



COUNSELING GUIDELINES

From 5 to 9 Years

FIREARM HAZARDS

1. Is there a gun in your home or the home where your child plays or is cared for?

COUNSELING GUIDELINES

Do not keep guns in your home. Guns, especially handguns, should be removed from the environments where children live and play. If firearms are in the home, they must be stored unloaded in a locked place and out of the reach of children, with the ammunition locked separately. Guns are frequently involved in unintentional shootings in this age group, and homicides and suicides also occur. Parents should ask if the homes where their child visits or is cared for have guns and how they are stored.

HOUSEHOLD HAZARDS

2. Do you let your child operate a power lawn mower?
3. Have any of your children ever had any injuries requiring a visit to the doctor or hospital?
4. How frequently is the heating system checked in your home?

COUNSELING GUIDELINES

Never let children this age operate a lawn mower or ride with you on one. Potential injury results from the machine itself and from objects thrown by the blade. Ride-on mowers are not recreational vehicles. Refer to the TIPP Safety Slip *Lawn Mower Safety*.

Report any history of injuries to the pediatrician. The pediatrician is able to explore the causes and discuss preventive measures. It has been shown that stressful family situations can be causally linked to repeated injuries in children (3 or more injuries needing medical attention within 12 months).

Heating ventilation systems and fireplaces should be checked at least once a year. This annual inspection helps prevent carbon monoxide poisoning, fires, and system malfunction.

BURNS

5. Do you and your children know how to get out of your home safely in the event of a fire?
6. Does anyone in your home ever smoke?
7. Does your child play with matches or lighters?
8. Do you have working fire extinguishers in your home?
9. Does your child play with firecrackers or sparklers?

COUNSELING GUIDELINES

Develop an escape plan in the event of a fire in the home. Identify appropriate exit routes and a family meeting point away from the house. Do not use elevators in apartment buildings if there is a fire. Use the TIPP Safety Slip *Protect Your Home Against Fire...Planning Saves Lives*.

A third of deaths due to home fires are caused by smoking. Smoking in bed or improper disposal of cigarette ashes or butts endangers children sleeping in adjacent rooms who may be trapped in the event of fire. Twelve percent of residential fires are associated with smoking.

Do not let children play with fire. Keep matches and lighters out of the sight and reach of children. They commonly ignite flammable materials, which may result in severe burns and house fires.

Buy a fire extinguisher for your home. Extinguishers should be available in kitchens and in rooms with a furnace or fireplace.

Do not let children play with fireworks. Firecrackers and sparklers can cause serious burns and injuries and should not be played with by children. Bystanders often are seriously injured by fireworks as well. An estimated 10,000 injuries related to fireworks are reported annually to the US Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC).

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10. Do you have working smoke alarms in your home?

Install smoke alarms in your home. Most fire-related deaths are the result of inhaling smoke or toxic gas. There is a critical period of 4 minutes to get outside the home after the alarm sounds. Smoke alarms are recommended for each floor, but particularly for furnace and sleeping areas. Be sure to test the alarm monthly to be certain that it is working. It is best to use smoke alarms that use long-life batteries, but if you do not, change the batteries every year.

WATER SAFETY

11. Does your child know how to swim?
12. Does your child know the rules of water and diving safety?
13. Does your child wear a life jacket when on a boat?

COUNSELING GUIDELINES

Teach children how to swim. Swimming is an important life skill that all children should acquire. However, even if children know how to swim, there are still hazards. They may not retain their swimming skills in an emergency; even competent young swimmers should not swim unsupervised.

Teach and enforce the rules of swimming and diving safety. Drowning is the second most common cause of death in children of this age. Knowledge of swimming is not enough to prevent drowning. Children should swim in supervised areas only. The “buddy” system is desirable. Teach your child to always enter the water feet first. Use the TIPPP Safety Slips *Life Jackets and Life Preservers*, *Pool Safety for Children*, and *Water Safety for Your School-aged Child*.

Be sure your child wears a life jacket when on a boat. Everyone on the boat should use a Coast Guard-approved life jacket. At least 1 adult swimmer should be present for each child who cannot swim.

AUTO SAFETY

14. Does your child use a booster seat or seat belt when riding in the car?
15. Does your car have a passenger air bag?

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A booster seat should be used on every trip by all children who have outgrown their car safety seats with harnesses (usually around 40 pounds) until the seat belt fits correctly (usually around 4 feet 9 inches tall or between 8 and 12 years old). Seat belts should not be used until the lap belt can be worn low and flat on the hips and the shoulder belt can be worn across the shoulder rather than the face or neck. Shoulder belts should be installed in the back seats of cars that do not have them.

Never seat a child in front of a passenger air bag.

PEDESTRIAN SAFETY

16. Do your children cross the street by themselves?

COUNSELING GUIDELINES

Teach your child pedestrian safety skills. All children should learn safe street-crossing skills and should demonstrate those skills to the parent before supervision ends. Children will still require supervision when crossing the street. Parents often think their children are able to handle traffic safely by themselves, but most children don't have the skills to handle these risky situations until at least 10 years of age.

Parents should be reminded that children

- Often act before thinking and may not do what parents or drivers expect
- May assume that if they see the driver, the driver sees them
- Can't judge speed like adults
- Are shorter than adults and can't see over cars, bushes, and other objects
- Need a place to play away from cars and the street

BICYCLE SAFETY

17. Has your child learned about bicycle safety?
18. Does your child wear a helmet every time he or she rides a bike?

COUNSELING GUIDELINES

Teach and enforce bicycle safety rules. Bicycle crashes can result in serious injury and death. Children should not ride in the street at this age. They should ride on bike paths, in parks, or in protected areas. They should never ride after dark. Bicycles should be equipped with coaster brakes at this age because the child may not be developmentally ready to use hand brakes appropriately. Use the TIPPP handout *Safe Bicycling Starts Early*. The size of the bicycle should be appropriate for the child. Use the TIPPP handout *Choosing the Right Size Bicycle for Your Child*.

Wear a bicycle helmet. All children should wear a bicycle helmet approved by the CPSC. Parents should set an example by wearing helmets when they ride bikes as well.

RECREATIONAL SAFETY

19. Does your child participate in sports?

20. Does your child participate in horseback riding?

COUNSELING GUIDELINES

Wear protective gear during sports. Despite safety measures, such as protective padding and helmets, the risk of injury is present in all sports. Children should be made aware of the risks that go with the sports they play. The chance of injury becomes greater with the degree of contact in a sport. Football, wrestling, gymnastics, soccer, ice hockey, and track/running have the highest rates of injury. Lower leg (knee and ankle) injuries are the most common injuries in major sports. Children should not participate in boxing because of the high risk of brain damage. Many serious sports injuries could be prevented if players wore protective equipment, particularly head and eye protection. Parents should encourage the use of such gear and teach their children that wearing protective gear increases the long-term enjoyment of the sport. If your child uses a scooter, skateboard, or rollerblades, a helmet, knee and elbow pads, and wrist guards should be worn. Use the AAP brochure *Sports and Your Child*.

All children should wear an approved equestrian helmet when riding a horse. All horseback riding activities should be supervised by an adult.