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Comfort Play
& Teach:

A Positive Approach to Parenting™

Every Day

Summer Safety: Outdoor Play Time Checklist

During the summer there are many things to do. Children will be eager to explore outdoors and to actively play. It is important to consider different ways to ensure your child's safety and to take time to help your child to develop safe habits. Parents can set an example for their child, take time to explain safety rules and provide reminders about them as needed. This helps your child to understand that safety rules are for his protection and will enable him to enjoy a safe summer.

Below are some suggestions for making the most out of your outdoor play which will help you ensure your *family's personal safety while close to home, at the park, or in the car.*

Making the Most Out of Your Outdoor Play

- Be sure to pace the daily events. Only take on what you and your child can handle. Doing too much will tire both of you out, and make you grumpy and less focused. If you have more energy in the morning, take on the more intense activities and when the day winds down, read a book, or go for a walk.
- Find the time and space to rest. It's important that you and your child are well-rested to face the day's activities. If there's a busy day ahead, get to bed early and sleep in if you can. If your child takes regular naps, be sure that he or she can still rest if you are out for the day. Bring a blanket with you wherever you go. Find a tree at a park to take a nap under, or bring a stroller for your child to sleep in when she or he is tired.
- Eat on time or when hungry. When you and your child don't get enough nutrients, you slow down, become irritable and less focused. If you want to have a fun day, be sure to listen to your child when he or she is hungry and stop for food or a snack.
- Have simple rules and be sure to remind your child about these rules.





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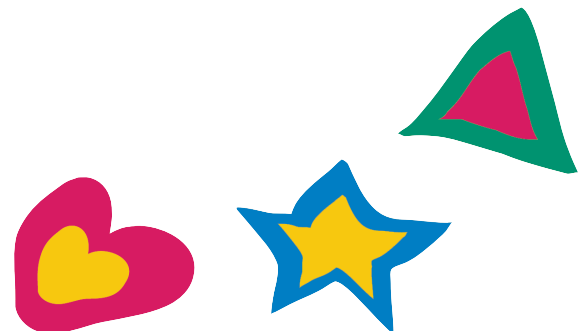
Every Day

Playing in the Summer Sun

- My child wears an appropriate hat for outdoor play and I apply sunscreen to both of us to prevent sunburn.
- My child and I enjoy outdoor activities during cooler times of the day (e.g., morning or late afternoon) to prevent heat-related illnesses.
- My child and I drink lots of fluids prior to playing outside, and carry bottles of water or containers of juice to prevent dehydration once at the park.
- I help my child to select light clothes to wear as a way of keeping cool. She is learning different ways to care for her body when it is hot out.

Playtime at the Park

- I take a few minutes to inspect outdoor play areas to ensure that they are free of unsafe items (e.g., broken glass) to protect my child from injury.
- I supervise my child closely when he plays in or near the water (e.g., wading pool at the park). Children can drown in very shallow water.
- I discuss important safety rules with my child, so she can take precautions when playing outside and tell me about unsafe situations she notices.
- My child and I play at playgrounds with surfaces that cushion falls (e.g., sand). Hard play surfaces can lead to serious injuries when falls occur.





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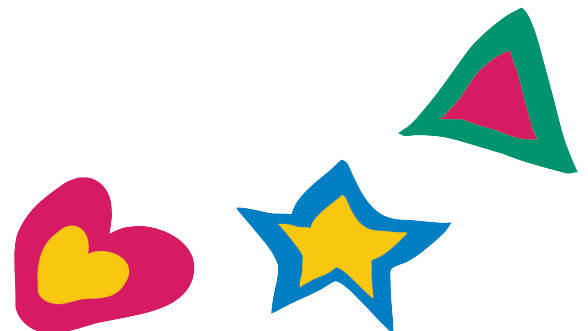
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Playing Close to Home

- I monitor my child very carefully if he is playing on the balcony, and explain why he needs to stay back from the railing.
- The outdoor play area is fenced with a gate that can be locked, or a latch that children cannot reach.
- There are no poisonous plants in the backyard, and grass and plants are not sprayed with pesticide.
- Unsafe items and products such as tools and insecticides are stored out of reach of children.

Car Safety

- My child is never left unattended in the car, and may not play alone in the car. Cars heat up quite quickly on hot summer days, putting my child at risk.
- The car is always kept locked and the keys are in a secure place so my child cannot play in the car and accidentally get locked in.
- I have a trunk release mechanism to prevent my child from ever being locked in the trunk of the car.
- Remember to monitor your children, even when packing or removing items from the vehicle. Once you arrive at your destination, ensure that all children leave the car safely, paying special attention to sleeping infants.





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Q: *Safety: How do I keep my children safe outside the house?*

A: Here is a basic safety checklist for the outdoors. In addition to the points below, be sure to check carefully around the outdoor area that you and your child use frequently, to see if there are any additional actions you can take to safety proof it.

But begin by making sure that:

- The outdoor play area is fenced with a gate that can be locked, or the latch is out of reach of children
- Potentially dangerous items and products (such as tools, axe, lawn mower, gasoline and insecticides) are stored in the garage out of reach of children
- The space between the rungs of a ladder or holes in a structure are not between 7 and 25 cm (3 to 10”), the perfect size for a preschoolers head to fit
- Outdoor equipment is arranged to maximize safe traffic patterns (for example, allow room for swings to go back and forth)
- The play area is not cluttered with a lot of equipment - there is at least 1.8 metres (6 feet) between pieces of equipment
- The surface around the swings, slides and climbers can cushion a child’s fall (for example, use 25 to 50 cm [10 to 20”] of sand) - hard surfaces such as cement can cause serious injuries if a child falls
- Outdoor equipment is arranged to maximize safe traffic patterns (for example, allow room for swings to go back and forth)
- There is nothing on equipment that can act as a hook to snag clothing (especially at the top of slides)
- Screws and bolts holding equipment together are not loose or missing





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- There are **no** sharp, rough, rusty or splintered edges or surfaces on areas where children sit and crawl
- There are no moving parts that can pinch or crush body parts, especially fingers
- Drawstrings and cords on hoods, jackets and mittens are taken off, tied up or tucked in and jackets are zipped up. Long hats and scarves and loose clothing are avoided - all of these can get caught on play equipment and strangle a child
- There are **no** skipping ropes attached to playground equipment - this could lead to strangulation
- There are **no** “S” hooks or other open hooks used to hang or secure equipment
- Unsafe or disassembled equipment is removed from the play area
- The play area, including the sand box, is free of hazardous objects (such as glass, nails, animal feces) - keeping the grass cut short makes hazards easier to see
- There is a cover on the sandbox (this helps to eliminate contamination from animals)
- There is close supervision if children play where there is snow build-up, which can allow children to climb to dangerous heights or to slide down into dangerous areas
- Children are **not** helped to climb to unsafe heights
- Children are supervised closely when playing in or near water, **no matter how shallow**. (Children can drown in as little as 4 cm [1 1/2”] of water.)
- Wading pools are drained, turned upside-down or made inaccessible when not in use, or when constant supervision is not possible





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- When barbecuing, children are **constantly** supervised
- All barbecue equipment (such as coal and starter fluid) is out of reach of children
- Supervision is not hampered by trees or other structures
- Children are protected from the sun with hats, light clothing and sunscreen (sunscreen is not recommended for babies under 6 months of age)
- Helmets are CSA (Canadian Standards Association) approved and fit properly, and are always worn when biking and rollerblading. (Elbow, knee and wrist pads are also worn when rollerblading.)
- When sitting on a bike, your child can touch the ground with the toes of one foot - it is not safe to buy a bigger bike, with the idea that your child will grow into it
- Children have been taught the “rules of the road”
- The outdoor play area is free of poisonous plants
- The grass and plants are not sprayed with poisonous substances such as pesticide

Safe Kids Canada

<http://www.sickkids.ca/safekidscanada/>

Caring for Kids

<http://www.caringforkids.cps.ca/keepingkidssafe/index.htm>

Canadian Pediatric Society

<http://www.cps.ca/English/statements/IP/IP02-01.pdf>

For more information visit www.investinkids.ca

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