usually the result of a single event, and include such common ailments as ankle sprains, hamstring muscle strain and wrist fractures. Overuse injuries, which are the result of repetitive use over time, are more common, accounting





for nearly half of all sports injuries to middle and high school students. Injuries from overuse include Achilles tendinitis, shin splints and tennis elbow.

Stanton said it's alarming to see young athletes with such serious, and preventable injuries. Stanton's fellow AOSSM member, [William N. Levine](#), agreed. "When you see eight-year-olds coming into your office with shoulder and knee problems, it should make you cringe," said Levine, director of sports medicine at the [Columbia-Presbyterian Medical Center](#) in New York.

The risks of overuse haven't gone unnoticed by local sports officials. [David Johnson](#), athletic director at [Bunnell High School](#) in Stratford, said as recently as 30 years ago, students who played a specific sport pretty much limited their activity to their school's scheduled season. For instance, baseball prodigies would play during their school's baseball season -- and maybe during the summer -- and that would be it. They'd also likely divide their attention among a variety of sports, which lowered the likelihood of a particularly area of the body being overused.

Now, Johnson said, students are more inclined to focus on just one activity -- and they have the option to participate in their sport of choice year-round. Ideally, this allows a young athlete to become better at his or her sport. But, Johnson said, if you have, for example, a young pitcher honing his or her craft month in and month out with no breaks, "that's a lot of wear and tear on a young arm."

In addition to overuse, causes of sports injury in young people include poor training and conditioning, and insufficient rest after an injury. One thing that's particularly upsetting to Stanton is the fact that many young athletes play while injured. He said a lot of children and adolescents are under such pressure -- either from themselves or from an outside source, like a parent -- to succeed that they ignore pain and other warning signs of injury. But this can only make an injury worse, Stanton said. Kids need to speak up if they're hurt, he said. Likewise, parents shouldn't urge kids to "play through the pain."

In fact, Stanton said, one of the aims of the STOP campaign is to make sure that kids are participating in sports for the right reasons. "Children should enjoy sports," he said. "It shouldn't be something they're forced to do."

STOP doesn't aim to keep kids from participating in sports, Stanton said. On the contrary, he said, sports can be fun and beneficial for children and adolescents, providing them with exercise and socialization. All the campaign does is work to persuade athletes to take better care of themselves, Levine said. "The goal isn't to stop kids from playing," he said. "It's to help kids play in a better environment and safer way."

The campaign does seem to have the potential to help growing athletes said [Bob Lehr](#), a member of the executive staff of the Connecticut Interscholastic Athletic Conference. Like Johnson, Lehr has had concerns about overuse among athletes. He's also grown worried about the trend toward specializing in a single sport, as opposed to playing a variety of sports. Thus, he said, an effort to educate the public about the risks facing young athletes has promise.





"Anything that can be done to further the health of student athletes is something we'd support wholeheartedly," Lehr said.

<http://www.greenwichtime.com/news/article/Campaign-seeks-to-stem-epidemic-of-young-496607.php>

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## **Parent Cited For Leaving Child in Car (The Herald Journal, Utah) | [TOP](#)**

May 21 / Matt Jensen

A Logan parent was cited Thursday for leaving an unattended child in a car around 8:40 p.m.

With higher temperatures on the way, police and public health officials are giving fair warning: this is illegal and the penalty is a \$100 ticket.

"Unfortunately, there have already been three confirmed heat-stroke fatalities this year," writes the Bear River Health Department in a Wednesday press release. "The first occurred in March in Florida on a day that reached only 73 degrees, the second occurred in late April in Georgia on a day that reached 86 degrees and the third occurred just six days later in Texas on a day that reached 80 degrees."

Between 1998 and 2010, 450 children died from heat stroke after being left alone in parked vehicles. The BRHD and the Safe Kids Bear River program remind parents and caregivers to always check for sleeping children before leaving a vehicle.

Health officials say a child's body temperatures rises faster than an adult's, which makes children more susceptible to heat stroke, even on days with mild temperatures.

"Our goal is to raise awareness of just how dangerous it is to leave a child unattended in a vehicle," said Safe Kids Bear River coordinator Farrin Wiese. "More than 50 percent of the children who died from heat stroke were forgotten by a caring adult who became distracted when they left the vehicle."

Logan municipal code states it is unlawful for any person to leave a child under age six unattended in a vehicle on a public street, alley or other public property within the city, for a period of time exceeding 10 minutes, even if the vehicle is unlocked. The statute is enforced year round.

Safe Kids Bear River urges all adults to take the following steps:

- Call 911 if you see an unattended child in a vehicle.
- 



- Never leave children alone in a vehicle - even for a minute.
- Set your cell phone to be sure you drop your child off at daycare.
- Have a plan with your child care provider to call if your child does not arrive when expected.
- Check cars and trunks first if a child goes missing.

Animal control officers also remind the public that leaving pets in parked cars - even with windows rolled down - is unsafe.

Logan animal control officer Bryan Lay says common mistakes pet owners make include placing or tying an animal in a space where it cannot reach adequate shade or leaving pets in hot vehicles.

[http://news.hjnews.com/news/article\\_ec3cb5e2-6561-11df-8785-001cc4c03286.html](http://news.hjnews.com/news/article_ec3cb5e2-6561-11df-8785-001cc4c03286.html)

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### **Reminder From Safe Kids Tucson: Never Leave A Child In A Hot Car (KVOA.com, Arizona) [TOP](#)**


May 21

TUCSON - Now that the temperatures are in the high 90's and nearing 100 degrees, Safe Kids Tucson and Rural/Metro Fire Department wants to remind the public never to leave a child unattended in a car.

Parents or caregivers may mistakenly think that they can leave a child in a car for a "quick" errand. Unfortunately, a delay of just a few minutes can lead to tragedy and death. Heat is considerably more dangerous to children than it is to adults. When left in a hot vehicle, a child's core body temperature can increase three to five times faster than an adult's.

Safe Kids Tucson further cautions parents and caregivers to be especially careful if they are dropping off children at a day care or other location that is not part of the normal routine. All too often, parents "forget" about their precious cargo in the car, and the results are often devastating. Place an unmistakable visual reminder where you'll be sure to see it before you leave your vehicle. This could be a diaper bag or child's backpack right next to your briefcase or lunch bag. Use this visual reminder as your cue to take your child with you when you exit the car.

This word of caution is not just for parents and caregivers. If anyone should see a child left in a vehicle, call 911 immediately.





<http://www.kvoa.com/news/reminder-from-safe-kids-tucson-never-leave-a-child-in-a-hot-car/>

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## Keeping Spring Sports Safe (KPLC, Louisiana) | [TOP](#)

May 2010 / Kate Kelly

As the weather gets warmer, kids are spending more time outside. It's great to see them running around instead of plopped in front of a screen, but you don't want your kids to get hurt. One of the best ways to minimize injuries is to make sure they're wearing the proper equipment. These tips will help you keep your child safe this spring.

### 1. Make helmets a must

And not just for bike riding. The majority of head injuries in sports and recreational activities result from bicycling, skateboarding or skating accidents, according to the American Academy of Pediatrics. Your kids may complain about helmets, but the key to keeping the gear on their heads is to make it a rule from the beginning. "Kids accept car seats and seat belts because we don't take no for an answer," says Dr. Mark Diamond, a pediatrician with Children's Community Pediatrics in Pittsburgh. "It's just a part of the routine of riding in the car." The same should be true of wearing a helmet, starting with your kids' first tricycle ride.

### 2. Protect their wrists

"You really need wrist guards when skateboarding or inline skating because broken wrists are a common injury with these activities," says Diamond, who recommends wrist guards for biking too. (For added protection, invest in some kneepads. They can soften the blow and reduce cuts and bruises.)

### 3. Examine the gear

When it comes to team sports, most programs do a good job of mandating shin guards, helmets and appropriate padding. But parents need to make sure the equipment fits properly and is in good condition, says Brian Robinson, an athletic trainer at Glenbrook South High School in Illinois. Make sure your child's helmet doesn't have any cracks, that it fits snugly without interfering with vision, and that the chinstrap is still attached, suggests Robinson. Padding should feel springy when you touch it, and any tears or frays mean it's time to get new equipment. Don't forget to inspect mouth guards -- some kids chew on them, which can make them look like a mangled piece of plastic, offering little protection for the teeth.

### 4. Pay special attention to cleats





Kids' feet grow so fast that it's tempting to try to get one more season out of a pair of cleats before investing in new ones. But playing in footwear that's too small leads to shin splints, arch strains and other foot and ankle injuries, says Robinson. If your child is wearing hand-me-down cleats that seem to be in good shape, make sure that the shoes' insoles don't have an imprint from the former owner -- another sign that the shoes are not going to be a good fit.

#### **5. Don't just gear up for the game**

Most organized sports-related injuries (more than 60 percent) occur during practices, not games, according to Safe Kids USA. And yet one-third of parents don't take the same safety precautions for practice as they do for the game, reports the organization.

#### **6. Insist on mouth guards and protective cups**

These should be worn during all contact sports. Such gear may not be *required* for play in sports such as soccer or baseball, but it should be, says Robinson.

<http://www.kplctv.com/Global/story.asp?S=12510899>

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### **RISK AREA NEWS**

#### **Swimming Lessons OK for Toddlers, Experts Say (US News and World Report) [TOP](#)**


May 24 / HealthDay News

Pediatricians' group policy change based on evidence that some kids may benefit

The American Academy of Pediatrics has issued new guidelines on drowning prevention in children, taking into account the risks from popular inflatable pools and new evidence that safety instruction may be helpful for toddlers.

In a change from previous guidelines, the AAP no longer recommends against swimming lessons for kids aged 1 to 3 years because there's new evidence that instruction may help some young children avoid drowning.

Drowning is the second leading cause of death for children aged 1 to 19 years, and about 1,100 children died of drowning in the United States in 2006. Toddlers and teen-aged boys are at highest risk.





"Not every child will be ready to learn to swim at the same age," said Dr. Jeffrey Weiss, lead author of a policy statement that was released online May 24 and will be published in the July issue of the journal *Pediatrics*. "Swimming lessons can be an important part of the overall protection, which should include pool barriers and constant, capable supervision."

The policy statement doesn't recommend water instruction for kids younger than 1 year of age.

"To protect their children, parents need to think about layers of protection," Weiss explained in a news release.

"Children need to learn to swim," he said. "But even advanced swimming skills cannot 'drown-proof' a child of any age. Parents must also closely supervise their children around water and know how to perform CPR. A four-sided fence around the pool is essential."

A fence separating a pool from the rest of the world -- including the house -- is estimated to cut the risk of drowning by half, the pediatrics experts said.

But laws about pool fencing often don't apply to large inflatable pools that may require thousands of gallons of water. Federal officials counted 47 deaths of children related these pools from 2004-2006.

"Because some of these pools have soft sides, it is very easy for a child to lean over and fall headfirst into the water," Weiss said. "These pools pose a constant danger."

Weiss pointed out that while many parents are vigilant while watching their children around swimming pools, a moment of inattention on the part of distracted adults can lead to trouble. "It's not a lack of supervision, it's a lapse of supervision," he warned.

### **More information**

For more about [swimming safety](#), visit the Nemours Foundation's KidsHealth Web site.

<http://health.usnews.com/health-news/managing-your-healthcare/treatment/articles/2010/05/24/swimming-lessons-ok-for-toddlers-experts-say.html>

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**U.S. Will Ban Drop-Side Cribs Amid Safety Concerns (The Washington Post) [TOP](#)**

May 22 / Lyndsey Layton

A decorative graphic at the bottom of the page consisting of a light blue wave shape that curves upwards at both ends and downwards in the middle.



They've been a fixture in millions of American homes since the 1940s, used by parents, then passed down to friends and relatives. Now the federal government is moving to ban drop-side cribs, saying that the nursery furniture with a moveable side poses lethal dangers to children.

By the end of 2010, it will be illegal to sell a drop-side crib. And public places such as daycare centers and hotels will be prohibited from using them, federal officials said. Under rules being developed, violators would face a range of penalties, from an order to stop use to criminal sanctions for repeat offenders.

Drop-side cribs, which have one side that lowers to allow caregivers easy access to a baby or toddler, have caused at least 32 deaths in the United States since 2000, according to the Consumer Product Safety Commission. Another 14 fatalities might be related to drop-side cribs, but investigators lacked information to make a clear link, according to agency officials.

"There have been few too many recalls and far too many deaths from defective cribs in recent years," said [Inez Tenenbaum](#), chairman of the Consumer Product Safety Commission.

A crib is meant to be safe enough to leave a child unattended; when it malfunctions, the infant is usually alone.

Since 2005, more than 7 million drop-side cribs have been recalled by manufacturers because of suffocation and strangulation hazards, including 2 million StorkCraft cribs last year, the largest single product recall in CPSC history.

It is unclear whether manufacturing changes have made the cribs more dangerous or whether the government has gotten better at pinpointing the cause of infant deaths.

Many deaths associated with drop-side cribs occurred when the moveable side partly detached, trapping the infant between the mattress and wood slats of the crib. In some cases, caregivers unwittingly installed the drop side incorrectly. In other cases, the crib hardware apparently failed and the side detached.

The crib industry says that drop-side cribs are not inherently hazardous.

"When these products are used correctly, they're perfectly safe," said Mike Dwyer, executive director of the Juvenile Products Manufacturers Association, which represents about 90 percent of crib manufacturers. "Many of these incidents involved improper assembly. There are a lot of second-hand cribs sold through garage sales, thrift stores, and that's a problem. They have missing hardware or missing instructions . . . Some parents and caregivers are using bailing wire and duct tape."

Nancy Cowles, executive director of Kids In Danger, a non-profit organization that works to improve the safety of children's products, said the fact that a crib can be assembled incorrectly is a design flaw, not





the fault of the caregiver. And problems with drop-side cribs started growing after manufacturers switched to lighter, less-expensive materials, she said.

"I had all three of my kids in a drop-side crib," said Cowles, whose youngest child is now 16. "But they were different then. I think with the efforts to make cribs sleeker and the switch to more plastic, we've ended up with more drop sides that can't hold up to the use."

Federal officials do not know how many drop-side cribs are in use. They once made up about half the market of new cribs purchased, Cowles said. By early 2009, after a spate of recalls, drop sides fell to about 18 percent of 2.5 million new cribs sold annually, Dwyer said.

Because cribs can cost as much as \$1,000, they are often used repeatedly, handed down to family members and friends or sold again, making it difficult to estimate what percentage of the marketplace they represent.

Cowles and other consumer advocates have been talking with federal regulators and crib manufacturers for nearly 10 years about ways to make drop-side cribs safer, but there's been little action. Federal safety standards for cribs were last updated in 1982.

In 2008, Congress ordered the safety commission to set new standards for cribs, baby bathtubs and other durable products for children. When Tenenbaum became CPSC chairman last year, she put crib safety on a fast track and told her staff to craft a ban on drop-side cribs.

At the same time, Tenenbaum urged ASTM International, the organization that sets voluntary standards for materials, products, systems and services, to prohibit drop-side cribs. "I got them on the phone, and said, 'You need to work with us right now to have the best voluntary standard possible,'" Tenenbaum told a congressional committee in January. ASTM International agreed to ban drop-side models; those voluntary standards for crib makers take effect next month.

Most of the cribs recalled in recent years met the ASTM International standards, leading consumer advocates to argue that new federal requirements should be tougher than the voluntary standards. In addition to banning drop-side cribs, the new federal standard also will require that cribs meet a certain level of mattress support and pass a "shaking test" to ensure they can withstand the jumping and pulling expected from a typical toddler, among other things. The new federal rules will require manufacturers to either make it impossible for a caregiver to incorrectly assemble a crib or use warning labels in a way that makes obvious incorrect assembly.

Anticipating these changes, most manufacturers have already stopped making drop-side cribs, Dwyer said.





Instead, they plan to produce cribs on shorter legs, so that a caregiver can more easily bend to pick up a child, or cribs that have a "drop gate," where the top five inches of one side folds down along a "piano hinge" to allow easier access to the infant, he said.

Consumer advocates and regulators say they remain concerned about the drop-side cribs still in circulation.

Anyone owning a drop-side crib should examine it thoroughly, said Patricia L. Edwards, a CPSC engineer. "If you've got a fairly new crib and it is in perfect working condition, still consider not using the drop side," she said. "But if this is your third child using the crib, or it is a hand-me-down crib from your aunt, I would recommend not using it anymore. The older a crib gets, the more problems we see."

And when the crib is no longer needed, throw it out, Cowles said. "Don't pass it on," she said.

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