

Kids Safety GUIDE





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Keep Kids Safe on the Road

Today's families are on the go, and much of that going happens in the family car.

Someone in the U.S. dies every 50 minutes in a car accident, according to the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration. Read on for tips to make sure one of those deaths isn't in your family.

HEAT

Every year, as the weather warms

up, heartbreaking stories of children left in car seats in hot cars crop up on the news. Even in cooler temps, the closed interior of a car can reach dangerous temperatures. Look before you lock, the NHTSA says, even if you know the child isn't with you. Also, keep your car keys out of reach. Some heat deaths happen when a child is playing in the car.

BACKOVER

Backover accidents occur when a car exiting a driveway or parking spot runs over an unattended child. To pre-

vent backover accidents, the NHTSA says, teach children not to play around parked cars and walk around your car before you back out. Check for children, toys and any other obstacles. If children are playing outside, have them stand to the side where you can see them while you back out.

DON'T TEXT AND DRIVE

We all know we shouldn't text and drive, but many of us still give in to the temptation to check a message while we're on the road. It's especially dangerous for new drivers, who both lack

the experience to quickly and safely react to many road situations and who practically live on their phones. Don't text and drive yourself and teach the importance of paying attention to the road from a young age. Next, for new drivers, go over the penalties for texting and driving, which in some states, can be stiff. Also encourage the use of driving modes or tell them to turn off their devices while driving.

In addition to these tips, while driving, watch for children playing and drive slowly and defensively through neighborhoods.



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Staying Safe Around Fire

More than 1 million fires killed more than 3,000 people in 2015, the most recent year for which statistics were available, the U.S. Fire Administration says.

Keep your home and your kids safe from fire with the following tips.

MAKE AN ESCAPE PLAN

Have a plan if your home catches fire. Find two ways to get out of every room, the USFA says, and designate a meeting place outside your home for the whole family. Rehearse the plan with your family so that children know

what to do when they hear a smoke alarm and there's no adult around. Teach them to never, ever go back inside a burning building.

BURN SAFETY

While USFA statistics show a downward trend in fire injuries to children, it remains a danger. Children, who are naturally curious, can be drawn to fire.

Keep children at least three feet from fire or anything that can get hot enough to burn, like heaters. Keep lighters and smoking materials well out of the reach of children, and refrain from playing with lighters or matches around your children. Safety starts with you.

SMOKE ALARMS

The USFA reports that the chances of

dying in a house fire are cut in half when these devices are properly used and maintained. Put smoke alarms in your home — they may be available free from your local fire department — and keep the batteries up to date. For the best coverage, choose alarms that are interconnected. If one alarm goes off, all of the alarms go off. Place alarms outside each bedroom and make sure there's one on each level of the house. Alarms are also available that flash lights or strobe for hearing impaired.

Online Safety

Children are logging on earlier and earlier whether it's for school, gaming or social media. Here are some ways to keep your children safe online from the U.S. Department of Education.

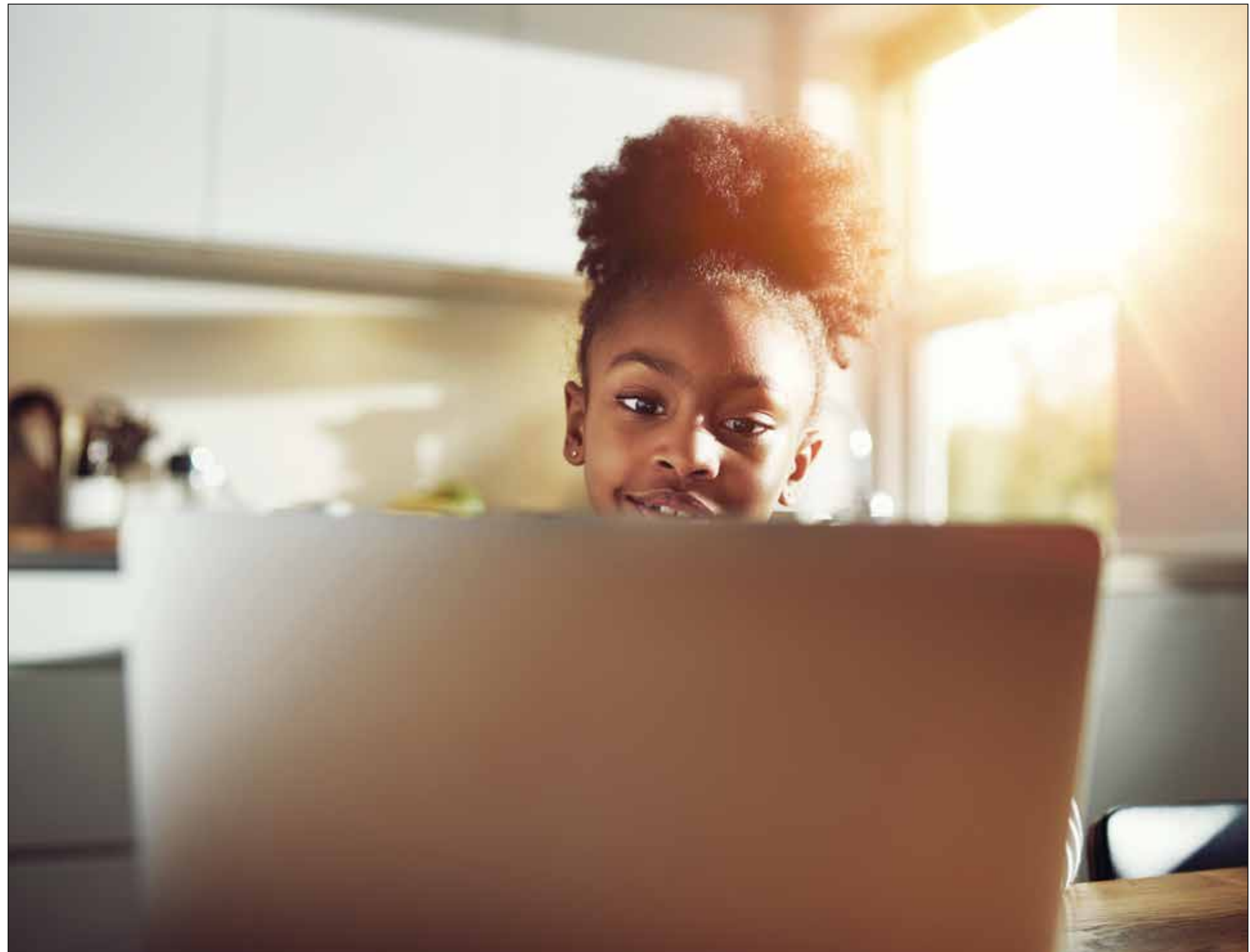
Build awareness. Teach your children online safety and terminology. You can even use a range of grade-appropriate computer games from the FBI, available at sos.fbi.gov.

Protect their identity. Tell your children to guard their information, like their name, address and telephone number, carefully. Caution them against the dangers of interacting with people they don't know in real life on social media, on chats and through other services and pages.

Protect your computer. Keep your computer and other devices updated with the latest security updates and virus protection. Select options that automatically update to make it easier.

Emphasize password safety. Talk about the importance of selecting strong passwords that use a combination of letters, symbols and numbers. Tell them to use different passwords for different accounts and to never share their passwords with others.

Watch your kids online.



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Monitor their online activity. Consider putting the computer in a public space in the home, or setting rules like having to use devices with their door open or with adults present. There are also a variety of software programs that will monitor and restrict online usage.

Talk about cyberbullying.

Encourage your children to think about the consequences of what they post online. Words on the internet affect people just as much words said out loud. Keep communication lines open and, if your child is being bullied online, work with them. Cyberbullying can be particularly pernicious because

the internet is available 24 hours a day. And remember, cyberbullying may actually be a crime in your state. Talk with your children about legal ramifications as well.

Sexting. Texting or sending inappropriate images or words is growing in popularity among teens. Talk to your children

about how this dangerous practice could land them in deep trouble — in some states it's a crime. The damage to their reputation is also permanent. What they post or send to a friend may seem private, but how would they feel if hundreds or thousands of people saw?

Missing Children

A missing child is a parent's worst nightmare.

These cases are often complex, as are statistics, but the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children says that in 2014, about 500,000 missing cases were entered into the criminal justice system.

TYPES OF MISSING CASES

There are a variety of ways a child can disappear. These include the classic abduction by a stranger, a family abduction, getting lost, or running away from home. Stranger danger, where a child is taken by someone they don't know, is actually the least common, according to the center.

PROTECT YOUR CHILD

It's hard to think about, but you need to be prepared in case your child is missing. Kits may be available from local law enforcement; check into getting one. Otherwise, keep plenty of current pictures of your child and a current written description, the center says. If law enforcement offers a fingerprinting program, do that, too.

PREVENTING ABDUCTION

A whopping 83 percent of children who took action to prevent an abduction got away, the center says. Here are some ideas to help your child avoid and respond to an unsafe situation:

- Always travel in groups;
- Warn them about accepting rides or changing plans without permission;
- Encourage them to look for escape routes and to tell adults of anything



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makes them uncomfortable; and

- Teach them to yell, scream, kick or otherwise try to get away and make a scene;.

FAMILY ABDUCTION

These are special cases when a child is taken by a family member, like a noncustodial parent or grandparent. Some warning signs of a family abduc-

tion are the family member threatening abduction, a history of domestic violence or child abuse and a history of marital issues. Watch for any preparations, like gathering records or selling a home. The center suggests the following tips for preventing a family abduction:

Having proper legal paperwork and legal representation. If a family mem-

ber has threatened abduction, have your counsel present this evidence and ask the court to tailor a protection plan appropriate to your case.

Notify schools, daycares, camps and other places your child stays without you present. Clearly outline any protective orders and plans.

Flag passport applications for your child.

Be Safe Around Water

Playing in the water is a favorite activity for many families, whether it's in a pool or in the bathtub. Never leave children unattended around water, even an inch or so. Here are some other ways to stay safe around the wet stuff.

IN THE POOL

Pools — in backyards, neighborhoods, parks and hotels — are kid magnets. But they're also killers. According to the CDC, about 10 people die every day from drowning and two of those are under 14. Keep children safe in the pool by teaching them how to swim. Lessons are available at local aquatics centers, from the local YMCA or at local parks. Teach your kids to stay away from drains or other suction outlets in the pool that can trap them underwater and make sure pools have appropriate fencing and enclosures to keep children out when adults aren't watching. This last step may also be required by homeowners insurance if it's a backyard pool; make sure you're compliant with your policy.

IN THE BOAT

Boating is a year-round activity in many parts of the country. In 2016, the U.S. Coast Guard counted 700 deaths



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from recreational boating and many, many more accidents. Keep your children safe in the boat by refraining from alcohol consumption (remember, in your state, drinking and driving a boat may be treated the same as drinking and driving a car), driving safely and obeying the rules and, most importantly, wearing the proper life jacket.

Life jackets are life savers. In 2016, 83 percent of boating fatalities were not wearing life jackets. Proper fitting life jackets:

- Are securely and snugly fastened;
- Aren't ripped, waterlogged or mildewed; and
- Can hold air for 16 hours, if inflatable.

You can buy life jackets for everyone in the family, including pets. Just look for the Coast Guard certification before you buy.

IN THE TUB

Children younger than 6 should never be left unattended in a bath, even in shallow water, the CDC advises. Use

nonskid pads or adhesives in the tub to prevent falls and always empty the tub after bath time to prevent accidents. Also, before putting your child in the tub, check to make sure the water isn't too hot to prevent burns. Check baby goods stores for duckies and other color-changing toys that can make this task at-a-glance easy.

Be Safe Around Pets

Having a pet as part of the family brings many benefits, like lower blood pressure and stress levels, the CDC reports. However, pets come with responsibility and risk. Keep reading for tips to stay safe around our animal friends.

PICK THE RIGHT PET

Before adding an animal to your family, make sure you pick the right animal for your lifestyle and your home. If there are children younger than 5 or older than 65, the CDC recommends avoiding some pets, such as amphibians, rodents and reptiles because these people have weaker immune systems and these animals can carry more diseases. Also consider your living space, lifestyle and whether you can meet the animal's care and attention needs.



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HEALTH

Regular veterinary care is important for all your animal friends. Keep to vaccination schedules and take your pet to the vet if it's sick. Also include your pets in any emergency plans. Make sure after caring for your pets to wash your hands and keep your pets and

their habitats clean. Keep pets away from food preparation areas and pick up and dispose of pet waste properly.

PRACTICE PET SAFETY

The CDC also recommends teaching children how to behave with and around pets.

Show your children how to interact gently and appropriately with animals. There are a number of books available; check your local library or bookstore for some titles to help. And always supervise children around animals, even the loyal family dog.

DOG BITES

Young children, ages 5 to 9, are the most likely to be bitten by a dog. Prevent dog bites by:

Always asking the owner's permission and guidance when approaching a dog.

Tell your children to always be alert for strange or loose

dogs and tell an adult immediately if they see one.

Teach your children how to approach a dog. Don't make constant eye contact, reach your hand out to the dog and let it come to you, and don't try to touch or grab the dog's head.

Teach Bike Safety

More than 800 people were killed in car crashes while riding a bike in 2016, the NHTSA says. Here are some tips for riding safely.

WEAR A HELMET

Always wear a helmet while riding. No exceptions. Pick a helmet that fits you well, is well ventilated and meets U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission standards (look for certification on the packaging). Visit your local bike shop for a variety of helmets in a wide range of prices. Replace your helmet if it no longer fits well, the protection is outdated or if it's been in a crash.

KNOW THE LAWS

Before you or your children hit the road, know the law. Some states require bikes ride a certain way on the street, some require helmets and other protective gear (though you should have your helmet on anyway). Consult with local authorities before going out.

BIKE MAINTENANCE

Keep your bike properly maintained and give it a once-over before going out. Also make sure to adjust for fit; a well-fitted bike is easier for you to control on the street. Check to make sure brakes, lights and other things



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are working properly. Properly inflate tires before you roll out.

DRESS FOR SUCCESS

Wear comfortable clothing, but also make sure its brightly colored so motorists can see you on the street. Ride one per seat — no one up on the

handlebars — and refrain from popping wheelies are riding with no hands. Carry stuff with you in a basket or backpack; don't hang stuff from one side of the bike or another.

DRIVE SAFELY

Consider a bike the same as

a car on the road. Go with the flow of traffic and obey signs, lanes and signals just like you're driving a car. Assume motorists won't see you and keep an eye out for potholes and other obstacles that will make you fall. Keep an eye and an ear out for cars at all times.

Children under 10 should not be on the street. Check laws to make sure sidewalk riding is legal in your area. If it is, teach children to watch for vehicles coming into or out of parking lots or driveways, watch for pedestrians and stop before crossing any streets.