



# Safe Kids New London County

## May is National Bike Month

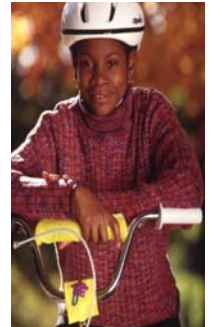
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- **Make sure the helmet fits and kids know how to put it on correctly.** In a crash, the risk of head injury is doubled if the helmet is worn incorrectly. A helmet should sit on top of the head in a level position, and should not rock forward and backward or side to side. The helmet straps must always be buckled but not too tightly. Safe Kids recommends the “Eyes, Ears and Mouth” test: The rim of the helmet should be one to two finger-widths above the eyebrows, the straps should form a “V” just below the ear lobe, the buckle should be flat against the skin and the strap

should feel snug when the rider’s mouth is open.

- **Make sure the bike itself is the right size for the child.** There should be about 1-inch of clearance between the bike frame and the child’s groin when the child’s feet are flat on the ground.
- **Remember bike helmets are for biking.** Kids should *not* wear bike helmets on the playground or for activities that require specialized helmets (such as skiing or football).



*A bike helmet is essential safety gear. Helmets could prevent an estimated 75 percent of fatal head injuries to child cyclists*

- **When in doubt, get help.** The sales staff at any bicycle shop or outdoor recreation store should be able to provide advice on fitting and adjusting bikes and helmets.

“Even with a window slightly open, on a typically sunny summer day, the temperature inside a vehicle can reach potentially deadly levels within minutes”

## In and Around Vehicle Safety

### Protecting Your Family

#### Heat

- \*Never leave your child in an unattended car
- \*Check to make sure all children leave the vehicle when you reach your destination. Don’t overlook

sleeping infants.

- \*Make sure you check the temperature of the child safety seat surface and safety belt buckles before restraining your children in the car.

- \*Use a light covering to shade the seat of your parked car.

#### Trunk Entrapment

- \*Teach children not to play in or around cars.
- \*Keep car keys out of reach and sight.
- \*Always lock car doors and trunks.



Many alarms are now offered as both CO detectors and Smoke Alarms. Check with the manufacturer to see if your alarm offers both.

## Fire Safety Tips!

### Eliminate potential hazards:

- Keep matches, lighters and other heat sources out of children's reach. Playing with matches and lighters is the leading cause of fire deaths for children ages 5 and under.
  - Keep flammable items such as clothing, furniture, newspapers or magazines away from the fireplace, heater or radiator.
  - Keep all portable heaters out of children's reach.
  - Avoid plugging several appliance cords into the same electrical socket.
  - Replace old or frayed electrical wires and appliance cords, and keep them on top of, not beneath rugs.
- Prepare your home:**
- Install smoke alarms on every level of your home and in every sleeping area. Consider installing both ionization alarms, which are better at sensing flaming fires, and photoelectric alarms, which are better at sensing slow, smoky fires.

- Test smoke alarms monthly. Maintain alarms by replacing batteries at least once a year, and replace alarms every 10 years. Plan and practice two escape routes out of each room of the house. It is important to have an alternate escape route in case one is blocked by fire. Fire drills should be practiced spontaneously throughout the year, as home fires and home fire-related deaths are more likely to occur during cold-weather months.
- Designate an outside meeting place, so all members of the family can be accounted for quickly.

### Teach safety:

Children should know the sound of the smoke alarm. When they hear it, teach them to:

- Crawl low under smoke. An estimated three-fourths of childhood fire deaths are caused by the smoke and toxic gases produced as a fire devel-

ops and spreads.

- Touch doors before opening them. If the door is hot, use an alternative exit.
- Never go back into a burning building. Children should be reminded not to stop or return for anything, such as a toy or to call 9-1-1. A call to 9-1-1 should be placed *after* leaving the premises.

*Take children to your local fire station for a tour. Children will be able to see a firefighter in full gear and learn that he or she is someone who saves children – not someone to be afraid of or hide from.*

*Also, be sure you're not teaching your children bad habits. Don't let them see you smoke in bed or disconnect smoke alarm batteries!*

**“A small fire can grow into a deadly one within minutes. To help prevent a tragedy, closely inspect your home to eliminate potential hazards.”**



*Fire is a very real concern for every parent. It is especially a concern for parents of hearing impaired children.*

## Fire Safety for Children with Hearing Impairments

There are 28 million deaf and hard of hearing Americans who are unable to rely on the life-saving warning sound of a working smoke alarm to alert them of fire. It is crucial that this audience is aware of the availability of flashing or vibrating smoke alarms,

and the importance of proper escape planning.

The United States Fire Administration (USFA) encourages the hearing impaired population and their caregivers to practice the following precautionary steps:

For children in wheelchairs, an accessible exit is critical. The fire department should be notified of the presence of a child who has a disability in the home.

Contact your local fire department for information about obtaining a flashing

## *Fire safety—hearing impaired cont.*

or vibrating smoke alarm. Install a flashing or vibrating smoke alarm on every level of your home. Test all smoke alarms months and change batteries at least once a year.

Make sure a TTY/TDD or phone (if used) is next to your bed, within arm's reach. Keep emergency telephone numbers and hearing aids (if necessary) handy as well.

Be sure to inform family members, the building manager, or a neighbor of your fire safety plan and practice it with them. Contact your local fire department on a non-emergency telephone (use appropriate TTY devices if necessary) and explain your special needs.

Ask emergency providers to keep your special needs information on file.



## *Walk this Way...*

Your children want to grow up to be just like you. They imitate the way you talk, the way you perform everyday household tasks, and – that's right – even the way you walk. The most important thing you can do to teach your kids safe pedestrian behavior is to practice it yourself: crossing streets at corners, using traffic signals and crosswalks whenever possible, and making eye contact with drivers prior to crossing in front of them.

Here are some other ways to keep your children safe:

### **Set limits:**

Don't allow a child under age 10 to cross streets alone. Adult supervision is vital until your child demonstrates traffic skills and judgment.

Require children to carry a flashlight at night, dawn and

dusk. Add retro-reflective materials to children's clothing.

Make sure your children take the same route to common destinations (such as school) every time. Walk with your child to find the safest path. Look for the most direct route with the fewest street crossings.

### **Teach your child safety:**

Practical, skills-based training has been demonstrated to improve child pedestrian behavior. Take the time to teach your child to:

Look left, right and left again before crossing the street.

Cross when the street is clear, and keep looking both ways while crossing. Walk, don't run.

Understand and obey traffic signals and signs.

Cross at corners, using traffic

signals and crosswalks when available. Do not enter the street from between parked cars or behind bushes or shrubs.

Stop at the curb, or at the edge of the road if there is no curb, before crossing the street. Never run into a street without stopping - even for a ball, pet or any other reason. Darting into the street accounts for the majority of child pedestrian fatalities.

Walk facing traffic, on sidewalks or paths. Walk as far to the left as possible if there are no sidewalks.

Practice these skills with your children hundreds of times. Supervise them until they show you they are safe pedestrians.

“In 2002, 40 percent of traffic-related child pedestrian deaths occurred between 4 p.m. and 8 p.m. Most (79 percent) occurred in the middle of a block or at other non-intersection locations.”



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We are on the Web!

[WWW.nlcsafekids.org](http://WWW.nlcsafekids.org)

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**Safe Kids are no Accident**

The Mission of Safe Kids New London County Coalition is to protect children ages 14 and under from motor vehicle crashes and pedestrian injuries, bicycle collisions, drowning, fire and scald burns, poisoning, choking, and firearm accidents through a multifaceted approach of increasing public awareness, providing education and advocating for environmental and public policy changes.

The Function of Safe Kids New London County Coalition is to be a broad based group of community members responsible for increasing public awareness of unintentional injuries to children, implementing safety programs in the community, evaluating safety programs, participating in public policy initiatives, obtaining local media coverage and recruiting new members and collaborative partners. It would also be useful to include a contact name for readers who want more information about the organization.

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## *Pool/Spa Drains .. The dangers*

Safe Kids Worldwide recommends that parents always supervise children around water and install fencing that completely surrounds all pools, spas, whirlpools and hot tubs.

- Teach children never to go near a pool drain with or without a cover, and to pin up long hair when in water.
- Install multiple drains in all pools, spas, whirlpools and hot tubs. This minimizes the suction of any one drain, reducing risk of death or injury
- Regularly check to make sure drain covers are secure and have no cracks. Replace flat drain covers with dome-shaped ones.
- Know where the manual cut-off switch for the pump is in case of emergency.
- Consider installing an approved “safety vacuum release system” (SVRS), a tool that quickly and automatically turns off the pump (and stops the suction) when something is trapped in or blocks the drain.

- Parents may also want to check to be sure these steps are taken at community pools, whirlpools, spas and hot tubs.

Nancy Baker's personal journey through pain began in 2002, when her 7-year-old daughter Graeme drowned after becoming trapped underwater by the suction of a spa drain.

